

**RESTRUCTURING OF THE AFGHAN
NATIONAL ARMY: 2001-2015**

*Dissertation Submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in the partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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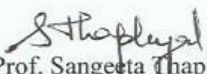
DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**RESTRUCTURING OF THE AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY, 2001-2015**” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.



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CERTIFICATE

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***DEDICATED TO THE CHILDREN BORN AND BROUGHT
UP DURING THE YEARS OF CONFLICT IN
AFGHANISTAN.***

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAF	Afghan Air Force
AMF	Afghan Military Force
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANAOA	Afghan National Army Officer Academy
ANATC	Afghan National Army Training Command
ANBP	Afghan New Beginning Programme
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces (ANA+ANP)
AWOL	Absent Without Leave
CENTCOM	Central Command
CFC-A	Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CM	Capability Milestone
COMISAF	Commander International Security Assistance Force
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command –Afghanistan
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
ETT	Embedded Training Teams
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GDP	Gross Domestic product
GPS	Global Positioning System
HDI	Human Development Index
HMMWV	High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicle
HQ	Headquarter
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ICG	International Crisis Group
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IJC ISAF	Joint Command
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JCMB	Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board

KIA	Killed-in-Action
KMTC	Kabul Military Training Centre
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MPRI	Military Professional Resources Incorporated
MTT	Mobile Training Teams
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NDS	National Security Directorate
NTM-A	NATO Training Mission Afghanistan
OCS	Officer Candidate School
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and development
OMC-A	Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan
OMLT	Operational Mentor and Liaison Team
OPLAN	Operation Plan
OSC-A	Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan
RC	Regional Command
RDDC	Royal Danish Defence College
SALT(P)	Special ANSF Leave Travel Program
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TTHS	Training, Transient, Holding, and Student
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

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AKASH VISEN

PREFACE

The proposed study seeks to examine the contemporary status and structure of ANA by establishing its historical linkages since its inception to the following periods with the present times. The study would primarily focus on the restructuring of the Afghan National Army. This study tries to analyse the objectives and policies that have been planned and implemented by the Afghan government and its international allies since the intervention of United States in 2001, in its mission of dislodging the Taliban and Al Qaeda from Afghanistan. The study would delve into the reformation and the modernising process of the Afghan National Army during the period of 2001-2015. It has highlighted the successive Afghan government's insistence on the rapid increment in the strength of the army, equipping of the force with the best possible technologies and weapons for the combat operations, imparting of skilled training in the modern warfare tactics and essentially balancing the defense budget along with the other budgets of the country. The study will also analyses the challenges Afghan National Army has faced in the process of its reformation. The challenges such as high rate of attrition and desertion, the financial constraints in sustaining of the 3, 50,000 strong Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in the face of huge financial crunch the Afghan government is facing in the existing scenario. The study examines the present day conduct of the Afghan National Army which has certainly been able to successfully integrate people from almost all ethnic backgrounds and composition to fight as one unit against the fundamentalism propagated in the name of religion by the Taliban forces. The Afghan army has been able to bring in the feeling of patriotism in the Afghan nationals which remains the need of the hour in a fragmented society like Afghanistan which sometimes back portrayed itself as a harbinger of national integrity in order to achieve one common national identity which would undoubtedly bring in the feeling of a proud Afghan nationality. The study has also highlighted the role of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in peace negotiations with the Taliban forces.

The scope of the study is limited to the analysis of the evolving transformation of the Afghan National Army from 2001 to 2015. It, therefore, keenly focusses on all aspects from the year 2001 after the dislodging of Taliban regime till 2014 which is the year of withdrawal of the NATO forces. It assesses the progress and changes brought in by the Afghan government and the Afghan army with the help of assistance and advise mission of NATO in the following year i.e.: 2015. Thus, the 15 years period of study is primarily covered in highlighting the making of an all new Afghan National Army. The study has also highlighted the role of international community and their huge investment of money in restructuring and strengthening the Afghan National Army and

the on-ground training that it has provided to Afghan soldiers with insistence on strengthening the Afghan forces by recruiting more and more soldiers. The imperatives of the study is to mainly highlight and analyze the challenges which primarily include ethnic, political and economic prospects of the Afghan National Army.

The proposed study examines the following questions:

1. What are the imperative factors in restructuring the Afghan National Army?
2. How will the Afghan government bear the financial aspect of the enlarged Army?
3. Which are the external factors contributing to the peace process in resurging Taliban forces?
4. What are the challenges of the Afghan National Army post withdrawal of U.S led NATO forces?
5. What role can India play in strengthening the Afghan National Army?

The proposed research study will also examine the hypotheses:

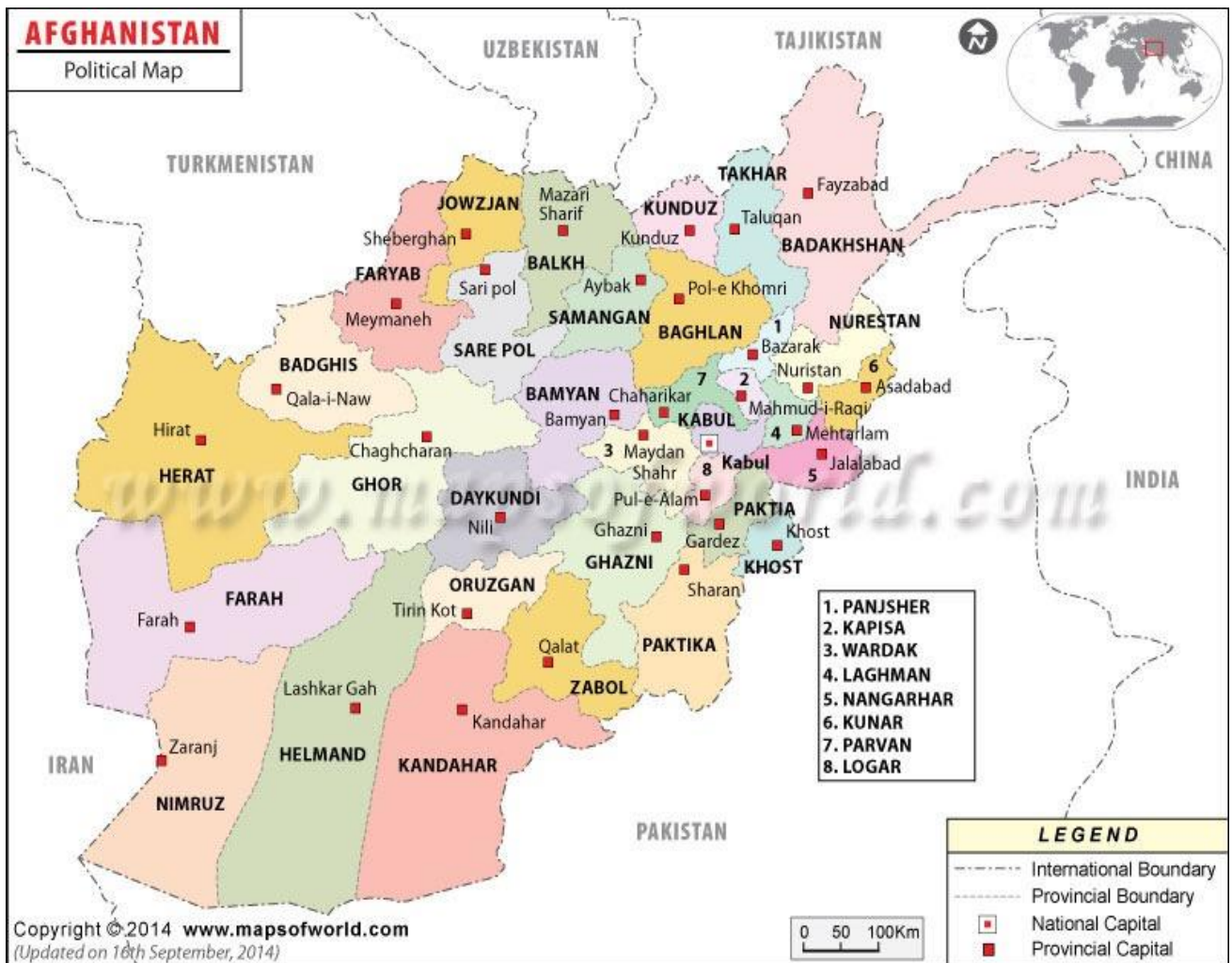
1. The emergence of modern Afghan army is a harbinger of one common national identity.
2. Restructuring of Afghan National Army is imperative for internal stability.

In the proposed research study, a critical analysis of historical events, evolving nature of Afghan National Army under various regimes will be critically analysed with the main focus on contemporary scenario of Afghan National Army and how over a period of decade it has been restructured and strengthened in order to counter the threats posed to the security of the country especially in the period post the withdrawal of U.S led NATO forces. The research would include both primary and secondary data to establish the linkages with the nature of Afghan army in the past and its reformation to face the present times. In this research primary sources of data will consist of government documents, newspapers, records, reports and interviews with concern authorities. The secondary sources consist of books, articles, periodical, journals, magazines, etc. The proposed study in the present framework will deal with all aspects of modern Afghan National Army and the policy reforms it has brought in to safeguard the sovereignty and integrity of Afghanistan.

The study has been divided into five chapters which would try to cover all aspects of the restructured Afghan National Army.

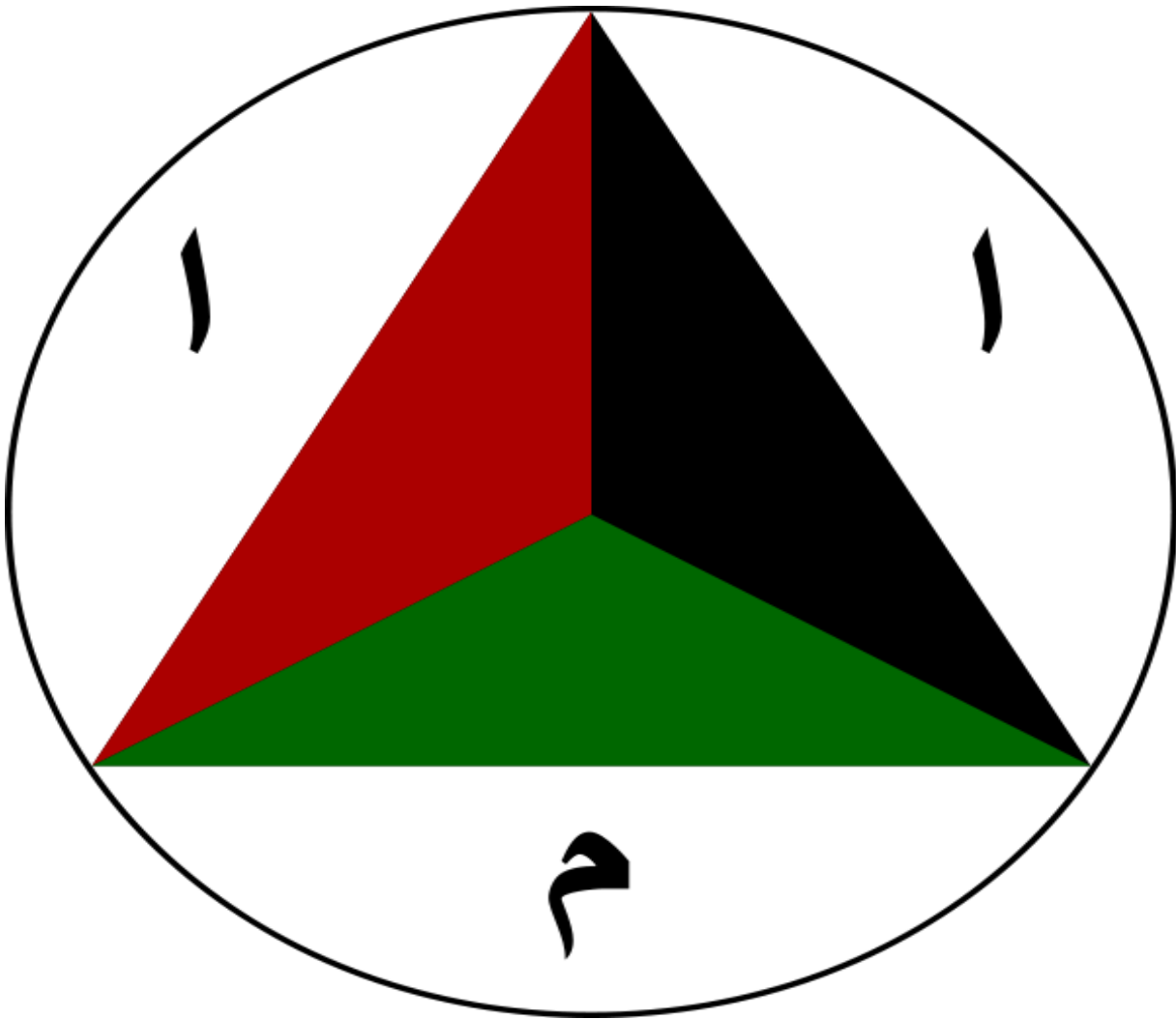
Chapter one is the 'Introduction' which will give a brief overview of the need for a strong military to secure the integrity and sovereignty of the nation with the detailed historical background of the Afghan Armed forces and the transformations and evolving nature it has gone through. Chapter two is titled 'Structure of the Afghan National Army' which deals with the making of an all new Afghan

National Army and the structure in which it has been built to bring the decade long civil war to a conclusive end. In the process it makes a relative comparison of ANA with other armies. Chapter three which is titled 'Afghan Government's policies and programmes for modernising the Army' will highlight in detail the policies and programmes the Afghan government has initiated in order to transform and modernise the skills of the armed forces through training and recruitment besides focusing on the various aspects of making it a modern day army with the latest technology weapons, heavy machineries and helicopters to encourage the force's capability level. Chapter Four titled 'External assistance to modernise the Afghan National Army' will precisely examine the evolving role of Afghanistan's foreign policy with respect to the matters of defence and security in order to build its military mechanisms for stabilising the security apparatus in the country with an approach of allying with more countries especially with the regional powers such as India, Pakistan and China. In the end, Chapter Five contains the 'Conclusion' which will be the concluding chapter where an overall analysis of the reframing and functioning of the Afghan National Army will be discussed keeping in mind all the permutations and combinations.



MAP OF AFGHANISTAN

Source: www.mapsofworld.com



EMBLEM OF AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY

Source: www.gettyimages.co.uk

CHAPTER: 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction:

In these times of evolving modern Democracies the governments keep in sight fundamental factors in the process of nation building and this thought process also leads to the building of the armed forces who are the most critical pillars of defence and security of the territorial sovereignty of a nation. Armed forces have over the period of time played a major role in the crisis situations such as wars, civil disorder and natural disasters. This study explores the unique case of Afghanistan where its army not only cast a shadow on the process of nation building but in itself is a microcosm of problems prevalent in this turmoil ridden part of the world. Stuck as a field of power play between the various global powers, Afghanistan's problem is not only internal but has a substantial external side to it as well.

With the invasion of Soviet Union in Afghanistan in December 1979, Afghanistan slipped into a never ending political turmoil. Since then this state has been fighting decades long civil war which does not seem to end anytime soon if the prevailing security scenario is anything to be relied upon. The seat of power at Afghan capital Kabul kept changing from time to time but the situation remained more or less the same with the external powers making a patternal shift from Soviet Union to United States in Afghan affairs (Cronin, 2009: 6).

With the dawn of 2016, Afghanistan has switched into its 36th year of civil war with an all new political establishment at the helm of affairs led by Ashraf Ghani, the current president of Afghanistan. Since the establishment of a democratic government in Afghanistan, there have been steady improvements in internal affairs of Afghanistan. Despite all the Taliban activities resurfacing around the country there have been innumerable affirmative factors that have arisen the hopes of peaceful and stable Afghanistan in the present scenario led by the democratically elected government and backed by the all-powerful Western allies. Most importantly, the reformation of a force has brought the Afghan nationals of different ethnicity and identity to fight together as a one entity under the banner of newly restructured

Afghan National Army (ANA) supported by Afghan National Police and Afghan Air Force. Nevertheless, these forces are still in their nascent stage of functioning with numerous flaws occurring in their operational procedures from time to time (Haynes, 2009: 3).

The events leading to the need of reforming the Afghan National Army is directly connected to the invasion of Afghanistan by the United States in the aftermath of the 11th September 2001, attacks on the Twin towers of World Trade Centre in New York City and the U.S Defence Headquarters Pentagon building by the Al Qaeda terrorist by the hijacked commercial planes. The attacks shook the conscience of the Americans and brought a huge shock and unanimous condemnation by the global community. U.S establishment under the then Bush regime swiftly decided to avenge the ghastly attacks and declared to wage an all-out war to dismantle the Taliban regime from Afghanistan and capture the main accused of the attacks, the Al Qaeda chief Osama Bin Laden. Hence came the moment when the mighty U.S Air Force and military along with their NATO counterparts without wasting any time entered the Afghan arena to launch their operation for eliminating the Taliban prominently known as "Operation Enduring Freedom". Simultaneously, Bonn Conference in Germany was hosted by United Nations from 2nd-5th December 2001, where an agreement was signed to form an Interim Government in Afghanistan. It also prepared a roadmap on the making of Constitution of Afghanistan and election of a new government (Younossi and Thruelsen, 2009: 13; ICG 2010: 7).

Thus, it would not be an overstatement to say that Afghanistan witnessed its toughest patch in the contemporary times ever since the attack on the U.S soil and its subsequent invasion that in real sense brought watershed changes in socio, economic and political aspects of Afghanistan. Also, the involvement of the foreign forces in defence and security affairs of Afghanistan played a crucial role not only in the nation building but also in the reformation and restructuring of the Afghan National Army.

1.2 Afghan National Army: The Historical Background

The Afghan army has survived and operated under several leadership that rose to power ruling Afghanistan and moulded its way of functioning as per their desire and needs of the incumbent rulers for centuries. The present day force has gone into remarkable change keeping into considerations of global standards. While the present formation is working under the watch of foreign powers as well as Afghan government, this army traces its history back to the early 18th century (Cronin, 2009: 3; Collins, 2011).

The present day Afghan National Army finds its historical origin from the 18th century period of Hotaki Dynasty which rose to rule Kandahar and subsequently defeated the Persian Empire in 1722 at the battle of Gulnabad. Thereafter, the Afghan Army successfully fought and won many battles under the rule of Durrani Empire of Ahmad Shah Durrani. One of the most prominent battles fought by Durrani Empire was Battle of Panipat of 1761 where Afghan forces defeated the Maratha Empire and went on a winning spree by defeating the Sikh Empire which was backed by British regime in the First Anglo Afghan War which stretched from 1839 to 1842. Later in the same century Afghan forces fought Second Anglo Afghan War against the then British Empire of India from 1878 to 1880, but this time they had to face defeat and had to bow down to the demands of British India of attaining the geopolitical objectives from the Treaty of Gandamak in the year 1879. It was since then that the British establishment, after making Afghanistan its colony, allowed the Afghan's to maintain their hold over internal affairs of the country but made sure to keep the control of foreign affairs in their hand (Jalalzai, 2004: 24).

Afghanistan got independence from the British Empire in 1919, and declared itself as a sovereign state under the leadership of King Amanullah Khan who took over the reins of Afghanistan after the Third Anglo Afghan war leading to subsequent Treaty of Rawalpindi in 1919. King Amanullah Khan started with the process of making improvements in the Afghan army but in reality army never really surfaced as his

major priority and he mostly tried building the foreign relations with the prominent countries. King Amanullah's 10 year regime was ousted in the civil war of 1929 and thus Nadir Shah took over the control of Afghanistan (ICG, 2010: 3).

King Nadir Shah came to power after the Civil war of 1928-1929 and green flagged the process reforming the National Army. Reformation and strengthening the capability remained among his top priorities. The strength of the Army grew drastically under Nadir Shah's leadership. The army went on to reach the strength of 70,000 by 1933 from 11,000 that was under the King Amanullah until the emergence of civil war of 1929. Nadir Shah was consistent in his policies of having a strong national army (Grady and Vaccaro, 2009: 5).

The historical background of Afghan forces of 20th century have been prominently dominated by Soviet Union which remained a major ally of Afghanistan especially in dealing with defence support and equipment ever since 1920 on a regular basis to the successive government's or Ruler that came to power in Afghanistan. Soviet provided technical advice, training and aircraft to Afghan National Forces. By the late 1950's, Soviet Union became the largest defence exporter to Afghanistan overlapping Turkey that had remained Afghanistan's most pertinent and largest defense supplier till the early 1950's. By 1977, Soviet forces trained around 3,700 Afghan security personnel in Soviet Union. The Afghan Army further reformed itself with the help of its Allies after the partition of India which led to escalation of conflicts on the Durand line bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan (ICG, 2010: 4).

It remains a matter of fact that even after Pakistan joined as a U.S ally in the cold war, U.S consistently supported Afghanistan with huge financial support, but Soviet Union remained on the top of the list in providing huge chunk of Military aid to Afghanistan from the period 1950 to 1979. In the process Afghanistan signed an aid agreement with Soviet Union in 1956. By 1965 Afghan Air Force had 100 aircrafts and all of them were supplied to Afghan's by Soviet Union. The aid provided by Soviet Union to Afghanistan reached a mark of \$1.25 billion by 1979. With the impressive aid and support to Afghanistan by Soviet Union the intake of force kept on rapidly increasing

with the strength of security personnel touched the mark of 98,000. In the same period Afghanistan was simultaneously struggling with the issues of internal factions and ethnic clashes that started erupting taking a toll on the vulnerability of the Afghan forces. The issue of ethnic factionalism is still very much prevalent in the Afghan army.

Afghan National Army ever since its inception remains vulnerable because of its inhomogeneity, diversity in culture, their loyalty to their ethnicity and differences in the composition of language. The Afghan armed forces since then itself has been a fragmented force portraying its vulnerability in times of crisis. Factionalism became a regular affair and the Government of Afghanistan gradually diminished its control over the force. In April 1978, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan ousted former Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud Khan in a coup after a split between Khalq and Parcham factions of the party which led to split among the elites of the Afghan Army. Once the Soviet forces intervened into Afghan affairs several of the Sunni Islamist parties which were being consistently supported by Pakistan, United States, Saudi Arabia and China in their motive of waging a Jihad became a tough task to contain for Soviet backed PDPA government of Afghanistan. Not having gained much from this adventure rather having faced embarrassment and the tense situation back home it was only a matter of time for Soviets to pack up from Afghanistan.

As the Soviet Union during its stay in Afghanistan from 1978 onwards, faced a costly military affair in Afghanistan it decided to withdraw its forces completely as the prevailing condition were not conducive for them to continue. The Soviet had realised that it was on the verge of disintegrating into several nations, the Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev brought in the policy of Glasnost and subsequently the return of large number of wounded Soviet soldiers returning from Afghanistan sent a clear indication that the Soviet war in Afghanistan was no more favourable for Soviet Union as it had clearly faced the lack of popularity among the masses of Afghanistan. Thus, its batch of forces returned home finally in the month of December in 1986 and in a phased manner the entire Soviet force left Afghanistan by 1989 (Jalalzai, 2004: 34).

It was during this time when Babrak Karmal was reinstated as the leader of Afghanistan. Soviet Union on its part had started cutting its development assistance cost to Afghanistan and confined its investment entirely on the security issues. Subsequent event was the fall of Najibullah government in 1992 as the Mujahidins took over the control of Kabul, the country went into yet another phase of civil war. Afghan soldiers across the country started deserting their unit and joined the several local armed militias who had started resurging across the country leading to the fall of political machineries up and disintegration of Afghan military. The fall of Najibullah Government and the ensuing civil war in Afghanistan led to the rise of Taliban Movement by 1994. It was an extremist group which was founded and led by Kandahar based Pashtun leader Mohammad Mullah Omar who was alleged to be covertly supported by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to destabilise the power center in Afghanistan and capture the seat of power in Kabul (Collins, 2009 : 51; Jalalzai, 2004).

The rising discontent among the masses and the arbitrary heavy handedness of the warlord's across Afghan land was a major factor in the rising of the Taliban movement (Jalazai, 2005 : 17). He further adds that the Taliban went on to achieve successive military victories against the ruling regime with the help and support of Pakistan. Though even after the constant covert support of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan the Taliban regime in Afghanistan did not get its part of international recognition. In the meantime Taliban had started the process of building its relationship with Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden. This move enraged the superpowers Taliban was subsequently sanctioned in the United Nations Security Council demanding the handover of Osama Bin Laden and later in December 2000, faced another Security Council sanction which called for arms embargo. On the other side, Russia and Iran had started funding and strengthening the Northern Alliance to counter Taliban regime in Afghanistan (Batiston, 2014: 4).

If it was not for the 9/11 attacks Afghanistan might have still been under the Taliban rule and its condition could have only deteriorated since it would have never been

able to become a part of the global community. Thus, the events that took place in September month of 2001, brought a radical change in the entire system of Afghanistan which was imminently required (Oliker, 2011: 13).

1.3 Role of NATO/ International Assistance Security Force in the security operations in Afghanistan:

It was on 25th March 2002, Donald Rumsfeld the Defence Secretary of United States announced that the United States along with its NATO allies will further work in order to create and train the Afghan National Army. He further emphasised on the restructuring of its formation and operating techniques to aid and coordinate the foreign forces in countering the Taliban insurgency. In a common parlance we can testify that the present formation of the restructured Afghan National Army is the product of United States invasion of Afghanistan. Though the entire idea of reforming the Afghan National Army was more to do with United States vested interest for operating in Afghanistan with the help of indigenous forces. It has been their well-planned strategic move to counter the indigenous Taliban insurgency by integrating the anti-Taliban home grown local militias into a national army which would initially provide the U.S forces the ground support in their combat operations. It is since then that the Afghan National Army came into re-existence under an elected government (Gautam, 2013: 14).

Initially, the personnel from the British army took to the job of training the first battalion of this new Afghan National Army but due to several technicalities that surfaced, U.S forces took over the entire responsibility of imparting professional training and skills to the newly recruited Afghan soldiers. Simultaneously the recruitment process accelerated keeping the inclusive representation of the soldiers from all over Afghanistan. Thus, people from all background, ethnicity and region were brought under one umbrella in the process of a building a pan Afghanistan strong national army (Sieff, 2014: 3).

In its vengeful and ambitious aim of eliminating Taliban insurgents and its terrorist allies United States spent huge amount of money in Afghanistan and subsequently in the making of a reformed Afghan National Army. From the year it started its combat operation against the Taliban in 2001 till the year 2010 along with Afghan army, the statistical data provided by the International Crisis Group suggests that United States had spent around \$25.2 billion in reinstating the security establishment of almost defunct Defence and Security Sector in Afghanistan. More than half of this amount went into revamping the Afghan National Army (ICG, 2010: 1-2).

Taking the process of revamping the capabilities of the force, on 6th April 2003, a chalked out strategy was launched commonly known as "Afghan New Beginnings Programme". Its main function was to deal with Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process to provide conflict prevention and peace building a grant under the supervision and guidance of Japan. For the successful implementation of the process Japan had poured in an amount of 3 billion Yen through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to the Transitional Administration of Afghanistan for the purpose of contributing to the implementation of Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme which supports the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process of ex-combatants. Among the many initiatives taken under this programme by the Japanese authorities in alliance with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi visited Afghanistan in May 2002 and proposed an initiative known as "Register for Peace" an initiative under which ex-combatants are demobilised and reintegrated into civil society. Subsequently Japan and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) had jointly assisted the efforts of the Transitional Administration of Afghanistan to dismantle the military factions through DDR. In February 2003 the "Tokyo Conference on Consolidation of Peace in Afghanistan" (the DDR International Conference) was held with the participation of Hamid Karzai, President of the Transitional Administration of Afghanistan (MoFA Japan, 2004). This initiative was to emphasise majorly on all the members of the several former militia groups who were brought into the mainstream civilian life and were given the

opportunities to join and serve in the Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police and other security forces operating under the Government of Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the other NATO forces had divided the training and skill development of the Afghan National Army and its allied forces among themselves (Termentini and Striuli, 2008: 6).

Meanwhile, as the NATO forces took over the command of International Assistance Security Force (ISAF) in 2003 and gradually started to increase the number of troops deployment in and outside Kabul it became much problematic to Taliban forces who were consistently pushed back by the might of the foreign forces. But much to the lack of internal support from the local forces in the initial period, the large part of Afghanistan still remained out of touch of the security forces for a very long time. While in the ensuing period Taliban commanders along with their Mujahidin's realising the prowess and intensity with which the international forces had cracked down, fled to the safe havens in the hilly terrains of Pakistani territory on the Afghan-Pak border and kept on managing their operations from there itself (Raipeha, 2013: 2). The wipe out of the Taliban forces from Afghanistan had become the top priority of United States with the launch of "Operation Enduring Freedom".

Simultaneously, United States in its lead role in Afghanistan made sure that the Afghan-U.S relationship and strategic ties is taken further in strengthening bilateral relations and went on to designate Afghanistan as its major Non-NATO ally. Bolstering its connect for the future course of time with the need and demand of Afghan government, Obama regime in the recent past declared that it would fund the Afghan National Army till 2024 and will support and assist in its policies so as to make it self-sufficient to finance itself independently (Botelho, 2013: 1-2).

1.4 Afghan Government's objectives to reform the Afghan National Army:

With the fallout of Taliban regime, an Agreement in December 2001, was signed in the German City of Bonn known as 'Bonn Conference' for building a cohesive Afghan National Army. In the following year in April 2002, a reform plan for security

was chalked out in Geneva by the International community which decided that United States would lead from the front in assisting to build a restructured Afghan National Army. The process of building a reformed Afghan National Army commenced on 1st December 2001. It was performed by the issue of a decree by the then Afghanistan's Interim President Hamid Karzai. Following the event, structural reformation of Afghan army began, with the major objective of the Afghan government to remain consistent in rapidly increasing the strength of the force, gauging the emanating threat perception posed by the extremist elements. President Karzai in his major objective vis-a-vis Afghan army had initially set a target of 70,000 personnel in its force by the year 2009 and made sure that the recruitments kept taking its shape at a regular interval. Simultaneously, in order to achieve its set objectives in the initial period, the Northern Alliance, the arch-rival of Taliban was dissolved and their troops were brought into regular government forces under the banner of Afghan Interim Administration. Their troops numbering more than 50,000 became the part of Afghan Military Forces. These issues remained pertinent among the major objective of Afghan National Army after its reformation in the year 2002. Meanwhile, in this challenging process of building the robust force it also had to face its part of rough patches wherein a lot of loops and shortcoming of the force emerged (Haynes, 2009: 2; Thruelsen 2009; Vaccaro, 2009; ICG, 2010: 7).

Afghan government policies with respect to its national army in the first decade of 21st century much depended on the way United States formulated it in strengthening the capability level of the force. With the span of time, the Defence Ministry of Afghanistan has been vested with the major administrative functions of the Afghan National Army as well as other security forces. But the unsystematic manner of the ministry's work style has been very disappointing and has come across heavy criticism for its irresponsible role. The allegations of rampant corruption right from the highest level to deep down into the entire system has emerged time and again making matters only worse for the growth of the security establishment. For example, in the early months of 2015, the oversight committee for the Ministry of Defense contracts, under President Ghani's supervision, revealed a serious kickback scheme, in which the ministry paid an excess of \$200 million to fuel contractors. An

investigation into the situation ultimately led to the cancellation of these contracts and the sacking of senior ministry officials (Mir and Wardak, 2015 : 1-2). The issue is not confined within the ministry but has also become a breeding ground for the influential landlords who have encroached deep into the system. The regional landlords of distinct ethnicity are undoubtedly responsible for the ethnic factionalism in the Afghan army and they were visibly backed by some of the top notch army Commanders who owe their loyalty more to their ethnic brethren's than in the security interest of the country. The challenges of rampant corruption and ethnic factionalism within the Defence ministry and national army confronts the Afghan government in pursuing its objectives successfully (Glasse, 2012; GAO, 2012: 8).

While the attrition rate remained too high which gradually started coming down only after several issues such as low pay rates, lack of education, staying away from family for long period of time, physically handicapped for life during operation, poor living conditions raised were taken care off and resolved to satisfaction. With the regular insistence of United States of increasing the strength of the force ever since it started working in the formation of Afghan National Army, the overall strength of the force has touched the 2 lakh mark simultaneously financing this huge force has become a cause of concern for Afghan government (Battiston, 2014: 5; Ates, 2014: 174).

Afghan government has been consistent ever since 2002 in furthering its security agenda. It has tried to rope in as much fund as possible from all quarters. Afghan Government and Afghan National Army in coalition with their western allies have built 69 training and educational institutes for Afghan security forces. More than 55 of these 69 institutes had their successful transition by 2014 and are now capable of operating independently without the support of its international allies. Some of the most premier defence institutes and universities which have been established are Marshal Fahim National Defence University, National Military Academy of Afghanistan, Kabul Military Training Centre. So far these institutions have been partially successful in providing quality education and training to its personnel but they are still lagging in areas such as their capability to identify lessons and their inexperience in training or instructor development (NATO, 2015).

In spite of all the financial support and ground efforts by the foreign powers as well as the Afghan Government to make it a robust army, it is still in a transition phase and struggling hard to overcome its obstacles. Now that U.S led NATO forces have departed after spending almost a decade and a half in combat operations from Afghanistan with its unfinished agenda of eradicating the Taliban menace from its roots. It is time for Afghan National Army to take security rein in its command and lead from front taking over the entire security apparatus of Afghanistan on its shoulders. The increasing proportion of army's success will directly impact and restore the diminishing confidence of the people who are already very apprehensive and fearful with the successive attacks across the country causing innumerable casualties especially after the withdrawal of international forces by the end of 2014 (Walsh, 2015 : 1-3).

Nevertheless, despite all these factors of Afghan National Army in a struggling stage, the present lot of national army in the wide perception of its nationals is one of the most trustworthy institutions and is widely regarded as one of the pillars of the sovereignty and integrity of Afghanistan (Younossi, 2009: 60). Like with the case of military's of most of the nations, the level of trust is only growing for this army with the every passing day. The Afghan National Army has been partially successful in portraying itself as a symbol of unity and has brought in the feeling of patriotism in its citizens further developing the feeling of one common national identity as Afghans. Afghan nationals across generations have started looking up to this force with a great hope and certainty in bringing the much required prosperity, security and stability in the country (Grady, 2009: 60).

1.5 Internal and External challenges in reforming the Afghan National Army:

In the surmounting task of restructuring the Afghan National Army, the government of Afghanistan is worried in dealing with the huge amount of Defence budget and

sustaining the already fragile force. Afghanistan's international allies had cut down their financial support post 2008 financial crisis that had its effect on almost all the donor countries. It was only in 2011 that the United States came up with the idea of determining the further financial support extended to sustain the Afghan National Security Forces. In an initial assessment projected during the Bonn International Conference in December 2011, it was decided that a fund of \$4.1 billion in which U.S will bear the largest percentage among the donors along with Afghanistan would be enough to cater the need of the country. The assumption was made keeping view that the strength of the Afghan National Security forces would be cut down from 3, 50,000 to about 2, 28,000. However, the plan of cutting the strength of the forces confronted the announcement of the withdrawal of the international forces. Thus any move of cutting down the numbers in the forces never met its initial aim. In the post withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan, its international allies have estimated a cost of around \$9 billion for its Security Sector Reforms from 2014 onwards to sustain its expanded national army and their combat operations. The estimates have been designed to address the concerns regarding the current operations of Afghan security forces and the economic assistance provided to them (Giustozzi and Quentin, 2014: 3).

Afghanistan is already struggling with very weak economy and has been so far existing mostly due to the efforts of its international donors. Thus such huge budget solely for its defence sector is not feasible to sustain the entire security forces for a longer period of time, who are more than 3, 52,000 including Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police. In his analysis (Battiston, 2014: 2) writes that the budget constraint is consistently becoming a major concern for the Afghan government and suggests that the issue should be addressed with utmost consideration. The challenges confronting the Afghan government is to retain the strength of the force while making it a force of substance. According to Giustozzi, despite some achievements, the effort to establish the Afghan Army has been very inefficient, and it is far from certain that it would be ready to fight its enemies on its own in the scenario emerging post withdrawal of foreign forces (Battiston, 2014: 4).

The major obstacle of this newly formed Afghan National Army is to overcome the rate of attrition and regular desertions of its personnel from the force which has become a major cause of concern. The rate of attrition in 2011 had gone too high when one out of seven soldiers i.e. between month of January and June 24,000 soldiers had quit the job stating various grounds as a reasons such as low quality of recruits, poor living conditions, low-level salaries, poor leadership and rampant corruption within the ranks and files of the force (Battiston, 2014: 6). Since 2013, as the Afghan Defence ministry suggests that the attrition rate has been relatively on decline compared to the first phase of recruitment wherein attrition rate had touched a mark of 50 percent in 2005 (ICG, 2010 : 19). But since then it has gradually been on decline but far from the satisfaction level. The problem emerged again only in the year 2015 when the Afghan forces had taken over the security reins of the country and had begun with the independent combat operation. In 2015, the Afghan army had to replace about a third of its roughly 170,000 soldiers because of desertions, casualties and low re-enlistment rates, according to figures released by the U.S. military in December 2015 (Amani and Macaskill, 2016 : 1-3). The increase was witnessed in both the Afghan National Army as well as Afghan National Police. The attrition rate in this force accounts for all the losses it has faced that includes the personnel killed-in-action (KIA), physically handicapped for life during operation, lack of basic education, hostile terrain of operation, affecting family lives as well as service retirements among many other factors. Yet the most significant factor which is heavily contributing to the attrition rate is “dropped from rolls” a very sensitive issue emanating when the personnel leaves his unit without the permission from the authorities for more than 30 days. Dropped from rolls accounted for over 80% of attrition in 2012, with 43,887 Afghan National Army personnel dropped from the army rolls between February 2013 and February 2014 (Ates, 2014: 176).

To sustain and improve the efficacy of this army the Afghan government is constantly emphasising on the increasing literacy level of the personnel in the force. Many of the training institutes of the Afghan National Army are pertinently emphasising on increasing the level of literacy among the soldiers of all ranks. The high illiteracy rate

has been the major cause of desertion from the force along with factors like personnel loyalty to their ethnicity and regional identity based on composition of language and culture (Cappacio, 2013 : 4).

The Afghan National Army's inefficiency in warfare tactics, skills and their support of modern day weaponries and armoured guns is very limited making it difficult for the Afghan forces to challenge the extremist combatants effectively. The insufficient logistical support to the 2 lakh strong Afghan National Army remains a matter of concern for the government. However, the situation was much better for Afghan army as they had much smoother access to the warfare equipments as long as the foreign forces operated against the Taliban extremism in the country. The availability and use of highly sophisticated weapons were not among the list of concerns but soon after it became a persisting challenge once they completely withdrew by the end of 2014 (Guistoizzi and Quentin, 2014: 42).

The lack of professionalism and war skills have taken a significant toll on the losses of its personnel ever since the Afghan army started its independent anti-insurgency operations. The initial training and skills imparted by the U.S led forces in bits and parts to the Afghan personnel have been mediocre and very inefficient. The kind of mental and physical display of skill of the Afghan force is way below the international standards in operating in an insurgency hit area. Much to the agony of Afghan forces, the United States led forces have taken away all their GPS system, Night vision goggles as well as their air ambulances among the many other highly sophisticated equipments and weapons that could have been of benefit for the Afghan security forces. These equipments and mechanisms were used and shared by U.S forces when it operated in fighting alongside Afghan army (Hodge, 2012 1-2 ; Ridgewell, 2014 : 2).

Despite all the shortcoming and challenges Afghan army has faced since June 2013, it decided to take on the incoming challenges of Taliban extremism independently and leapt into the insurgency operations all by itself. Much to their satisfaction and delight, the force has so far achieved a good share of success barring the fact that it has also had to pay a heavy price due to their inexperience, but recognising their

potential to combat has certainly boosted their confidence. In the ensuing period Afghan army was tasked to perform the litmus test of safeguarding the Afghan election. The elections were held in a peaceful environment. Afghan army along with the other assisting security forces were lauded for their commendable job in preventing any major terrorist attack during the 2014 Presidential elections. The strict vigilance and thick security cover provided by the Afghan security establishment culminated into a largely peaceful elections in Afghanistan. Yet, even after their several achievements, the withdrawal of United States led forces is bound to reflect Afghan army's deficiencies and weaknesses in the situation of combat operations and containing the Taliban factor (Carroll, 2014 : 1; Crilly, 2014: 4).

1.6 Contemporary Scenario of Afghanistan:

After having fought for over a decade long war without much substantial success in a hostile terrain, it was only a matter of time when Obama administration in 2011 finally declared that its forces would withdraw from war torn Afghanistan completely by the end of 2014. In reaction to the announcement on 23rd June, 2011 the Afghan President Hamid Karzai said "I welcome the decision of the US President today on pulling out some of its troops from Afghanistan and I consider this a right decision for the interest of both countries". The Afghan President while addressing a press conference further said that "The Afghan people's trust in the Afghan army and police is growing every day and preservation of this land is the job of Afghans", (Siddique, 2011: 1-3). The stand taken by Hamid Karzai was clear as he did not favour the holding back of the international forces any more in Afghanistan. The withdrawal announcement of the forces was also welcomed by the Afghan Taliban who called it symbolic but a way ahead. President Hamid Karzai was so reluctant on his decision that he refused to sign the bilateral security arrangement with the United States for holding back of the international forces for further mission (Siddique, 2011: 3).

However, there was a dire need felt for the foreign troops to stay back as the Afghan army was not entirely ready to take on the challenges independently reports. This was

primarily the reason that almost all the candidates who contested for 2014 Presidential elections in the country promised in their election campaign to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement with the United States as soon as they come to power which would allow the some 10,000 U.S led forces to stay beyond 2014 reports (Hodge and Stancati, 2014) for The Wall Street Journal. Much to the contrary of Hamid Karzai's stand, the present President Ashraf Ghani soon after assuming the President's office signed the Bilateral Security Agreement on 30th September 2014. President Ghani has been consistently emphasising on the holding back of the foreign forces until the Afghan National Security Forces are completely capable of handling the security situation in Afghanistan. After intense assessment by Ministry of Defence it was figured out that the Afghan National Army was not yet in the condition to take on the entire security of the country independently and would be needing advice and assistance in their operational procedures (Hodge and Stancati, 2014 : 1-3).

The agreement has provided a much needed relief to the Afghan National Army, however the force has been clearly instructed by the Ghani administration to ready itself to tackle the entire security of the country and prepare itself to face the uncertain future that lies ahead. The government of Afghanistan is formulating its security policies and bracing its forces post departure of NATO forces reports (Bernard, 2012). Although after the agreement on the bilateral security and the NATO's new initiative "Resolute Support Mission- Afghanistan" the Afghan forces have further got time to revamp themselves (Landler, 2011; Bernad, 2012 : 1-2). The NATO's Resolute Support Mission has been discussed in detail in the later part of the study.

Meanwhile, the Afghan government in its primary aim of restoring peace and stability in the country by all means went on to take a leap forward by asking the Taliban's alleged patron Pakistan to bring in the extremist forces active in Afghanistan for peace talks. This move of President Ghani was perceived from the strategic point of view which was in the interest of all the stakeholders in the Afghan peace process, since all the concerned nations have been victims of Taliban extremism. The call by Afghan President for peace talks was reverted back by Pakistan with a positive feedback. Pakistan on its part portraying in a gesture of a friendly neighbour and

agreed to the Afghan President's proposal of peace talks. Thus the initiative of peace negotiation was hosted by Pakistan that took place in Murree town near Islamabad on 7th July 2015, where Pakistan, Afghan Taliban and Afghan government's delegation led by its Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai participated with China and United States making their presence as an observer of the peace talks. While reporting for Dawn (Khan, 2015) quoted an officer on condition of anonymity concerned with the peace talks said "We expect both sides to discuss confidence-building measures, including steps to bring down the level of violence before they move on to discuss the more complex issues to end the conflict in Afghanistan. He added that Kabul seemed ready to listen to and discuss what the Taliban have to say". Pakistan's positive approach towards its war torn neighbour was hailed by all the concerned nations (Harooni and Haider, 2015 : 1-2).

The July peace negotiation ended without much substantial result though it was still perceived by the concerned nations as an imperative move towards reconciliation process as both the hostile sides Afghan Taliban and Afghan government decided to hold talks again after the holy month of Ramadan, in August 2015 with even larger delegation from both sides reports (Johnson and Malik, 2015) for Reuters. But say factionalism in the divided Taliban over talks with the Afghan government or a well-orchestrated strategy of Pakistan or may be Taliban had different plans for Afghan's resulting in the postponement of the peace talks, due to leadership turmoil in Taliban camp after it confirmed the death of its founder Mullah Omar. On 29th July 2015, the Afghan officials quoted as saying by media that Mullah Muhammad Omar, the supreme Taliban leader has died and the claims were further confirmed by the Pakistani authorities. The Pakistani authorities claimed that he died two years back in 2013, but there have been varying news regarding his death. Post the news of Mullah Omar's death the going to be peace talks were postponed and later cancelled after the 7th August, 2015 attacks near an Afghan army base followed by another two explosion killing more than 50 people including civilians and soldiers in Kabul. These attacks led to jeopardising the whole peace process as it infuriated the Afghan government. Analysing the enraged mood of the nation after the attacks this time President Ashraf Ghani minced no words in rebuffing Pakistan in his strong worded

statement addressing a press conference said, “The last few days have shown that suicide bomber training camps and bomb-producing factories which are killing our people are as active as before in Pakistan, We hoped for peace but we are receiving messages of war from Pakistan” reports (Haider, 2015) for Dawn. He further went on to add and said, “In my telephone call with Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, I told Pakistan to see terrorism in Afghanistan the same way it sees terrorism in Pakistan”. This unprecedented stand of Afghan president Ashraf Ghani could be viewed with perspective of the gauging mood among the Afghan nationals towards Pakistan (Osman, 2015: 2; Donati 2015: 3).

Meanwhile the confidence of the Afghan security personnel have been shaken with the intensity of attacks on a regular interval since the beginning of January 2015 causing innumerable losses of civilian and personnel lives. The casualties in the Afghan National Security Forces soared to 28 percent in the year 2015. There have more than 16,000 personnel from Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police who have been killed or wounded in the year 2015 up from 12,500 in 2014. As the foreign forces have almost withdrawn from the security affairs of the country, it has raised genuine concerns regarding the operating ability and sustainability of the already struggling and fragile Afghan National Army. The security situation in Afghanistan have been in facing its worst phase since 2015 as U.S. forces stepped back from conducting combat operations while reducing their troop levels to 9,800 confining themselves for advising and assistance mission. At the same time, Afghan forces faced a resurgent Taliban as well as al-Qaeda and Islamic State militants (Brook, 2016). In a NATO report published in 2015, it suggests that the Afghan establishment and its army is not very comfortable with the fact that the U.S forces have left the country even when the projected task is only half done. It further mentions about the present state of inefficient Afghan army who is constantly confronting the highly boosted and well equipped Pashtun dominated Taliban insurgents in combat operations. These unfolding security situation and huge surge in loss of lives in the country is continuously leading to fear psychosis among the Afghan people. They are apprehensive and fear for their lives in a situation wherein the present political establishment is pulled down by the ever resurging Taliban

militants. It has undoubtedly left Afghanistan establishment into a tangy and fragile situation wherein a lot of issues still remain to be resolved in the context of security establishment (Munoz, 2015: 2; NATO, 2015; Lyall, 2016 : 1-2).

Addressing the concerns and apprehension of the Afghan government, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, initiated a new assistance, advice and training mission called “Resolute Support” from 1st January 2015. This initiative was taken keeping in view of the present security scenario of Afghanistan. In this mission it was very categorically mentioned that there would not be any sort of participation of NATO soldiers in combat operations. It was decided in June 2014, and was later announced by the NATO Defence Minister. The Agreement regarding the mission was signed between Afghan President and NATO representatives of Afghanistan. The Agreement was later ratified by Afghan Parliament in November 2014. Yet after all these precautionary measures supported by Afghanistan’s Western partners, the condition of the Afghan National Army is still not in its best shape to contain the Taliban activities completely in the country (NATO, 2015; Lee, 2015).

The current formation of the Afghan National Army consists of soldiers coming from different ethnicity such as Pashtun, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks as well as other ethnic groups. The ethnic Pashtuns who consists of the majority population of the country as well as in the Afghan army term themselves to be superior to the other tribes, whereas Hazaras are perceived as inferior tribes as the other. Such clash of identity in the force ever since its reformation has been a major factor in the vulnerability of the force. The reasons behind this weak link is the problem arising out of the race of supremacy and clash of identities among the different sections over their ethnicity writes (Porter, 2009: 1). The already prevalent feeling of ethnicity over country is one such threat which makes the Afghan National Army look very feeble and shaky. It is a wide perception among the top Afghan authorities writes (Porter, 2009: 2) that if the situation does not improve further from here, the force might fall like a house of cards in the face of a civil war. The feeling of an integrated nation is still lacking in the soldiers of Afghan National Army, perhaps one of the reasons of high rate of desertion from the forces. This aspect of this force makes it fragile and vulnerable.

The problem has been consistent though with a certain level of improvement it has made with the span of time. Thus, it is yet another issue which needs a deep introspection by the Afghan National Army officials and the Afghan government in his report and analysis feels (Rasmussen, 2014 : 1-2).

Since the very beginning of the year 2015. Afghanistan has faced a pool of blood bath especially after the departure of the foreign forces from the war torn country. The whole country came under several fideen assaults by the Taliban miscreants to prove that they were rapidly gaining the lost ground in Afghanistan. The routine attacks on the security forces, to the several attempts at the Afghan Parliament as well as the indiscriminate attacks on the civilians have already taken a huge toll. Simultaneously, the year 2015 also witnessed a clash of existence among the already divided Taliban and the entrance of the ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and Levant). The latter is yet another terrorist outfit which has in recent years taken the world by storm by its kind of barbarian and brutal acts in West Asian region and is desperately trying to expand its base rapidly in South and Central Asian region. It is being vigilant and is taking all possible measures to sabotage any militant activity on its soil. Here, the role of Afghan army and other security forces becomes even more challenging. Nevertheless, it has substantially proved its mettle along with the help and support of its intelligence agencies who are continuously working to figure out the solution to get rid of this whole terrorist menace. Afghanistan has also asked for foreign help in order to gather the intelligence inputs (Brown, 2015: 4; Wagner, 2015 : 1-2; Shalizi, 2015 : 1-2).

The year has seen the escalation in casualty rate of the Afghan personnel that only kept rising every month despite the fact that Afghanistan along with its regional and international allies went ahead and initiated a peace process with the Afghan Taliban. The casualty figure went as high as 4,921 civilian casualty in the first half of the year 2015. This figure saw an increase of 1 percent in the figure of the last year in the same period. The year 2015 had been a crucial year with the Afghanistan's security perspective as it had performed some of the most audacious operations to restore peace and safety in the country (MoD Afghanistan, 2015; NATO, 2015).

1.8 India's contribution in restructuring of the Afghan National Army:

India has for long been portraying itself as a soft power and has cautiously been approaching its Afghan policy. The government of India on its part will have to be a more proactive player in the nation building of Afghanistan to further embolden the relations that share a centuries old linkages. India will have to steadily reconstruct its Afghan policy and be a part of the Afghan peace process. Though the shift in political establishment in Afghanistan has visibly affected relations between the two nations due to Afghanistan's increasing coziness with Pakistan, Afghanistan has been consistently emphasising on the relations with Pakistan as more of a strategic one. Though even after that it has been observed that the Ghani regime has not been as cordial as his predecessor in strengthening ties with India. The reasons are not too difficult to figure out, as Afghanistan does not want to have hostile relations with Pakistan with whom the country shares a porous border of 2,430 kilometres and have over the decades blamed for sponsoring insurgency to destabilise the Afghanistan (Price, 2015: 5; Pattnaik, 2014: 2-3).

The present Afghan government under President Ashraf Ghani cancelled the wish list that Karzai regime had demanded for weapons from India. The reasoning given behind the cancellations was the India's lack lustre approach to Afghanistan's demands and needs to strengthen its military power. Although President Ghani making his first move vis-a-vis India in the recent past desired to acquire four military helicopters from India to further strengthen their armed forces. Much to the desire of the Afghan government, Indian government this time did not disappoint its historical neighbor and agreed to further take the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in 2011 to a new level. The former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had signed this agreement with the Afghan President Hamid Karzai to assist the Afghan National Security Forces in providing them training and equipping the force with the latest

technologies. It has also stepped ahead in building its military ties and has been training several Afghan Army officers in its prestigious military institutes like India Military Academy, Dehradun, Officers Training Academy, Chennai, and National Defense Academy Khadakwasla in Pune. Recently, 60 members of the special Afghan commandos began their military exercise with 10 Para Brigade of the Indian Army in Thar desert in December 2013 (Miglani, 2013: 1-3; Raiphea, 2013: 2; Swami, 2015: 3-4).

Indian government has been keenly observing the events unfolding in Afghanistan. India on its part has shown utter cautiousness in delivering defence equipments to Afghanistan fearing that in case of another civil war type situation the sophisticated weapons and defence equipments might fall into Taliban's hand. As a stable and peaceful Afghanistan is also necessary in the security interest of India as well. India will have to admit the fact that instability and resurgence of Taliban extremism in Afghanistan will not be confined to Afghan state itself. Its repercussions will be visible well beyond Afghan territory which will come to haunt not just India and Pakistan but the entire region and the Indian subcontinent as well. Regional powers like India, China and Pakistan who are all struggling with the terror menace for a long time now will have to play a comprehensive and responsible role in the nation building of Afghanistan in order to maintain the regional stability and security which is in the interest of all the stakeholders (Jha, 2009: 338; Swami, 2013: 3).

Thus, it would be wise on the part of Afghanistan government's reconstruction of its foreign policy to call for an extensive participation of the three regional powers India, China and Pakistan as any further instability in security problems will affect these regional powers too.

The much touted peace and stability measures still remains to be cherished off in this war torn nation and adding to its woes is the harsh fact that United States has almost withdrawn its maximum activities and has sharply lessen the fund support it used to provide. This situation has left the Afghanistan and its security forces to depend upon on what it received and achieved from NATO forces in last 14 years. Thus after

having experimented with all possible measures the only way forward that seems to bring the sustainable security and stability lies solely in a determined, strong confident and united Afghan National Army. It needs to be fully supported by the other security forces as well as they are backed by Afghanistan's undeterred political will of the Afghan Government.

Afghanistan is a country which has been of vital significance for its geographical position over the centuries connecting and sharing the historical and cultural linkages with the major regions such as South Asia, West Asia, Central Asia as well as China. The strategic location of this country has made its impactful relevance and has played an imperative role during the Anglo-Russian rivalry during Great Game period. It has been and still holds the potential of becoming a hub for trade and business and re-establishing the age old ties among these regions. Thus, a secure, stable and peaceful Afghanistan is not just the need of the Afghanistan itself but in the national interest of all the international and regional stakeholders affected by its instability and rise of any unrest in this war torn country.

After the introductory chapter that has provided with the brief overview of the need for a strong military to secure the integrity and sovereignty of the nation with the detailed historical background of Afghan Armed forces and the transformations and evolving transition over the period of time, the second chapter in detail deals with the restructuring of an all new army that has been built to bring the decade long war to an conclusive end. The chapter addresses the intricacies involved in the structure of the Afghan army.

CHAPTER: 2

**STRUCTURE OF THE AFGHAN
NATIONAL ARMY**

2.1 Introduction:

The success ratio and the prowess of any army of a nation across the world much depends on the kind of structural basis it has constructed in the process of building the militaries and hence in the process of nation making at large. The ever changing scenarios has led the militaries world over going into radical transformations in their pattern and methods of functioning. The structural transition of the nations's militaries for the further development and betterment will have to be a never ending process as that would be a tool that would keep the militaries in transitional mode as the time moves on.

From the ancient times classic military unit groupings from ancient phalanx or hoplite formations to modern armoured cavalry regiments differ greatly in their specialisation and size, and from country to country as the time moved on writes (Moran, 2006 : 2). This has been a traditional hallmark of the growing militaries world over. The case not just applies to Afghanistan but to the military's of the entire world. As with the case of the Afghanistan's National Army that presently lies in the centre of crucial revival and transformation for last more than a decade and a half ever since its reconstitution after United States invasion in 2001, is still not in the best of its shape to counter a well-orchestrated powerful attacks in the world's one of the most terror affected state (Battiston, 2014: 3).

The organisational restructuring of the Afghan army is certainly not something that came into being in the 21st century, the method have gone into constant transformation and progressed right from the period of Durrani empire following up to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan that made unaccountable amendments as per their convenience and requirement in the formal structure of the force over the period of time (Haynes, 2009: 4-5).

As a matter of established fact that at a point of time Afghan army was one of the most organised and combative military power in the 19th century which had its glorious share of victories having defeated the British Empire as well as the Maratha Empire(Cronin, 2010: 3-4). Afghanistan over the centuries have only grown to be a

better nation-state as it has come a long way after having faced one of the toughest of its period especially after the invasion of Soviet Union and establishment of a Communist regime in Afghanistan in 1979. In this very span of time Afghanistan as a nation was severely affected as it became a centre of 'Great game rivalry' among the powerful blocks in vicious attempt of imposing their hegemony on its sovereignty from time to time (Raiphea, 2013: 2; Cronin, 2010 : 6).

Yet, it would be even tougher to classify the period of the toughest turmoil in Afghanistan for it has been a centre of Great Game rivalry for centuries now. This country for superpowers has been an adventure ground for it has been a witness to so many wars fought that it is now prominently known as the graveyard of 'Invading Armies'. The British tried their supremacy in Afghanistan but was eventually defeated in Anglo-Afghan war in 1842, in the 19th century, the Soviet Union tried it in 20th century and met with even devastating fate after their decade stay from 1978 to 1989, and now it was the dawn of 21st century United States had a substantial reason to play its kind of war game in Afghanistan, obviously with some partial success but ultimately leaving the country with uncertain future (Piper, 2012 : 1-2; Thakur, 2012: 89-90).

The ground situation in Afghanistan has been making gradual move towards the goal of achieving peace, stability, absolute normalcy or even normalcy in literal sense. Nevertheless, the Afghan nationals are much more satisfied in the present form of establishment ruling the Afghanistan. The emerging love and feeling of patriotism for their country and their rising level of confidence towards the Afghan National Army among the Afghan nationals is a positive way forward for the nation to achieve its goals (Younossi and Thruelsen, 2009: 60).

The emerging feeling of nationalism in the Afghan nationals and the level of extremism displayed by the Taliban forces is undoubtedly making things much convenient and easier for the Afghan government and the Afghan security forces to differentiate between a civilian and insurgent, which is giving the security forces the

leverage of cracking down heavily on the elements involved in the insurgency activities in the country (DoD U.S, 2013).

Simultaneously, Afghanistan's international allies in the initial phase made sure that there was no monetary restraint while assisting in building of the Afghan army. They flowed in millions and billions to make it a comprehensive army that is aptly able to secure the entire Afghan territory. The Afghan National Army with the support and assistance of their allies have over the period of more than a decade covered and expanded its military control throughout the entire country (Battiston, 2014: 3; Quentin and Guistozzi, 2014: 21).

2.2 Rebuilding of the Afghan National Army:

The restructuring of the Afghan National Army began in 2001 when United States along with its coalition partner NATO began drawing the plans for Afghanistan for the post-Taliban scenario. The idea to establish the full-fledged Afghan army was first articulate in the Bonn Agreement which took place in December 2001. With the establishment of an Interim government at the helm of affairs in the war torn Afghanistan, the role and reconstitution of Afghan military was given a go ahead as a major priority in its process of reformation in the meeting of the NATO allies in Geneva in April 2002. It is since 2002, the United States has spent billions of dollars and has continuously deployed its advisors and trainers to reconstitute the modern day Afghan National Army. Since 2002, the Afghan army and its international allies have encountered a range of problems familiar from the past, including problems of recruitment and troop retention, desertion, high rate of attrition, of force loyalty, cohesion and discipline, and of training and education. So intractable have these problems proved to be that the Government of Afghanistan and its international advisers have seemed increasingly inclined to resort to a solution also familiar from the past, an ever larger reliance on local, non-state actors, tribal groups, militias and warlords, a reliance which is inevitably at the expense of the state-building project

itself, although this is rarely acknowledged writes (ICG, 2010: 7; Younossi and Thruelsen, 2009: 12-13).

With the commencement of the reformation of the Afghan National Army in 2002, the Interim government of Afghanistan which was initially established for administering the country under Hamid Karzai focused on the priority basis on increasing the strength of the Afghan army which was targeted to reach the mark of 70,000 soldiers by the year 2010. Hamid Karzai since its commencement insisted on making it a robust army which would include the Infantry units, army air corps and the revamped Ministry of Defence which would be handed over with primary role of looking after the entire functioning of the Afghan National Army (MoD Afghanistan, 2005). As the focus of successive governments under Hamid Karzai deeply emphasised on the increasing of the strength of the force, it was by the year 2013, the current strength of the Afghan National Army had reached the mark of 1, 83,000 according to (NATO, 2013).

United States with the help of its allied nations kept its focus in revamping of the Afghan security establishment in order to dislodge the Taliban extremism from its roots. Therefore, U.S had tactfully divided the workload among its coalition partners in strengthening the security apparatus of Afghanistan. The distribution of role to be played among the coalition partners in strengthening the respective fields was of much contribution in the restoration of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police which together constituted (ANSF). The role played by the major NATO partners apart from combat operations in Afghanistan has been discussed in length in the fourth chapter wherein the assistance from the external players in the building of the entire security apparatus of Afghanistan have been detailed (ICG, 2010 : 2).

United States in its war against the Taliban forces was continuously achieving its ground success in its Operation Enduring Freedom in the urban areas which it strategically aimed to target initially. The plan was strategised in such a way that the

commanders of the U.S led NATO forces were very much clear about not stretching the war beyond a point of time after having learnt their harder lessons of its past experiences in Vietnam war and its long stretch of occupation in Bosnia writes (Labott, 2010 : 1-2). However, United States in its strategic motive of launching its full-fledged operations made sure to rebuild the almost defunct Afghan army as that would help the United States forces in their combat operation on ground against the Taliban insurgents. However, several observers felt and pointed that U.S emphasis on reforming the national army was mostly to do with its mission “Operation Enduring Freedom” to achieve its goals with the help of local force which for all reasons would be very helpful in ground operations. The astute motive of United States of reforming a strong and sustainable Afghan army more for its own benefits gradually started showing its disinterest as the United States forces gained enough ground to combat Taliban elements from their bastion and thus started focusing more on its mission they had come for called ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ (ICG, 2010: 6-7).

2.3 The evolving chain of command of the force:

It is a proven fact that no chain of command have ever been absolutely perfect, thus in the case of the Afghan National Army also transitional evolvement and its substantial sustenance must not be judged in abstract terms in this very short span of time. No country across the globe have been able to substantially construct its security apparatus given the time Afghanistan is under nation building processes, thus with the context of the Afghan army and its building capabilities, it would require substantial time and effort to test the efficiency of the force.

In an interview given by International security Assistance Force (ISAF) officer who has been part of the trainers, training the Afghan soldiers said “ We bang on at the ANA about unity and command etc., but our own C2 (Command and Control) is hideously complicated and competitive”(Guistoizzi, 2014: 38). The eminent concern of the trainer officers have been to see the effectiveness of the Afghan National Army personnel in the situation of challenges and threats, while also keenly introspecting

their attitude and discipline on task zone in order to tackle the situation as being a unified and confident force (Vaccaro, 2009 : 30).

In its report Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit explains how the command and control of the force has been more centralised and accountable since 2001 than it has ever been in the past. As compared to earlier times in the Afghan army the corps commander had the power of replacing the ranks of Colonel's, now the system has been so effectively placed that it cannot remove even the Non Commissioned Officers (NCO). The headquarters of the respective battalions now have to take the permission from the superior authorities which certainly was not the case earlier. The duo scholars while delving in today's scenario mentions that all sorts of order for any operation is passed through the top most leadership in a delegated and procedural manner. The implementation of concept of centralisation has irrefutably shown its positive effects but also the implementation of this idea has shown its share of flaws and lacuna. Nevertheless, there has been instances when it showed its effects for better way forward. While Reporting for Khama Press (Ghanizada, 2013: 1-2) describes that the summer 2013 operation in Azra district of Logar province was carried out without much support of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) but eminently under the assistance and coordination of Ministry of Defence and other security agencies. It marked a successful moment with the effective coordination of the indigenous forces in the operations. This was termed significant and hailed overwhelmingly as only 2 years back in 2011 most of the responsibility of the planning and advising was carried out by the advisers of the foreign forces (MoD Afghanistan, 2013: NATO, 2013; Guistozzi and Quentin, 2014: 37-38).

Though these positive developments have given some sense of confidence and portrayed some real positive effects on the ground but in the existing context it seemed to be coming a bit late on its part, as the United States made no changes in its departure schedule after having announced the withdrawal of its forces completely by the end of 2014. The crucial and testing time for the Afghan National Army is shaping up with every passing day since January 2015 in its own way and it is from here that this army will have to show the confidence in itself for its further betterment.

2.4 Strength, Ranks and files of the Afghan National Army:

In the process of restructuring the Afghan National Army, all possible sort of idea, design and strategy for its sustainable growth and improvement needed to be carved out in the most appropriate manner. Thus, the issue needed to be addressed with utmost importance. Though, even after taking all precautionary methods several lacunae and shortcomings kept on emerging from time to time and the problems related to its overall restructuring is still very much prevalent and the trend seems to exist for longer if the present situation on ground is taken as worthy account. The Afghan National Army with the assistance from its Ministry of Defence and NATO partners is being further built with the realistic approach by emphasising on modernising its methods of operations and the equipments used by it (MoD Afghanistan, 2010; NATO, 2012).

It is since the very beginning of the rebuilding of the force, the governments at the helm of affairs have been consistently focusing on increasing the strength of the force in a phased manner. The main motive behind this idea is to have as many soldiers as possible to the extent where there is no dearth of the personnel deployed in combat operations against the resurging Taliban insurgency. The rising apprehensions of the successive governments and their NATO partners about the questionable effectiveness of the force was among the main reason on focusing on the strength of the number of personnel in the forces (Grady and Sollinger, 2009: 12). The move was also viewed as a pragmatic approach and moreover a necessity, as the national security and defence of the nation had to be entirely handed over to the Afghan National Army sooner or later.

The regular increment in the number of personnel in the force has not been an easy task at all as it has posed many a challenges which are still in the process of addressing (ICG, 2010: 10). The Afghan National Army for the record is called as an all-volunteer force. As per the latest data of (MoD Afghanistan, 2015) suggests that the Afghan army has crossed its end strength of the force over the 2 lakh mark which obviously was the set target made during the Karzai regime and is being moulded as a

positive factor in the security of the country. Earlier, the projected strength for the Afghan National Army by the month of October 2012, was set at 1, 95,000 strong force which would also make this army the world's 22nd largest army. Earlier, by March 2012 the strength of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) had touched the mark of 3, 37,516 which included Afghan National Army, Afghan National police and Afghan Air Force. Afghan National Army alone has touched the strength of 1,83,000). The trio that handles the entire defence and security of the country are doubtlessly the main pillars of the security of the nation (global security, 2012: 1-2; NATO, 2013).

In June 2011, the Government of Afghanistan had consented the approval of increasing the strength of the security forces to 3,52,000 after having set the deadline of end October 2012, the revelation was done in the report published by (DoD U.S, 2013). Among all these process of the strengthening of the security sector of Afghanistan, the larger concern is that it would also need a huge budget for sustaining the Afghan security sector which again is not an easy road ahead.

Meanwhile, in the same period in June 2012, the high ranking ministers from the Afghan government met the United States Defence Secretary Leon Panetta and apprised him of their concerns regarding the Afghan National Army and its allied security forces. They addressed their concern regarding the reduction in the personnel and insisted on significant cut in the strength of the force to around 2, 30,000 security personnel as they placed the genuine case of budgetary constraints in clear manner in dealing with such an enlarged personnel of the force especially once the NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan would conclude in 2014 (Global security, 2012 : 1-2). Nevertheless, after several round of meetings and negotiations among concerned NATO officials, Afghan government officials and Afghan army officials, it was decided to scale down the strength of the force to 2,28,500 by the year 2017 with a condition of reviewing the ground situation allowing it to do so. The projected idea or plan was proposed with some foresight on the heels of assuring oneself of defending and securing the nation with the altered strength of the force. Although any hurry regarding this sensitive issue could have lambasted the process of strengthening the

Afghan army, thus no such action has been implemented and doesn't seem to be happening any time soon, even after more than year that the U.S led forces have departed from war zone Afghanistan (U.S DoD, 2012; NATO, 2013).

After having assessed the ground limitations of the Afghan government and its security forces post withdrawal of the international forces, the Obama regime extended its Afghan policy by funding the Afghan government and especially in modernising and equipping the effectiveness of the Afghan National Army till 2024 (Battiston, 2014: 4). Even in that scenario financial crunch of Afghanistan looms large especially with respect to the already fragile security apparatus of the country.

In the initial phase after the 2001 Bonn agreement, it was established to have an army of 50,000 and Afghan National Police would consist of 62,000 personnel but in the ensuing period when the Bonn 2 agreement of December 2002 was worked out, the Afghan army target was expanded to reach the strength of 70,000 as the apprehensions were far reaching as the initial target of the strength of the force would have been far from the sufficient requirement to provide the security at the countrywide level. Thus, the process and method of increment in the security forces were more or less on the same pattern and as per the rising demand of the security personnel were felt but only after having assessed the threat perception from time to time to the security of the nation (Vaccaro and Grady, 2009: 16).

The year 2010 was significant from the Afghan army's perspective as it vowed to take further its strength of the force wherein it had made a remarkable growth in the force's strength from 97,000 soldiers to a huge rise making it 1,38,164 soldiers. Simultaneously, the Afghan police also kept up its race with the Afghan army. By the year 2011, this force had grew to a huge mark of 1, 71,600 security personnel deployed in the service to serve and secure the nation. Yet after having assessed through many statistics available there is no clear data available on the exact strength of the force, the rightest so far has been provided by the data available with (NATO mission in Afghanistan's) website. The affirmative action on Afghanistan with the support of its international allies have certainly brought watershed changes in the

Afghan security apparatus which would only help in the growth of stable and peaceful Afghanistan. After having traced the history of the Afghan army under several leadership over the centuries, it is perhaps the largest ever Afghan army in the history of Afghanistan (NATO, 2013; Battiston, 2014: 4-5).

2.5 Rank profiling of the force:

Such a huge contingent of the force at every level right from the Chief of the General Staff to the ordinary rank soldier has been divided and appointed into several ranks and positions. The present form of structure of Afghan army is very much like the other armies of the world dividing their ranks and files in hierarchal manner. Most of the personnel and officer ranks in the present force have been the well experienced soldiers in some form as most of them were Mujahideen's who fought against the Soviet Union backed People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) regime from 1979 in Afghanistan until it was finally dislodged and the Soviet's forces were compelled to leave the country ultimately in 1979 (Cronin, 2011: 3). In the aftermath of the Soviet's departure, the formation of Taliban came up in the early 90's which was predominantly a Pashtun led force and ultimately leading to formation of rival militias (Younossi and Thruelsen, 2009: 1).

Similarly on the lines of its Indian counterpart, the President of Afghanistan is the Commander in Chief of the Afghan National Army and presides over its functioning through the Ministry of Defence whose minister is nominated by the President and the final approval is made by the National Assembly (Parliament of Afghanistan) (MoD, Afghanistan 2015). The present day prominent leaders and officials of the Afghan army had earlier fought against the Soviet forces as Mujahideen's, resulting into which many were apprehended and incarcerated as well as many others had to flee the country and sought exile somewhere or the other. The finest example of the present Chief of General Staff Sher Mohammed Karimi who was imprisoned after the Saur Revolution of 1978 in Afghanistan, it is said that he was arrested for having studied in West and pursued a thought process inclined to western thinking. Sher Mohammad

Karimi later exiled to Pakistan and came back only after the U.S intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 (Brown, 2010: 2).

The first Defence Minister of Afghanistan, post-Taliban era was Mohammad Fahim, a former commander of Northern Alliance an erstwhile militia of Tajik ethnics who vehemently fought the Soviet forces all through their stay in Afghanistan and the militia later fought against the Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Mohammad Fahim was conferred with the honorary title of Marshal by the Afghan President Hamid Karzai by a decree in December 2004. After the regime of Marshal Fahim as Defence Minister it was now Abdul Rahim Wardak an ethnic Pashtun who was again one of the tallest leaders leading from front as the leader of the Mujahideen's in their resistance movement against the Soviet forces (Afghan Biographies, 2015). He was the man under whom all the major radical transformations came into being in the Afghan security apparatus. He has been the longest serving and most effective Defence Minister of Afghanistan so far. The highest ranking post of the Defense Ministry of Afghanistan has been presided over by the former Mujahideen's and commanders of the former militias that operated during Soviet and Taliban era (Jalazai, 2005: 34; Brown, 2010: 2).

Bismillah Khan was yet another prominent figure in the list of former commanders of the erstwhile Northern Alliance who fought firstly against the Soviet backed PDPA rule and later resisted all throughout the Taliban rule in Afghanistan under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Massoud. Bismillah Khan has been the man who despite not sharing cordial relations with the Defence Minister has been the leading mentor at the forefront of helm of affairs of the Afghan army. He has many feathers in his cap as also the longest serving Chief of Army Staff of Afghanistan (Afghan Biographies, 2015). Later, after relieving himself from the military duty he went on to become the Interior Minister in 2010 to 2012 when he was assigned the job of Defence Minister of Afghanistan in the Hamid Karzai's second regime as President. Bismillah Khan presided over the chair of Defence Ministry up to 2015 when he was finally succeeded by the acting Defence Minister Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, though Stanekzai is still the acting Defence Minister despite the fact that President Ashraf

Ghani nominated him but the National Assembly in its voting rejected the approval of Masoom Stanekzai as the Defence Minister of the country. Notably, there are many such high ranking senior officials of the Afghan army who have had their share of experience and skilled training as a soldier well before the reformation of the Afghan National Army started in 2001. The decades of experience and their honed skills of combat operations of these men in the present day Afghan army has only contributed in the development and the growth of the force that took to rebuilding from the scratch (Trafimov, 2010: 1-2; Mashal, 2015: 1-2).

The Afghan National Army's top most officer in the service is known as Marshal in the most communicative language of the force which also means the Chief of the army. The ranks and positions of the officers and personnel of the Afghan National Army has been structured more or less in the same concept as of the other military's of the world. The rank of commissioned officers starts from the Junior Second Lieutenant and the highest obviously is the Chief of Army whereas in non-commissioned personnel of the force the rank is allotted starting from Private to the senior most non-commissioned personnel is Sergeant First Class (MoD Afghanistan, 2015).

These soldiers and officers are appointed to their respective designations and posts after they have completed their military training from their respective training academy and schools that were built over the period of last one and a half decade with the assistance and support of the International allies of Afghanistan (MoD Afghanistan, 2012). As Afghanistan moves towards self-dependency and development, post the withdrawal of foreign forces, the present lot of personnel of Afghan army are being provided with the best possible methods of skill development. Many of the senior most officers of the present Afghan army have been trained and skilled in the Soviet Union, Europe, United States and India. The present Chief of Army Staff General Sher Mohammad Karimi took his military training from India, United States and United Kingdom but never went to erstwhile Soviet Union for the military training unlike his other counterparts in the force. So far the hierarchal order established to maintain the discipline and regulation in the existing force has been

above satisfactory level. The success and expectation from this army can be gauged by the fact that whenever a positive news emerges from the Afghan army, it is received with much fervour and excitement by their fellow countrymen who have been vying for a peaceful Afghanistan for long (Afghan Biographies, 2015; Cordesman, 2013 : 7).

2.6 Corps and Commands of the Afghan National Army:

The strategic way forward for a country like Afghanistan to secure the nation from external and internal threat was to firstly make access of Afghan security forces to every corner of the country. Thus the realisation of the strategically important corps and commands was felt to provide the security and to attend effectively the urgent security threat without losing much time to the entire territory of Afghanistan. The formation of Afghan army corps have been done in phases throughout the decade with the help of U.S led foreign forces who assisted and recognised the areas for establishing these corps (DoD U.S, 2013; ICG, 2010: 8).

The Afghan National Army's base and formal structure considerably consists of six corps strategically spread covering the entire territory of Afghanistan. In the existing scenario, the ANA is mainly distributed into six main corps along with Special Operation forces and 111th Capital Division which is mainly formed and strategically deployed in and around Kabul to safeguard the capital city. The six corps of the Afghan army wherein each one of them have been assigned to protect and secure one major portion of the country (MoD Afghanistan, 2015). Each of these corps consists of three to four subordinate brigades depending on the threat perception in the area, and over to this each of these subordinate brigades consists of at-least four infantry battalions who are their basic combat units. All these infantry battalions are assigned with the responsibility of securing a specific area from all sorts of emerging internal and external threats. In the initial period of reformation of this army and the subsequent buildup of these corps, there were just one or two brigades attached to first four of these corps (ISW, 2009). The maximum number of Afghan army personnel

were deployed with the 201st corps which was in the initial period was assigned the most significant job of securing the capital city of Kabul. Although with the need and demand of the situation in the upcoming period the additional brigades were build up with the other corps also (Radin, 2009: 1-3). The very significant part of the Afghan National Army, the establishment of these corps were initiated on September 1, 2004 after the commanders and staff were appointed for these corps keeping in view the strategic need of these units to secure the country from any further menace of Taliban extremism (MoD Afghanistan, 2010). These were designed to carve out a security roadmap for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan.

Every corp of the Afghan force has its own headquarters with their area of operation specified and thus these six corps (initially five) are spread all over the country performing their tasks in the most effective possible manner. These are located in the following manner: 201st Corps known as Selab is stationed in Kabul, 203rd Corps known as Tandar is stationed in Gardez, 205th Corps known as Atal is stationed in Kandahar, 207th Corps known as Zafar is stationed in Herat, 209th Corps known as Shaheen is stationed in Mazar-i-Sharif and lastly and the latest of these corps is the 215th Corps known as Maiwand which is stationed in Lashkar Gah (MoD Afghanistan, 2013; DoD U.S, 2013; ISW, 2009: 3).

The strategic importance and the structure of these corps of the Afghan army for a secure Afghanistan are discussed in the following sequence:

201st Selab (flood) Corps which also consists of the maximum number of Afghan Army personnel among all the corps is stationed in Kabul and the 1st brigade of it is assigned with the duty of securing the Presidential Palace in Kabul city. The 3rd and the 4th brigade of this force is stationed at Pol-e-Chakri in a mechanized formation with the battle tanks. This corp is assigned the duty of securing the eastern part of Afghanistan which includes Kabul, Kapisa, Laghman, Konar and Logar. An important factor of this corps is the 3rd brigade of this corps is the only one operating without any assistance or aid provided by the coalition forces in its operations. The

3rd brigade has been operating all by itself and has also achieved many successful feats in its combat operations. (MoD Afghanistan, 2014; Global-security, 2015: 1-3)

203rd Tandar (Thunder) Corps that is stationed in Gardez as a regional command was formed on September 23, 2004. This corp presently consists of 3 brigades spread in Khost, Paktika and Ghazni areas. This corp in its combative mission in 'Operation Mountain Fury' after challenging situations successfully neutralised the enemies with the help of the D30 artillery support from its fourth battalion of second brigade. The casualty occurred by the artillery was said to be the highest ever casualty caused by the artillery attack in the history of Afghan National Army. This corp is also supported by the Gardez regional support squadron of the Afghan National Army Air Corps (ANAAC) (MoD Afghanistan, 2014; Global-security, 2015).

205th Atal (Hero) Corps stationed in Kandahar is primarily assigned with the responsibility of securing the provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul. The 205th corp also consists of four brigades with number of infantry battalions spread all around in its specified area of operation. The corp is also supported by the Kandahar based unit of Afghan Air Force and is also provided with the airlift capability which plays a pertinent role when the personnel of the corps are out in performing their combat tasks (MoD Afghanistan, 2014; Global-security, 2015).

207th Zafar (Victory) Corps is headquartered in Herat province of western Afghanistan with the two subordinate brigades located at Herat and Farah. The third brigade was later built in Chesma-e-Dozakh in the Badghis province. It is also supported by the Afghan National Army Air Corps Herat regional support squadron which is widely equipped with eight helicopters as well as two medical transport and two attack aircrafts in its possession (MoD Afghanistan, 2014; Global-security, 2015).

209th Shaheen (Falcon) Corps is stationed in Mazar-e-Sharif a capital city of Balkh province in the northern part of Afghanistan. The 209th corp consists of 3 brigades, the first brigade is at Meymanah the second brigade is at Kunduz and the third brigade of this corps is in Mazar-e-Sharif. This corp also remains strategically important due to

Mazar-e-Sharif's close proximity to Central Asian nations like Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Much like the other corps this corp too gets immense support from the Afghan National Army Air Corps for its combat operations (MoD Afghanistan, 2014; Global-security, 2015).

215th Maiwand (Battle) corps is stationed in Lashkar Gah the capital city of Helmand province located in the southern part of Afghanistan also considered as the region most prone to Taliban attacks in the country. This corp has been the sixth and the latest of the corp added to further embolden the security affairs strengthen the security of the designated area and the country at large. In its further observation on Afghan army corps (Global security, 2015) finds that this corp has been performing well below the expectation and have been a big disappointment for the people living in this region, this corp in the present form is considered as the weakest of all the existing corps of the Afghan National Army. The 215th corp has had a strength of almost 18,000 security personnel but hasn't displayed enough valour in curtailing the activities of the extremist forces, thus has not received very positive feedback from the Afghan nationals in comparison to its other counterparts. This corp is very significant from the strategic point of view as the Helmand province where it is based has been since the very beginning the frontline in the fight against the Taliban forces. After having assessed the emanating security threat Ministry of Defence decided to have an army corp for this particular region of the country. Thus, after extensively examining and several deliberations that followed this corp was finally took its shape in April 2010 with the charge of leadership handed over to General Syed Mallok. This corp consisted of three brigades as its subordinate for its combat operations (MoD, Afghanistan, 2014; Global-security, 2015).

Till the year 2010, there were just five corps along with Capital Division securing the Afghan capital Kabul supported by the Air corps of the Afghan National Army. The sixth corp was added with the presently existing corps after it was approved for its formation in December 2009 by the Afghan government. In the year 2008, it was decided that the assigned responsibility of the 201st corps will be divided with a

Capital Division which would be handed over the responsibility of securing the capital city of Kabul. The 201st corps were asked to make its move and focus on securing the border areas from (MoD Afghanistan, 2012). Undoubtedly, the citizens of Afghanistan have shown great deal of confidence in the 111th capital division which has earned immense respect among its nationals, whereas the lowest level of confidence by the Afghan public is shown towards the 215th corps which is dealing with the most fragile area of Afghanistan which is also popularly known as the hotbed of the Taliban insurgency. There has been an urgent need felt in the security apparatus to look into the functioning of these corps from top to bottom level with considerable priority as the situation on ground further deteriorates and the personnel operating in these corps are constantly struggling to combat the resurging Taliban forces. More and more support of all types is required to these corps at all levels to boost up the confidence of the security personnel of these strategically significant corps. (LaFranchi, 2013: 2-3; Global-security, 2015: 1-3; Radin, 2010: 1-2).

2.7 Ethnic structure of the Afghan National Army:

Afghanistan has been a country which has centuries old tradition of diversity in language, culture, composition and most importantly the ethnicity factor which has created whole sum of problems for the 21st century Afghanistan (Jalalzai, 2005: 13).

Under the supervision of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) an initiative was launched as Afghanistan's New Beginning Programme (ANBP) in April 2003, with the primary goal of reintegrating the several militias operating in Afghanistan to bring them together on one common platform with the main of disarming almost 1, 00,000 lakh personnel. The Ministry of Defence took the task of identifying the units of the Afghan Military Forces to be disarmed, meanwhile the reformation would be taking place simultaneously. The units of Afghan Military Forces were made responsible for providing the lists of men who were to be evaluated by the Regional Verification Committee (RVC) of the Government of Afghanistan. All the personnel verified by the committee were supposed to surrender their arms to

Mobile Disarmament Unit (MDU). The Mobile Disarmament Unit was tasked to collect, store and transport the surrendered weapons to Kabul. The report in its findings says that the aim was to galvanise and encourage them to serve and secure the national identity and integrity in a form of soldiers. Under the objectives of the programme, they were rehabilitated and trained to become a regular soldiers in Afghanistan army. The soldiers received a voucher for their career counselling and were offered the choice of coming back into main stream civil society and live the life of their choice if they were reluctant to join the armed forces (MoFA Japan, 2004; ICG, 2010: 6; ICG, 2003: 6-7).

The programme was a major step in bringing back a huge number of people in normal civilian life further strengthening the process of state making. This was also important since this move was seen as having a lasting effect on the Afghan citizens after the decades of armed conflict that read among several militias during Taliban rule. The initiative was well within the accordance of all the concerned stakeholders right from the Government of Afghanistan to the Afghan National Army as well as all the International players role involved in the Afghanistan's peace building process said (Struili and Termentini, 2008: 2-4).

By the month of October in 2003 the programme commenced with the various major projects which finally shaped into a national programme by the month of May in 2004. The programme's first round of success was partially achieved in July 2005, more than 63,000 soldiers and officer ranks finally turned up to voluntarily disarm themselves (NATO, 2008). The security sector reform that has been one of the major task of reformation process comprises of the formation of revived Afghan National Army with the re-establishment of the judicial system to keep a check on any irregularities in the ANA and restructuring and modernising the Afghan National Police. To foster the growth of the country in all fields the success of the reforms will have to become a reality which is where the government of Afghanistan will have to create a positive environment which in turn will help the already fragile nation to come out of the shadow of instability in the country (NATO, 2008).

The Afghan National Army at present consists of 43 percent of Pashtuns or Pathans, the personnel from Tajik ethnic are 32 percent and are already a decisive factor in the decision making of the Afghan army. They say that the Hazara personnel are minuscule in number with almost comprising of 12 percent of the strength of the force, and then are the soldiers of Uzbek ethnicity who form 10 percent of the Afghan army strength with the other ethnic groups making their symbolic presence in ranks and files of the Afghan National Army. The comprehensive report prepared by the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit claims that these men coming from different parts of Afghanistan with diverse ethnicity, identity and language are trained and skilled to instill the idea of working together as one unit to safeguard the security interest of the nation. Though the ethnic clashes within the force and overtly backed by some of the top notch officials have very often emerged publicly. Nevertheless, this target has been the biggest bone of contention in the top to bottom administration of the Afghan Army. As with the span of time, the developing camaraderie among the personnel coming from different identity and ethnicity in the Afghan army has shown encouraging testimony to take further the sustainable growth of the force. After all the possible measures and steps taken for eradicating the feeling of different ethnic and tribe there is still a lot of lacunae very evidently prevalent in the force (Guistozzi and Ali, 2016: 4-5; Guistozzi and Quentin, 2014: 22).

A threat perception that's making a round is that in case of yet another civil war type situation and the collapse of the democratically elected government by the anti-government forces would inevitably lead to the disintegration and then collapse of Afghan National Army which would be a disaster for an unstable Afghanistan says (Winter, 2015: 5) in his policy paper. The ranging apprehensions and observations based on historical background of the Afghan army reveals that the personnel of the force may switch their allegiance to their ethnic brethren's and leaders deserting their units and fellow soldiers, although in the present context this theory is yet to be ascertained. Nevertheless, the positive news is that with the span of time the Afghan National Army is only getting determined and self-independent in their work style which has been encouraging and further leading to win the confidence of the people of Afghanistan that the country will not fall into Taliban hands again. The much

touted issue of Afghan personnel participating in the combat operations against their people of own ethnicity has been successfully tackled wherein soldiers have shown their strong determination of eradicating Taliban extremists irrespective of their ethnicity or place. The force has displayed its prowess efficiently but is still in a need of more support from its international allies (Winter, 2015: 6).

The top notch leadership of the Afghan army has deeply compromised with its growth and enlargement ever since the very reformation of the force. The issue popped up from the very beginning with the appointment of the Defence Minister Mohammad Qasim Fahim. Fahim hailed from the Tajik background and was a prominent commander of the Northern Alliance and led played a leading role in the Northern Alliance capture of the Afghan capital Kabul alongside the U.S led NATO forces after dislodging the Taliban government (Brown, 2010: 1-2).

In her study on Defence appointments in the Afghan National Army (Brown, 2010: 2-3) details with the high level of nepotism and how the Defence Minister Fahim who was also popularly called as Marshal Fahim, along with his close associates from the Northern Alliance distributed the key position of the force to the people who maintained their all-weather loyalty to him and filled the top leading commanders of the Afghan National Army by the personnel from the Tajik ethnics. Marshall Fahim's strategy of inducting as many men as possible in the ranks and files of the Afghan National Army had been almost successful. The situation took a turn much to his agony when the allegations of rampant corruption and nepotism started highlighting on a regular basis and, thus it was only a matter of time when Marshal Fahim was removed as the Defence Minister and stripped off with his military positions by the President Hamid Karzai in 2004. Yet, much to the relief of close and dear ones of Fahim, his appointee General Bismillah Khan remained the leader of the Afghan army as ANA Chief of staff.

General Bismillah Khan was a well-regarded officer with years of experience and skill who rose to this level after having played his major stint as a Mujahideen commander against the Soviet backed Communist government in Afghanistan. The

General shared good rapport among the MP's and ministers in the Karzai Government. She adds that Bismillah Khan never shared good relations with the Abdul Rahim Wardak, a Pashtun leader who went on to become the Defence Minister after succeeding Mohammad Qasim Fahim in December 2004. The silent rivalry between the two powerful leaders often made the officers and leaders to take sides, by Tajiks faction of the force overtly supporting Khan's ideas whereas Pashtuns section have been seen siding with their ethnic leader Abdul Rahim Wardak. It is not just the Afghan army but the Tajiks had gradually maintained their firm grip in the administration of the Ministry of Defence as well(Brown, 2010: 1).

The hierarchal supremacy of Tajiks in the force can be gauged by the fact that 90 among the first 100 Generals of the Afghan army appointed came from the Panjshir Valley. This valley is predominantly a hold of Tajik ethnics, reigniting the regional and ethnic factionalism in the Afghan National Army as well as the other armed security forces (Porter, 2009). The Afghan army had been divided into four major factions led by their ethnic leaders. Pashtuns back Abdulk Rahim Wardak, Tajiks back their General Bismillah Khan, Uzbeks have been backing their officer Lieutenant General Hamayoun Fauzi and Hazaras allied with Lieutenant General Baz Mohammad Jawhari(ICG, 2010: 10 ; Brown, 2010: 1).

During their respective tenure Abdul Rahim Wardak and Bismillah Khan, they were hell bent on pursuing their personal interest and agenda by committing such vilified acts which was ultimately pushing the Afghan security apparatus into shambles. The evident internal rivalry and factionalism which was no secret to the observers was in a much fragile and worse situation than it was during the era of Communist regime in Afghanistan (ICG, 2010: 10).

The recurring clash of personality and command over the forces has significantly hindered the growth and development of the force as it also undermined the discipline and loyalty of the personnel in the ranks and files of the force. The level of friction between the two leaders had weakened the chain of command of the already vulnerable Afghan army. Several voices from within and most of all from the

international forces emerged for the removal of General Bismillah Khan from the post. The constant insistence of the impactful section's voice of concern expressing the threat to the unity of the force gradually became loud and clear for the exit of Bismillah Khan (Brown, 2010: 2 Guistoizzi, 2014 : 10-11).

The patternal shift over the years in the ethnic composition of the personnel of the Afghan National Army have been massive. In the year 2009, the Tajiks had surpassed the strength of the force which was predominantly in the control of Pashtuns soldiers says report of (ICG, 2010: 19-20). These two ethnics have been the powerful rivals for decades now. The Tajik ethnics are second largest in terms of population of Afghanistan after the Pashtuns who form the majority of population of Afghanistan and have mostly ruled the country over the past 250-300 years whereas the Tajiks who constitute around 27 percent of the Afghan population have over the period decades become a force to reckon with (Ates, 2010: 182). The rise of Taliban is said to be the main reason of growing rivalry among the two ethnic factions. The Northern Alliance a Tajik dominated powerful militia primarily from the northern part Afghanistan and backed by Russia, Iran, Tajikistan and Turkey kept on fighting and resisted the Pashtun led Taliban administration in Afghanistan. As it remains a matter of fact that Tajiks have always had an impression of Pashtuns to be allied or at least sympathise with the Taliban forces ever since the birth of Taliban movement in Afghanistan. This is no secret among the power elites of Afghanistan that ever since the reformation of the Afghan National army in 2002, the leadership of the force has primarily been controlled by the Tajiks. The majority of officer corps are in the hands of Tajik officers although the soldiers composition in the other ranks and files of the force is ethnically balanced among the several ethnicities of Afghanistan (Quentin and Guistoizzi, 2014: 31).

India going with its reputation of a soft power kept a close watch over Afghanistan as the events unfolded after the Soviets had withdrawn and cautiously backed the Tajik led Northern Alliance in their fight against the Taliban regime which was backed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. These two nations recognised the Taliban rule in Afghanistan even though the regime was not recognised globally (ICG, 2005: 5).

In its report for Inter Press Service (Porter, 2009) having deeply studied the Afghan army structure says that in 2003, a guideline was issued by the then U.S General in Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry who headed the office of military cooperation in Afghanistan to ensure that the composition of the force is ethnically balanced. The general who later went on to become the United States Ambassador to Afghanistan from 2009 to 2011 called for Afghan army troops composition as following ratio comprising 38 percent of the personnel will be from Pashtun tribe, 25 percent would be Tajiks and 19 and 8 percent Hazaras and Uzbeks respectively. He further says that it is since then the United states officials following the tradition have released the figure of Afghan troops as per their ethnic composition on the guidelines prepare by General Karl Eikenberry (Sieff,2014: 3). In a 2008 report of Rand Corporation, it cited a figure of around 40 percent of the Afghan troops to be Pashtuns and less than 30 percent are of Tajik ethnic in the force. Among the many reasons and rationales provided for the Tajik dominance in the Afghan National Army, one of the major reasons is that the recruitment in the Pashtun dominated areas were creating major hurdles on the recruiting process mostly due to the Taliban effect over the Pashtun community by the mid 2007 (Younossi and Thruelsen, 2014: 29).

The state of affairs had become such that even in the Pashtun province of Zabul the percentage of Pashtun soldiers in the Afghan National Army had reduced drastically in comparison to Tajik soldiers, adding to its advantageous position the Tajik leadership of the Afghan army had appointed Brigade commander of the province of a Tajik tribe (Porter, 2009). The United States officials citing from a report prepared by Army Times correspondent Sean D. Naylor said that the situation had worsened to that extent by mentioning about the situation on the ground wherein one among many of the Kandaks (Battalions) there were only 5 percent of the Pashtun men from the force. The report which was prepared by the correspondent of the Army Times was later published in one of the Armed forces journal in month of July in 2009. In 2008, a United Nations official citing from the Antonio Guistozi's report said that almost 70 percent of the Kandaks (battalions) are primarily commanded by the Tajik commanders.

The NATO commanders operating in Afghanistan have often cautioned the Afghan authorities of the Tajiks growing unprecedented control on the Afghan Army suggesting that it would only lead to an isolation of the majority Pashtun population and other several tribes of Afghanistan, a matter of concern which might push the country into yet another civil war like situation in the country (NATO, 2011). It would be too naive on part of the Afghan Government to overlook these serious issues pertaining to the security and stability of the nation. Thus, after observing and making a ground analysis came the point of time when the officials apprehension which were genuine and serious in nature were being worked on this factor by the successive elected governments of Afghanistan. Though it was a bit delayed move, but nevertheless a sharp and strategic move it was in the security interest of the country.

Unites States on its part has been consistently insisting on the broader representation of the Afghan Army whereas the fact is that the Tajik commanders have almost hijacked the authoritative representation of the Afghan army. The NATO officials feel that there is a need for an International framework integrating all sections of society into the government machinery and the Afghan security forces. The proposed framework would also include the United Nations as well as the regional players who will have to actively participate in reviving of the defunct Security Sector not just for the stable Afghanistan but also for their own national interest (NATO, 2013).

In the initial period of the restructuring of the Afghan National Army (Porter, 2009) says that the apprehensions regarding the active involvement of the Pashtuns ethnics in the security sector and politics of Afghanistan was very high having known their proximity with the Taliban and Al Qaeda groups. The decades old rivalry and ethnic factionalism among the different ethnics in Afghanistan is nothing new to be observed, but Tajiks found a higher ground in the making of an all new Afghan National Army than the majority Pashtuns while the nation is in the process of its rebuilding. The clash of identity among the Pashtuns and Tajiks are very much prevalent, although the current structure of the Afghan army has come a long way

proving themselves as one unit combating to eradicate the Taliban insurgency (Porter, 2009:2).

The problem of pandemic ethnic factionalism is not a new trend in the organised structure of the armed forces of Afghanistan. The present case of ethnic rivalry has just been an extension of the rivalry that prevailed much before the Afghan army's reformation after 2001. During the period of Soviets invasion and its decade long war in Afghanistan, this issue remained unsolved and caused a major hurdle in the functioning of the Afghan army even after all the training and skill development programmes initiated by Soviet forces (Oliker, 2011: 63).

The exit of General Bismillah Khan from the Defence Ministry in 2015 and succeeded by the acting Defence Minister Mohammed Masoom Stanekzai appointed by the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has been expected to be working more on the development agenda and sustainable growth of the Afghan National Security Forces. Simultaneously, General Sher Mohammad Qarimi the present Army Chief who comes from the majority Pashtun tribe has been hailed over for his impeccable integrity and his acceptability across the ethnic lines and his decades long skilled experience and tactical role for the comprehensive development and growth of the army ever since he took over the reins of Afghan army in 2010 (Brown, 2010: 3).

It's never ending evolving process of transition so far has been a cause of much frustration and has brought the Afghan security apparatus to a stagnancy without much substance. For this dubious condition the blame points directly to lack lustre approach of Afghan policy makers who are tangled in such messy administration that has created a huge dearth of any new strategic framework with respect to the expansionist policies of the Afghan military in the security interest of the nation (Recknagel, 2012: 2-4).

Afghan army in the present times has come over a lot of obstacles to keep itself a relevant force. The daunting challenges faced in the building of its structure has been immense. The emphasis was given to this force as it holds the major responsibility of

securing the Afghan land and its inhabitants from the anti-social elements of Taliban who are recklessly involved into back to back fatal attacks on a regular period causing major casualty of civilians and security personnel. The hopes of a secure and peaceful Afghanistan are very high with regard to this army among its countrymen (Sollinger and Grady, 2009: 54). Although in 2015, in its survey (Asia Foundation, 2015: 1) finds that the people are not very comfortable with the departure of foreign forces and the rise in attacks have again instilled the fear among the common Afghans.

The Afghan government as well as its international allies have dealt with daunting challenges in making the Afghan National Army, a force with maximum participation for people coming from diverse ethnicity and tribe to make it a more balanced and representational force to eliminate the anti-social elements trying to disrupt the peace and harmony in the country. Thus, while preparing the roadmap for the reformation of the Afghan National Army, the balancing and the proportional representation along with the strategically positioning of the force covering the entire territory of the country was among the list of priorities. The guidelines prepared for Afghan National Army by U.S army General Karl Eikenberry to ensure the ethnic balance of the Afghan army that were issued in 2003 have been partially successful but still lot needs to improve in the positive direction (Porter, 2009: 2). Now with the departure of the foreign forces it is the Afghan government and its Ministry of Defence that will have to ensure that the rampant nepotism which remains a major hurdle in its further growth is eradicated from the force to make the structure of the Afghan National Army a more substantial one (Afghanistan Times, 2016: 1-2).

In the continuation of the study and further taking the discourse of the structural reforms in the Afghan army, the next chapter would deal with the Government of Afghanistan's policies and programmes for modernising the Afghan National Army in the existing scenario. The chapter would also focus on government's objectives and preparations post the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

CHAPTER: 3

AFGHAN GOVERNMENT'S

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR

MODERNISING THE AFGHAN

NATIONAL ARMY

3.1 Introduction:

Every developed or developing country on the globe that possess a strong military has taken decades in forming and strengthening them and there after modernising them only for the better since it is also one of the quintessential factor in the nation building mechanism at. No country in the present context can afford to keep themselves away from changing security scenario at the global level which has its direct or indirect effect on one and all. When there is a complete breakdown of diplomatic channels the militaries become the first and the most powerful line of defence and offence of any nation. All those nations that have neglected to strengthen their militaries from its roots have faced very severe repercussions in some or the other form. India had to face defeat at the hands of China when it constantly neglected the need of transforming and strengthening its army in the 1962 war even after several concern arising due to emerging threat perception from the hostile nation, and the end result is no secret to the world. There have been many an instances where the leaders and the governments of the several nations have shown lack lustre approach in strengthening their militaries and thus have landed with defeat, persecution, invasion and so on.

There has been a steady change in the Afghan government's defence and security policy ever since the U.S declared to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan in 2011. Afghanistan government along with all the concerned departments have been working out all possible measure on a priority basis by addressing the issues regarding the future prospects in sustaining and strengthening of the enlarged Afghan National Army. The government of Afghanistan in its process of strengthening the force is leaving no stone unturned in making its national army a robust force.

Afghanistan with all its machineries and resources is finally making a move with sheer optimism for a better future with a positive foresight adapting pragmatic approach which was not the case in earlier times. Afghanistan has decisively got a much needed democratic structure in the political process of the country and its undoubtedly raised the hopes of the common citizens who are now entitled to choose the government and the leader for their country.

There has been constant attempt of reforming the Afghan army ever since the 19th century. Most of the time the pattern followed for the reformation was on the lines of western design which never really could become a success due to the monetary factor as well as the lack of human resources.

The nation building of Afghanistan which significantly includes the army reforms took place within the difficult political, social and economic context in the Pre-Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It was by 1960s that the nation got the taste of success which later culminated into a military coup with the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and establishing the government of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in 1978 (Jalalzai, 2005: 18-19). The Soviet Union's invasion led the United States to get with its evil designs by arming and supporting financially to all those forces and militias who were fighting against the Soviet backed PDPA regime. The propagation of proxy war was part of the United States strategy of confronting the Soviet Union in the cold war era. The consequences of the rivalry among the two superpowers of the world were catastrophic and destructive for Afghanistan, as it jeopardised the process of state building tradition in Afghanistan which almost stretched back to the early period of 19th century and destroyed the social forces on which the process of reformation and modernisation were based upon.

The regular propagation of instability in the Soviet time Afghanistan finally made its way to haunt the United States itself. Their game of adventurism of waging a proxy war against the Soviet Union after a success of brief period ultimately trapped the United States when it was attacked on 11th September 2001 by the same forces it propagated only a decade back in Afghanistan (Cronon, 2010: 7). The United States is till date struggling with the consequences of propagating these forces politically, economically and militarily for their decisions, which finally compelled them to invade Afghanistan in 2001. Army reforms in the case of Afghanistan can be successful within a much extensive context of state-building. Even in today's changing global scenario, the same old temptation of anti-west feeling still remains prevalent in hearts and minds of the Afghans who have lived over these decades of

turmoil writes (Cronin, 2010: 1) in his policy paper on historical background of Afghan army.

3.2 History of modernising the Afghan army:

The initiation of modernising of the Afghan army was firstly done in the early period of nineteenth century by the then Afghan King Amir Dust Muhammad Khan. In his book on Afghan National Army (Jalalzai, 2005: 27) has extensively explained how he took to the initiative of modernising and strengthening of the force in the European design of the military formations by going with their advice and assistance in building a powerful army after he felt the threat perception emanating from his powerful rivals and the rising regional powers. He cites how earlier the Afghan rulers use to ask the tribal chiefs in return for remission of taxes and land grants to provide the men for fighting whenever the need aroused for it. Later, King Amir Dust Muhammad Khan making a shift from his earlier policies of relying on these tribal leaders started with the process of raising his own national army. He was deeply influenced in the manner the surrounding armies were designed with much disciplined formations, use of the modern weapons and the tactical war skills of the army of the East India Company. It was in 1839 that Amir Dust Muhammad's move of strengthening and modernising his army was sabotaged by the British India Empire who saw him as a rising threat with the Russians at his support.

The Britishers lost no time and invaded Afghanistan in 1839 and dethroned Amir Dust Muhammad. After dethroning of Amir Dust Muhammad, the Britishers installed Shah Shuja as the ruler of Afghanistan. It was under the leadership of Shah Shuja the reformation of the military in Afghanistan became the major focus of the Britishers as that would be the inevitable way forward for the establishment of a stable Afghanistan and Pro-British Afghan regime(Cronin, 2010: 3). The Britishers further plan of modernising the army was to firstly dismantle the existing tribal forces and bring them all into a regular force operating under the ruling dispensation an traditional concept that is applied even today says (Cronin, 2010: 3-4).

The British empire had to put unaccountable money for the process, but even after all these efforts put in, the approach didn't quite worked out successfully and led to several clashes that broke out among the rival forces who kept clashing among themselves for their existence. At last, Amir Dust Muhammad managed to form his regular army though with several problems and difficulties but insistently kept working on its formation and operating skills in the European model (Collins, 2011: 15).

The Afghan rulers kept on relying on the Britishers in want of the subsidies to maintain the force. Interestingly, the Afghan leaders fought against British encroachment, but then after severely vexing the British to establish the independence, often ended up taking subsidies from them. The British Empire in return made sure to hold control over the foreign policy of Afghanistan. The subsidies were generally used to strengthen the Afghan army and further the internal power of the central government in Kabul. It was after the British withdrawal in 1880 from Afghanistan, the new ruler Abdur Rahman Khan who ruled from 1880-1901 started the process of military reformation once again and landed up encountering almost the same set of problems such as inadequate monetary support, lack of man power, training and many other factors that had arisen in the process of reforming the Afghan army earlier(Collins, 2011: 17). The first two Anglo-Afghan wars that Afghans with their techniques of fighting gained the reputation of fierce fighters with a taste for sometimes no holds barred battlefield behaviours and atrocities that they cause on their opponents(Collin, 2011: 16).

3.3 Modernisation process in 20th Century:

In his research work on rebuilding of the Afghan army (Chua, 2014 : 35) observes and explains that ever since the independence of Afghanistan in 1919 and its reins took over by the King Amanullah Khan who went on to rule for a decade did not pay much heed to the restructuring and modernizing of the army. The modernizing

process of the Afghan army has gone through several patches and disintegrations over the period of time. He further says that it was in his period that the intervention of the foreign forces became more frequent in the military affairs of Afghanistan. In the book *Afghan National Army* (Jalazai, 2005: 19) adds on to say that the repeated clash of ego among the elites of Afghanistan only led to the worsening of the condition of Afghan army. It is since then itself the internal competitiveness to take control of the administration of Afghanistan and its security has ultimately led to the shaping of the relations with the external players such as United states, Russia and Pakistan to an extent which had led to rivalry and rampant factionalism in the force which gradually proved too costly for the Afghan state to survive.

In its detailed study on Afghan army (International Crisis Group, 2010 : 3) analyses that the Afghan military under the leadership of King Nadir Shah who took over the reign of the country after he ousted King Amanullah Khan in 1929 civil war made some genuine reformation in the force. It has further explained the role of King Nadir Shah who since the very beginning showed interest in building and strengthening the national army unlike his predecessor King Amanullah Khan. Without losing any time Nadir Shah made sure his army strength had reached a mark of 70,000 by the year 1933 which was way above the strength that existed during King Amanullah's regime (ICG, 2010: 3).

In its report on the constitution of Afghan army (ICG, 2010: 3) mentions that the partition of India and creation of Pakistan in 1947 and the subsequent cold war led to the Afghanistan's confrontation on the Durand line with the Pakistan and the conflict arisen between the two only escalated further. The developments led Afghanistan to prioritize the security imperatives for the country that remained a major factor leading to further galvanize and modernizing the Afghan military apparatus by its ruling establishment. It was this very period when Afghanistan's emerging threat Pakistan joined the United States led alliance in the cold war between the two power blocks of the world Soviet Union and United States. India after gaining independence remained neutral to both these blocs whereas Pakistan which became an independent nation at the same time joined the United States led front while Afghanistan turned towards Soviet Union for its need of military aid and assistance during the cold war that

stretched for more than four decades and concluded with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Cronin. 2010: 3-4).

Afghanistan's increasing proximity with Soviet Union had reached a new high with the sign of an 'Aid agreement in 1956' in which Soviet's would provide all sorts of defence and security help to Afghanistan. The aid provide Afghanistan with many key military equipments over the period of time as also a huge rise in the strength of the Afghan army rose to 98,000 security personnel. In addition to these the Soviet as per the agreement trained more than 3000 Afghan soldiers in the Soviet Union (Younnosi, 2008: 25; Collins, 2014: 19).

The Afghan National Army has been through many phases of reformation and modernisation stretching through the period of centuries. Every regime that came to rule this country tried to modernise its national army in its own methods and forms. The current structure of the Afghan army is probably the best possible form of army Afghanistan has ever had with some really high standards of training and skill imparted to its personnel over the period of decade. Currently the successive elected governments of Afghanistan are constantly focusing and working with all possible stakeholders taking them on board for the sustenance and further mushrooming of the army. Thus, the force needs to be kept in a continuous modernisation mode as that would enable it to strengthen itself in the face of deteriorating security situation in the country. The Afghan government will have to pull itself out of the dependency of its international allies and create a thorough road map keeping in view all the factors for further modernisation of this army. Every step forward in making it a more robust force is the urgent need of the hour as in the present situation the Afghan army irrefutably remains the main pillar of peace and security for a stable Afghanistan.

3.4 Afghan Government's challenges:

3.4.1 Policy Framework to overcome the challenges on the economic feasibility of the force:

The challenges arising out of the financial stability of the Afghan security forces are far reaching in nature. We have seen that the major debate and concern regarding the issue of sustainability of the force is mainly on the financial grounds.

A NATO report of 2011 reports that, In December 2011, at the Bonn International Conference, an initial assessment was made for a major cut in the strength of the combined force of Afghan National Army and police from the existing end strength of 3,52,000 to cut down to the revised strength of 2,28,500. The initiative which was yet to be implemented was done in order to make the force financially feasible for the Afghan government as well as the United States and the other foreign donors. The United States after reviewing the financial aspects of the force promised to fund \$4.1 billion in the year 2015 and \$3.8 billion in the year 2016 in its move of further sustaining, reforming and straightening of the Afghan National Army. The financial support to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) from the international allies until the year 2024 were agreed upon in the Chicago International Summit in 2012 (DoD U.S, 2013).

Later, Afghanistan's Ministry of Defence released a report wherein it was decided that the Afghan government would bear the cost of \$500 million in the year 2015, the amount that would be entirely put in covering the security sector of the country and will have to take over the entire financial responsibility of its security forces by the year 2024, as the international donors will stop their financial support to the country. The major relief for Afghanistan government and its security forces is that at present the funding from its international allies are coming in billion dollars and will continue for another good number of years. Thus, it would be the appropriate time to cautiously utilise the huge fund and support coming from its allies and make the best

possible use of the fund which would ultimately help in the process of making a strong national army (Battiston, 2014: 2).

In 2014, during the election time the two major presidential candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani during their campaign had gone on to say that they would sign the much awaited Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the United States if they are elected to power. The agreement that was yet to be signed would deal with the post 2014 scenario in Afghanistan wherein a chunk of U.S forces would stay back after the formal completion of the withdrawal of foreign forces by the end of 2014. The agreement finally saw the light of the day in July 2014, when President Ashraf Ghani after being elected went ahead with his promise and fulfilled it within months of taking over the country's supreme post. Although earlier, many apprehensions were raised among the observers as the deal was yet to be signed. The United States reluctance on staying back the forces after 2014 while declaring regarding the withdrawal of the troops on May 27th 2014 raised many eyebrows on the motive and commitment of United States for the future of Afghan security forces and the NATO's "Resolute Support Mission" an training mission to Afghan personnel launched from 1st January, 2015 by the foreign forces (Raghavan and Karen, 2014: 1-2; Battiston, 2014: 2-3).

Meanwhile, Afghanistan had been struggling with the huge budgetary constraints and was in the dire need of financial help and support. According to a report published in Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) as of March 31st 2014 the United States had earmarked an amount of more than \$58.8 billion to strengthen and support the Afghan National Security Forces out of which it had disbursed \$46.6 billion (Battiston, 2014: 2-3).

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report in its detailed study on the financial challenges to Afghan security forces mentions that with the case of Afghan National Army's and Afghan National Police funding from its own government and agencies domestically, it was stated around \$369 million in the

year 2013 and remained a bit more higher in the year 2014 at around \$386 million. Despite the huge need of financial support to these security forces the Afghan government has been poorly performing when it comes to mobilising its own sources of revenue, raising questions on relying on its credibility which it has committed post 2024 era in sustaining and strengthening the Afghan security forces in an already hostile environment where the Taliban forces who are again trying to make deep inroads are giving tough resistance to the security forces.

In the contemporary scenario, Afghanistan is passing through a major transition period where it is trying to make a shift from the economy that is mostly driven by the support of its international allies for its military to the one where it is more reliant and self-dependent on the growth of the economy from the methods of domestic sources of growth.

In its report NATO suggested that till the year 2014, almost 90 percent of the Afghanistan's revenue came from its international donors, who are now substantially but cautiously reducing their support with every coming day(NATO, 2015). It is also pertinent keeping in mind that their forces have already withdrawn from the still vulnerable and struggling Afghanistan. Although United States has assured the Afghan government of all possible economic and security help and support for a stable and peaceful nation, but simultaneously has conveyed its message quite clearly that any more help and assistance would be beyond their control after the specified time period that is after 2024. According to a report published by the World Bank in 2014 which stated that in 2013 the economic growth of Afghanistan had plunged to an estimated 3.6 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which was at 14.4 percent in the preceding year in 2012. The findings of the report came as a rude shock to Afghanistan for the kind of situation it has been going through with its budget, and more over to maintain an already enlarged security force of more than 3 lakh personnel whose growth cannot be compromised at any cost if Afghanistan has to grow as successful nation-state(Battiston, 2014: 3).

The Afghan National Army is without a doubt considered as the most effective of all the security forces of Afghanistan. In the span of last one and a half decade there has

been considerable amount of money invested in training and mentoring of the ANA, especially after NATO in 2009 had established its NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A).

United States commenced with its gradual reduction in the financial support to Afghanistan since 2011. It announced in 2014 ahead of the final phase of the withdrawal of the international forces that it would substantially reduce its financial support to Afghanistan and would extend \$1.1 billion, half the amount compared to 2013 wherein it spent \$2.1 billion pushing the economically weaker nation into self-searching for financial dependency (Londono and Young, 2014: 2-3). Thus the time came for Afghanistan to realise that it cannot rely on international donors for the growth of its economy for long. It is high time that Afghan government must explore all possible options of domestically generating revenue. Arguably, this remains a tough job but a sustainable solution that will help and support them grow further in the long run. Afghanistan is a country that is abundantly rich in natural resources and has huge mineral deposits which is worth trillions. In 2010, the then Minister of Mines Wahidullah Shahrani had said that the geologist in their survey had discovered the mineral deposits worth \$3 trillion, he further claimed that there is also huge copper deposit in the district of Balkhab in the Sar-e-Pol province (Bakr, 2010: 1-2). Therefore, with these homegrown natural resources available worth booming the economy of the country in these tough times, Afghan government will have to step forward and put in its best possible machineries for accessibility to tap on these natural resources. But for all these measure to be taken the only hindrance which is again the major problem is the unending turmoil and unrest situation in the country in the wake of Taliban forces resorting to all sorts of methods to destabilise the country. The menace of Taliban does not seem to ending until and unless it is dealt with more modified strategy and caution as sooner the better. The maximum utilisation of these resources will only help in the economic growth of the nation which would also ultimately lead to a more self-dependent Afghanistan (Najafizada, 2011: 1-2).

3.4.2 Afghan army's security challenges during the Presidential elections of 2014:

The responsibility graph of the Afghan security forces have expanded more and more throughout the country after the phased withdrawal of NATO forces begun. In his report for Stars and Stripes (Carroll, 2014: 1) reports as to how in an enigmatic display of the growing strength capability and confidence by the security personnel of the Afghan forces, a largely peaceful and successful Presidential elections were held in the year 2014. The peaceful culmination of the Presidential elections were seen as an evidential progress in the standard operational procedures followed by Afghan National Army and its affiliated security forces. Several observers and analysts who have been closely studying the developments in Afghan affairs minced no words in showing their confidence in the growing capabilities of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. The performance of these security forces in the Presidential election run off was undoubtedly a feat achieved that was beyond the expectations of all who were closely watching the evolving election environment in the country. Yet, despite their overwhelming performance in elections, their functioning and readiness to confront the regular challenges and threats posed by the enemy attacks autonomously has been partially dubious so far. The Afghan National Army is still facing face a complex set of challenges that derive from the economic, security, political transitions undergoing in the country.

3.5 Encouraging maximum participation of women in Afghanistan's security forces:

Afghan government in alliance with the United States were keen on working on the issues concerning women's equality and engagement in the nation building mechanism. The partners decided to emphasise on creating a favourable atmosphere for the Afghan women to come forward and actively participate in the national affairs while actively engaging in the process of the decision making bodies. To provide a further boost to the progress, the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan reserved 25

percent of its seats for women candidates in the Afghan National assembly (The Afghan Parliament). It is since then that Afghan government is consistently endeavouring for a gender equality in Afghan society. The Afghan women were made aware and entitled with their rights and liberty. Thereupon the Afghan women have profusely practiced their rights with liberty and equality (Wyatt, 2014: 3; King, 2010: 1-2).

Afghan women are coming forward in huge numbers to join the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police. There were several apprehensions at the ministerial level before inducting women officers into these services but government's consistency with its policies came over these obstacles successfully. In a report in the Los Angeles Times (King, 2010), writes a group of 29 Afghan female Second Lieutenants completed a 20 week officer-candidate program at Kabul Military Training Centre mentored by the U.S troops and graduated in September 2010. It had been considered as a significant step in strengthening of the Afghan forces. Recently, the Defence Ministry of Afghanistan reports have indicated the surge in Afghan women consistently applying to get into the ranks and files of the Afghan National Army. In a report published in The Hindu (AP, 2013: 1) mentions that women special force units were being trained to take part in the night raids as well as for their pertinent role during the upcoming 2014 Presidential elections. The recruitment of women in Afghan special forces began only in 2011 with their number being around little more than 1000 in the entire force till 2013 as per the (MoD, 2013) spokesperson General Mohammad Zahir Azimi. On the 26th December 2013 United States in an unprecedented move and with the emphasis of the Afghan authorities passed the 52nd National Defence Authorisation Act, an Act precisely designed to inculcate maximum women participation in Afghanistan's security forces. An amount of \$25 million was assigned for the successful implementation of the project. With the evolving state of Afghan society going through a transition period, it came as a well thought of inclusive strategy to bring in Afghan women at the forefront. It was also necessary as the huge turnout of Afghan women were expected and their participation undoubtedly emerged as a decisive factor for the race of Presidential election of 2014. Women

accounted for the 38 percent of the total vote casted in the Presidential elections (Owen, 2015: 5-6; Barsa, 2013: 2).

This is yet another issue that has its own set of challenges issue too has its set of challenges. After having all the strategies and plans that have been carved out too engage women participation, the deep rooted patriarchy which has been a dominant factor in the Afghan society been a major obstacle, but with the span of time and transition in the societal norms, obviously there has been a certain shift in the male mindset of Afghanistan towards their women who have been a suppressed class for generations. The dismal condition and participation of women can be gauged by the fact that the number of women in Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army was below 1 percent. According to a NATO report of April 2015, Afghanistan has set its goal to recruit and retain women to fill 10% of the ranks in Afghan security forces over ten years. There are currently 869 women in the Afghan National Army and 2,334 women in the Afghan National Police (NATO, 2015).

The primary aim of having established these armed security forces is to provide and secure the Afghan citizens irrespective of their class or gender from the anti-social elements. This task is not as easy as it may sound but the only way that seem possible is a determined political will with an accountable and robust administrative system. The Afghan women are actively participating in the process of nation building and harbingering the feeling of Afghan unity.

3. 6 Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan:

The process of building effective and viable security sector in accordance with the international standards is among the top priorities for Afghanistan's security reforms. The process of security sector reform is viewed as foundation on which progress in all other facets of the reconstruction effort is much dependent. The concept of security sector reform has been established in the thinks tank operating in the West, but inadequate consideration has been given to reform contexts, none as complex as Afghanistan. The whole idea of security sector reform tends to renounce the traditional security structures and mechanisms. Although, in the context of

Afghanistan the traditional security mechanisms in the form of customary law and militia systems have remained intact, while modern formal structures nurtured through external assistance have struggled to take form and acquire legitimacy. It is this problematic relationship between the informal and the formal or the modern and the traditional that has undercut efforts to transform the Afghan security sector (Sedra, 2007: 152).

A comprehensive approach and focus with pragmatism on the part of the Afghan government on the building of its security forces is the direct road to peace and development. In his study on security sector reforms in Afghanistan (Sedra, 2014) comments that in the existing environment the security sector of Afghanistan needs a thorough reformation for it will have an imperative role to play in the future that lies ahead. His deep study of the subject over the years compels him to say that the Afghan government has time and again lost its focus on further expanding its security sector and its armed forces who are now struggling hard to cope up with the Taliban forces that are consistently gaining ground and have shown up their presence in the national capital Kabul also by attacking it back to back especially in the year 2015 when the U.S forces had completely withdrawn from all its combat operations in Afghanistan (Sedra, 2014).

The security sector reform in Afghanistan was bestowed with single point agenda of training and equipping the personnel of the Afghan security forces for a combat role. The rapid development and enhancement of the security forces of Afghanistan was on top of the priority list of the NATO forces to help and assist the foreign forces in getting geographical knowledge of rural and urban part of the country to launch their operation. The kind of strategy that was implied by the foreign forces in equipping and training of the Afghan forces in its mission seemed more of driven from the cold war style wherein it was done keeping the geo-strategic importance in mind (Dennys, 2012; Baille, 2012).

The United States had put in almost \$62 billion particularly for the purpose of rebuilding the Afghan National Army out of the \$109 billion that it had invested in

the reconstruction process of building the Afghan state. If the expenditure made by United States in other spheres of security is included the amount goes even higher. The security forces were out to take on the hostile enemy autonomously after the phased withdrawal of foreign forces begun. Afghan National Security Forces were full of optimism and kept operating in the hostile environment with full dedication and determination in the beginning of the year 2014. The transition process of taking over the security responsibility of the entire country from NATO forces was also successful, even though the frequency of attacks of Taliban extremists have relatively increased(Sedra, 2014: 1-2;Bhandari, 2012: 1-2).

Under the former president Hamid Karzai's insistence of increasing the strength of the force, the Afghan National Security Forces numbers grew significantly from 2,24,000 security personnel in May 2010 reaching to an almost the strength of 3,45,000 by the month of January in 2014 (Guistozzi, 2014: 7). The manner in which the Afghan army dealt with the situation post the withdrawal of the foreign forces raised the level of confidence of the people in their national security forces.

The Taliban extremists had launched 788 attacks only in the Helmand province which also happens to be one of the most fragile province of the country. The above stated attacks in which many were the fidayeen (suicide bombers) attacks by the Taliban was done in the period of only 3 months in which 230 security personnel from the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police were killed in the province by these attacks. There should be absolutely no doubt that the combative strategy and skills of the personnel of the Afghan National Army have seen significant improvement after the grilling recruitment and intense and skilled training been provided by possibly one of the best of the trainers of the world that NATO forces possess(Shah and Nordland, 2014: 1-3).

The security sector of Afghanistan is still lying at the core of state building process. It will have to serve as the mechanism to fill in the huge gaps between the centre and the periphery and should work towards building a new process with the provision of most basic public welfare and security. The current government of Afghanistan has the

most unique opportunity of thoroughly building and reviving the lost glory and sovereignty of Afghanistan for decades in the hands of global powers and extremist forces. They say that the Afghan governments after 2001 have certainly been able to partially revive the future of the country with the unhindered help and support of its international allies. The government must sustain and take forward the right path that has been already laid for the future of Afghanistan (Mackay and Sedra, 2011: 2-3).

The development and modernisation of the Afghan security sector has been at the core of the Afghan state building project since its emergence in the late 19th century. It was the principal mechanism by which the state sought to project its power into the rural tribal periphery. As a rentier state in which the social contract between state and society was ill defined, the security forces were oriented inward, to pacify and extend control over the rural population. The post-Taliban period ushering into a new era with revamped state building mechanisms, embracing the lessons learnt in the process, should be understood as part of this historical tradition (Sedra, 2007: 172).

3.7 Rebuilding of the Infrastructure, Recruitment, and Training of the Afghan National Army:

3.7.1 Rapid recruitment process:

In its report by International Crisis Group in 2010, suggests that the foremost work that the former Afghan President Hamid Karzai insisted on doing was to expeditiously increase the strength of the force. On 28th January 2010, a conference was held in London where the NATO and Afghan government sat together to decide the future strength of the force and finally came up with the conclusion that the strength of the force would be increased to 2, 40,000 by the year 2014.

The report further says that it has been since then the increase and decrease in the strength of the force has been extensively debated between the Afghan government officials and the NATO officials. International forces along with the Afghan forces

stepped up efforts their efforts to screen children, drug users and potential Taliban infiltrators from recruits for the country's rapidly growing national army and police, said a senior ranked official from the coalition forces to (Rosenberg, 2011) of Wall Street Journal. Deputy Commander Jack D. Kem of the coalition training mission in February, 2011 said, "The measures put in place over the past 15 months range from more intensive biometric tracking of recruits, such as collecting fingerprints and iris scans, to having trusted village elders and mullahs write letters on behalf of prospective soldiers or policemen. Officials from the Ministry of Defence, Afghanistan stated that for all the move of increasing the strength of the Afghan National Army, the larger concern that aroused was of providing the facility of scrutinised recruitment and imparting the high standards of skilled training to the inducted personnel in the force (Rosenberg, 2011).

In a report filed to GAO in 2012 (Shaughnessy, 2012) assess the recruitment process of the personnel in the Afghan army that has constantly remained at a good pace and at times reaching the set goal well before the targeted deadlines. For example, the Bonn Agreement of 2001 initially established the goal of a 50,000 personnel in the Afghan National Army and by the Agreement of Bonn II held in December 2002 expanded the target strength of the Afghan National Army to 70,000 personnel 2010 which reached its objective well within the deadline. The strength of the Afghan National Army had touched the mark of 1, 12,000 by March 2010. The plan was further expand the strength of the force to 1, 34,000 by the end of October 2010 and in January 2010 the Joint Coordination Monitoring Board agreed to request made by the Ministry of Defence to raise the strength of the Afghan National Army to 1, 71,600 by 2011. (ICG, 2010: 16). Although such moves have often been revised after assessing the need for it.

Though the strength of the force has been continuously increasing from time to time the quality of recruits coming have often been below the standard expectations (Shaughnessy, 2012). It is due to the government's policy of increasing the soldiers at any cost is the result that a huge chunk of soldiers are not just illiterate but are also very much into the addition of drugs which is remains a major hindrance in their

personality development as a soldier. While interacting with the International Crisis Group a senior ANA official said, “We are recruiting people who are barely literate and people who are addicted to become sergeants and officers. We have people who are lacking in basic education joining the army. So we have to cope with this in part by lowering our even basic expectations. We’re in a society that has experienced 30 years of conflict and the institutions and culture of this country were destroyed. So we can’t expect much from the people who were raised in this society and have to cope with what we are given” (ICG, 2010: 18).

These are the certain areas where the Afghan government and the Afghan army will have to deal with utter precaution taking all possible precautionary methods as the country moves to a more autonomy and dependency on itself.

3.7.2 Infrastructure building:

The state of infrastructure at the initial stage of restructuring the Afghan army was in a more dilapidated condition than the recruitment procedures. Over the period of time several training school and Defence academy’s that came up across the country to avail its security personnel the best possible training is something that the Government of Afghanistan must be applauded. It is indisputably a positive and a futuristic approach which would pay off through its national security forces in a longer run.

Few years the back, due to lack of enough infrastructure the Kabul Military Training Centre had to carry the burden of training the recruits beyond its limits. The officials at the KMTC claimed that the institute had the capacity of not more than 8,000 recruits to be trained but due to infrastructural constraints it was training more than 14,000 recruits by the mid of January a number way beyond its actual capacity (Guistozi, 2014; 12)

NATO in 2012 published its report where it mentioned that by the year 2012, the Afghan government with the help and assistance of its foreign allies went on to build several premier military training institute to train the newly inducted officers level recruits of Afghan National Security Forces. In 2012, Afghanistan's so far the best premier defence institute Marshal Fahim National Defence University finally took its shape which was established with the help of the NATO forces. The university is spread in 1500 acres of land and is located in Qargha in the west of the capital city Kabul (Noori, 2015).

The defence and strategic affairs website global security provides us with the current status of the premier defence university which is mainly distributed into six branches National Military Academy of Afghanistan, Afghan National Army Officers Academy, Command and Staff College, Senior Officers Academy, Foreign Language Institute and the Military Academy. The National Military Academy of Afghanistan (NMAA) which was earlier established near the Kabul International airport was shifted to the defence university premises in 2012 (MoD, 2012). It is also the largest department of the defence university and certainly the most significant among all the departments. The military academy was built on the lines of West Point Military Academy of United States that remains one of the world's oldest military academies. Ever since military academy became part of the defence university, the cadets at the military academy are also given non-military education such as imparting them with the knowledge of language and culture, law, computer science and management and leadership alongside their high quality of military training.

The Afghan security officials now take a pride in claiming that this defence university is operating in an autonomous manner without any help of the advisors from the foreign forces and the cadets trained here complete their training under the guidance and supervision of the Afghan authorities looking after the entire affairs of the highly valued and reputed defence university. The government of Afghanistan with its allies is making all effort to refurbish the infrastructure development of the force, the additional training schools and train programmes launched on a gradual basis is

irrefutably working in favour of boosting the morale of the cadets and personnel inducted in the national security forces (Gov U.K, 2012; Noori, 2015: 1-2).

Afghanistan's Ministry of Defence which keeps on publishing the overall update of the functioning of the force reported about the successful revival of the defence university which comprises of the National Military Academy of Afghanistan (NMAA), the Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) and the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) academy. These revamped and newly constructed training institutes have further boosted the efficiency level of the training imparted to the Afghan personnel. The emerging reliance and self-dependency to handle the Afghan security affairs has undoubtedly played a major role in the confidence-building of the entire security apparatus (MoD Afghanistan, 2015).

Even if the Afghan National Army secures necessary financial resources, the problem remains that the Ministry of Defence is unable to deploy its resources effectively in the existing situation. The primary obstacle in the process remains the level of rampant corruption. As one NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) source put it: "Therefore the primary threat to the Afghan state is not the Taliban or Pakistan, but its own internal corruption, and unless they can demonstrate a commitment to resolving this, the international community's funding will dry up". The infrastructure development vis-a-vis the Afghan National Army and its security forces will directly have its positive effects on the overall development of the Afghan state itself (Guistozzi and Quentin, 2014: 4).

Afghan National Army has come a long way in its methods, approach and tactics of handling the weapons while displaying their exemplary standards of professional skills in the combat operation against the fully armed insurgent groups. Most U.S. soldiers say the reformed Afghan National Army has become a capable combat force. U.S. Army Captain Craig Halstead in his statement even credited a group of Afghan soldiers for saving the lives of several of his men during an intense firefight against the insurgents reports (Peter, 2011). Writing for Christian Science Monitor on Afghan army logistics, (Peter, 2011) states that ANA'S logistical and infrastructural

facilities have developed to a larger extent with more in demand but to maintain and sustain these developments in the long run is definitely not an easy task as the major challenge now for the Afghan government is to safeguard a huge financial support for this army. The observers closely studying the unfolding state of affairs in Afghanistan says that the Afghan government is gradually moving beyond the status quo and involving its potential international partners to help in restoring the much touted peace and stability in the country. The state of Afghan Army would improve as the country progresses with a rational approach. The ANA personnel of the force are much more confident and determined than the earlier times and it is the right time for the Afghan government to nourish and take further the comprehensive development of the Afghan army from here on (Cheryl, 2014).

3.7.3 Training of the personnel:

During the Soviet stay in Afghanistan, they had taken up the job of training the men from Afghan army. Soviet forces had formed an advisory team to train the Afghan soldiers in Kabul. He goes on to suggest as many of the Afghan soldiers were sent to Soviet Union for attaining the professional and skilled training. In his book on Afghan National Army (Jalalzai, 2005) mentions about Soviets as they had spent a huge amount of money like in today's case in reforming and training the security personnel from the Afghan army. The Soviets had trained their Afghan counterparts on the pattern of their own itself. The result of training and equipping the Afghan forces did not turned out to be successful and with the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan the government and the national army also collapsed within no time (Cronin, 2010: 5-6).

The training of the reformed Afghan National Army post 2002, began under the advanced guidance and supervision of the U.S led NATO forces (NATO, 2011). The primary aim of the foreign forces was to develop the specialized skills and capabilities of the army personnel in a professional manner while focusing on the strengthening of the training institutions, its procedures and its structural basis. In a report released by (NATO, 2013) in June 2013, states that almost 90 percent of the training of the

Afghan soldiers were carried out by themselves in their indigenous as well as official language Pashto and Dari with the assistance and support of the foreign forces. The report of Rand corporation describes about the poor rate of literacy level which internally threatened the core of the force and had become a major cause of concern for the Afghan authorities was addressed by making the literacy training as compulsory for all the security personnel of the force. The report suggest that aftermath of addressing the issue the increasing level of literacy among the soldiers was very much evident in the manner they performed their task.

While reporting extensively on Afghanistan's security for TOLO news (Noori, 2015: 1-2) mentions that earlier the inducted recruits first route to commissioning into the Afghan National Army mostly went through Kabul Military Training Centre and the other four regional training centres that were established to impart the basic training course to the cadets inducted in the Afghan National Army. She goes on to suggest the Kabul military training centre (KMTC) remained among the best premier military training institute for training of the soldiers until the establishment of the Marshal Fahim National Defence University in Kabul. Although both these training centres are located in Kabul itself, the National Defence University has by far become the best and the most elite among the existing military training institutes in Afghanistan.

The major chunk of the high quality training to the Afghan soldiers started after the initiation of NATO Training Mission- Afghanistan (NTM-A) in November 2009 (NATO, 2010). The mission was named as NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan NTM-A/CSTC-A NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan/Combined Security Transition Command in which the NATO partners coordinated to train and assist the personnel of the Afghan National Army and Afghan Air Force. The Afghan National Army Training Command (ANATC) which was established with the purpose of training the recruits has been a prominent player in imparting and implementing all sorts of training and education to the soldiers of the ANA since 2006. ANATC reported directly to the Chief of General Staff of Afghanistan. Most of the training institutions of Afghan army including the Kabul Military Training Centre falls under the supervision and headquarters of Afghan National Army Training Command (DoD Australia, 2013).

In their report to the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit (Guistozzi and Quentin, 2014) mentions the role of NATO in training Afghan soldiers since 2010. The NATO forces in collaboration with the Afghan National Army assisted and mentored the formal training of the recruits through Task Force Phoenix, a joint military formation under the leadership of United States to train and mentor the Afghan security forces established in 2003. It has been since then that each of the ANA headquarter that holds the status of above battalion level had NATO trainers and mentors who acted as the communicators between the Afghan National Army and the International Assistance Security Forces (ISAF). The imparting of formal education and professional skills to the personnel are presently provided in the two of the training centres under ANATC both located in Kabul. Simultaneously National Military Academy of Afghanistan which in 2012 shifted its base in the National Defence University premises gives a four year degree course to its cadets before they are finally graduated and inducted into the force as a Second Lieutenants once they are passed out from this premier military institute. The first batch of cadets of ANA in National Military Academy went into its second academic year in 2006 (MoD U.K, 2008).

The mid-level officers of the national army are trained and mentored in the Command and General Staff College that is located in Kabul. The personnel trained in these training centres are inducted to serve the brigade and Corps staff of the Afghan National Army. In the year 2004, France took the responsibility for the establishment of the General Command and Staff College. Once the National Defence University finally came up these military training institute and colleges were shifted to it (MoD Afghanistan, 2013; Global security, 2011: 2).

The Afghanistan's Ministry of Defence has since the very beginning been keen on training the newly inducted recruits in the Afghan army by their homegrown training experts obviously with the support and monetary assistance from the foreign forces. The training instructor from the Afghan army has been imparting the individual basic training at the Kabul Military Training Centre (KMTC) since its inception. A report published in 2008 by (NATO, 2008), said that most of the high ranking Afghan security personnel of the Afghan National Army were earlier trained in the Kabul

Military Training Centre which is not the case in the present scenario with the induction of other elite training institutes.

As for the advanced level of training and teaching the combat skills to the Afghan soldiers who were enlisted for such high level of courses, it was the United States Armed Forces that took to this job (Blenkin, 2012). Thus, so far the training of the Afghan personnel have received a mixed response from the observers and security experts who have been closely studying the developments in the Afghan National Army (Global security, 2011: 2).

3.7.4 Equipping the force with modern Arms, Ammunitions and Equipments:

In his study on Afghan army during Soviet times (Oliker, 2011: 4) details us that ever since the Soviet period Afghanistan has continuously worked on enhancing its military equipments from time to time. The Aid agreement that was signed between Russia and Afghanistan in 1956 provided with the several types of battle guns, fighter aircrafts and various kinds of battle tanks to the Afghan military (Garrity, 1980: 33). In his detailed work on Afghan National Army (Jalalzai, 2005: 78-79) mentions that previously Afghan army received military aid and assistance from Turkey, United States and Soviet Union but after the aid agreement deal was signed with the Soviets, there was a rapid increase in transfer of military equipments to Afghanistan from Soviet Union. In his study (Oliker, 2011: 4-5) says the transfer of arms, ammunitions and military equipments from Soviet Union to Afghanistan continued until their stay in Afghanistan. The main assault rifle that the personnel of Afghan army preferred was the Soviet made AK 47 assault rifles, and these rifles are still the most preferred assault rifles among the security personnel.

As the Soviet forces completely withdrew from Afghanistan and the subsequent collapse of the PDPA regime, they had left behind the arms and ammunitions that they brought with themselves (Katz, 2016: 1-2). He claims that later these became one

of the significant reasons for the powerful rise of Taliban as most of these sophisticated arms and equipments went into their hands. The scenario post withdrawal of Soviet forces turned from bad to worse as the inevitable rise of Taliban changed the entire political dimension of Afghanistan. Taliban became the post-Soviet alternate to the country displaying its might with the Soviets equipment that were left behind by them. The Afghan National Army after its reformation in the late 2002 has been constantly working on enhancing its combat skills with the latest possible technologically upgraded arms and ammunitions in its combat operations (Carberry, 2012). For long after dismantling the Taliban regime, (Peter, 2011) reporting for Christian Science Monitor writes that the United States worked to firstly reform the defunct Afghan army and then make them capable enough to fight alongside them with the arms and ammunitions that the NATO forces used against their operation in eliminating the Al Qaeda and Taliban insurgents. The U.S led NATO forces have spent billions of dollars in providing all sorts of defence equipments and facilities to the Afghan National Army after 2007. Among the many facilities provided by the NATO forces, it helped in building the several military bases across the country to make strong strategic hold and command. The facilities that included were the several military bases that the NATO forces built across the country for the strategic hold and command of the country for the Afghan National Army (Recknagle, 2012: 1-2).

Though even till today the Afghan security personnel prefer Soviet made AK 47 assault rifles, but since it was U.S that was involved in the reformation of the force, it provided the Afghan security personnel with the M16 assault rifles. Meanwhile, the Afghan government in collaboration with the U.S army had signed an agreement with the Navistar to provide them with over 2,293 MTV trucks to cater the transportation of the personnel, water, petroleum and for ammunition carriage. In the present framework the Afghan National Army is equipped with sufficient arms, ammunitions and equipments ranging from guns, tanks, armoured vehicles to the combat helicopters and aircrafts in its possession (Hodge and Totakhil, 2012: 1-2; Tomkins, 2015: 1-2).

As the foreign forces were planning to wrap up their last leg of withdrawal in 2014, Afghan government sensing the need of involving its major regional partner in its policy of further expanding the scope and prowess of the force prepared and sent a huge wish list of weapons, armors helicopters to the Indian government (Sawant, 2013: 1; Miglani, 2012: 1).

In the next chapter we would deal with the various kinds of external assistance the Afghan National Army has been provided not just by the NATO forces but also the role played by India and Russia in providing the all sorts of logistical support and military equipments for the Afghan National Army that is still in the nascent stage of its existence and has the potential for its further growth with the help of its NATO as well as its regional allies.

3.8 Re-establishing the Legal and Administrative Structure of the Afghan National Army:

3.8.1 Legal structure of the force:

In the making of an Afghan National Army, (ICG, 2010: 10-12) in its expansive study mentions that the legal framework was prepared simultaneously for the smooth administrative purposes of the force. The legal set-up consists of several laws, regulations and the policy guidelines. It stated that the law adopted by the constitutional provision empowers the Afghan National Army to take on the task of countering all sorts of internal and external threat from the insurgent groups and are given a free hand to clampdown on them with all possible might. The actions and the response of the Afghan army in the situation of an emerging threat is in complete legality as per the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) framework (MoD Afghanistan, 2009). In (London Conference, 2006) Afghanistan compact was signed in the January-February 2006, declared that the Afghan government would work and spend hugely on building an ethnically balanced and nationally respectful national

army which is democratically organised, trained, equipped and accountable to take on all the security needs of the country.

Although the supreme commander of the force is the President of the country, it is the Afghanistan's Ministry of Defence that organises and administers the Afghan National Army. The major appointments such as the ministerial and General Staff appointments are done with the approval of the Defence Minister or the President of the country (MoD, Afghanistan).

The decision for the framework has been taken by Ministry Of Defence, Afghanistan wherein it was decided that the framework of the security policy and national security objectives are to be prepared by the Office of the National Security Council. The members of the office of National Security Council includes the official from Presidents office, Department of the Service, Administrative Affairs Office and from the National Security Advisor Office. Even though the ONSC is vested with such powers it is the Ministry of Defence that practices the real powers and ONSC is left with very little influence in the affairs of defence and security policy making (ICG, 2010: 10).

The Afghan Parliament had appropriated three laws regarding the Afghan army's organisational structures, the rules, regulations and the criminal procedures. It states that the three laws adopted are Uniform Code of Military Justice, the Afghanistan military court law and the criminal procedure code for the military courts. These laws are designed in a manner that it primarily focusses on the working of the military justice system and the issues emanating out of the violations in army's code of conduct and decides the level of punishment and penalties for negligence and violations during the duty. The laws were made with well-intended thought process to revive the military justice system but due to conflicting interest leading to interpretation of the law has led to the emergence of several flaws in it (ICG, 2010: 13).

The establishment of the military justice system for keeping check on the army is a progressive move towards formation of a responsible and an accountable army. In his

book (Jalalzai, 2005: 28) writes in detail and discusses how earlier in the pre Taliban period the violators were dealt with the severe corporal punishment, (ICG, 2010 : 14) further says that this punishment remained in practice till the early years of the reformation of the Afghan National Army as well. The ANA's history of maintaining the discipline in the force has been very harsh and this was clearly evident in the Uniform Code of Military Justice that was adopted in 2008, a law that included severe punishments and prohibitions for the violators and serial offenders in the force. Ministry of Defence elaborates that the Uniform Code of Military Justice had punishment for 34 kinds of violations in which at least a minimum period of punishment would range to not less than one year (ICG, 2010: 13).

The role of International Security Assistance Force has been described by (Gualdrama, 2012) and how it has further helped in the growth of the Afghan security forces. Afghanistan's Ministry of Defence in its report on military courts published a report on how the primary military courts set up in each of the regional commands take on the cases for review where the codes are enforced. Simultaneously, the secondary military court of appeals take on the hearings that come up to them. The court that is located in Kabul consists of the five judges bench. Despite having all the mechanism at place there is still needs to function in an objective manner. Therefore, it won't be an exaggeration to say that the military codes are not fairly enforced (ICG, 2010: 14).

The dilapidated military justice system of Afghanistan is very much on the lines of most of the third world countries which would to an extent include India too, wherein there is immense pressure on the concerned authorities to influence the verdict of the case. There has been very little scope of transparency so far but since the nation is in the reconstruction mode, not much emphasis has been put on these areas even till the present days.

3.8.2 Administrative structure of the force:

In its report published in May 2010 (ICG, 2010: 14) mentioned that Afghanistan's military administration at a point of time was in a shabby state where there was no comprehensive structure was in place to address the emerging issues. All the decisions regarding the movement and activity of the entire force was run from the headquarters in the capital city Kabul. Ministry of Defence Afghanistan, in its report stated that the Parliament took the legislation route to remove the inequities in the Afghan army. The move was overwhelmingly lauded as it comprehensively addressed several issues on a positive note (ICG, 2010: 14; MoD, Afghanistan, 2008).

Yet, many a factor regarding the move to refurbish the administrative structure of the force were deliberately not addressed as it would have had direct repercussion on the security forces. The Government of Afghanistan in its report on Afghan National Security Forces stated that the Afghan parliament in the year 2008 brought a legislation that brought transformational changes in administrative structure of the force. The reforms and regulation were even more significant as it countered the rising feeling of apprehension in the Afghan authorities and officials that were emerging to evidentially prove the fragility of the force (MoD Afghanistan, 2015).

However, in the present context, the administrative affairs of the Afghan army has come a long way wherein things have been steadily shaping in much healthier form. After having initiated several reformist approach, the conditions have shown gradual improvement though with a slow pace but only for the better as the administrative structure of the force is made more transparent and accountable.

In accomplishing the set objective for the sustainable growth of the Afghan National Army and the country at large, the Government of Afghanistan has made sure to take on its regional as well as its international allies on board to gain maximum aid and assistance till Afghan government makes itself is fully independent to support its security forces in all spheres. In continuation of the argument, the fourth chapter will elaborate on the external aid and assistance provided to modernise the Afghan

National Army till 2015. The chapter would also comprehensive study on the security agreements signed between Afghanistan and its allies to modernise its army and its other security forces in the future course of time.

CHAPTER: 4
EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE TO
MODERNISE THE AFGHAN
NATIONAL ARMY

4.1 Introduction

The emerging status gap between the third world countries and the first world countries is only widening despite the pretentious move of the developed nations of claiming to uplift the status of the third world nations as most of these nations are struggling mostly due to hegemonic structure created by the developed nations of the world especially the one on the west of the Indian subcontinent. Now with the evolving change in the global politics, the developing nations are taking all possible measures to make themselves self-dependent nations. It is in this very transitional process the third world countries confront the major hurdles wherein the financial limitations and budgetary constraints emerge and thus the focus on dependency heads back to the already prosperous and developed nations for aid and assistance.

The reconstruction of Afghanistan that came in the backdrop of United States waging an all-out war against the Taliban regime ruling the Afghanistan had to undergo a serious circumvention of the contemporary times. It can be argued with substantiating facts and evidences that the transitional evolvement Afghanistan has gone through till date since 2001 in the making of a sustainable Nation-state, the credit significantly goes to the United States and its allies that have over the period of more than one and a half decade worked on the rebuilding of Afghanistan.

In her paper on Afghanistan (Poole, 2014: 3) mentions that the war torn country has been the focus of significant international humanitarian, development and security investments since the United States came to Afghanistan in 2001. In her paper she writes about the country receiving US\$50.7 billion in Official Development Assistance (ODA) between 2002 and 2012, including US\$6.7 billion in humanitarian assistance. However, investments in reconstruction, development and humanitarian assistance have been pale in comparison to the cost of foreign military operations and support to building the security forces in Afghanistan, which are estimated to have cost more than US\$130 billion in 2012 alone.

It was in 2014, Afghanistan rapidly moved towards the end of a transition period, which involved the formal handover of security responsibilities to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the year that remained witness to successful passage of the 2014 presidential elections too writes (Crilly, 2014: 2). It was the Bilateral Security Agreement signed soon after the 2014 Presidential elections that allowed some NATO and US troops to remain, post 2014 that marks the advent of a new chapter in which Afghans will take responsibility for managing internal security and charting their own developmental progress. But the transition is overshadowed by political, economic and security uncertainty. Confidence in the economy has faltered and the fiscal gap in government revenues has widened. Despite billions of dollars of international investments during the past 13 years, Afghanistan faces a daunting array of security and development challenges and will continue to require considerable external assistance for at-least some more time. Meanwhile, the scale and nature of international support available to Afghanistan as it approaches the 'Transformation Decade' remains uncertain.

The three major areas of international spending that have a direct bearing on the daily lives of Afghan people are: humanitarian, development and security spending. It also considers the domestic economic outlook and the choices donors face in recalibrating their partnerships and investments to protect and build on hard-won development and security gains made since 2001 (Poole, 2014: 4).

Afghanistan has had the major focus on achieving the maximum external aid which included almost all sphere to improve the livelihood of the Afghan people but most importantly for revamping the defunct security apparatus of the country ever since the beginning of the 21st century. The huge inflow of the international aid and money has been significantly spent on the humanitarian development and security of the nation. The result being its direct influence on the common lives of Afghan people. After such massive support and effort by the NATO allies on the sideline of their military operation, undoubtedly there has been a certain level of change that is very much visible in the perspective outlook of the Afghan nationals.

The withdrawal of foreign forces by the end of 2014 made the year 2015 as one of the most crucial years for Afghanistan for its self-dependency in every sector was at stake. Earlier, in 2014 there had been a huge sigh of relief and satisfaction among the international allies of Afghanistan after the successful execution of the 2014 Presidential elections under the tight security cover of Afghan National Security Forces. With the successful conclusion of the Presidential election also came the end phase of the withdrawal of the foreign forces by the end of the same year. Although despite having had partial success in the past few years, it sent jitters in to the functionaries of Afghan administration with the arising apprehension regarding the security situation of Afghanistan after the forces had completely withdrawn with the task of stabilising the country not completely achieved, thus confining themselves to a new role under the aegis of 'Resolute Support Mission- Afghanistan' 2015 initiated by NATO.

4.2 U.S military aid to Afghanistan:

The enormous flow of financial support to Afghanistan by the United States is not a new or latest trend that developed only in the 21st century. The United States overtly and later during Soviet time covertly supported Afghanistan monetarily until all the aid and support to Afghanistan was taken over by the Soviet Union that provided all sorts of financial and military support to Afghanistan until it finally withdrew all its military operations from the country by 1989. United States right from the period of King Nadir Shah until the Prime ministership of Sardar Mohammad Daoud Khan extended its aid and assistance with its focus on military based support. In those times United States provided Afghanistan with millions of dollars in the development of the country until it was finally invaded by the Soviet Union in 1978 and run by the Soviet backed PDPA regime (Jalalzai, 2004: 23; ICG, 2008: 4).

Ever since the launch of Operation Enduring Freedom in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks of 2001 in New York, the United States led intervention have spent billions of dollars to reform and strengthen the Afghan National Army. In their study on military and

civilian assistance provided by the United States (Stapleton and Keating, 2015: 8), claim that Afghanistan probably remains the only nation that is undoubtedly making its move towards further progress and development after several fierce combats between the United States led forces and the Taliban extremists. During the Soviet era in Afghanistan from 1978 to 1989, U.S in its proxy war against the Soviet Union constantly supported the Taliban forces to fight against the Soviet forces. Although, after the United States intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, it has certainly helped in building a democratic form of government and restoring the basic human rights of Afghan nationals.

Afghanistan has been in the constant process of nation rebuilding ever since 2002 and existing scenario is amply clear to substantiate that the country is finally making a move towards a better future if only every mechanism that has been built over the period is sustained in best possible manner. Afghanistan in the last one and a half decade has achieved significant level of development with the help of the financial support coming from the international donors. For instance, the health services has improved to an all-time high when it reached 82 percent of the Afghan population by the year 2012. Afghanistan's road to improvement and the facts and data in its positive growth would go on piling up but the harsher fact still remains that despite overcoming the several challenges the situation of almost everything still remains grim and is vulnerable enough to fall yet again. The national graph of poverty have remained more or less the same despite the boost in the economic growth of the country. Simultaneously issues like inequality, internal displacement of indigenous people has been a huge cause of worry. In the backdrop of all these very pertinent reasons the role and assistance aid of international donors have been of much significance in achieving the ultimate process of rebuilding the Afghan state (Poole, 2014: 4-5).

Nevertheless, the security scenario is still not in its best shape which ultimately led to call for the holding back of the foreign forces post 2014. After several deliberations and the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement 2014, the United States and its allies, as per the agreement, decided to hold back their 12,000 security personnel to

help in developing the combat efficiency of the Afghan security forces. The Afghan government and its security agencies kept insisting in this regard for a long time ever since the Obama administration announced the complete withdrawal of its forces by the end of 2014. A senior Pentagon official with his experience in Afghanistan said “The local forces need air support, intelligence and help with logistics. They are not going to be ready in three years or five years. You have to be there for a very long time.” (Johnson, 2015: 1-2; Ryan and Jaffe, 2016: 2-3).

In a report by Centre for International and Strategic Studies published in May 2013 (Cordesman, 2013: 12) writes “At present, it likely seems to require a minimum of some 10,000 US forces and some 2,000-2,500 allied forces to provide the full range of enabling and supporting services that are needed for a “four corner” training and partnering presence that can cover every major threatened area though at least the corps level and support in areas like airpower, medevac, intelligence, combat emergencies, and correcting for key problems in logistics and support. Afghan forces that have been rushed into being will need conditions based support based on merit and not arbitrary outside manning and funding.”

A clear roadmap was the need of the hour in the backdrop of the situation unfolding as the United States withdrew its security forces by the end of 2014. Thus came the need for an extended security mission in Afghanistan, and with that came the existence of the Resolute Support Mission-Afghanistan (RSM-A) which was formed with primary aim and role of advising, assisting and training the Afghan National Security Forces without directly involving themselves into any more combat operations. United States has been contributing in the weapons and other logistical military equipments, also with contribution of a good sum of revenue but has drastically reduced in relative terms what U.S used to spend during the period of 2008-2013 (Cordesman, 2013: 45).

In his write up for World Affairs Journal (Brinkley, 2013: 5) in its edition of January-February 2013 mentions that, In a recent quarterly report, the US Special Inspector

General for Afghanistan reconstruction said that, “When security for aid workers is figured in, the total amount of nonmilitary funds the United States has appropriated is almost \$100 billion ever since it started its operations in 2002, an amount most spent by United States in rebuilding the country”. The estimate was revealed in July the same year. It was since then the U.S Congress has appropriated another 16.5 billion for reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has been eager to take along its regional allies for its requirements of military support and assistance now that the foreign forces have almost departed leaving the Afghan government and its security forces in dilemmatic situation in dealing with the resurgent Taliban elements. The rapid decline of its security aid from the western forces have compelled Afghan authorities to take these allies in confidence to sustain its already enlarged Afghan National Security Forces. Major donors like Germany, United Kingdom, European Union, Norway and Sweden have made commitments to maintain and Australia, Finland and France have committed to increase current levels until at least 2016, but the outlook for development assistance is hard to predict over the Transformation Decade. Undoubtedly, there are risks associated with a potential reduction in development assistance, but there may also be opportunities to reset aid relationships and practices in Afghanistan. This could ultimately lead to more sustainable development partnerships focused on supporting the needs and priorities of Afghan citizens and building their resilience in the face of recurrent humanitarian crises.

The budget of the Afghan National Security Forces in the year 2015 was estimated around \$5.4 billion and in all probability was expected to fall at around \$5 billion by 2016. The Afghan government so far has been struggling hard in mobilising its own source of funding to tackle effectively the issues arising out of the huge budgetary constraints. The United States on its part had agreed to fund \$4.1 billion in 2015 and in the subsequent year in 2016 it would reduce it down to \$3.8 billion. United States started its reduction on the military funding to the Afghan security forces since 2011, the year when it had almost touched the mark of more than \$10 billion in funding the

ongoing process of building the Afghan National Security Forces (Global-security, 2015: 1-2).

In the follow up of its building relations with Afghanistan and providing the post withdrawal of international forces assistance (Johnson, 2014: 2) in his report for Reuters says that the two countries on September 30th 2014 signed a long-delayed security agreement that would allow about 9,800 American troops to remain in the country past 2014. "This agreement was specifically for the Afghan security and stability measures," Afghan President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai said. The agreement was signed a day after Ashraf Ghani was signed into office. The agreement ensures a long term presence of U.S. and coalition troops in Afghanistan and sets the two countries on a more stable relationship. U.S and Afghan officials had agreed on terms of the accord more than a year ago, but former Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai had refused to sign.

"We are eager to work with President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah, and a new Afghan government, to achieve more success in the coming years," said James Cunningham, the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan. "We have a perfect opportunity to reset this relationship now that there is more pragmatic leadership," said Marc Chretien, a former top political adviser to the coalition command in Kabul, referring to relations between Afghanistan and the West, reports (Michaels, 2014: 1-2) for USA Today.

The residual United States forces took the responsibility for advising and supporting Afghan security forces and conducting counter terrorism missions against al-Qaeda and its affiliates. This extended mission was confined to the above mentioned spheres as the American combat mission in Afghanistan terminated by the end of 2014. With that the Afghan security forces are already leading operations throughout the country as U.S. forces have largely withdrawn from direct combat. NATO countries too have contributed troops to the residual force as well, bringing the total number of foreign troops presence in Afghanistan to about 12,000.

In her detailed study on Afghanistan (Poole, 2014: 4) explains that the country is now on the cusp of what has been termed the ‘Transformation Decade’ spanning from 2015 to 2024 wherein the United States has agreed to finance and support the country. This period of transition also brings with it a great deal of uncertainty about the future, including the nature of international donor support and the ability of the Afghan state and economy to meet its financing needs.

Under the plan, it was decided and agreed upon that the number of U.S. troops would be reduced by more than half in 2015 and then removed entirely by 2017 which may or may not extend depending on the further developments and negotiations between Afghanistan and United States. There were about 24,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, down from a peak of about 100,000 in 2010 and 2011, according to the Pentagon (2014) report. At the same time, the Government of Afghanistan has committed to contribute a rising share of domestic security costs until 2024, when it will assume full financial responsibility. The financing outlook for the security sector and the ability of the government to meet its wider financing requirements remains uncertain at this stage. The need to maintain the large security sector could crowd out other areas of government spending. In 2013, for example, recurrent security spending grew to 10.7% of GDP compared with 10.2% in 2012, while civilian recurrent expenditure fell to 6.6% of GDP in 2013 from 6.8% in 2012 (MoFA: Afghanistan, 2014). Moreover, with low levels of foreign investment (US\$94 million in 2012) and an economy dominated by small-scale agricultural production, the government is unlikely to meet commitments to take greater responsibility for financing its own recurrent budgets. The rate of economic growth in Afghanistan also slowed considerably in 2013, despite considerable improvement the previous decade. This growth has masked longer term structural economic problems, with domestic budget revenues supported by international grants rather than improvements in domestic revenue collection.

Since 2011, the primary site of international expenditure in Afghanistan has consistently and overwhelmingly been security. When international troop levels were at their peak at 132,000 in 2011, spending on the two international military operations

the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and United States led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) reached United States \$129 billion. International spending on security has shifted in emphasis towards supporting the Afghan National Security Forces in anticipation of the win down of the foreign forces presence. Currently the security sector, which has an estimated annual cost of US\$6 billion, is heavily supported by international donors, but the future of this funding is uncertain. Peace and security in the Transformation Decade depend to a large degree on international donors maintaining this support to the large domestic security forces that they have helped to build.

During the Transformation Decade, donors can play a vital role in helping to build much needed confidence in the Afghan economy and in the government's capacity to govern and ensure security. There are risks associated with the international security scale-down and probable changes in the nature of development partnerships, but there are also opportunities. This junctures is an ideal time for international donors to recalibrate their future investments in Afghanistan. For example, rebalancing of priorities could open up opportunities for donors to focus development investments on poverty reduction, inclusive economic growth and resilience to shocks, at the same time as they pursue security and stabilisation objectives.

4.4 India's relations with Afghanistan and its building military support to Afghan National Army:

Afghanistan and India share a cordial and strong relationship much based on the cultural and historical linkages. This relationship is not confined to the establishments of Kabul and New Delhi but traces its historical, people to people contacts and exchanges back to centuries. These historical and cultural linkages was revamped and was further boosted in the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) 2011 signed between the two countries during former Afghan President Hamid Karzai's visit to India in October 2011. The agreement reinforced the strong, vibrant and multi-faceted relations between the two countries and at the same time formalised a

framework for cooperation in various areas such as political and security cooperation, trade and economic cooperation, capacity development and education, and social, cultural, civil society and people to people relations (MEA India, 2012: 1-3).

However, despite sharing historical and cultural linkages, India had mostly kept itself out of the unfolding affairs in Afghanistan post the United States intervened in the country in its war against the Al-Qaeda and Taliban forces in 2001. In his article for Institute For Development and Strategic Analysis (Kanwal, 2013: 1-2) writes, that although India has not extended any support to Afghanistan for sending its military troops or any kind of military presence in the country, it has certainly worked on the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan over the period of time since 2001. India has extended help of US \$1.5 billion, and promised another US \$500 million in 2013. The financial support provided by India is spent to build the Zaranj-Delaram highway, a 218 kilometre stretch connecting Iranian border with the Garland highway, the new Afghan Parliament, hydroelectric power projects and dams such as Salma Dam. India since 2001 moved very soft with its foreign policy approach with regard to this war torn country bordering South and Central Asia. Meanwhile, in the recent years Afghanistan has been insisting India to step up its role in the security sector of Afghanistan and had sent direct signals to Indian establishment such as demand for medium lift aircraft, military attack helicopters, trucks and artillery's to support in strengthening its defence mechanism of the country (Kanwal, 2013: 1-2; Swami, 2013: 1).

Afghanistan is in a dire need of help and assistance from all its allies as well as the potential allies of it. The need becomes even more significant in the backdrop of NATO forces complete withdrawal along with their reconstruction process coming to a gradual reduction is something Afghanistan will have to prepare itself for the times ahead.

In his assessment on India's relations with Afghanistan (Stobdan, 2015: 1-2) says, India in its strategically designed foreign policy towards Afghanistan fully realises the repercussions in the backdrop of the fall of the existing Afghan establishment and the

rise of yet another Talibanised Afghanistan with respect to its own security interest. Therefore, India's approach vis-a-vis Afghan army in lending its supportive hand in the Afghanistan's security apparatus has been on the very cautious line so far. Indian officials concerned with Afghan issues says that the reasons for delaying Afghanistan's demand for Indian defence equipment is to wait and watch the development in Afghanistan as the situation unfolds especially after the U.S led forces have completely withdrawn. This has been probably the main reason of India's reluctance in heeding to Afghanistan's demand of huge list of defence equipment. However, India finally agreed to transfer the defence equipments after the visit of Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani's visit to India in April 2015. In the first week of November, Russian Ambassador to Afghanistan Alexander Mantyskiy said that the "Russian government had received a request from Indian government for certain level of assistance to Afghanistan free of charge and added that the deal was almost in its final stage of clearance. India, so far has been portraying itself as a soft power in its Afghan policy and has mostly focused on the infrastructure building and reconstruction of Afghanistan (Gupta, 2011: 1; Swami, 2015: 1-2).

In his write up on the rise of Taliban insurgency and its implications on India and Pakistan (Jha, 2009: 337-338) mentions that any further resurgence of Taliban from the existing scenario will have its direct implications on Indian side of the Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir which has been witnessed to enough bloodshed in the last few decades. He further argues that India in the present context must go ahead further to revamp its foreign policy with respect to Afghanistan as the country's significant and strategic location would give India a geopolitical influence in the region. The resurfacing of Taliban forces in Afghanistan is not just worrisome from India's point of view but its presence in the areas of eastern and southern Afghanistan and the FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) region of Pakistan has given enough pain to Pakistan. The mentioned region has been historically linked to Taliban insurgents whose extremist activities have severely affected the region. FATA region of Pakistan had become a Mini-Taliban during the regime of President General Pervez Musharraf. Afghanistan's establishment has often alleged its immediate neighbour Pakistan for destabilising the atmosphere of security and peace in

Afghanistan by its proxy wars executed by the Taliban forces who have been time and again alleged to be sponsored by the Pakistani establishment and its security agencies (Jha, 2009: 337).

Pakistan in the last few years have gone out to launch an all-out military operation in these regions to eliminate all sort of extremists forces in the aftermath of the nonstop brutal and fatal acts levied on the civilians in the mainland Pakistan. These extremist elements derive their association with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, a militant group formed in 2007 operating mainly from the FATA region bordering Afghanistan and has been considered as the most volatile region in the country (Stobdan, 2015: 1-2).

India has never had any friendly or diplomatic ties with the Taliban ruled Afghanistan adding to it India had also refused to recognise the Taliban administration as a legitimate centre of power. Thus, India has a genuine reason of being apprehensive of Taliban's rise. Hence, in the backdrop of all these events that have occurred over the span of time, India now needs to be a proactive player in Afghanistan minus NATO operations and revamp its foreign policy with the a futuristic approach with the primary aim of endorsing peace and stability in the country. Although India so far has shown a soft power approach but there is huge popular demand of India playing a significant role in revamping of the security apparatus of Afghanistan.

The signing of a Strategic Partnership Agreement between India and Afghanistan on October 4th 2011 during Afghan President Hamid Karzai's visit to India was termed a landmark event as it witnessed a new era in the India- Afghanistan relations (MEA, 2012: 1). The document was significant for its implications for Indo-Afghan relations as well as for India's wider neighbourhood policy. The agreement positioned India and Afghanistan for the post 2014 situation when the international forces would have withdrawn and handed over security responsibilities to Afghan forces. The then Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh was categorical in his support for the Afghan people when he stated at a news conference that "India will stand by the people of

Afghanistan as they prepare to assume the responsibility for their governance and security after the withdrawal of international forces in 2014”, (Gupta, 2011: 2).

Toeing the same line with some partial change in its India oriented policy after the change in regime in 2014 from Hamid Karzai to Ashraf Ghani led government in Afghanistan, the Government of Afghanistan asked its Indian counterparts especially after Afghan President Ghani’s visit to India, to step up its military equipment supplies for its national army. The Afghan National Army which is struggling in countering the resurgent Taliban forces have faced huge loss of armed personnel as well as civilian lives across the country. In its report (Indian Express, 2015) published that the diplomatic sources in Ministry of External Affairs of India said that the request was made by National Security Advisor of Afghanistan Hanif Atmar while on his visit to New Delhi in November 2015. NSA Atmar asked the Indian government to substantially contribute to the wish list of military equipments handed to it by the Afghan government long back. The wish list had logistics and strike capacity mechanism which would include training, equipment, air and ground mobility assets, light infantry combat weapons and also contribute in the engineering infrastructure of the force (Swami, 2015: 2).

India on its part as promised in the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) of 2011 went ahead with its assistance on the training capacity building programmes for the troops of the Afghan National Army. However, (Swami, 2015: 3) reports that the then Indian government led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh tactfully declined the supply of military equipments to Afghanistan in the last few years after the 2011 agreement fearing it could hinder the peace process with its all-weather hostile neighbour Pakistan. Many observers felt that the concern was mainly due to the apprehension that the sophisticated military equipments provided to the Afghan security forces may fall in the hands of Taliban forces in case of any further security and political instability in the country.

India's cautious approach to the demand did not send a positive signal to Afghanistan and thus President Ghani after taking over as the office of the President in September 2014, kept the wish list on hold after India's deliberate delay in supplying of the defence equipments which were of dire need to Afghan security forces. President Ghani's move was also seen a radical change in Afghanistan's foreign policy shift as the Ghani regime was seen hobnobbing with the Pakistani establishment unlike his predecessor Hamid Karzai who was very often and aggressive in accusing Pakistan of sponsoring terror in Afghanistan. However, President Ghani on a different note shunned on commenting on the activities of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence in Afghanistan. In fact, President Ghani went on to invite Pakistan's army chief General Raheel Sharif and ISI chief Lt. Gen Rizwan Akhtar along with two other top ranking army commanders. In a change in its Pakistan policy President Ghani sent first batch of six Afghan army officers to Abbottabad for training in February 2015. In her article in *The Hindu* (Haider, 2015: 1-2) writes that President Ghani's sharp change in policy from his predecessor towards Pakistan mostly remained for bringing the Taliban forces operating in Afghanistan to peace negotiations with the help of Pakistani establishment. Though after the failure of the talks in July 2015 and subsequent attacks in Kabul in August 2015, President Ghani was back to its predecessor Hamid Karzai's stand and lambasted Pakistani regime for continuously infusing instability in Afghanistan. President Ghani said "The last few days have shown that suicide bomber training camps and bomb-producing factories which are killing our people are as active as before in Pakistan," He further added "We hoped for peace but we are receiving messages of war from Pakistan." It was in this backdrop that Afghan NSA Hanif Atmar along with Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai came down to New Delhi in November 2015 to negotiate further with the Indian government on the military wish list (Haider, 2015: 1; Swami, 2015: 2; Donati and Totakhil, 2015: 1).

Meanwhile, India after stalling its military supply and transfer for a long period of time finally heeded to the demand of the four MI 25 ground attack military helicopters to Afghanistan which was eventually handed over to the Afghanistan's Ministry of Defence in January 2016. The highly equipped modern day combat

helicopter replaced the ageing MI 35 helicopters of the Afghan Air Force and would further boost the effectiveness of the already struggling Afghan security forces (Panda, 2016: 1-2). Earlier in 2015 in the month of April, India delivered three Cheetal military utility helicopters proven to be very effective on high altitude areas to Afghanistan days ahead of Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani's first visit to India after taking over the office. The delivery was done after assessing the appropriate time though after much delay and several deadlines missing (Pubby, 2016: 2). The helicopters are much better and effective in operation than the existing fleet of the 16 United States provided McDonnell Douglas MD530 helicopters to Afghan Air Force. The Afghan pilots complained about the U.S fleet of lacking on many grounds, most pertinently while operating these fleets on the high altitude mountain ranges while moving in and out of Kabul. Much to the delight of the Afghan Air force the Cheetal helicopters have been serving their need much effectively than their existing fleet of helicopters.

In his column for India Express (Swami, 2015: 4) says, India is hopeful that the MI 25 combat helicopters will be of much use for the Afghanistan ground forces. These helicopters would provide the air cover to ground forces until Afghanistan receives the 20 Embraer EMB32 Super Tucanos lightweight aircraft specialised for the counter insurgency operations.

Afghanistan has also sought India's assistance for getting its fleet of mothballed Soviet era Antonov An32 medium transport aircraft back into the regular operation to further mobilise the effectiveness of the security forces of the country. Afghanistan is also keen to get access to the Indian A2-A18 105 millimetre Howitzers, the weapon that has been used by the Indian army for years now. However, India is now planning to phase out the long used howitzers by the United States built M777 Howitzers with a deal of \$700 million (Pubby, 2016: 1).

Apart from the list of military equipments and logistics the Indian government is going ahead by its tactically designed soft power approach in helping the Afghan National Army by training its several army men in its reputed military training

institutes such as Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, Officers Training Academy, Chennai and the National Defense Academy, Khadakvasla in Pune. More than 1,100 cadets of the Afghan National Security Forces have been trained at these military training institute. In his report for Reuters (Miglani, 2013: 1-2) writes that the India army further boosting its military relations with Afghanistan with utmost caution brought in the 60 commandos from the Afghan National Army for a military exercise in the Thar desert with the elite commandos of 10 para brigade troops of the Indian army in December 2013. Several Afghan personnel have also been sent by the Indian army to the infantry school at Mhow, Artillery School at Deolali and Mechanised Infantry Regimental Centre at Ahmednagar to acquire the modern day specialised courses effective in the combat operations.

India due to its trans-Himalayan borders creating geographical constraints and limitations has faced enough hindrances in successfully building up its relations with Afghanistan. The road link connecting Afghanistan to India would have to cross Pakistan, which the India's hostile neighbour has refused to agree so far. However, in 2015 Indian officials said that Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has told the Pakistani leadership that if they do not open up the road to India via Wagah border, they will deny Pakistan access to Central Asia (Express Tribune, 2015: 1). Nevertheless, India and Afghanistan with whom the Pakistan state shares hostile relations ever since the partition of India in 1947, cannot be expected to play a role of a good samaritan in allowing any sort of smooth and safe passage for the two countries (Roche, 2015: 1-3; Sharma, 2015: 1-2).

India's national interests lies in a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. India supports all efforts towards improving the security situation and providing good governance. It is only through sustained reconstruction and concerted socio-economic development that future stability can be assured. India will continue to provide aid and assistance to the government and the people of Afghanistan as it has been consistently doing over the past ten years (Kanwal, 2013: 1-2).

4.4.1 Pakistan's reservations against India's active role in Afghanistan:

Pakistan had reservations on India-Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in 2011 between Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Pakistan has been taking the Indo-Afghan relations as a detrimental factor with regard to its own interests. Pakistan's zero sum attitude to regional cooperation for peace and stability creates many security dilemmas in the region. India-Afghan relation is also not going down well with Pakistan for the fact that Pakistan has been hostile to both these countries for decades now and have consistently tried all possible measure to destabilise the two of its neighbouring countries by its means of proxy as well as conventional wars. Though India has been too powerful for Pakistan to play its instability tactics but Pakistan has left no stone unturned to destabilise any form of democratically elected government at the helm of affairs in Afghanistan (Gupta, 2011: 1-2).

The former President Hamid Karzai was in particular very much against any ties or neighbourly relations with Pakistan, though occasionally he kept calling Pakistan a 'brother' country while termed India as a 'Great Friend'. However, he also staunchly believed that it is the Pakistani state that is the endemic cause of all the problem deliberately hindering the growth and development of Afghanistan for decades (Tisdall, 2011: 2-3).

Later in its foreign policy shift a bit different from his predecessor towards Pakistan, President Ashraf Ghani in his initial period made all possible measures to work along with Pakistan to maintain peace and stability in the country but it seems that even after several initiatives President Ashraf Ghani has finally found himself in an embarrassing and disappointing situation. The state visit to Afghanistan by several high dignitaries of Pakistan after the regime change in post 2014 in Afghanistan seemed to be a tactical shift in Afghanistan's foreign policy with regard to Pakistan but not too much avail but one cannot be very sure about the upcoming times when it

comes to matters like diplomacy. The Afghan government ever since the withdrawal of international forces has been trying its best to bring in stability in the country by all means. It probably was the reason it asked the Taliban's alleged patron Pakistan to bring in extremist forces active in Afghanistan for peace talks. This move of President Ghani was said to be strategic move which clicked the right chord though with very uncertain results (Notezai, 2015: 1-2).

Pakistan on its part agreed to the proposal and thus took the initiative of peace negotiation that took place in Murree town near Islamabad in July 2015, where Pakistan, Afghan Taliban and Afghan government's delegation led by its Deputy Foreign Minister participated with China and United States making their presence as an observer of the negotiating talks. Pakistan's move was hailed by all the concerned nations. The talks were an imperative move towards retaliation process and both sides decided to hold talks again after the Holy month of Ramadan. However, the August 2015 attacks in Kabul jeopardised the whole peace process. Analysing the mood of the nation this time one could clearly notice the kind of avatar President Ashraf Ghani took and rebuffed Pakistan in his strong worded statement and categorically alleged it of sponsoring terror on Afghan soil and conveyed his message to Pakistani establishment of following the "same definition of terrorism just as it has for itself". This stand of Afghan president can be viewed with perspective of the gauging mood among the Afghan's towards Pakistan (Harooni and Hassib, 2015: 1-3).

4.5 China's offer of military assistance to Afghanistan:

After having kept itself devoid of all the activities by the global powers against the one time most threatening terrorist and fundamentalist organisations in its immediate neighbour Afghanistan, China has finally made its move towards Afghanistan and is showing interest in further strengthening of the Afghan National Army. China's offer of expanded military aid to Afghanistan's army to effectively counter the rising insurgency has been gradually gaining grounds in the recent past. The offer coming from the Chinese government was later confirmed by the Afghanistan's Ministry of

Defence. Beijing's move, which comes after the withdrawal of international forces from the Afghanistan, reflects the China's growing interest in strengthening its ties with its neighbour country which has been in an unending turmoil for decades (Donati, 2016: 1-3).

A military delegation under the leadership of General Fang Fenghui, Chief of the Joint Staff Department of the People's Liberation Army visited Kabul in the end of February 2016. Although, China has finally initiated its involvement in Afghanistan's peace process but it has been wary of openly supporting the Afghanistan's army and security as (Donati and Amiri, 2016: 2) says that China has portrayed itself to be neutral party in the Afghan government's fight against Taliban and had also been the observer of the Murree peace talks between the Afghan government and Taliban hosted by the Pakistan in 2015. At the most, it can be said that China is concerned due to the deteriorating security situation back home and the emergence and rising popularity of Islamic state that China is compelled to play a more significant and active role in Afghanistan so as to keep the militant groups at bay.

The visit of Chinese General came as huge encouragement for the Afghan government at the time when its security forces are consistently struggling with the resurging Taliban extremists who in the aftermath of the withdrawal of International forces have started operating overtly. He mentions in his article in diplomat that the Afghan government on its part has formed a commission that had been assigned to prepare the wish list to hand over to China which would include light weapons, aircraft parts and uniforms for the Afghan National Army(Tiezzi, 2016: 1-2).

So far china has been too slow with its aid and assistance to the war torn neighbouring country and has only contributed around \$70 million as a military aid to Afghanistan. The sum of aid which is way lesser in relative terms comparing to the other countries, but during the meeting with President Ghani in February 2016 General Fang expressed his hope for increased cooperation on security and counter-terrorism, which apparently indicated for potential military supplies from China. The nature of

supplies from China was yet to be determined said the Spokesperson of Afghan Defence Ministry to Wall Street Journal.

China is particularly worried about the rise of fundamentalist forces in the region and instability in Afghanistan provides a safe haven for Uyghur militants who are scaling their attacks in the mainland China for an independent Xinjiang from Chinese rule. China too has been severely facing the upsurge of the terrorist activities and rampant violence in its western province of Xinjiang which shares its borders with Afghanistan. The Chinese government is trying to curb the menace of militant activities in its Xinjiang province, and simultaneously extending military support to Afghanistan as its apprehensive of any further instability in Afghanistan would lead to aggravation in the extremism and separatism movements in its own backyard (Shi, 2016: 1-2). A former advisor in U.S State Department and a senior fellow at the New York University Barmett Rubin says “China’s interest in Afghanistan has dramatically increased adding that China now considers the security and stability of Afghanistan both for the domestic security of China and for the continuing growth of its economy.” In 2013, China and Afghanistan issued the Joint Declaration on the deepening strategic and cooperative partnership and the two sides further went on to sign the treaty on extradition. On its part, Afghanistan has stayed committed to One-China policy and has extended its support to China on issues pertaining to Tibet, Taiwan and Xinjiang (Donati and Amiri, 2016: 1-3).

U.S State Department spokesperson addressing the press conference said that the United States on its part welcomes the China’s decision of getting involved in the stability and the nation building process of Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the (MoD China, 2016) said that the relations between the militaries of China and Afghanistan have been consistently building up and there is a huge scope in the times to come which would include imparting of training to Afghan security personnel also. The ministry in its statement on the issue of military aid to Afghanistan added “Both sides are willing to further deepen military exchanges in various ways and strengthen pragmatic cooperation in counter terrorism and training of personnel in order to contribute to safeguard regional security”.

China's shifting change could be gauged by the role it played during the Afghan peace process talk hosted by Pakistan. China along with the United States had participated as an observer state in the ongoing peace talks. Though the talks between the Afghan government and Afghan Taliban failed, it saw an emergence of China's role in the Afghan peace process. Undoubtedly, China was equally instrumental in bringing the Afghan Taliban on table for the peace talks.

Thus the times ahead would be crucial for Afghan National Security Forces vis a vis emerging military relations with China as the war torn country has already switched itself into self-dependency mode with partial support and assistance from the NATO and United States.

4.6 NATO's role in modernising the Afghan National Security Forces:

The United States led prolonged war in Afghanistan against the firmly established and well equipped Taliban and Al-Qaeda may not have been all that successful if it was not for the undaunted role of NATO forces who have been the all-weather combat allies of United States ever since the agreement was signed on 4th April 1949, in the Washington D.C. NATO has over these decades has been a part of several military operations which has been mostly led by the United States.

In the first decade of the United States war against the Taliban that commenced in 2001, United States primary mission was to eliminate the Taliban forces from the seat of power. U.S and NATO's simultaneously assisted the newly established Afghan government in the process of the nation building. They played a major role in mentoring and training of the Afghan National Army units (NATO, 2009). The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a NATO led security mission in Afghanistan immensely contributed in the Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT) program, a program that was first introduced by British forces in May 2006

to further help in the development of the Afghan National Army. The United States in its leading role had in almost every area had majorly taken the primary responsibility right from funding, equipping, and manning to basic and collective training to sustainment and validation of the reformed Afghan army. The OMLT's were led by the Commander of the ISAF who is known as Commander ISAF (COMISAF), but their operational process on the field is followed by the directives and guidelines prepared by the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and Task Force Phoenix. These were primarily responsible for developing doctrine and regulation for the ANA and also took the entire responsibility of the development and restructuring of the force, until the responsibility of the Afghan army was ultimately handed over to the Afghan authorities in a phased manner and in the entirety by the end of 2014 (NATO, 2010; Grady and Sollinger, 2009: 34).

The security and strategy website (Global-security, 2015) mentions that while in the reformation of the Afghan army by the NATO and United States Central Command (CENTCOM), there erupted many complexities regarding the control of operational structure of the two forces in the mission. However, there was an agreement signed between the Afghanistan's Defence Ministry and ISAF regarding the control and command of the OMLT and the Afghan National Army in the combined operations. The OMLT program of International Assistance Security Force was implemented by the officers and non-commissioned officers from the contributing countries whose troops were assigned as trainers and mentors to the Afghan army and also as liaison officers to ISAF and CSTC-A. The primary goal of the OMLT program was to focus on the development of the Afghan National Army which would be the major progress towards a developing Afghanistan (ICG, 2010: 8).

After having involved comprehensively in dismantling of the Taliban enforced structure from the mainstream Afghanistan, the departure of NATO from the country was perceived with much apprehension especially when ANA has been into its real testing time. Although, with the span of time Afghan National Army has shown substantial improvement, determination and dedication to secure the country. In the

process they have finally started gaining all the applause and winning confidence of the people they were expected to while securing the nation from the extremist forces.

The United States started shifting its focus from Afghan National Army towards training the Afghan National Police it was then that ISAF's OMLTS began to be implemented in actual sense. The implementation of the OMLT's replaced the Embedded Training Teams (ETT) from all levels which included mentoring, command, function with area specific, implications of the doctrine, operational tactics and procedures during the operations. The OMLT's have been providing with the much needed and crucial fire support, close air support, quick reaction force and command and control during the time of combat operations (Younossi and Thruelsen, 2009: 35-36).

U.K forces introduced the first NATO OMLT to the 3rd brigade of the 205th corps of the Afghan National Army stationed in Helmand in May 2006. Until August 2008, there were only 34 OMLT's out of 71 that had been validated for operation throughout the region as only very few countries volunteered in contributing the troops for the 37 OMLT positions which were unmanned. Due to the eruption of complicated political circumstances among the coalition nations contributing to the troop strength, the ISAF had divided the positions of the 71 OMLT'S into two tiers, Tier 1 and Tier 2. The two tiers were differently designed and deployed. The Tier 1 functioned without any restriction whereas Tier 2 operated with certain restriction in its functioning. Training and mentoring the infantry, combat support and combat service support Kandaks. These Kandaks were being used in the field for operations against the enemy and had a high probability of being engaged in high-level combat operations. Meanwhile, the Tier 2 was for the primary purpose of mentoring and training at headquarter level such as regimental headquarter and brigade headquarter (Thruelsen and Vaccaro, 2009: 36).

The ISAF had to face a tough time in filling the several positions in the Tier 1 as well as in the restricted Tier 2 OMLT's. The 2008 data of ISAF OMLT's reveal that even after the two years of operation more than half of the teams still faced the manning

constraints ultimately effecting the aim of the goal. He in his observation analyses that the issue of under-manning cropped up time and again and was more evident in the Regional Command Central and Regional Command North where the security situation was better than in the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan. The issue of under-manning remained the biggest cause of worry for the commanders of the ISAF who were constantly trying to figure out the solutions for the persisting problem. The strength and troop contribution to OMLT's kept on increasing over the years till the the foreign forces were involved in their combat operation against the Taliban forces in the country(Vaccaro, 2009: 37-38).

In their study on the reformation of the Afghan National Army (Sollinger and Grady, 2009: 38-39) says that the idea was to effectively sustain the function of the OMLT's which would remain in practice as the Afghan forces focusses on increasing its troops capacity to take on any future operations all by itself in the most effective manner. The OMLT's and ETT'S in the year 2008 was 119 teams comprising of 71 NATO OMLT's and 48 United States ETT's. An estimated figure prepared in 2008 regarding the requirement of the OMLT's and ETT's in the coming years for the Afghanistan's security was in the following sequence: a combined requirement of 125 teams by December 2009, which was estimated to slightly rise by December 2010, 141 teams in December 2011, with the number of teams going only high with every coming year to 159 teams by December 2012 and would require 168 teams by December 2013. The report on Afghan army published by the (Rand, 2009) says that the estimates were prepared with the security scenario existing back in 2008 and keeping in mind the future challenges the security forces would be meeting. Although, the chances of achieving the required goal seemed very remote since almost 50 percent of the positions remained vacant then in 2008, the year the estimates were prepared for the future course of time. The role of NATO countries contributing troops for this mission was not up to the expectations which significantly undermined the significance and aim of the mission. They further added that OMLT's deeply varied in their size, strength and organisation. The provision allowed a member country of NATO to contribute OMLT in entirety which meant it would mentor the entire ANA

partner unit, for example a brigade or a country can be allowed to contribute in smaller number to the multinational OMLT's.

The OMLT's that vary from each other on several grounds function on a rotational basis with almost half of it involved in conducting combat operations with the Afghan National Army and the rest involved in training at the Kandaks in the military training centres built across the country. The OMLT's which use to be on operation were attached to the units of Afghan National Army for a period of six weeks. In this period of six weeks, the OMLT's were deployed on check points, for patrolling purposes and also on mobile operations with the Afghan National Army units (Younossi and Thruelsen, 2009: 39).

While in the operations the basic concept adopted by the OMLT is to deploy itself to an operational area along with the units of ANA, before heading for the first operation in order to minimise the gap in the level of basic training provided at the Kabul Military Training Centre and the training that is required to perform effectively against the enemy in the combat operations. The OMLT'S have further worked in order to bridge that gap between the levels of basic training and combat oriented training by setting up of the continuation training at the ANA barracks and also by facilitating the process of on the job field oriented training.

The data released by the NATO Headquarters on 16th October 2008 mentions that the OMLT'S involvement with the ANA units were said to be reached when the ANA units finally made it to the Capability Milestone 1 (CM). It was the system designed to measure the ANA unit and thus validating it (Younossi and Thruelsen, 2009: 40). After the regressive training, the forces effectiveness is finally measured and if it is considered to be good enough for all sort of combat operations, it was honored with Capability Milestone 1. The trainees passing out from Kabul Military Training Centre after having been provided with the basic training were considered as Capability Milestone 4. Once the ANA has been tagged with the Capability Milestone 4, it only required very minimum external support in the face of a combat operations against the enemy forces (Younossi and Thruelsen, 2009: 45; ICG, 2010: 21).

NATO in the initial year of OMLT had been going too easy to support the United States in their move of training and mentoring of the ANA troops. Assessing the need for more OMLT's, the ISAF in its estimates prepared in 2008, mentioned that it would need a combined total of 168 OMLT'S and ETT's by December 2013, keeping in mind the situation of 2008 wherein only 50 percent of the total available OMLT's were present to perform the duty. He says that the insipid approach of NATO was a clear indication that it was not yet fully interested in fulfilling its commitment to its leading partner. This approach was viewed as a huge compromise on the NATO a part in this warn torn country in achieving success in their goal (Grady and Sollinger, 2009: 42).

The training and assistance program of the international forces have by and large been successful, but there are still several concerns which are arising in a day to day functioning of the security forces that needs to be addressed as soon as possible. After initiating on several occasions the international forces have time and again shown a lack lustre approach in implementing the training programmes. The training program should have been in an accelerated mode from the early days of the reformation of the Afghan army but unfortunately it was not the case mostly due to lack of enough infrastructure. Also, the most important factor is that the Afghan National Army and the other security agencies are now much dependent on themselves as the forces have withdrawn (Sollinger, 2009: 44).

4.7 The Role of NATO'S Resolute Support Mission-Afghanistan:

The command of the United Nations mandated International Assistance Forces was taken over by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in August 2003. It was delegated with the functioning of the ISAF in Afghanistan. The NATO forces have played a significant role alongside the United States in their mission in uprooting the Taliban forces from Afghanistan. It was the ISAF that helped in improving the effectiveness of the indigenous forces to provide full-fledged security in the entire country and made sure of the effective capacity building of the Afghan National Security Forces. With the span of time and endeavour put in by the ISAF the Afghan

forces were being made ready to face the security situation of the country post the withdrawal of the U.S led NATO forces by the end of 2014. However, to extend the help and assistance to Afghanistan's peace process the NATO in collaboration with the Afghan government had launched its post withdrawal of foreign forces initiative prominently known as Resolute Support Mission-Afghanistan (RSM-A; RSM: NATO, 2015).

It is no secret that the withdrawal of U.S led NATO forces by the end of 2014 has left Afghanistan government and its security forces into a tenuous and fragile situation wherein a lot of issues still remain to be resolved regarding security affairs of the country. After repeated requests of holding back the international forces and further sensing the need for an extended support NATO on its part, post withdrawal of its forces agreed to extend its mission and initiated a new assistance, advice and training mission for the Afghan National Security Forces called "Resolute Support Mission-Afghanistan" which commenced its role from 1st January 2015 (NATO, 2015).

In his observation (Lee, 2015: 1-3) suggests that the initiative was taken keeping in view the existing security scenario of Afghanistan. The decision of such an initiative was taken in June 2014 in the backdrop of Afghanistan's still unstable ground condition. The detailed operation plan for Resolute Support was approved by NATO Foreign Ministers at the end of June 2014.

The legal framework for the Resolute Support Mission is provided by a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which was signed in Kabul on 30th September 2014. The Agreement regarding the mission was signed between Afghanistan's newly inducted President Ashraf Ghani and NATO senior civil representatives of Afghanistan. This agreement was later ratified by the Afghan Parliament on 27th November 2014. The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) defines the terms and conditions under which NATO forces will be deployed in Afghanistan as part of Resolute Support Mission, as well as the activities that they are set to carry out under this agreement. The main aim of the mission was to provide all levels of training, advice and assistance in the eight

major areas such as multi-year budgeting, transparency, accountability and oversight, civilian oversight of the Afghan Security Institutions, force generation, force sustainment, strategy and policy planning, resourcing and execution, intelligence, and strategic communications. Currently, the Chief Commanding officer of the Resolute Support Mission is General John W. Nicholson of the United States forces (NATO, 2016: 1-3).

In the process of providing the best possible advice and assistance to the Ministry of Defence of Afghanistan and the Afghan forces, the Resolute Support Mission also hosted a legal conference in November 2015 in Kabul where around 100 legal professionals from the Ministry of Defence, Appellate courts, Primary courts, Criminal Investigation Department and the Afghan Legal School attended the conference. Simultaneously, the officers from the Afghan National Army were imparted with the critical lessons on the rule of law which would further help them in enhancing their capabilities and effectiveness while dealing in a hostile situations in the future course of time. The Resolute Support Mission is also supported by the United Nations Security Council resolution 2189, which was unanimously adopted by the UNSC days before the commencement of the mission on 12th December 2014. United Nations in its press release said that it recognises the significance in the continuation of the international support for the prosperous and stable future of Afghanistan (RSM: NATO, 2015: 1-2).

NATO in its April report (RSM: NATO, 2016: 1) states that the mission presently consists of around 12,000 troops from both the NATO and its partner nations after most of the foreign forces in Afghanistan had left for their respective nations. The Resolute Support Mission will majorly operate with one central hub in the Kabul/Bagram region along with the four spokes strategically stationed in Mazar-e Sharif, Herat, Kandahar and Laghman. Currently there are about 39 partnering nations who are contributing to the strength of 12,486 troops for the mission in Afghanistan with United States leading in the troops contribution with well over 6,961 soldiers deployed for the mission. There are countries that are not actively participating in the troops contribution but have taken several other initiatives in making this mission a

success not just for the secure and prosperous Afghanistan but also from their own security perspective keeping in mind the rising terrorist activities world over.

In its briefing report (RSM: NATO, 2015) states that this mission is not just confined to the training, advice and assistance mission to the Afghan National Security Forces. The NATO allies and partners involved in making the mission a successful feat are also working on the international support for the long term financial sustainability of the security forces of Afghanistan as that would help the country in attaining its self-dependency in various fields.

The following are the main functions of the NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan:

- *Supporting, planning, programming and budgeting;

- *Assuring transparency, accountability and oversight;

- *Supporting the adherence to the principles of rule of law and good governance;

- *Supporting the establishment and sustainment of such processes as force generation, recruiting, training, managing and development of personnel. (RSM: NATO, 2015: 1-2)

These efforts are part of the broader engagement of the International community in Afghanistan to ensure that this fragile country does not become anymore a safe haven for terrorism. Though not much can be said about this initiative in this short span of time, only time will tell the impact of this agreement.

4.8 Post Conflict Reforms (2001- 2015):

Post Conflict Reforms (PCR) is a generic term used to describe the myriad of individual security sector reform programs that have arisen or are still operating in Country as a result of conflict. Collectively, the detail and subtleties of each program have to be understood by those involved to ensure that the root causes that created the conflict are actually addressed. In context of Afghanistan this term is significantly

used in the nation building process of Afghanistan majorly in the field of security sector reform of the country. Collectively, the detail and subtleties of each program have to be understood by those involved to ensure that the root causes that created the conflict are actually addressed. The failure in addressing the issues give a scope in allowing them to go ahead with smouldering which would have the potential to flare up in the later stage. The impact of it would be that it would further delay the reforms which would ultimately lead to hindering in bringing in the private sector investments which remains of utmost importance for a country like Afghanistan. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the subtleties of the programs by the involved actors to affirmatively address and rectify the concerned issues regarding the reason behind the rise of conflicts. After being a victim of unstoppable conflict for decades, this war torn country urgently needed to speed up its reform to bring back Afghanistan to much needed normalcy and prosperity among its people (PCR, 2006: 1-2).

Afghanistan has been into constant political turmoil for more than three decades having been a witness to gross violation of human rights, women subjected to all sorts of violence, civilian killings mostly due to the indiscriminate firing and attacks by the Taliban militants as well as the Armed forces have gone into lakhs by now. In the aftermath of such a situation the times coming ahead threw a set of daunting challenges to be addressed in the best possible form within the set time frame especially after the establishment of a democratic form of government in Afghanistan. After years of instability people are looking forward to a nation under the rule of law which respects the human dignity at core and believes in the utmost equality among the citizens of the country. The generations who have lived over these conflict years are ensuring their best that the upcoming generations do not have to face the same political conflict and making them move out of the orthodox set up of the Afghan society to make their own choices in life. The major key to enabling this approach is the need to provide a stable and working atmosphere that provides hope which is no longer scarred by the remnants of war which the Afghanistan has been resisting for long.

4.9 Taking on the Challenges by the International forces:

The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration programme (DDR) has been one of the five major programmes initiated in the Agreement of Petersburg conference in December 2002. United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Italy and Germany in the agreement decided to take on the five different areas in order to rebuild the security sector of Afghanistan (ICG, 2010: 7). The reformation process of Afghan National Army was taken over by the United States, the Disarmament and Reintegration of the Afghan military forces was done by Japan, United Kingdom took the responsibility of Counter-narcotics, modernising the Afghan National Police was taken over by Germany, and Italy looked into reforming the Judicial system. Post Conflict Reform which has been often referred to as Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (DDR) has been involved in to several distinct programs the origins of which can be traced back to the Bonn Agreement of 2001 (PCR, 2006: 1).

The several distinct programs mentioned are as follows:

4.9.1 Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR):

The main source of dissolving the existing Afghan militias was under the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, a Japan led initiative under the Afghan New Beginning Programme in 2003. Japan took the responsibility of United Nations administered program of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of the Afghan military forces (MoFA, 2004: 1). In a period of two and a half years, it almost spent around \$142 million to disarm 63,380 officers and soldiers ranks from the Afghan military forces who themselves voluntarily agreed to participate on a condition of reintegrating with the mainstream security forces. Every individual who participated in this programme was provided with a reintegration fund package for almost 6-12 months. In June 2006, the programme officially came to its end but the project was not a success in entirety wherein many of the soldiers from the Afghan military forces were still not reintegrated. The programme lacked on many accounts such as the sustainability on the viable employment opportunities to the soldiers among many other factors (PCR, 2006: 1; Striuli and Termentini, 2008: 3-4).

4.9.2 Afghan National Army:

United States in a lead role took the responsibility of revamping the Afghan National Army. The goal was to make the Afghan army an ethnically balanced, professional, well equipped, disciplined and representative force. By the year 2015, the Afghan National Army had touched the strength of 2 lakh personnel in the force. The Afghan National Army over the period of last 15 year since 2001 has been built after intense effort put in by the U.S led NATO forces. The foreign forces under the aegis of Afghan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) brought in the men from erstwhile militias such as Northern Alliance who until then had been combatting against the Pashtun dominated Taliban rule in Afghanistan. The resourcefulness of former Defense Minister of Afghanistan Fahim Khan of Tajik ethnic was of immense help as he remained the key factor in bringing the several militias of Tajik ethnicity into the mainstream national army. However, in the process United States had to face daunting challenges in sustaining national army which remained very fragile in substance as the desertion and attrition rate remained high in the first decade of the reformation of the Afghan army. The initial aim of creating a well-trained, equipped and disciplined national army of 70,000 by the year 2010 was way too ambitious but there was no other alternative left at that stage to further reform and strengthen the Afghan army force capability. Despite all odds, the Afghan army with the help of these U.S led NATO forces have significantly learned the tactic of combat operations and function independently though it is still in its nascent stage and must be given time, support assistance to let it strengthen its combat capability (ICG: 2010: 6; Guistoizzi and Quentin, 2014: 4).

4.9.3 Afghan National Police:

In the Bonn Conference of December 2001 its responsibility of the reformation of the Afghan National Police was initially handed over to Germany. Germany initiated the process of rebuilding the Afghan National Police as a sustainable project with the civilian approach. However, Germany made little effort in reforming of the Afghan National Police. It had deployed its nine instructor and few short term experts to train

the cadets of Afghan National Police in 2003, it increased the number of experts to 25 in 2004, and the number of experts deployed in the 2005 numbered 37. Germany parted its training and assistance to 3,600 commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the Afghan National Police by 2006. In 2003, United States State Department too got involved in further improving the functioning of the Afghan National Police as the progress made by Germany was too slow. Though Germany lead the programme of reforming of the Afghan National Police, United States intervention in the programme filled the gap created due to the slow progress. By the year 2004, United States had already put in US \$224 million in the reformation process of the Afghan National Police. The NATO led forces also built a Police training center in the Afghan capital Kabul. Even after having put in immense effort in the reformation and revival process of the Afghan National Police, the force has not been in the good books of the Afghan public and does not carry the confidence of the people. The process of reformation took off slow but on a cautious note as the significance of this force could not be undermined at any cost and its importance was no lesser than the Afghan National Army. The foreign forces involved in this reformation projects had challenges of resolving the issues emanating from the budget constraints and complications of reintegrating of the more than 5,500 redundant police officers in the initial phase of the programme. (PCR, 2006: 1-2; ISW, 2012: 1-2).

4.9.4 Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG):

In its annual report(UNDP, 2010) explains the every intricacy of Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups. The Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) programme was commenced by the Government of Afghanistan as it was a follow up programme of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration programme with some distinct features in its process of functioning. After the completion of theDisarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration programme in July 2005, there were still many unknown private militias that never existed in the files of Ministry of Defense but posed major threat to the security of the country. Thus, the need of this programme was felt. The Afghan government in coalition with its international allies

started the process of disarming these leftover militias. This programme was initially launched to host the 1, 25,000 men from several militias who significantly posed threat to the Presidential election of September 2005. In the second phase of the programme, it estimated to address the issue of 1, 80,000 men who may not be a real threat to the Government of Afghanistan but they were certainly a major hurdle in the process of restoring the states institutions and mechanisms such as judiciary, civil administration and police mostly at the provincial and district levels (Global-security, 2012: 1-2).

The Government of Afghanistan with the help and support of United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and NATO forces conducted two pilot projects. The two projects included the negotiations of the NATO forces with the local commanders and defining the type of support the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT's) of International Security Assistance forces (ISAF) would need to provide during their course of operation in Afghanistan. UNAMA and UNDP went ahead to arrange financial resources to support the Government of Afghanistan in the successful implementation of the project. Under these pilot projects Afghan New Beginning Program (ANBP) and UNAMA under the leadership of the National Security Council worked with the national as well as international security agencies to map and categorise more than 1,000 such illegal armed groups (Global-security, 2012: 1; MOFA: Japan, 2007: 1).

However, like most of the other programmes, even after several efforts put in, the DIAG programme has not been a successful story mostly due to the lack of credibility of governments as well as international allies' confidence in the programme.

4.9.5 Establishment for Heavy Weapons Cantonment:

The establishment for heavy weapons Cantonment was the second component of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration programme. This programme was initiated by Afghanistan's Ministry of Defence. The Government of Afghanistan and ISAF had agreed under the Military Technical agreement Signed on 9th December 2003. It was agreed that ISAF would help and assist the Afghanistan's Ministry of

Defence in relocation of the weapons. It played a crucial role in relocation of the 12,000 heavy weapons from the community sites and placed the weapons in an orderly manner in the cantonment sites. This was more so necessary as the erstwhile commanders who had earlier owned these weapons and wanted to retain them was viewed as huge security compromise for the future of the nation. This programme in successfully implementing its core fundamentals made sure that all these weapons were placed far from common citizens reach and in the safest regional store sites. This relocation of weapons process undoubtedly reassured the Afghan nationals of the security being in the safest hands as the common Afghan citizen has been very apprehensive due to the past period of Afghanistan wherein these very weapons were commonly used in all public areas (Global-security, 2012: 1-2; Embassy of Afghanistan, 2005: 1).

4.9.6 Destruction of anti-personnel mines and ammunition stockpile programme:

In July 2005, a nationwide project for the destruction of anti-personnel mines and ammunition was launched when the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed an Agreement on Anti-Personnel Mine & Ammunition Stockpile Destruction. This programme of United Nations was initiated by Canada that took the responsibility of disposing and relocating of over 1,00,000 tons of discarded anti-personnel mines and ammunitions that had been existing all through the country making it a major cause of concern. In the initial phase the United Nations led programme moved eight teams for survey, locate and dispose the ammunitions and mines to a safer site that worked under the authority of the Government of Afghanistan. By 22nd July 2006, 20,935 pieces of boxed and 1,96,840 pieces of unboxed ammunition as well as 24,182 heavy and light weapons were handed over to the teams of Afghan New Beginnings Programme. The programme was yet another milestone in bringing the security of Afghanistan to normalcy. The United States too contributed to the programme as its Explosive

Remnants of War Department played a significant role in the process (PCR, 2006: 2; ANBP, 2006: 1-3).

The help and assistance provided by Afghanistan's allies especially the United States led NATO in Afghanistan since their intervention in 2001 has been immense. The Afghan National Army as well as the other security forces have been reformed by the insurmountable help and assistance provided by Afghanistan's western allies. Although, Afghanistan's security forces are still not in the position of averting of fatal attacks and looks very fragile in substance. Thus, Afghan government along with the reconstruction of the war torn country will need to substantially focus on the Afghan National Security Forces and will need to address the challenges they are facing in the existing scenario. Afghanistan's peace and stability measures much remain in the effectiveness of men from Afghan National Army.

CHAPTER: 5
CONCLUSION

Conclusion:

Political uncertainty and insecurity can hugely undermine the overall developmental prospects of Afghanistan. In the present context peace, stability and development in every sphere remains the only way forward for the war torn nation. The potential major political crises comes on top of the major structural challenges that Afghanistan has faced and will continue to face for years to come. The global experience so far has clearly demonstrated that violence and especially protracted internal insurgency which is the core concern has extremely devastating effects to the development, stability and sustainability of a country. The agenda of development remains the key factor of transition to a peaceful and stable nation. In the context of Afghanistan, if there is worsening insecurity, increasing uncertainty and long term instability, it is the Afghanistan's development prospects which will have to bear the brunt. Hence, to achieve or to build a strong foundational prospect for a stable, developing and peaceful Afghanistan, the Afghan government with the help and assistance of its international allies has been able to restructure and reform the Afghan National Army since 2001. Thus, it becomes significant that the reformed Afghan National Army along with its other security forces always keeps itself on tenterhooks in eliminating the elements causing hindrances and obstacles in the reconstruction and further development of the country.

The study, while tracing the historical linkages of the Afghan army from the early 18th century during Hotaki dynasty to the Taliban era till mid-200, has primarily emphasized and dealt with the various aspects involved in the restructuring of the Afghan National Army since 2001. The study has also detailed the Soviet Union's era in Afghanistan and their contribution in the strengthening of the Afghan army. The study, by substantiating facts, has evidentially tried to prove that the effectiveness and competency of the present day Afghan army will lead to the internal stability and security in the country. The Afghan National Army is generally perceived as amongst the strongest institutions that emerged in the aftermath of the United States intervention in Afghanistan post 9/11 attacks in New York. The international allies

have played a major role in the reformation process of the Afghan National Army. However, with the withdrawal of the international forces by the end of 2014 from the still volatile country, the Afghan National Army's ability to consolidate and hold the ground on its own and successfully confront the enemy that lies well within the core territory will be facing a major test. The reconstitution of the Afghan National Army commenced after the Bonn Agreement of December 2001 with the United States taking over the lead role in the reformation of the force. The other ally nations such as Germany, Japan, United Kingdom and Italy divided the responsibility among themselves of revamping the security sector of Afghanistan. Simultaneously, Afghan government with the help of United States started with the process of formulating its policies and objectives with respect to the Afghan army which has been discussed in the research study.

It remains a matter of fact that the Afghan National Army has nourished itself to be a much professional force relatively in 2015 than it was in the first decade of its reformation. However, the issues of rampant factionalism and nepotism in the ranks and files of the force that has kept erupting on a continuous scale has deeply undermined its growth and development which remained no secret to their international allies. Despite the overall improvement in the level of discipline, though still not up to the mark, it has certainly improved to a great extent from its early years of reformation.

The government of Afghanistan in its primary objective needs to focus on the sustainability of the Afghan National Security Forces. It direly requires to assess the performance enhancement of the force from time to time. Simultaneously, Afghan government's move of cutting down the strength of the forces in any circumstances could be harmful as it would in all certainty undermine the confidence, determination and operational procedures of the force which would only lead in compromising the security of the nation at large, says observers who have been working on Afghanistan's security. Another major challenge Afghan government needs to overcome is to find its way to move out of its compulsions of budgetary constraints to keep up the pace of reconstruction of the country while simultaneously properly

funding the building of a stronger Afghan National Army. Apart from the foreign funding, Afghan government can explore its own sources of funding which would primarily come from the abundance of rich natural resources that Afghanistan avails, but to reach to those mining regions it needs to rout out the Taliban extremists who are in possession of these areas of rich natural resources in the eastern part of Afghanistan (Najafizada, 2011). Hence the Afghan National Army, which also is the first line of defense and offence against the Taliban, comes to play a crucial role as they would be the ones who would be designated to confiscate the area and sanitize it for the further processes to be carried out.

In its efforts to deal with Taliban Afghanistan is trying to get the support of its regional allies and engage into constructive negotiations with Pakistan. Afghan government asked Pakistan to negotiate a peace deal with Afghan Taliban. Pakistan on its part agreed to the proposal and thus took the initiative of peace negotiation that took place in Murree town near Islamabad in July 2015, where Pakistan, Afghan Taliban and Afghan government's delegation led by its Deputy Foreign Minister participated with China and United States making their presence as an observer of the negotiating talks. Pakistan's move was hailed by all the concerned nations. The talks were an imperative move towards retaliation process and both sides decided to hold talks again after the Holy month of Ramadan. However, the August 2015 attacks in Kabul jeopardized the whole peace process. There is a stalemate between Afghanistan and Pakistan post Murree talks in the backdrop of the Kabul attacks but the peace dialogue process should continue.

The security scenario on ground post-withdrawal of international forces has been alarming for the Afghan National Army as well as the Afghan government as the extremist elements are gaining ground in the mainland Afghanistan. If these extremist elements are not controlled in a given time period, the possibility of fall of Kabul cannot be completely ruled out in the near future. The huge loss of personnel from the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police is compelling the Afghan government to re-strategize and innovate their operational methods for eliminating the Taliban menace from the territory of Afghanistan.

Despite the struggle and hostile environment in which the Afghan National Army is operating in, US is determined not to leave the operation of eliminating Taliban extremists halfway and have been constantly making sure they end the operation on successful note. The Afghan army fully understands the repercussions for Afghanistan as a state if the Taliban keeps making inroads. This is certainly one of the primary reason that the men from distinct ethnicity have been posing a great example of Afghan unity to eliminate the forces threatening the process of creating a stable and peaceful co-existence in the country.

Afghanistan is slowly and gradually showing signs of development and improvement even though the country is paying a very heavy price in the form of huge casualties of its civilians and its armed forces personnel. Therefore, to take the nation building process further, the country needs to be safe and secure from all sorts of internal as well as external aggressions emanating on regular intervals especially after the departure of the foreign forces. This is where the essence of having a strong and dedicated national army becomes a necessity for the civil strife Afghanistan. Now that the Afghan National Army has completely taken over the security of Afghanistan, it is trying to work closely with other internal security forces. The Afghan army has made its significant strides ever since the process of restructuring and reformation of the force commenced in the year 2002.

Afghanistan's sustenance as a democratic nation depends on its national army as they would be the ones to keep the extremist forces at bay. Afghanistan government fully realizes that to sustain the achieved peace and stability measures, it certainly depends much on its national army. Thus, strengthening and sustaining the enlarged force should be among its major priorities. Hence, in the backdrop of these futile assumptions government confronts the challenges of the budgetary constraints. Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world and with the major reduction in its financial support from its western allies, it would only lead them to further financial crisis since in the present scenario the country is largely dependent on the funds coming from the United States and its NATO allies.

However, Afghanistan has large natural resource reserves and if it is availed by the Afghan government to the best of their needs, the issue of financial crunch can be largely sorted out. The Logar province in the eastern part of Afghanistan bordering Pakistan remains the richest region with immense possession of natural resources such as copper and lithium. The Afghan governments have in past tried to gain control over the resources but has been facing lot of obstacle since the province has been predominantly a hotbed of Taliban militancy over the decades.

Simultaneously the issue of rampant corruption and factionalism in the Ministry of Defense has extensively effected the smooth functioning of the forces who are already facing the daunting challenges posed not just by the resurging Taliban extremists but also by its own political machinery that is functioning in an ineffective manner. Though the challenges arising out of these issues can be addressed without wasting much time but it can be done only if the political will to do so is strong and determined. This is one area which remains the pillar of the sovereignty and integrity of the force and if the things go in the right direction from here on, it would not be too difficult to successfully sustain a reformed force to take on the upcoming challenges more effectively.

The Obama administration's decision of holding back its small part of the force after assessing the ground situation for the assistance and advise mission has been a significant move in the process of further strengthening of the combat capabilities of the personnel of the Afghan national army who, since the end of 2014, have been getting training from the U.S led NATO forces under the aegis of 'Resolute Support Mission - Afghanistan'.

India, on its part, along with the other international allies of Afghanistan is continuously lending its support in strengthening the capability of the Afghan armed forces. India remains the most favorable nations in view of majority of the Afghan nationals. Thus, India is putting all possible efforts as a soft power to maintain the trust it has built over the period of time. India is gradually in a process of revamping

its Afghan policy and has shown the signs of moving beyond its soft power approach to smart power approach.

Amidst this difficult internal situation and as a way to address some of the country's structural challenges, which have been severely compounded by persisting violence, President Ghani staked his early political capital on negotiations with the Taliban. In a bold move, he reached out strongly to Pakistan even subordinating crucial military operations, such as in Helmand, to respond to Pakistan's requests for Afghan military action in the east. Politically controversial and costly for Ghani, this outreach produced at least one meeting between Taliban members, accompanied by Pakistani intelligence officers, and Afghan government representatives in China in late May. The attacks in Kabul in the aftermath of the peace talks jeopardized the whole prospect of further negotiations. In fact, President Ghani also went on to lambast the Pakistani establishment for continuously sponsoring terrorism and instability in Afghanistan.

The regional dimension of the conflict cycle in Afghanistan highlights the need to adopt a regional orientation for the state building process. The 2006 Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS, 2006) report appropriately asserts that without the confidence and cooperation of its neighbors Afghanistan cannot enjoy the stability it needs to reconstruct the country and tackle several nontraditional security threat posed by menaces like drug trafficking.

It is a matter of fact, that it is not easy to chart the future prospects of the security scenario in Afghanistan. This can be said keeping the present situation in view where despite all the mechanism that has been put in place to bring peace and stability in the country amidst the ongoing war between the Afghan forces and the Taliban extremists, success has been too little. The positive factor for Afghan nationals is that the Afghan National Army along with other security agencies are improving their combat capabilities with every passing day with much more determination and combat efficiency.

Despite the various shortcomings and flaws that have emerged from time to time in the functioning and operational procedures of the Afghan National Army in the existing scenario, the Afghan citizens have shown their trust and confidence in the force. The higher credibility of the force among its nationals comes as huge morale booster for the Afghan army in the backdrop of heavy casualties due to regular attacks by the extremist forces. This trust and confidence in the force becomes even more significant as it comes across the ethnic lines which is undoubtedly a progressive and positive sign for the coming future of Afghan government which has worked extensively on eradicating the division of society on the ethnic lines.

On the basis of the study, the effort has been put to ascertain the given hypotheses that the Afghan National Army has definitely been able to successfully bring in the feeling of patriotism and loyalty to the country which was not the case earlier in Taliban rule where the deeply inherited loyalty was only towards the ethnic brethren and warlords fragmenting the country into many factions. Hence, before it is too late to overcome the unnerving security challenges which remain of utmost concern for the democracy to flourish in Afghanistan under an elected government, the government of Afghanistan along with its regional and western allies must go ahead with the sustainable and structural reforms in the Afghan National Army.

After an overall examination and assessment of data and facts from several sources, this study observes that the implementation of policies and programmes initiated by the U.S led NATO forces in coalition with the Afghan government has not been entirely successful and there is still a lot needs to be done to strengthen the overall capability of the Afghan National Army. The job has become even tougher and challenging in the backdrop of the withdrawal of the NATO forces from the combat mission in Afghanistan. The ANA is running out of time and there is a need for more assistance and advice for sustaining and strengthening of the force as the security situation is further deteriorating in the country after the withdrawal of the international forces. Although the reformation of the Afghan National Army has not just become a medium of respectful job for the Afghan youth but this force has been successful in re-energizing the feeling of national unity and has become a huge

symbol of one nationality, patriotism and has harbingered the feeling of one common identity as Afghan national.

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