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CONTENTS

THE BJP'S TRACK TO TRIUMPH IN INDIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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Introduction

The political landscape of India witnessed a historical about-turn when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) decisively ended the decade-long political monopoly of the Indian National Congress (INC). It goes without saying that the unprecedented victory of the BJP in the recent elections has out-distanced even its own major success of 1998. No doubt, there are a number of crucial factors which paved the way for its resounding success. One, of course, is the political and ideological vacuum created by the rival INC. This said, however, this paper seeks to uncover other distinct and multifaceted factors which led to the overwhelming rise of the tide of Hindutva,[1] and this despite the fact that India is touted as being a secular and pluralistic democratic state.

Not surprisingly, the history of the BJP itself is seminal in understanding the emergence of the party which today enjoys the mandate of a majority of Indians. This essay reveals multifarious aspects of this process as they emerge from a detailed historical account of the evolution of the BJP and nationalistic politics within India. Besides, it attempts to assess both the nature of the present BJP government and its likely future policies.

The narrative that follows is divided into five sections. Of these, the first explores the deeper roots of Hindu nationalist movements and ideologies in India. The purpose is to identify the dynamics behind the honing of Hinduness, which culminated into Bharatiya Janata party, and then emerged as a gigantic force opposing the towering secular powers in Indian polity. Part two is an effort to unravel the internal processes of the BJP to explain just how, through a series of trial and error, it positioned itself to become the successful champion of

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Hindutva. The third section deals with the characteristics of different BJP leaders, and of L.K. Advani, Atal Bihari Vajpayee in general and Narendra Modi in particular, so as to envisage the influence of personalities on the domestic politics of India. This hopefully will provide readers with an understanding as to how communal politics, based on religious affiliations, can be manoeuvred and used as an incisive tool by political players to dominate the mindset of people in the interest of their own ideological mastery and political power. The fourth part delineates the trajectory of BJP's development and the factors that led to its rise. Attention is given to the fact that how this urge for change came from the dissatisfaction of the populace with the ruling class of the time, which in this case was Congress and Manmohan Singh. The fifth and the final section presents a hypothetical analysis of the future policies of the recently formed BJP government. In this, the readily discernible trends are augmented by insights drawn from a range of scholars, researchers and political commentators, as well as by the observations this writer has gleaned from his own analysis and study while observing the growing dominance of Hinduization over the Indian polity and its culture. As a conclusion, an attempt is made to draw together the various threads of argument in a cohesive manner so as to address the issues and concerns of contemporary Indian politics.

The road towards BJP: A historical analysis

Hindutva: An ideological patronage

Before investigating the genesis of the BJP, it is necessary to explain the concept of Hindutva and to understand the ideologies that gave birth to it.

Hindutva stands as the ideology and political philosophy of a group of militantly anti-minority, Hindu organisations. These include the BJP, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP—World Council of Hindus), Bajrang Dal (BD), Shiv Sena, Patit Pawan in Maharashtra, the Hindu Jagran Manch in Gujarat, and many more such regional organisations and political wings of India. The common goal of all these organisations is to establish a "Hindu Rashtra", which literally means a Hindu nation. However, Hindu Rashtra has also been often referred to as a "Hindu State" as well as a Hindu nation. The origins of Hindutva date back to the nineteenth century when revivalist and nationalist movements were appearing in India during the mid-1820s and 1830s. These movements served as mere stumbling blocks in blocking the march of colonialism, but they did help revitalize Hindu culture and stirred the Hindu community to its very core.[2]

The concept of Hindutva was first articulated by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (V.D Savarkar; 1883-1966), one of the pioneers of Hindutva, who politicized religion and introduced religious metaphors into politics. He spent his whole life in an unwavering pursuit of single ideal: to establish India as a Hindu nation. Even today, Savarkar remains the first and most original prophet of an extreme, uncompromising rhetorical form of Hindu nationalism[3] in Indian political discourse.[4] The following lines by V.D. Savarkar can be considered as the starting point for the core belief of Hindutva. This, he wrote, "is not a word

but a history. Not only is the spiritual or religious history of our people as at times it is mistaken to be…but a history in full…Hindutva embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole Being of our Hindu race."[5] After assuming role as the President of Hindu Mahasabha in 1936, he directed the organisation to pursue a distinctive Hindu ideology which in turn hailed as the true idealisation of the Hindu nation and Hindu nationalism. Moreover, Savarkar's *Hindutva,* first published in 1923, probably best drew the distinction between Hinduism and Hindutva, the two most contesting doctrines at the time. According to him, Hinduism was concerned only with the theological and spiritual aspects of the religion, but Hindutva incorporated the entire gamut of social, cultural, political and linguistic aspects of Hindu life.[6]

In practice, Savarkar's Hindutva was a revolt against the Khilafat movement and most of his thought is based on his deep-rooted hostility towards political Islam and its followers. He insists that the Hindus are the autochthonous people of India, whereas the religious minorities are outsiders who must adhere to Hindu symbols, which represent India's national culture. According to his view, any religious minority should pay allegiance to the Hindu religion and traditions in public, but can worship their own gods and follow their rituals in private. This applies especially to Muslims and Christians who, in his view, are the proponents of truly un-Indian religions. He does not consider Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs to be non-Hindus. Rather, he sees them as followers of sects closely linked to Hinduism.[7] V. D. Savarkar's political message, which still remains the unifying and driving force for the Hindus of India, was a theme of religious-cultural unity in face of the need to fight their common enemies, the non-Hindus:

> Ye, who by race, by blood, by culture, by nationality possess
> almost all the essentials of Hindutva and had been forcibly
> snatched out of our ancestral home by the hand of violence—
> ye, have only to render wholehearted love to our common
> Mother and recognize her not only as Fatherland (Pitribhu) but
> even as a Holyland (punyabhu); and ye would be most
> welcome to the Hindu fold.[8]

From statements like this, it can easily be deduced that Hindutva advances an extremely exclusivist racial concept that would only embrace the religious communities of India whose origin could be said to be rooted in Indian soil. They must accept Sanskrit, or any other Indian language except Urdu or English, as their mother tongue. Even if an Indian Muslim or a foreigner has converted to Hinduism, he cannot be taken into the fold of Hindutva or the Hindu race, simply because of the blood running in his veins is not of a Hindu race, and so he may be a descendant of an Arab or European or some other non-Hindu people.[9]

The RSS: An organizational patronage

Under British rule, the "communalisation" of politics in the early 1900s is stated to be a core reason for the emergence of RSS, a social organisation ostensibly aimed at freeing "Hindustan" and saving the "Hindu" culture. It also

claimed to be a movement directed towards achieving the cultural and spiritual regeneration of the Hindu nation through the actions and example of a disciplined vanguard that represented the ideal model of Hindu society. In reality, there were other, multiple factors which provided a fertile ground for the foundation of RSS. These included, for instance, the tensions among Muslims and Hindus, both of whom were striving to save their religious identities and interests through political means; the rifts between upper and lower caste Brahmins; and fears of Western cultural domination.[10]

In the era of the Montford political-fiscal "reforms" of 1921, the antagonism between Muslims and Hindus acquired new intensity due to the competition for state patronage. Muslims' interests were taken care of by institutional arrangements such as the separate electorates formed by the British,[11] but the Hindus' interests failed to unite rural India under the banner of the Hindu Mahasabha[12] and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).[13] The Hindu Mahasabha was founded in 1916. It was a nationalist organization that participated in the Indian independence struggle. Both Savarkar and Golwalkar were members and chairpersons of the Mahasabha.[14]

On the one hand, there was this kind of Savarkarism, and on the other hand, pan-Hindu movement gaining an ascendancy which eventually would overshadow the Hindu Mahasabha. Influenced by Savarkar's theory of Hindutva a Mahrashtrian Brahmin, Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889-1940), established the RSS in 1925 at Nagpur. In translation the name literally means "National Volunteer Organisation"[15] and it was a paramilitary organisation with the express mission of organizing Hindus on nationalistic lines. For ideological purposes, the RSS promoted Savarkar's theories with the volunteers being encouraged to read his works (mainly his *Hindutva)*. Two other practices of the organisation also indicated its ideological framework: the Prayer and the *Pratigya* (pledge). The prayer was a salutation to the Hindu Rashtra and a solemn promise by the *Swayamsevaks* (volunteers), reading as follows: "I swear that I shall serve the RSS with all my body, heart and money for in it lies the betterment of Hindus and the country."[16]

Hedgewar's ideological moorings can also be linked to Plato's *Republic* in that the latter served as a model for "radicalising" Hindu youth with the help of history, music and gymnastics. His own special paramilitary skills proved conducive to moulding the minds of the young volunteer *Swayamsevaks* at the different training camps, called *Shakhas*. Hedgewar's life itself was a creditable model: he had spent his impressionable years involved with the Hindu Mahasabha, and he had constantly itched to wrest freedom from the British by means of indigenous arms and patriotism. [17]

The history of the RSS until 1940 could be called the biography of Dr. Keshav Baliram.[18] After his death in the same year he was succeeded by M.S. Golwalkar (1906-1973), under whom the RSS grew rapidly. In January 1948, Nathuram Godse,[19] a Hindu fanatic who had been associated with both the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS, assassinated Mahatma Gandhi. On the one hand the former, under the patronage of Dr. S.P. Mookerjee (1901-1953) who had succeeded Savarkar as president in 1943, abandoned its activities because of the

explosive public reaction. On the other, the government banned the RSS and only lifted the prohibition a year later when that organization agreed to relinquish its social activities and adopt a written constitution. The RSS was again banned during the emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1975-1977, when those arrested included many RSS members. It was banned for the third time in the wake of the demolition of Babri Masjid in December 1992, and that ban lasted for two years. Yet the RSS has grown dramatically since the end of the emergency: it has enlarged its organisational base, multiplied to a number of new affiliates, and expanded its membership. The RSS thus, rose remarkably from about one million in the late 1970s to some eight or nine million activists today.[20] Although the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha were ideologically close, there was inconstant organisational linkage between them, especially after M.S. Golwalkar took power. Many RSS members, maintain that the Hindu Mahasabha represents only *zamindars* (hereditary aristocrat) and *talukdars* (land or district holders), and so clearly incapable of defending Hinduism.[21] In any case, over the past sixty years it is the RSS that has emerged as an increasingly powerful force in India, and that has become the head of what is now known as the Sangh Parivar,[22] or family of Hindu nationalist organizations, whose influence spreads across all sectors of Hindu society. These organizations include the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, founded in 1948 and now the largest student organization in India; the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), founded in 1955 and today the largest trade union in the country; the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), created in 1951; and its successor, the BJP, as the political arm of the RSS; the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), founded in 1964; and its thuggish offshoot, the Bajrang Dal established in 1984 to represent the more explicitly religious wing; and the newly formed Swadeshi Jagaran Manch, founded in 1991 to protect Indian economic self-reliance from the threat of foreign capital.[23]

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh: A political patronage

At the time of Partition, the British handed over power to the Muslim League in Pakistan and the Congress Party in India. The Congress had long claimed not to represent only Hindus, but Muslims as well, and gained a larger share of the vote. The reality was otherwise, however, as in the elections of 1946, all the Hindus had voted for Congress and almost all Muslims had voted for Muslim League. This fact was very evident and both Gandhi and Sardar Patel were aware of it. For this very reason they insisted on including non-Congress Hindu leaders such as Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the government of "Free India." These non-Congress Hindu leaders worked in collaboration with Sardar Patel and the other Hindu nationalist leaders of the Indian National Congress, but simultaneously disagreed with Nehru on many issues.[24] "The situation became worse," writes Professor Bal Raj Madhok¸ "after Sardar Patel's illness and the Nehru-Liaqat Pact which left the Hindus of East Bengal to the mercy of [the] Pakistani government. Their persecution and forcible eviction from East Pakistan to India continued."[25] He further insists that these facts were the basic impetus for Dr.

S.P Mookerjee's resignation from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet on 8 April
1950, which was then approved in Parliament on 14 April. In the resignation
documents, Mr. S. P. Mookerjee[26] warned that Nehru's policies would be
devastating for the nation, and would lead to a situation that might become
worse than that in pre-partition times, an act appreciated by Hindu nationalists.
After resigning from Congress and Nehru's cabinet, S.P Mookerjee turned for
support to all sections of Hindu society. But he focused in particular on those
connected with Arya Samaj[27] and the RSS in the hope they would throw their
weight behind a proposed new party — the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS). Nehru
meanwhile warned that promoting the cause of Hindutva would doom India. He
declared in his speech at Benares that the Hindu Mahasabha was a great threat to
the Indian people and polity.[28]

  Meanwhile, with the banning of the RSS because of its fanaticism,
which was highlighted by Nathuram Godse's traumatic murder of Gandhi,
Sangh Parivar's political influence became vulnerable. This had inflicted a
major blow on the RSS organisational enterprise, and its leaders felt the pressing
need to find representation either in parliament or the state assemblies. The RSS
and the Hindu Mahasabha had relied mainly on Congress leaders to drive their
objectives in the political sphere, and especially on Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
(1875-1950). He was known to patronise and support the RSS, but the latter lost
this ally when Patel died on 15 December 1950. This event put further pressure
on the worried RSS and Mahasabha leaders to form their own political wing to
confront the Western liberal ideology of the majority of Congress. In addition,
Nehru's animosity towards the radical RSS also compelled its leaders to approve
the forming of the BJS as a separate wing on the 21 October 1951. Initially
established at the provincial level, it later spread throughout India and with it,
the baggage of the RSS.[29] Furthermore, BJS had also emerged from an earlier
Faustian pact between the RSS and S.P Mookerjee, who at the time was the
chief of the Hindu Mahasabha. The latter then was aware of the constituent
assembly's resolution of 3 April 1948, urging a ban on "communal"
organisations. Since the Mahasabha had refused to end its exclusion of non-
Hindus, S.P Mookerjee did a deal with the RSS — he would set up a nominally
non-denominational party while the RSS would provide the cadres, and the
muscle. Before long, therefore, the RSS began to dictate terms.[30]

  Within the Indian spectrum of political parties, the BJS could be
described as "reactionary", "communal", "Hindu revivalist", "ultra-rightist," and
"militant nationalist" in terms of its organisational behaviour and ideological
orientation. Unlike Congress, the BJS could be called "rightist" because of its
rejection of "doctrinaire Socialism"—but its programs and affiliates
convincingly make it more radical than the rest of the so-called radical parties of
the country.[31] The principles laid down at its birth committed the new party to
stand for rebuilding India on the basis of Bharatiya *"sanskriti"* and *"maryada"*
(culture and tradition). It explicitly rejected the Western-style democratic
patterns imported into India by Congress, as is exemplified by the views of Deen
Dayal Upadhyaya. He once openly admitted that:

We therefore reject all concepts of "Right" and "Left" or of "Socialism" and "Capitalism." The life of a country with a vast and rich heritage like ours cannot into fixed patterns imported from abroad.

Again, in an interview L. K Advani asserted that "the truth is that BJS is neither leftist nor rightist. It is forward looking." Similarly, Atal Bihari Vajpayee in his Presidential address at Bhagalpur in 1972, referred to Indian traditions: "Jana Sangh is the party which believes in looking backward in its attempt to move forward." As these statements clearly indicate, the agenda of BJS was to build an Indian nation around the theme of unity or "oneness": one people, one country and one nation, with the preservation of the old age values of Indian life, culture and religion.[32]

At the time of the Jana Sangh's formation, India was still enmeshed in problems arising out of Partition. The biggest worries were the continuation of the conflict with Pakistan, especially in Jammu-Kashmir, and the systematic annihilation of Hindus in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Widespread public discontent existed regarding the government's Pakistan policy, which in effect was only an extension of the perceived Congress policy of "appeasing" the Muslims. Amidst this furore, the supreme priority of the BJS was to lay maximum emphasis on warning and preparing the country against the Pakistan danger. The Jana Sangh's leadership was fully alert to the fact that for a newly emancipated country like India, national security and a robust military is as imperative as economic and industrial growth. This is evident in Jana Sangh's first manifesto, adopted on 21 October 1951, in which great stress was laid on making the country "prosperous," "powerful" and "united."[33]

Hindu Nationalism now emerged for the first time as a credible political philosophy in an independent India when the Jana Sangh stepped forth to challenge Congress hegemony in the 1950s and 1960s.[34] Initially, the party's attempt proved abortive but its participation in the Janata Party coalition of 1977 in fact mirrored the erosion of Congress power.[35] From 1977 to 1979, Morarji Desai's unparalleled initiatives within the Congress badly damaged the reputation of the Indira Raj.

BJP: A political party formed

The BJS had remained on the margins of Indian politics until the RSS initiated a cow slaughter campaign, under the aegis of Hindu Vishwa Parishad (VHP), in 1966. However, this campaign proved rewarding for the BJS in the parliamentary elections of 1967. A decade later the BJS joined a disparate group of other political parties to collectively create the Janata Party. Much to its own surprise, this coalition defeated Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the INC following her "National Emergency" in 1975. Yet the Janata coalition could not sustain its power and succumbed swiftly to conflicts within its leadership in 1977. The Hindu nationalists of the BJS, newly re-formed as the BJP, themselves re-entered the Indian political fray with new strategies on the 5 April 1980. They were led by the party's president, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who would later become the prime minister. Henceforth the BJP's future success in Indian

politics was mainly due to the downward spiral of the Congress, despite a brief revival of the party's fortunes. The BJP now invoked "Gandhian Socialism"[36] and adopted the symbolically significant green, identified with Islam, as well as the saffron of the old Jana Sangh in its flag.[37]

It is noteworthy that the period of BJP's history from 1980 to 2004 has been called one of radicalization. During these years the party employed as many popular policies as possible.[38] Under Atal Bihari Vajpayee's leadership, the BJP managed to win only two seats in the elections of 1984. Vajpayee then remained in place for the next two years, after which Lal Krishna Advani succeeded him as party leader. Since then, the BJP gradually developed into a major political force. Under Advani, it adopted a purist stance as the defender of the Hindu society[39] and its supporters began to refer to the Congress tenet of secularism as *pseudo-secularism* (minority appeasement).[40] Advani himself is considered to be the BJP's saviour and builder. He is credited for taking the BJP from the ashes to the sun, and in 1998 the party entered another national coalition government. Having successfully capitalized on the issue of mosque demolition and the resulting communal polarization, the BJP had won 161 seats in the Lok Sabah in the general elections of 1996. The BJP was thus the largest parliamentary party and Vajpayee took over the helm of the state. Yet his tenure lasted a mere thirteen days before, having failed to maintain his majority in the assembly, he had to resign and a coalition of regional parties formed a new government. This also proved to be fragile and short lived. For the midterm elections of 1998, the BJP formed the National Democratic Alliance and Vajpayee again became prime minister. However, this coalition also fragmented in May 1999,[41] when AIADMK's[42] leader Jayalalitha withdrew her support and forced fresh elections.

An insight into the BJP

A cocktail of Hindu nationalism

The BJP is a right-leaning, Hindu nationalist party. It also is the first major party to mobilise overtly on the basis of religious identity and to adopt a clearly anti-Muslim stance. In comparison to both the Congress and the Janata parties, BJP members are much more disciplined and better organised. They join the party's cadres after a prolonged apprenticeship while within the party itself, the lines of authority are relatively clear and well respected.[43] Technically, the BJP is a different organization from Jana Sangh. Yet they were identical in structure and leadership and some political scientists call the BJP a direct descendant of the BJS. In *India after Gandhi,* the historian Ram Chandra Guha writes that regardless of the factional divisions inside the Janta Party's government, its tenure saw an increase in support for the RSS. Evidence of this was the communal violence of early 1980s. Even so, the BJP sought to gain wider support by adopting a moderate stance regarding the "Hindu nationalist urge of its predecessors."[44]

On the other hand, the BJP has a national presence and has been awarded the status of a national political party by the Election Commission of

India. On the surface, it makes no official claim to be a religious party either by its constitution or mandate. Nonetheless, it emerged from the BJS and recruited the RSS members who have thus had great influence over issues of leadership. Indeed, the BJS justifiably felt a lack of freedom in exercising its own autonomous ideological goals because the RSS' agenda controlled its politics. Moreover, the ideological similarities between the RSS and the BJP (like their religious credentials) have been vehemently debated over the years within Indian political circles. And their kinship is evident in the BJP's continuing informal and organic, rather than functional and formal, relations with the RSS; the BJP has acquired the mantle of being a "Hindu fundamentalist" organisation.[45] In addition, it has largely rejected the Nehruvian concept of an Indian nationalism that ignores the cultural and religious context of nationalism.[46] A Hindu nationalist is essentially different from a Hindu traditionalist: the nationalists look more towards revivalism while a traditionalist is backward-looking.[47] The BJP represents Hindu nationalism.

A number of factors have prevented the BJP from moving in a wholly centrist direction. First and the most important are its close ties to the RSS and a Hindu religious organisation, the VHP. Since the VHP's formation in 1960, it has tried to represent Hindus of India in a chauvinist and exclusionary fashion. In 1960 it was mainly active in converting Muslims, who, it claimed, had been forcibly converted to Hinduism. Again in 1980, it shored up to unite Hindu support for the construction of temple in Ayodhya. There is a marked difference between the cadres and orientations of these nationalists' organisations: for instance, the RSS mainly advocates economic nationalism, the BJP economic liberalization. The VHP has been implicated in provoking violence whereas the BJP seeks stability. Despite such differences, the BJP has maintained its close relationship to the RSS and the VHP. But it is hard to rupture the connection between the RSS and the BJP since many, if not all, high-ranking BJP officials have RSS backgrounds and ongoing ties with it. Furthermore, the RSS always supports the BJP in electoral campaigns and has intervened to mend rifts within the party's branches in various states, thus helping to avoid the splits that plague so many other political parties in India. Although the BJP's relationship to the VHP has been confrontational at times when the BJP is in office, it has been close as well. VHP activists also regularly campaign for the BJP in state and general elections, and the VHP's role in polarizing the electorate along Hindu-Muslims lines after the premeditated riots was always done in such a way as to be of outright political benefit to the BJP.[48]

Long obscured by other issues, the deeply rooted racism and resentment felt by the Hindu nationalists regarding Muslims has come to the surface over time. The rise of Hindu nationalism along ethnic lines was feared by many Indian Muslims. This despair is evident in an op-ed piece published in *The Times* (3 August 1993) by the Indian journalist Khushwant Singh. "The most disturbing development," he wrote, "is the increasing number of senior civil servants, intellectuals, and journalists who have begun to talk the language of Hindu fundamentalism, protesting that religious minorities, particularly the Muslims, have pushed them beyond the limits of patience." He later concludes

sadly that while India may retain a secular facade, it "will no longer be the India we have known over the past 47 years" and "the spirit within will be that of militant Hinduism."[49]

The demolition of Babri Masjid: The dark side of BJP's politics

The site of Babri Masjid was considered to have been the location of the temple of the Hindu god Rama.[50] Consequently, the VHP and BJP coalition's united front demanded that Ram Mandir should replace Babri Masjid because India was a Hindu country, and it was the responsibility of the government to preserve the symbols of Hindu civilization. This proposal was based on the unspoken and yet obvious assumption that the Muslim rulers of India were tyrants who had mercilessly humiliated Hindus.[51] It was around this issue that the BJP launched its mass mobilization of religious nationalism.

As an issue, Babri Masjid epitomizes communal violence and communal riots, and more broadly points to societal backwardness.[52] The associated Ayodhya campaign was the greatest mobilization since Gandhi's *Satyagraha* (nonviolent resistance).[53] In the 1980s, the BJP benefited considerably from tensions roused by the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute,[54] and cashed in on the religious symbolism. The Ayodhya issue was cleverly manipulated and instrumental in building support for the BJP in the coming elections.[55] This assembling strategy helped the BJP both to define its political agenda and to enhance its limited social base so as to become an all-Indian political party.[56] A vision of Hindutva that had backing from a historical perspective, and the "Indian-ness" championed by the BJP, were extremely effective as means for gaining support from among the Hindu population, and Babri Masjid perfectly seemed to fit the bill. On the one hand, no party dared to oppose the BJP when it raised the Ram Temple issue.[57] But on the other, the BJP itself developed an argument that was replete with criticism of the "minorityism" of secular parties, the Congress being the main target.[58] L. K. Advani reportedly expressed his satisfaction that the Rama movement had contributed to the BJP's success.[59] The communal activism of VHP and BJP was seriously criticized by those who thought that Babri Masjid issue was in fact a conflict between *Indianness* and *Hinduness*.[60]

The 1990s were marked by a power vacuum that resulted from the Indian people's apparent rejection of the legacy of Nehru, and this led to a decade of political strife.[61] The rise of the BJP was not primarily due to its own endeavours, but in large part because the Congress had sown the seeds of its own defeat in 1970s: the Indira Raj's internal weaknesses had created a power vacuum which came to benefit the emerging wave of the BJP.[62]

Idiosyncratic analysis under BJP

L. K Advani: A brilliant nurturer

Born on 8 November 1927 in Pakistan (Karachi) and having joined the RSS at age fifteen in 1942, Lal Krishna Advani is remembered as the leader who nurtured Hindu nationalistic politics in India. Holding many important positions

in RSS, he remained a close friend and ally of Vajpayee, and at times alternated portfolios with him.[63] Without any doubt, Advani became a major figure in the Indian political arena, yet he lacks the charisma of Vajpayee.[64]

After migrating to India, Advani joined the BJS as the joint secretary of Rajasthan Province; after his appointment as party secretary in 1958 in Delhi, he became prominent nationally. During the "National Emergency" imposed by Indira Gandhi in the 1970s, he vehemently demanded the restoration of democratic rights, and as a result, faced 18 months imprisonment. Despite this, he remained in the cabinet as Minister of Information and Broadcasting under the Janata government (1977-1979), and after the birth of BJP in 1980s, Advani was always there to support it. In the BJP, he began as the general secretary before holding the position of party president during 1986-1989.[65] Furthermore, he is credited with introducing the *"Yatra Politics."*[66]

After the electoral defeat of the Congress Party in 1989 Lok Sabha (in Sanskrit, "Lok" signifies "people" and "Sabha" signifies "assembly")[67] V.P Singh became prime minister as the head of a coalition ministry which had the BJP's external support. The Singh government resolved to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission[68] on allocating 27 per cent of all government jobs and posts in institutions of higher education to a group of "backward castes." This placed the BJP in a tight spot between its upper-caste support base and the lower-caste electorate whose votes were crucial for the success of its Hindu nationalist political agenda. Thanks to the fact it had not officially entered the coalition, the BJP was free to launch a campaign condemning this policy. In order to unite the Hindu community and electorate, Advani launched a 10,000-kilometer-long (approximately 6,214 miles) *rath yatra* or (chariot pilgrimage) in a van fashioned to look like a mythological chariot. His route took him across the heartland of North India to Ayodhya where, on 30 October 1990, the construction of Rama temple was to begin. Riding on the twin pillars of Mandal and Masjid, the BJP engineered a hike in its share of the vote from 7.5 per cent in the elections 1984 to 21 per cent in 1991.[69] It was Advani who had taken the reins of the BJP into his hands after its debacle in 1984 elections. From 1984 to 1998, the BJP rose from almost nowhere to form the government. The following table shows the BJP's increasing electoral success:[70]

Election Year	Vote Share	Lok Sabha Seats
1984	7.5	2
1989	11.8	89
1991	20.7	120
1996	20.29	161
1998	25.59	182

Source: Khalid Mahmud, "BJP's Identity Crisis and Misgovernance," IRS, 2003.

Advani was particularly instrumental in striking strategic alliances at both the state and national levels. He could rightly be called the pioneer of

forming the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government which, led by the BJP, took power in 1998. His own ranking rose from the post of Minister of Home Affairs in 1998, to Deputy Prime Minister in 2002, and later, after the defeat of the BJP in 2004, he served as leader of the opposition in parliament. While Advani's career had its extreme ups and downs, his robust and unflinching stands against secularism make him a somewhat controversial figure. Hindutva (Hindu First) for him remained a centrifugal force throughout and being a hardliner, he might well have been deprived of the post of Prime Minister. All in all, his constitutional reforms that restricted the number of ministers in both union and state cabinets, his emphasis on overhauling electoral system, and his initiatives for curbing defection and criminalization were the most obvious steps he took towards realising his vision of Indian politics.[71]

Vajpayee: The true alternative to the Congress monopoly

Chris Ogden cites the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) as being central in the reshaping and restructuring of the inherited norms and taboos of Hindutva during 1998-2004. This was a period of political advances and reversals but, as a premier, Vajpayee can be credited with encapsulating "Hinduness" as an inherited ideology that aims to serve "Hindu, Hindi and Hindustan" — a triptych that entered the Indian political discourse. The rise of Hindutva and the deeply rooted communal politics have rejuvenated "Hinduness" and so created a more pervasive outlook with regard to the principles and ideologies of "Hindutva." These new trends and behaviours lasted both during the BJP-led NDA tenure, and afterwards. The result was a paradigm shift at the expense of the competing normative trends of secular and liberal domestic politics espoused by the INC.[72]

Despite the radical promise of its 1998 election manifesto, the diverse nature of the NDA coalition constrained the BJP's activities while in government. From within the NDA's National Agenda (drafted by all its coalition partners), the BJP planned to enact a Uniform Common Civil Code (negating special provisions and personal laws for Muslims and other minorities), to build a temple in Ayodhya on the site of the destroyed Babri Masjid, and to remove Article 370 from the Indian Constitution (providing the state of Jammu and Kashmir with a special status), in opposition to the consensus of the coalition. The coalition partners, however, did agree with the BJP's pledge to "exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons." Apart from this, the BJP held key positions in the cabinet: Atal Vajpayee served as Prime Minister, L.K. Advani as Home Minister, Yashwant Sinha and then Jaswant Singh, as Finance Ministers, and Murli Manohar Joshi as Minister of Education. This dominance of the BJP in NDA cabinet allowed the promotion and injection of Hindutva's core beliefs, and their injection directly into government policies, and then into Indian society.[73] With Vajpayee at its head, the NDA coalition thus played a cardinal role in maintaining, and indeed, making the norms and ways of Hindutva a central factor in Indian politics. Now that the BJP has again regained power with Narendra Modi as Prime Minister, it is clear that the

untiring efforts of Vajpayee and his fellows to insert a refurbished Hindutva into Indian political life have borne their fruit.

Vajpayee is the only Indian political leader to be elected nine times to the Lok Sabha.[74] He also has been elected twice to the Rajya Sabha.[75] As political leader, he is gifted with a unique combination of oratory, charisma, and vision.[76] During the election campaign of 1999, commentators noted that Vajpayee is a moderate leader with centrist agenda.[77] He has been in the Indian political arena since Gandhi launched the *Quit India Movement*. Since independence he has involved himself with pro-Hindu, right-wing politics. A founding member of the BJS, he was accorded the portfolio of foreign affairs when the BJS merged with Janata Party of Morarji Desai in 1977. Then, in 1998, he formed the BJP-led coalition that ruled India until 2004, and guided his government to head some of the toughest periods of India's history. It was also on his watch that India went nuclear, and then suffered some of the worst sanctions ever imposed on that country.[78] He oversaw both India's operations during the Kargil crisis, as well as the BJP's successful efforts to "saffronise"[79] India under the guise of that issue.[80] Indeed, the international reaction to nuclear developments in South Asia on the eve of India's nuclear test[81] seemingly harmed his state's good relations with Western nations;[82] but by the test itself, the BJP broke completely with the legacy of Nehru on this issue.[83] His government was at the helm of affairs when the Kargil war[84] became a reality. Yet his reign in India also saw high economic growth, and this despite the boycott of the Great Powers. And despite the ups and downs in the region's strategic milieu, Vajpayee attempted to keep the peace with Pakistan by establishing an inter-state bus service.[85] Domestically, Vajpayee repeatedly reassured the Indian public that under his government that every citizen would be treated equally, and this regardless of ethnic and religious differences.[86] Although he is best known for his vibrant economic policies which took the Indian rate of Indian economic growth to 8 per cent in fiscal year 2003-2004, and which drastically transformed areas of domestic importance like tax policies, small-scale industry, and foreign investment.[87] It is paradoxical that BJP had criticized Congress over economic policies, yet when it came into power, it finally surrendered to the realization that economic liberalization was a fact to reckon with.[88]

Adieu to Vajpayee's premiership

Nearing the end of his tenure, Vajpayee called elections early in 2004, almost six months prior to schedule. On this occasion the NDA tried to take credit for the country's rapid economic growth of country and made use of campaign slogans such as *Chamakta Baharat* (India Shining). Instead, the shock victory for Mrs. Gandhi's Congress party arose after a month-long campaign which had focused mainly on whether India's economic boom, built on information technology, had lifted the fortunes of the nation's one billion people.[89] The results showcased a U-turn when, surprisingly, the NDA suffered an unexpected and heavy defeat. It won only 189 seats with vote share of (39.5 per cent) as compared to the Congress led United Progressive Alliance (UPA)

that secured 225 seats (vote-share 36.8 per cent) in the 15 Lok Sabha elections. Meanwhile, the BJP only managed to obtain 138 seats with (22.2 per cent) vote share in comparison to congress win of 145 seats (26.5 per cent vote share). The latter then formed the government (UPA) and Manmohan Singh, a second non-Gandhi Prime Minister became Vajpayee's successor. Voter's turnout was around fifty eight per cent, total electorates in this election were 67, 1487930 while total number of votes polled were 38, 9342364.[90] Again, in the general elections of 2009, the BJP-NDA lost additional 22 seats when the number of seats dropped to 116, while Congress by adding 60 seats further strengthened their hold.[91] The tiny chart below shows the performance of various alliances in the 15th Lok Sabha elections of 2009.[92]

Results of General Elections 2009 (543/543)	
Alliance	Seats Won
NDA	160
UPA	262
Third Front	79
Fourth Front	28
Others	14

Source Adapted: <http://electionaffairs.com/results/ge2009/trends_partywise.html>.

Narendra Modi: A multilayered persona

"I am nationalist. I am a patriot. Nothing is wrong."[93] Narendra Modi appears to be both a complex and a simple man. But it is clear that his stage-presence and message during the campaign was a major factor in the BJP victory, as is evident in frequent references to the "Modi wave". Rather than identifying Modi with BJP, the public came to identify BJP with Modi. Modi's popularity surpasses that of the BJP. As in the United States, these recent elections were not between parties but between the leaders.[94] He is viewed as a true representative of quick-decision making while his combative personality has also captivated the Indian public. He has come to represent the "change" which the Indian public apparently craves. Equally important, as compared to the traditional leaders who are born and groomed in elite families, Modi's story represents the journey of a common man. Time and again, he has identified himself as a common man[95] and repeatedly recounted the tale of his life's journey to inspire his supporters. He himself seems to believe that it is probably a story that relates to every common man of India.

Modi's past in the RSS adds more spice to his image as a somewhat controversial nationalistic leader. Since his boyhood, he was raised in the nationalist RSS and remained a Sangh *pracharak*[96] for most of his life. As narrated earlier, the RSS was formed in 1925 mainly for promoting a revival of Hindu civilization. It espouses the philosophy of Hindutva,[97] according to which being Indian means being Hindu,[98] and it stresses the need to preserve a common Hindu cultural heritage and identity.[99] During the 2014 campaign, the way in which volunteers from RSS worked selflessly for Modi was truly impressive. Of course, at second thought this service may not have been all that selfless since, in turn, the RSS expects Modi to work not only for India, but also

for the RSS.[100] Although the latter does not ostensibly impose its aggressive nationalistic program upon Modi, its goals are expected to weigh heavily in his decision-making. Firstly, top and experienced members of the RSS would likely advise him and secondly, the RSS mentality may well have a bearing on his policies. Although the BJP leadership has warned RSS volunteers against expecting personal advantages,[101] the extent to which the BJP will seek to please leaders of the RSS leadership may still not remain a moot question.

While the decisions of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi were almost always influenced by their personal advisers and lobbyists, Modi's style is clearly autocratic.[102] He cares little for lobbyists and more for talent and merit — or so his supporters, at least, believe. If such is the case, the impact of red-tape and bureaucratic privilege may be significantly diminished[103] since the prospect of Modi's government stands as a potential one-man show.[104]

Gujarat: A determining factor in Modi's politics

> *The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere*
> *The ceremony of innocence is drowned;*
> *The best lack all convictions, while the worst*
> *Are full of passionate intensity.*[105] *(W. B. Yeats)*

For many, the carnage of the Gujarat riots of February 2002 have left gory handprints on the page of history, and the downing cries of many, when the frail shrieks of despairing Muslims were choked and mercilessly silenced forever, still echo in their consciousness. Their reactions are epitomized by the following comments on the poignant episode of Gujarat and the emerging mindset of Hindutva:

> A spectre is haunting the nation. The spectre of communalism. The rough beast, its hour come round at last, has been unleashed and slouches its way across the land. Even those who turn away cannot escape its breath, now slowly poisoning the air. As the curtain begins to descend on the first phase of the saffron regime, they watch in disbelief, realisation dawning that what has been witnessed thus far is merely an overture, a prologue to the tragedy of history repeating itself.[106]

Upendra Baxi poignantly explicates Gujarat riots that how majoritarian democratically elected government owes concrete duties to devise ways and means that facilitate communal revenge:

> Gujarat brings home to us with poignant intensity the consummation of the practices of communalisation of governance. These manifold practices reach, at the end of the day, the same ends: minority communities may exercise and enjoy only those basic human rights that the ideology of Hindutva may justify.[107]

Over 2,000 people, mainly Muslims, perished in the Gujarat riots, and more than 150,000 people were forced into refugee camps. This bleeding of

Muslims continued in over twenty-one cities and sixty-eight provinces throughout Gujarat. Ostensibly, the motive was to take revenge for the accused killing that resulted from the torching of two train coaches of the Sabarmati Express, by a Muslim mob, at the Godhra Train station on 27 February 2002. In that violence some 57 passengers, including Sangh Parivar activists, were burnt by fire.[108] These activists or *kar sevaks* (volunteers) were returning from Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, where they had supported a campaign led by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) or VHP for constructing a temple for the Hindu god Ram on the site of the sixteenth-century mosque that militants had destroyed in 1992. That mosque, the VHP claims, had been built on a site regarded as the birthplace of Ram. As a consequence of the Hindu-Muslim violence that followed the mosque's destruction, thousands of lives were lost in the city of Bombay and elsewhere during 1992 and 1993. Thereafter the "Ayodhya campaign", which had the effective backing of the BJP and its allies, had continued to raise the spectre of further violence.

The three-day vengeful killing spree by Hindus — between 28 February and 2 March 2002 — left hundreds dead and tens of thousands dispossessed and homeless as a result of the widespread looting and burning of Muslim homes, shops, restaurants, and places of worship. Tragically consistent with the longstanding pattern of attacks on minorities and Dalits (or so-called untouchables), and with previous episodes of large-scale communal violence, in Gujarat scores of Muslim girls and women were brutally raped before being burnt to death in what proved to be the country's worst religious bloodletting in a decade. Nonetheless, the immediate reaction of Narendra Modi, then the BJP's chief minister of the state of Gujarat, was to charge that these heinous events were being orchestrated by Pakistan's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence agency), although he could provide no evidence for such a highly inflammatory proposition.[109]

K.N. Panikkar states that communal politics, "is essentially the manipulation of social consciousness based on religion for political purposes."[110] This view is widely shared and supported by other major scholars such as Brass Paul and Steven Wilkinson. In fact, BJP's crucial role in orchestrating the violence in Gujarat is demonstrated by the "Wilkinson Model" (see figures 2-4 below), which clearly indicates that surprisingly, the level of violence appeared to be lowest in the constituencies or districts where the BJP had won majority votes in 1998, and highest in those in which the BJP could expect to face the most intense competition in the forthcoming elections. The BJP's grip on the state had begun to fade; the party's performance appeared in the civic and district panchayat elections in 2000. After widespread criticism of its response to a massive earthquake, the BJP lost two by-elections in September 2001: one for the State Assembly, and one for the Parliament in Delhi. This led to the resignation of the Chief Minister, to be replaced by Modi. Under Modi, however, the BJP lost two further Assembly seats in three by-elections in February 2002. In those four by-elections for the State Assembly, its vote fell on an average by 14 percentage points from 1998. A complete revival of the BJP in

Gujarat was clearly vital, particularly for the future career of the new Chief Minister, before the state balloting scheduled for the end of 2002.[111]
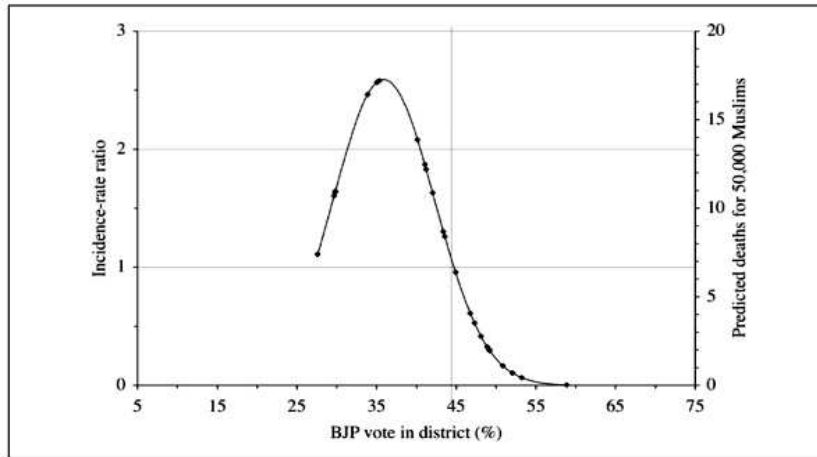
Figure 2. Association between BJP vote and killings (Model 2)

Model 2 aggregates BJP vote at the district level constituencies.
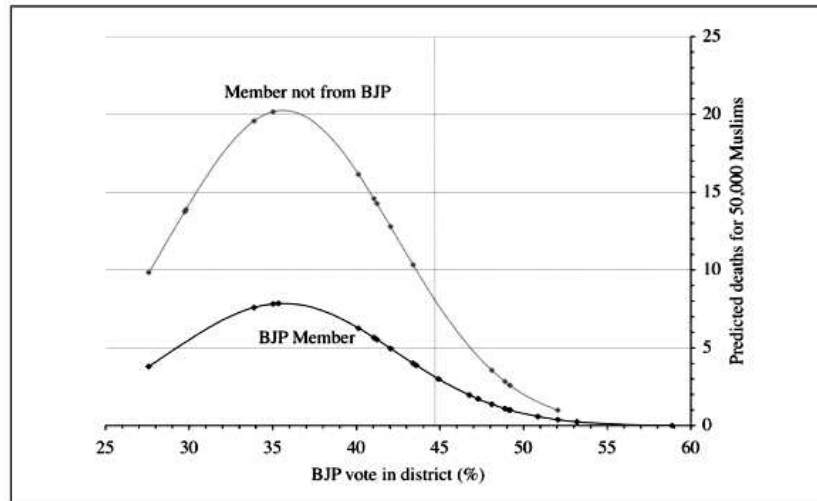
Figure 3. Association between BJP vote and killings (Model 3)

Figure 4 below clearly indicates that how the BJP's vote share changed from 1998 to 2002. The unit of analysis is the district. Although thousands of Muslims had not returned to their homes by December, they generally remained within the same district, and thus electoral results should not have been affected by the exodus of refugees. The independent variable is the total number of killings expressed as death rate per 1,000 Muslim populations. In short, there is strong quantitative evidence that violence did in fact yield electoral rewards for the BJP.
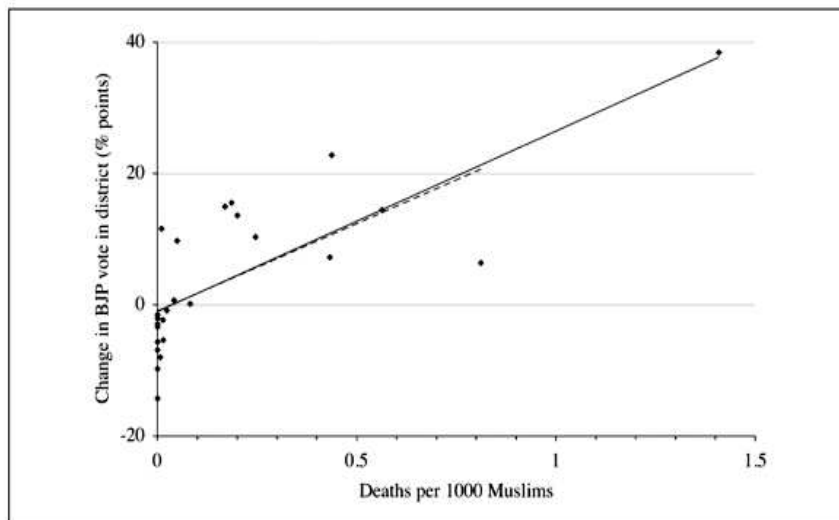
Figure 4 · Association between killings and change in BJP vote, 1998 to 2002
Source: Raheel Dhattiwala and Michael Biggs, The Political Logic of Ethnic Violence: The Anti-Muslim Pogrom in Gujarat, 2002.[112]

　　　　Others are not so cynical regarding the involvement and motives of the BJP and Modi. For example, Madhu Purnima Kishwar writes that:

> When BJP in general and Modi in particular, began to be singled out for attacks and demonised as no other politician before or after in known history, one felt an instinctive uneasiness about [the] Hate and Oust Modi campaign. This uneasiness grew as it became obvious over the years that most of the NGOs, activists, journalists, [and] academics involved in Modi's demonization enjoyed[the] active patronage of the Congress Party and some even got huge financial support for carrying out a sustained campaign against Modi.[113]

　　　　Even so, one can only wonder how Modi, after having been labelled as culpable and the manipulator of Gujarat pogrom by most media outlets, Human Rights Watch, umpteen groups of NGO's and activists from all over the world, retained his position. Yet being a credible politician, Modi aptly defended himself and portrayed this entire episode as having been fabricated by the Congress or "alien hands" for the sole purpose of defaming him and hindering his political ascendance. His aggressive propaganda campaign against the opposition parties, media and civil institutions worked. The slogan of "Gaurav Yatra" became a corner stone of his campaign, through which he provided 50 million Gujarati's with a sense of "unity" and "self-respect." The election results showed that this propaganda campaign had paid high dividends in terms of votes. The BJP obtained more than two-thirds of the seats in the Legislative Assembly (and 49.85 per cent of the votes). This is a clear testimony that his aggressive propaganda, which he based on two forms of identity — religious

and cultural — had reached wide sections of the electorate, both rural and urban.[114]

This communal issue aside, the more general "Gujarat Model" also provided strength for Modi's campaign. The economic development and quick decision-making that marked his tenure as Gujarat's chief minister undoubtedly was decisive. He gave infrastructure to Gujarat by building thousand miles of highways, he provided the state with a vastly improved infrastructure while his promotion of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) took Gujarat to a whole new level of progress and prosperity. Modi's model was based on supply-side economics which stipulate that if the government fulfils the needs of individual citizens, the economy will flourish.[115] When he raised the slogan of "India first," he actually meant the implementation of Gujarat Model in the whole India, and this is what appealed to the public. Modi called his model a "pro-people governance" model and by it, he converted Gujarat from an arid backwater into a hub of economic activity.[116] After the Gujarat holocaust, the acceptance of Modi was either a result of his controversial character, or the popularity of the Gujarat governance model.[117]

Since coming to power in 1995, the BJP government in Gujarat developed a specific Gujarati cultural ethos around the issue of development. The party adopted a neo-liberal approach to economic liberalization while wrapping its policies in ethno-nationalist garb.[118] Modi has further advanced these policies. India is no doubt a predominantly Hindu country, but that does not necessarily entail others being subjected to violence like that of the Gujarat Inferno.[119] As a matter of fact religious politics can also invite infiltration from the near neighbours[120] while such as that of Gujarat 2002 will cast Modi a tyrant bent on eroding individual equality.[121] The vision of a Gujarat in which people have always lived unitedly in a communal sense, with programs for creating wealth and eradicating poverty served as the top-most priority during the general electoral campaign of 2014[122] and Modi recurrently used slogans like "One India" and "Excellent India."[123] A range of slogans political tactics and involvement of Gujarat played a pivotal role in Modi's recent victory.

The Modinama

The BJP's massive victory of 2014 is no overnight, accidental sensation. As already indicated, it is backed by a long history. Likewise, it will have long-lasting impacts on the outlook of India, as well as on future political patterns in South Asia. The BJP's recent political trajectory is inseparable from the rise of Modi, not only because he became Premier but also because he was himself a major factor in his party's victory. This "personality factor" is a necessary element in any explanation of this whole development: the style and character of a political leader largely determines the prestige and reliability of a government.[124] Modi's personality had an immense influence on the elections results, and some have gone so far as to speak of Modi's "Unstoppable Wave."[125]

Modi's appointment as a member of the BJP parliamentary board on 31 March 2013, and as chairman of the BJP Election Campaign Committee on 9

June 2013, forced Advani, despite his status as "the patriarch of the BJP,"[126] to resign from all his posts. After Modi became the prime ministerial candidate, he attended more than 5800 rallies and travelled more than three lakh kilometres around India.[127] Ironically, Modi's experience in Gujarat also exists as a double-edged sword: while the BJP became branded with the stigma of the Gujarat pogrom and at the same time Modi entered in the limelight as an efficient, progressive and substantial leader. At the end of the day, the latter prevailed and the BJP seems to have gained from Modi's leadership rather than have been harmed by the association. Then, having mustered an outright majority in the Lok Sabha,[128] on 16 May 2014 Modi emerged as the victor, and his strength in the Parliament points to a future of robust policy initiatives. The *Times of India* and *Asian Age* hailed Modi's victory as the beginning of the "Modi era," and it is likely that Modi, backed by his majority in the 16th Lok Sabha, will be unprecedentedly independent in his decision-making.

In his discussion of the ways in which Modi benefited from the BJP and his own prime ministerial candidacy of 2014, the words of Sandeep Shastri hold true because they delineate general ambience of Indian politics. "The issues which define and determine voter choice, even in parliamentary elections," he wrote, "are what are relevant and specific to a particular state."[129] With regard to Modi's political career in particular, the Brookings Institution "sees him as a necessary evil, more necessary than evil." Even so, elements within the BJP regard him as a "hot potato" and would happily queer his pitch. Similarly, a whole array of small protest movements, ranging from the *boat yatras* to those battling against the Nirma plant, betrays unease with his development policies. Most important still is the fact that the shadow of the pogroms of 2002 still hangs over him, and no amount of cover-up by the SIT (Special Investigation Team) has been able to cleanse the blood on his hands. Nonetheless, the future and Modi appear to be intertwined in the minds of India's middle class. So the question is just how a simple, lower middle class *pracharak*, once diagnosed as a fanatic and fascist by the political psychologist Ashis Nandy, succeeded in changing his image. However one may view him, he is clearly a shrewd politician who rose from *chai wala* (tea person) to Prime Minister of the world's largest democracy.[130]

Meanwhile, *Time Magazine* and *Brookings* have gone out of the way to award him certificates of good governance, and the corporates pine their hopes of multiplying their conglomerations through him. Thus his dependence upon economic progress and a re-invigorated Hindutva ideology probably proved to be a ladder of success and glory for the new leader of India.

The BJP comes to power

Election manifesto and domestic policies

A party's election manifesto serves a mirror in which we can see what the leaders promise to do, if and when they form the government. A political party provides a logical articulation of the party's views on current political issues, along with a summary of the public notion.[131] Manifesto of the BJP is

very clear and comprehensive, and it covered almost all the issues facing the country. A party's priorities also can be determined by its declared political agenda. In this regard, the BJP boldly places corruption and the paralysis in decision and policy-making under the heading "Attend the Imminent."[132] In one article, Tisha Shrivastav writes about "30 smart ideas from BJP's manifesto 2014". Among other things, she praises the BJP leadership's innovation in carving out specific policies on the most important issues. In this writer's view, this manifesto can be divided broadly into two main categories: domestic and foreign. On examining this document, it becomes more than obvious that domestic issues are more focused upon. Although it does very pointedly highlight issues of foreign relations, this section is not as comprehensive as the domestic. The party's tilt in priorities is clearly domestic.

One unique aspect of this BJP manifesto is that the leadership's promises are followed by clear plans for realizing them in practice. Some of the main points are as follows:

- The BJP will attend to the most critical issues first.
- It will strengthen the framework of the existing political system. It is important to note that the BJP does not talk of changing the framework of the system, but merely pledges to strengthen the present system.
- It also chalks out the ways to reform the system as well. Yet this pledge should not be taken as referring to measures that will change the system, but merely to those aimed at removing such noxious elements as unaccountability, inefficiency, and so on. The BJP seeks to establish ease of use, openness, efficiency, transparency, and fairness.
- The BJP talks of inclusion, which here means prioritizing the downtrodden sections of the society, and bringing equality and opportunity to all including the backward or lower castes.
- The BJP has made youth the base of its plan for the progress of India. It has promised of social security and old-age care, as well as the promotion of women through education. Its agenda covers areas ranging from tourism, the preservation of natural resources, technological development, and Foreign Direct Investment, to ecological security.[133]

Modi has tried to convince the Indian public that his policies hinge upon the development and progress of the whole India. He seeks to take an inclusive line of thought when he says that his policies will be for all of India, and not just for BJP voters. In his view, his policies are ones that aim at a resurgent India. Modi's promise to push for the Hindi language, after he has been sworn in as the prime minister, also points in this direction.[134] The Gujarat Model is said to have been one that increased governance by decreasing government through lower tax rates and by facilitating private enterprises. Modi wants to extend these policies to the whole India.

Finally, by reiterating that Kashmir is an integral part of India and that it will not adopt a conciliatory policy on this issue, the BJP is attempting to

domesticate the problem in the same way as was done by previous Indian governments.[135]

The 16th Lok Sabha elections: Methods, ways and means

Modi's campaign was one of the most successful in India's electoral history, and it stunned the leaders of other democracies around the world. He made a deft use of the social media to reach out to people. His tweets depicting his self-life repeatedly went viral, and he used 3D technology to penetrate the remote areas of India. The volunteers dispatched to knock at the doors of houses across the country were another innovative technique employed to win votes. Another strategy used by the BJP was the *Chai pay Charcha* (popularity through Tea).Through this program Modi took questions from public and responded to them. This had the added benefit of keeping him informed of the pulse of the people and their concerns. On top of that he was innovative enough to change and mould his policies on the basis of such public feedback. His skills as a good and clear conversationalist gave him another advantage and added to his charisma. Modi himself has described his campaign as being "extensive, innovative and satisfying"[136] and in the end, of course, it is undeniable that his effectiveness resulted not only in the victory of the BJP, but in a revolution in India's electoral politics. The BJP has subtly exploited the scheduled castes[137] card in order to muster its electoral strength, and then based its campaign on employment, development and economic progress.[138]

On 22 April 2014, a roundtable conference on the "Indian General Election" was held at Institute of Regional studies Islamabad. On this occasion H.E. Dr. T.C.A. Raghavan, the High Commissioner of India to Pakistan, pointed out that the scale of the upcoming elections of 2014 was enormous. With over 800 million voters, they required massive administrative arrangements. Largely based on the experience of the fifteen previous general and four hundred state assembly elections, the Indian electoral commission had come a long way with the present polls involving over one million administrative personnel. Furthermore, there are some 1,600 registered political parties in India although, because of the enormous size of the country and its electorate, only between 200 and 300 actually participate in general elections. Dr. Raghavan agreed that economic growth and governance were important concerns for Indian voter, and added that social media had emerged as a significant element on the Indian socio-political scene. He also opined that regardless of the outcome, the elections would have little impact on Indian-Pakistani relations, but cautioned that if the BJP came to power, any cross-border terrorist act might well evoke a robust response aimed at Pakistan.[139]

Challenges in campaign

When the BJP was preparing for the recent electoral campaign during 2013, ideological rifts arose among the senior leaders over the party's proper functions, with Advani leading an internal opposition to proposed innovations. However, those issues then were resolved by consensus. Later, the NDA faced new challenges during the selection of electoral candidates, especially in the

cases of Advani, Joshi and Jaswant Singh. In order to open a seat for Modi, Joshi was moved out of Varanasi while, despite his preference for standing for Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, L. K. Advani was forced to run from Gandhinagar in Gujarat. Similarly Jaswant Singh hoped to contest the seat of Barmer in Rajasthan and, when his appeal was rejected, ran instead as an independent candidate (only to be defeated). Meanwhile, Sushma Swaraj's list of preferred candidates, Jaswant Singh included, was rejected as well. Taken together, these cases were considered to be an insult and highly humiliating for the former senior leadership by the new power brokers of the Bharatiya Janata Party, now led by Rajnath Singh and Modi. Stories circulated of deception and mistrust within the party leadership, poisoning relations with its ranks during election.[140]

Results

The effective outcomes of this strategy were explicitly evident in the results in Uttar Pradesh (71/80), Andhra Pradesh (17/25), Bihar (31/40), and West Bengal (18 per cent vote share compared to earlier 6 per cent). Otherwise, in Tamil Nadu the BJP attracted for the first time, an unprecedented number of allies, including the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), the Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK) and the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK). Despite this, the NDA failed to win a seat there to the Lok Sabha in 2014, although the PMK managed to secure one seat and the BJP one other.[141]

After more than a decade, the BJP succeeded in having the Telegu Desam Party (TDP) reinstated within the NDA and this alliance brought the coalition 16 seats in Andhra Pradesh. Also in the state of Andhra Pradesh, another regional actor (a former film actor), Pawan Kalyan, along with his Jana Sena Party, ended his alliance with the Congress and joined hands with the BJP and the NDA; however, he too was unsuccessful in acquiring a seat for the NDA in the federal house.[142] In West Bengal, meanwhile, the BJP was expecting to achieve an all-time increased percentage of votes, but couldn't win a single seat. In general, this forecast proved to be accurate enough since Bengal is a region strongly held by the Trinamool Party, although the BJP did manage to score two Lok Sabah seats from West Bengal.[143] Otherwise, in Bihar, where Nitish Kumar, a long time big supporter and ally of NDA had left the scene,[144] the NDA still lost only one seat and so retained almost all of the 32 seats in the Lok Sabah it had won in 2009.[145] In Odisha, too, the BJP was expecting to emerge as the second largest party behind the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), which held 20 out of 21 seats.[146]

The BJP's landslide: Critical observations
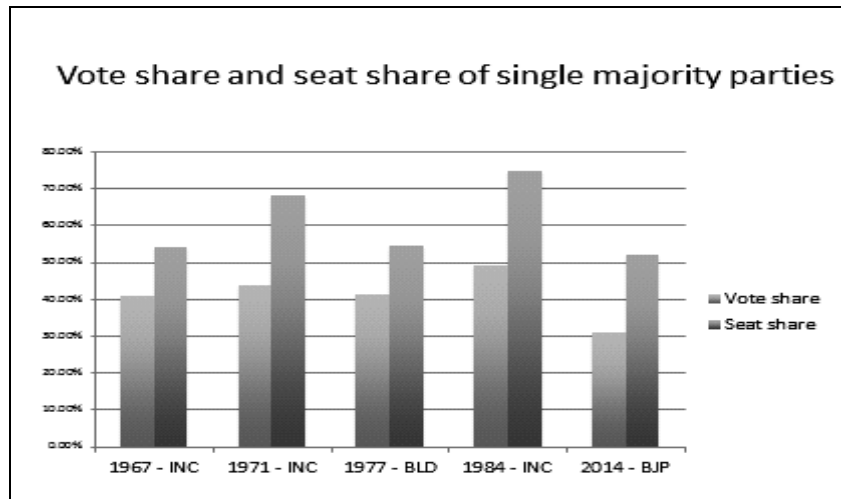
Source: Adapted from ECI data

Even a cursory look at the graph above prompts a question: are the results of the polling in 2014 really a national verdict of the party system? A series of interesting observations can be made, in terms of vote share. That of 2014 is the lowest share ever needed to obtain a majority of seats – 31 per cent. In other words, 31per cent of the 66.994 per cent of eligible voters, or some 139.5 million voters, represent only 17 per cent of the total voting population. In comparison to previous four single majority elections, 31 per cent is the smallest majority obtained by a single party.[147]

New terrain conquered by the BJP

On 12 August, at a roundtable conference convened at the Institute of Regional Studies in Islamabad Christophe Jafferlot, a former French diplomat who now is a professor at Kings College London, made an interesting observation. He pointed out that although the BJP had won the bulk of seats in the Hindi heartland and Gujarat, it also had managed to increase its vote in less likely states. This ripple effect is most evident in the states of Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala and West Bengal,where the BJP secured an exceptional 16.8 per cent share of the votes cast.[148]

| New Terrain for the BJP in General Elections 2014 | | |
| Source: Adapted from ECI data by Young India Fellowship Election Data Unit | | |
State	Vote Share 2009	Vote Share 2014
Assam	17.2%	36.5%
J&K	18.6%	32.4%
W.B.	6.10%	16.8%
Kerala	6.30%	10.3%

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BJP remains a Hindi belt party

In spite of BJP's astounding performance across India, it remains a party based predominantly in the Hindi-belt. Of the 282 seats won by the BJP, 206 are located in the nine Hindi heartland states and Gujarat. This is the party's best performance so far. Historically, since 1990 the major share of the BJP's votes and seats have always come from these ten states, which also served as a ground for the religious mobilisations that helped bring it to power. For example, the BJP's vote share in the Hindi belt has consistently been above 60 per cent of the total votes it has polled across all of India, and this trend was confirmed in the 2014 elections. A combination of the promises of development, voter polarisation on religious lines and caste politics remained at the heart of the BJP's strategy.[149]

*Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand+Gujarat

BJP in the Hindi Heartland* from 1989 to 2014
Source: Adapted from ECI data by Young India Fellowship Election Data Unit
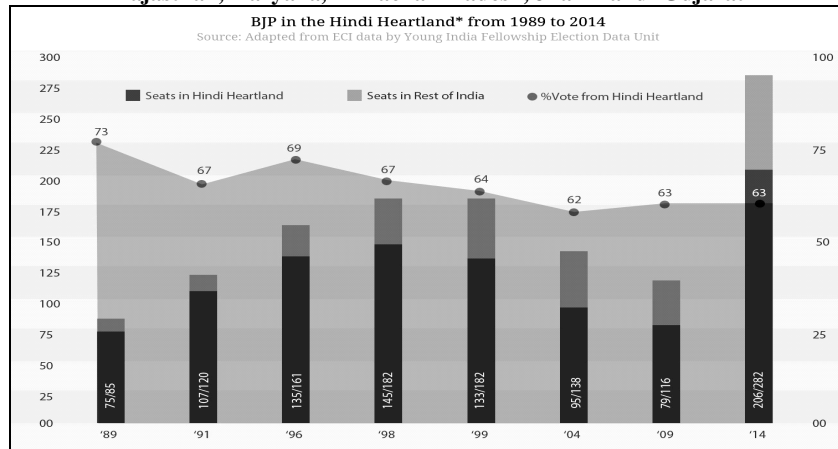
Urban support for the BJP rises

Bearing the BJP's hefty victory in mind, one might suspect that the urban-rural divide would not have been of consequence. In fact, however, the opposite was the case, and in a very interesting way. As the following graph

clearly illustrates, the party's share of urban ballots escalated from 14 per cent in the previous election of 2009 to 84 per cent in 2014, which confirms the pro-BJP inclination among urban voters.[150]
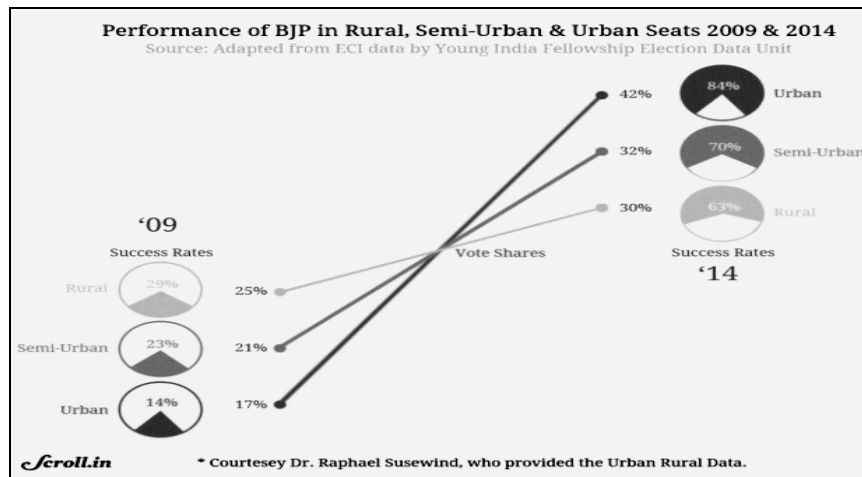
Party composition of the Rajya Sabha

When examining the composition of the Rajya Sabha, Christophe Jafferlot points out that the BJP does not hold a majority in the upper house, which usually is considered to be a parking lot for retired politicians, past sports heroes and past singing stars. Even so, the Rajya Sabha can serve to obstruct legislation, and this could create obstruct the BJP's legislative program. To begin with, the BJP has less than a fifth of the seats. Indeed, even taken together, the Congress and BJP do not make up a majority. Then, secondly, only three parties have ten MPs or more, which means the BJP has to make deals with a range of other parties to obtain a majority. For Instance, if Jayalalithaa and Mamata Bannerjee can combine their efforts with the Congress on an issue-by-issue basis, they can create problems for the BJP government. Jafferlot then added in such situation the BJP may have several possible options: it can take the ordinance route, which Modi will use as much and as often as he can; it can make its own bargains, also on a case-by-case basis, by making concessions to the regional parties and possibly convincing one or two of the most important of these to join the coalition. This confused situation will prevail until the next biennial election, which is due in 2016.[151] The below pie diagram would assist the readers about the party composition in Rajya Sabha.

Source: Adapted from http://rajyasabha.inc.in
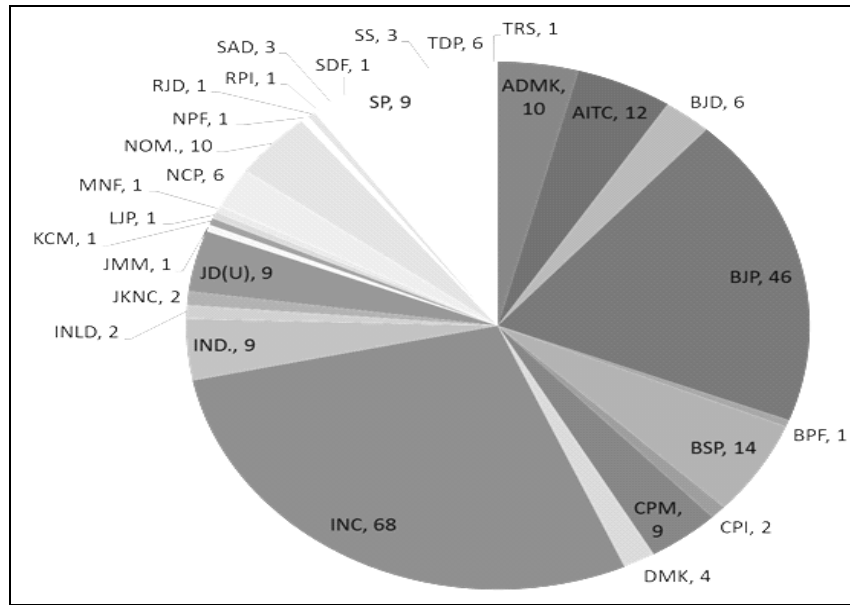
The anti-incumbency factor: A BJP advantage

The BJP seems to have capitalized not only on its own strengths, but also on the weaknesses of the Congress. Under the latter, the decade-long slump in India's economic growth had created unprecedented discontent among Indians while the indecision of the Congress was unfavourably contrasted with the slogans aiding Modi's ability to make rapid decisions.[152] Indeed, Modi almost became a symbol of a strong and decisive leader. Again, although the Congress had throughout its history benefited from alliances with regional parties, by 2014 elections these seem to be failing.[153] And finally, the perceived rampant corruption, for which the Congress leadership was held responsible, made Rahul Gandhi's prospects bleak.[154] Meanwhile, the role of cyber system also gained great significance in 2014 for involving the Hindu diaspora. This was particularly true in the United States where there were 3.2 million Indians, most of whom voted for the Sang Parivar and for India.[155] In this manner the overseas Indian Hindus contributed to the BJP's victory. Put simply, then, the continuing corruption, inefficient policies and other tribulations of the Congress were used to a great advantage by the BJP against the Congress. With Modi at its head, the BJP presented itself to the public as a serious alternative option to the dynastic politics of the congress. The public's craving to get rid of the Gandhi dynasty and with it, the rule of the Congress, naturally added to the strength of the BJP.

Discernible trends and future

Will Modi follow the footprints of Vajpayee?

It is noteworthy here that domestically, even in its 1999 election manifesto, the BJP built its policies upon the rhetoric of transparent governance.[156] This is a theme that Modi inherited from his predecessor like Vajpayee. Equally notable is the fact that both Modi and Vajpayee have benefited from this rhetoric. It also speaks of the public temperament of contemporary India: the people are as much concerned with corruption in 2014 as they were in 1999. Yet the corruption had not abated in the period between the two campaigns but, if anything, it probably had soared considerably.[157] As for Hindutva, in 2000, after the BJP had lost 2 per cent of its public supporters, some argued that that ideology has lost its power to unite Indian people.[158] When the BJP suffered from its fiasco of 2004, their clamour for diluting the party's traditional adherence to Hindutva grew stronger. Even so, L. K. Advani insisted that party should not keep its members as prisoner of its ideology, but still some were of the view that self–negation is important for the party's endurance.[159]

It is pertinent to mention that Vajpayee's significance cannot be overlooked in the present Indian political context. This is because Modi has pledged to follow his predecessor's policies on Kashmir, an issue that obviously has great significance in the politics of India. If Modi does so, this will have a long-lasting impact because it will mean a repetition of the policies set by Vajpayee. Yet times have changed and the politics of South Asia has evolved, a resurrection of out-dated policies may well prove to be detrimental. Nevertheless, if Vajpayee's composite dialogue is followed and further pursued, this could prove fruitful.

To the rest of the world, Vajpayee was considered as an iconoclast regarding his nuclear tests. One of the contentious objectives of Indian foreign policy in the testing time of Vajpayee was nuclear weapons. Under his government India transformed from a state of nuclear power usage to one with a nuclear weapons capability. Discerning Modi's intentions on this question is important because reports have surfaced that his government will revise the policy of "No First Use Option" *vis-à-vis* Pakistan.[160] If Modi follows Vajpayee's example, it can be expected that the former can take a tougher stance on nuclear issues. Yet Modi has repeatedly and publicly reassured the region that he indeed is committed to rejecting any *First Use* Policy.[161] Nevertheless, Modi's tenure in office is only a few months old and it is too early to make confident predictions in this regard**.**

The politics of 'decisionism'

Modi's epic victory makes necessary an enquiry about the ideology of "Decisionism,"[162] which now ranks high among the "isms" of modern Indian politics. In some ways Indian "Decisionism" today can be compared to the attitudes of those German intellectuals who defended the Third Reich[163] during the 1930s. This aside, the reiteration of the mantra that Modi would "set

everything right" was the bedrock of the new "Decisionist" hopes of the Indian electorate. Shortly after the elections, one newspaper commentary noted:

> Two decades of coalition politics and self-effacing leaders [who were] seen as men without [a] real mandate seem to have triggered nostalgia for strong leaders. Modi, Jaya [lalithaa], Mamata (Banerjee) and Naveen (Patnaik) exploited this to the hilt.[164]

It has to be noted, however, that in case of Modi's government, "Decisionism" could become a one way street. The central plank of Decisionist messianism has always been a type of utopian hope and wild desperation; and it seems that time will prove to be the best decision-maker as to how well the Modi government will do in meeting the voter's expectations and in constructing the prosperous India it has promised in the future.

The economic accelerator

India seems on the cusp of new era. The past few years have seen the economy, in part because power struggles among coalition partners have locked and dramatically stunted economic growth, and simultaneously hamstrung foreign investments. Now the landslide victory of Modi's BJP has provided a cabinet backed by an absolute majority, and this may mark a paradigm shift on the Indian political scene. Signs of the expectations provoked by Modi's assumption of power are the fact that foreign investment has already added more than 16 billion dollars and bonds into the Indian stock market. At the same time, the international Wal-Mart chain, whose struggles over spread of business were publicized in India, now plans to open up fifty new stores around the country to expand its business.

The right-wing BJP and its broader centre-right coalition of the NDA are expected to drive a pro-business policy agenda. The government will certainly have to deal with macroeconomic indicators like the rupee, the current accounts deficits and inflation and, with the help of foreign investment, seek to bring these variables back on track. Mumbai based Managing Director Reshmi Khurana, head of Kroll's India operations and Senior Director Probal DasGupta, while responding to a question in a seminar in May, 2014, optimistically pointed out about India's economy:

> India has a tremendous economic engine in its youthful demographics —65 per cent of its population is under the age of 35.That's a working population of over 500 million people, similar to China in the early 1980s when its economy really took off. If India can accelerate growth now and put this population to productive work (preferably in the organized sector), the country can leverage this demographic dividend before the 2020s when it wanes away.[165]

So, we can expect that the next five years will be critical in determining whether or not India can reap the potential benefits of this work force from a demographical viewpoint.

The BJP and Pakistan

According to a study of 2013 by one anti-nuclear group, if the South Asian rivals India and Pakistan engage in a nuclear warfare, this would trigger a global famine and the immediate deaths of some two billion people around the globe.[166] Not surprisingly, political pundits and the people of Pakistan have not welcomed BJP's victory as they still perceive Modi to be a demagogue and the "butcher of Gujarat." Even so, retired Air-Vice Marshal and journalist Shahzad Chauhdry believes that Modi is adaptive and will certainly play a different role as a national premier than he played in Gujarat. Whatever our apprehensions, he most certainly would not seek a war with Pakistan, but would focus on seeing that his own military gains an assured level of readiness. He could then use the Indian armed forces with effect if another situation arose like that of Mumbai in 2008. Pakistan should have no doubts on this score. But barring another Mumbai, the worst-case scenario, relations should remain smooth enough for both nations. Nonetheless, it is better for Islamabad to be prepared than to be surprised, and the best way for Pakistan to manage Modi is simply by being better at doing what Modi does than he is.[167]

Meanwhile, concern is mounting about the impact on the Indo-Pakistani relations of the international troop drawdown in Afghanistan, and about whether or not the Kashmir issue might reignite. Indian officials have reported an increase in militant infiltration from Pakistani into Indian Kashmir during 2013. In August 2013, military tensions there escalated briefly after a series of incidents occurred along the Line of Control (LOC). When innocent civilians were killed on the Pakistani territory, the Pakistan military killed five Indian soldiers and the rhetoric became more highly charged on both sides.[168]

These issues were examined extensively during a roundtable held on "India's Foreign Policy towards Pakistan" with Trividesh Singh Maini of India's Jindal School of International Affairs, Haryana, in the Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad. At this session Maini took the view that the "basics of India's foreign policy towards Pakistan would remain the same after coming to power of the BJP." He argued that the slogans raised during the elections should not be regarded as policy statements. In his view, the lack of mutual understanding is the core problem between the two nations and is the pivotal reason for the lack of progress. Referring to the Mumbai attack of 2008 (an alleged terrorist attack from Pakistan) as a setback to the peace process, he reiterated the opinion that it is difficult for India to move ahead in the dialogue with Pakistan until the latter conducts a substantial follow up investigation of the Mumbai tragedy. "The mantra that Pakistan is also target of terrorism no longer cuts ice in India," he stated. "Pakistan would need to do the doables", and that this would be an important step towards regional peace. Moreover, Pakistan would gain considerably from freeing up of trade with India under the banner of a "most favoured nation" (MFN). Similarly, effective confidence-building measures (CBMs) would only be achieved by improving and simplifying the procedural inefficiencies that exist between Indian and Pakistan.[169]

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan has hailed Modi's "impressive victory" and was the first foreign leader to call and congratulate him

and this even before the counting of votes was complete. Modi responded by inviting Sharif to visit New Delhi, a move that Aziz Ahmed Khan, a retired diplomat and one-time Pakistani High Commissioner to India, described as "really very shrewd." Sharif's announced intention to accept the invitation of Modi was reportedly highly appreciated by both India's politicians and public. However Tariq Azeem, a governing party Senator and close confidante of Sharif, told the *Guardian* that although Sharif was very keen on building ties with India, others in the government were wary of moving too quickly to embrace Modi. Sharif's visit of India also created tensions within powerful military circles in Pakistan. According to the *Express Tribune*, the army's chief Raheel Sharif recommended Islamabad to send a high-powered delegation to India rather the Prime Minister. Commentators in New Delhi, meanwhile, fully recognized the problems facing both Prime Ministers. "Each leader," observed Siddarth Varadarajan of the Centre for Public Affairs and Critical Theory at Shiv Nadar University, "is trying to break free of his shackles – Modi needs to demonstrate he is not a prisoner of his Hindutva ideology, Sharif that he is not completely tied down by his military."

In a nutshell, Nawaz Sharif's bold decision to accept a friendly hand to the BJP government is congenial to progress in bilateral trades for both nations, while Modi's position as outlined in a major speech of 2013 seems to offer the best way to look ahead. "Bombs, guns and pistols," he said, "have failed to do any good for the people of Pakistan…. If Pakistan or India has to fight a war, it should be a war on poverty, illiteracy and superstition."[170] Modi's friendly gestures and the concurrent protocol, potentialities and pledges between the two were all regarded as a promising package the government had for a peaceful Pak-India relations towards Sharif on the inauguration as PM at Varanasi. But Modi's unpredictable character was epitomised in his harshest statement against Pakistan to date in his recent visit to Ladakh (a border town near Kargil) which echoed vociferously that "[Pakistan] has lost the strength to fight a conventional war but continues to engage in the proxy war of terrorism." The statement popped up as a reaction against the lately frequent violations of 2003 cease-fire along the Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir from both sides. This led the political rhetoric to grow more strident between the two neighbours. In addition, tensions have further boiled up when the BJP government halted the Foreign-Secretaries peace talks, the first in two years which were to be held on 28 August 2014 in Islamabad. The proximate cause was India's anger over a meeting that Pakistan's Ambassador to India held with separatist leaders from Kashmir. Reaction from New Delhi is an unexpected one, as over the years Pakistan has had always regular contacts with the Kasmiri Separatist leaders. All the previous Prime Ministers Including the BJP's Atal Bihar Vajpayee too, lived with the same practice.[171] In response, Pakistan said on August 28 August, 2014, that peace talks with India cannot take place without addressing the long-standing dispute of Jammu and Kashmir. Adviser to Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz, while talking to Voice of America, alleged that Indian attempts to sideline the issue of Jammu and Kashmir is "unrealistic". He added further:

All we are doing is appealing to the international community that dialogue between India and Pakistan is necessary for peace in the region, and therefore they should take notice and share our disappointment that these talks have been suspended on very flimsy grounds.[172]

The BJP's first budget (2014)

For the politician, a budget is an opportunity to score political points. It is a chance to show people the generosity of their government, and how concerned their rulers are about the welfare of the less fortunate. Of course, it is the people's money that the government has collected and now is spending. However, it still sounds marvellously philanthropic to announce, "we will spend thousands of crores for women and education."[173] Regarding the recent budget, it is one of many issues that merit for an analysis showing how governments, once in power, spin the pledges and promises made before coming to power. When Modi ordered a steep hike in the diesel prices, someone — quite possibly a critic — pulled out an election poster and put it on the web. On this, the prime minister-to-be lamented: "Bahut hua petrol aur diesel ka atyachar, ab ki baar Modi Sarkar." (Enough of the pain inflicted by petrol and diesel prices. Vote for a Modi government). His supporters claim that the turbulence in Iraq is the real cause for the inflation of diesel prices, whereas the media masters do not bother to remind their audience that it was Manmohan Singh — a star Finance Minister — who in 1991 performed exceptionally well when a similar situation existed in Iraq.[174]

Any analysis of the Budget 2014-2015 is plagued by a multiplicity of interpretations. One view points out that the BJP presented its budget within a mere sixty days of assuming power, and that it looks remarkably like the one that might have been drawn up by the defeated UPA. Minister of Finance Arun Jaitley, however, could be complimented for taking the budget back to the basics. Major policy departures seemed postponed for later in the year. It is believed in some quarters that the hype and hoopla associated with the budget is a peculiarly Indian phenomenon, that the budget should be stripped of its frivolities, and that it should be regarded as little more than the annual income-expenditure statement of the union government. Over the years, annual budgets in India have become media events by which governments seek to legitimize and publicize policy announcements. In this respect Budget 2014 also is no exception. The important point to note is that by advocating the necessity of instituting a "modern monetary policy" for an "increasingly complex economy", Budget 2014 effectively shrouds the future operations of monetary policy in mystery. Going forward, it remains to be seen just how far these mysteries will be revealed.[175]

A strong international presence

"The strategic interactions and security concerns of the vast majority of states," write Robert Stewart-Ingersoll and Derrick V. Frazier, "are focused upon their immediate neighbourhood."[176] For India, Bhutan is a case in point.

In this buffer state in the Himalayas China has a potential to undercut Indian security. Thanks to India's strong economic presence there, any aggression against Bhutan would be seen as directed against India.[177] In accord with a policy of "Neighbours First," Modi's first official abroad was made to that small mountain state and served to emphasize the strong historical and cultural ties between the two countries. Modi's assurances of continued support for Bhutan's future development were more than welcome.[178] Since that state is landlocked, shares three of its borders with India, has access to the sea only through India, and shares about 80 per cent of its trade with India, it is very unlikely that Bhutan will jeopardize its relations with New Delhi.[179]

Nepal is a second Himalayan state with close economic and cultural ties to India. Apart from being Hindu, Nepal shares (1000 mile) of porous border with India. India always considered Nepal as its "subordinate partner and northern backyard."[180] Modi's recent state visit there was the first by an Indian Prime Minister in seventeen years and regarded as a milestone. Nepal's National Council publicly expressed its thanks to Modi of having taken steps that have greatly enhanced the already close Indian-Nepalese relationship.[181]

Relations with Bangladesh on the Bay of Bengal are more complex. "Thanks to the great increase in social violence and separatist movements in [the] Indian northeast," explains Stephen Cohen, and adds that "Bangladesh's location and geography have also assumed strategic importance."[182] New Delhi has always been anxious over the possible security threats posed by the entry of illegal migrants from Bangladesh, who are mostly economically deprived, along with anti-Indian radicals and insurgents, into the Northeastern India.[183] Bangladesh and India share a boundary, along which the border killings by Indian forces continue while issues of final demarcation and enclaves have yet to be settled. According to a report from Human Rights Watch in 2010, around 10,000 Bangladeshis were killed over a decade by the Indian border guards. At the same time, the magazine *Silicon* India reported in May 2013 that some 500,000 Indians from West Bengal, Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura, and Mizoram were working illegally in Bangladesh, and so remitting considerable sums to India. The border is porous in both directions and economic migration is not confined to poor Bangladeshis alone.[184] Recently, Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj of the BJP made a three-day visit to Bangladesh. Returning on 27 June 2014, she announced that she and the Bangladesh authorities have made an "excellent beginning" in addressing each other's concerns in the spirit of good neighbourliness. During her meetings, Swaraj gave a commitment that New Delhi would address Bangladesh's concerns over sharing of Teesta waters and implementing the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) "in a manner that improves the welfare and well-being of both nations."[185] Both countries now are looking for a better understanding over economic ties, including the border issues and the water crisis.

On the broader world stage, India has gained prestige as a participant in the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) conference. It was Modi who proposed the name for New Development Bank established by that body, and although that institution will have its headquarters will be in Shanghai, its

first Chairman will be from India. Although China wanted a larger share in this bank, Beijing had to agree on accepting India's proposal that each BRICS member receive an equal share. As a result, the National Council congratulated Prime Minister Modi for his diplomatic success.

Finally, India's international stature has increased due to a newly emerging global balance. Russia, China and the United States have all made efforts to improve relations with New Delhi. Indeed, the American Secretary of State has personally expressed his appreciation Modi's mantra of *Sabka sath-sabka vikas* (inclusion and development for all) and assured the new government that Washington has a similar policy and shares Modi's way of thinking. This is particularly the case with regard to naval policy, and both nations have expressed their concern over China's possible maritime power projection into the Indian Ocean.[186]

Conclusion

The political discourse of India is vibrant, diverse, multidimensional, and complex, and an understanding of that country's political chemistry requires long, careful and persistent study. An attempt has been made above to unravel the knotted intricacies of the intertwined multi-ethnic and multicultural relationships and conflicts that lay behind the BJP's striking victory in 2014, which has ushered in a new era of expectations for the people of India. So the time has passed for mulling over BJP's success, and we must now turn to assessing the likely policies and political future of the Modi government.

As the defeat of the Congress demonstrates, no political dynasty can sustain its power over time and new interests and claimants to power repeatedly emerge. Throughout, however, this cycle remains subordinate to the urge for the acquisition of power, which lies at the very core of human nature. Yet while this impetus to power is now usually pursued in the name of particular social groups, communities or societies, the so-called "game changers" mostly come from recognized leadership elite. Meanwhile, the rapid Hinduization of society in India could result from two main factors. Firstly, the Hindutva ideology, which is portrayed as the true representation of the Hindu society and, presented as a panacea that needs to be embraced before the vision wanes. And secondly, the use and politicization of religion and its concurrent relevance implanted in the minds of the collective society by power mongers so to attain political positions. It seems undeniable that the politicians in India, like those in any other state, are equipped with a range of fiery slogans, promises and pledges. Yet these are hardly ever translated into reality after these leaders succeed in attaining power.

In the end, therefore, India's recent political conflicts are all about power politics. Otherwise, one decisive factor behind the BJP landslide was the multiplicity of media communications which became a juggernaut that crushed its rivals. It is, of course, part and parcel of the campaign that political stakeholders advertise themselves as the most suitable candidate for office but the media, as the architect of opinion, should be responsible for digging into exposing the negative behaviour and misleading statements of a government once it has taken power. Even so, an uninterrupted process of democratization

and incremental progress in India not only is ameliorating the inefficiencies of governments, but it also providing platforms for unheard voices to be heard such as the members of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) or "Lay Men Party." In this way democracy does make a difference, regardless of its flaws and loopholes.

Moreover, both the BJP and Modi as its protagonist were offspring of the RSS. He in particular had been feathered and weathered by its ideology, and it will be interesting to observe how long he remains a prisoner of Hindutva. If he breaks the shackles of this bondage, what might the implications be for the BJP-RSS link and, in case of a backlash, how might Modi react? At the same time, what consequences could this have for the Indian polity and its voters? In addressing these issues, it is important to remember that over 60 per cent of BJP's office-holders at the centre and in the states are either former *pracharaks* (full time RSS workers) or have bonded with the RSS. Amit Shah, for example, is now a close confidant and aide of Narendra Modi, as well as the current BJP President. He, too, was nurtured in the RSS nursery, and in the recent elections, took the BJP from its nadir to its apex in Uttar Pradesh (UP) by winning 71 seats out of 80. Despite being notorious in connection with the Gujarat arson of 2002, and with the more recent Muzafarnagar riots, his old comradeship with Modi bore fruit for him and the party. Any face-off between the RSS and BJP is thus unlikely to occur as both would avoid stiff relations and Modi in particular is unlikely allow his support base out of his hands.

We have yet to see with what magnitude the RSS will attempt to intrude and influence BJP's policies in the way it used to interfere in the past. At the same time, the RSS will always expect that the Hindu Swaraj should have first priority in the BJP's policies. But given Modi's fluid and whimsical character, he can always adapt and is in the best position to afford "the road not taken". The real test of the policies, leadership and political cadres will come if and when the BJP arrives at some critical juncture, whether it be because of domestic, national or international reasons, and this will then clarify the nature of the recent victory.

Domestically, India is passing through a transitional phase. Having emerged from an egalitarian and majoritarian encounter, the contemporary Hindu nationalist forces have managed to eclipse their secular foes by their rise to hegemonic power. This has been achieved but it is as yet unclear whether or not this means secular India is defeated once and for all. Questions that still linger are: will Dalits ever live like the Brahmins? Will India's large Muslim minority ever receive their legitimate rights of liberty of religious practice, be freed from prejudice and racism, and have full freedom of expression? Will India's downtrodden masses ever be freed from poverty, and will solutions ever be devised to deal with the endemic plagues of bribery, embezzlement, public plundering, corruption, and crimes against women? Communal and caste politics will pose mounting challenges for those hoping to bring the whole of Indian society under one roof despite boundaries of caste, religion, colour, creed, and race. If the same hackneyed and surreal tactics continue to haunt and hound the unfortunate Indian people for the sake of the political ambitions of the few, segregation and isolation will continue to disrupt social harmony, and the

violence provoked by sectarianism, extremism, communal and caste violence will be an ever-present danger.

Notes and References

1.   The literal meaning is Hinduness. Politically it connotes that India being a Hindu majority nation, its nationalism must find its essential sustenance from Hindu social and religious ideology. The term was first used as the title of a book written in 1922 by V. D. Savarkar. See Sumanta Banerjee, 'Hindutva' — Ideology and Social Psychology," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19 January 1991, pp.97–101.
2.   Irfan Engineer, *Current Domestic Policy Challenges and Prospects in South Asia* (Islamabad: IRS Publications, 2003), p.46.
3.   The term was first used as the title of a book written in 1922 by V. D. Savarkar. See Sumanta Banerjee, 'Hindutva' — Ideology and Social Psychology," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19 January 1991, pp.97–101.
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6.   Partha S. Gosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism, From Periphery to Centre* (New Delhi: Manohar publication, 2000), p.64.
7.   Christophe Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), p.15.
8.   Bidyut Chakrabarty, *Communal Identity in India: Its Construction and Articulation in the Twentieth Century* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.73.
9.   See ref.6, p.68.
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12.   On the origins of the Hindu Mahasabha, see Indra Prakash, *A Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Hindu Sanghatan Movement* (New Delhi,1938), pp.1-31; Richard Gordon, 'The Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress, 1915 to 1926', *Modern Asian Studies*, IX, 2 (1975), pp.145-71.
13.   See Walter K. Andersen and Shridhar D. Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), pp. 26-50; and K. Jayaprasad, *RSS and Hindu Nationalism* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep, 1991).
14.   Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2001), p.3.
15.   Robert Hardgrave Jr., *India*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970), p.149.
16.   See ref.6, p.71.

17. Sikandar Hayat, "Hindu Revivalism: Genesis and Implications," *in The Rise of Hindutva Fundamentalism*, ed. Institute of Regional Studies,(Islamabad: IRS Publications, 2003), p.449.
18. S.N. Sadasivan, *Party and Democracy in India* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill,1977), p.181.
19. Godse apparently quit RSS and joined the Hindu Mahasabha because Hedgewar had refused to turn RSS into a political organization.
20. Robert Hardgrave Jr and Stanley Kochanek, *"India Government and Politics in a Developing Nation,"* 7th Edition, (Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008), p.205.
21. See ref.6, pp.73-74.
22. See Jaffrelot, Christophe ed., *The Sangh Parivar: A Reader* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005). A superb collection of essays dealing with the family of organizations representing Hindu Nationalism.
23. See ref.20, p.204.
24. Prof. Bal Raj Madhok , "Founding of Jana Sangh", *Jana Sangh Today,* October 2008, <http://janasangh.com/jsart.aspx?stid=311>, (Accessed 20 June 2014).
25. Ibid.
26. Mukherjee had resigned from the Nehru Cabinet and subsequently the Congress party due to the differences with Nehru on the issue of appeasement of Pakistan.
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STATE BUILDING IN POST-2001 AFGHANISTAN: THE LIBERALIZATION PARADOX

SHAHIDA AMAN & SHAGUFTA AMAN

Introduction

The post-Cold War international environment has become conspicuous for a changed appreciation of the concept of state sovereignty. Under the new concept of 'sovereignty as responsibility', the failure of a state to enforce its coercive authority over its territory, and inability, either to deliver services or protect the population from violence, was justified as a reason strong enough for international community to intervene for rebuilding the so-called failed states.[1] Somalia, Sudan, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Balkans, East Timor, Afghanistan and more than forty other states have experienced international intervention in the post-Cold War era; the rationale is state failure and the remedy is international intervention for state building. Such international interventions are followed by attempts at building and rebuilding of institutions of the fractured state. This interventionist state-building practice is guided by the Western notion of a centralized, bureaucratized Weberian state that exercises a monopoly of power over violence within its territory. Such conventional top down understanding of state building is, in turn, manifested in attempts at constructing security sector apparatuses, a centralized bureaucracy for tax collection, service provision, and political institutions based on liberal democratic lines, such as, a constitution, elections, a civil society and a liberal market economy.

The liberal re-construction of post-conflict states stem from conventional state-failure discourses, which identify state weakness and failure

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with lack of legitimacy of domestic political systems.[2] Such an understanding of state failure is carried into the state-building models. State building is hence theorized as strengthening of democratic forms of political participation and carried out in practice through bringing in Western democratic forms of governance practices, including constitutional guarantees of individual rights, elections, political parties, civil society and the like. Liberal political order is accompanied by reforms in the economic field. Since economic under-development is cited as another area of deficiency in failed states,[3] theoretically this limitation is argued to be a function of lack of liberal economic institutions. It is supposedly tackled through an orientation towards liberal market institutions, including free trade, macro-economic management, property rights, greater private sector role and a free market.

In the building of liberal political and economic order, paradoxes emerge because despite aiming for stability, Western democratic and market reforms may not blend well with the local cultural, traditional and economic norms and practices in intervened failed states. Especially problematic have been democratic legitimacy experiments in elections and participatory politics in post-intervened states. International state builders have found it hard to handle the paradoxes generated from rapid political and economic liberalization experiments in post-conflict settings. This paper attempts to bring out the various paradoxical practices in the liberal order and their resultant destabilizing and slowing impact on the state building efforts. The framework of this paper is designed around five sections. After introduction, Section two divulges into the paradoxes resulting from liberal state-building models in post conflict and intervened states. Section three focuses on liberalization paradoxes in post-2001 state building exercise in Afghanistan. Section four briefly attempts to address the issue of how to address the liberalization paradoxes in intervened conflict states. And the last section provides the conclusions.

State building as building of a liberal order: The liberalization paradoxes

State building is theoretically understood as the building of a liberal political and economic order, exemplified by the following explanations:

State Building as Liberal Political and Economic Order

Dobbins	Nation building[4] (state building) is the use of armed forces in the aftermath of a conflict to underpin a transition to democracy.[5]
Paris and Sisk	State building is the construction of legitimate, effective governmental institutions.[6]
Brinkerhoff	Stabilization and Reconstruction (state building) S&R missions in post-intervened settings prioritize governance by focusing on 'democratization and elections, legislative development, formal government structures, civil society

	participation, combating corruption and reforming central institutional architecture of the state'.[7]
OECD	State building is an 'endogenous process to enhance the capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state, driven by state society relations'.[8]
Fritz and Menocal	State building priorities include constitution making, elections, centre-periphery relations, security, legal framework and administrative governance including the creation of civil service and public financial management.[9]

Liberalism in post-conflict societies is profoundly pronounced in the construction of a democratic and legitimate political order. The ideals of democratic legitimacy owe their renewed resurgence to the fall of socialism. In the period immediately following the end of Cold War, democracy was emphasized as the new panacea for Third World political deficiencies. Literature produced by the donor agencies (engaged in post-conflict reconstruction) in particular, are mindful of the significance of building legitimate state institutions. This literature underscores the importance of effective engagement in post-conflict settings, through aiding legitimate and democratic state-building process.[10] The state's ability to manage state-society expectations and state-building process, it is argued, is influenced by the degree of legitimacy it has in the eyes of its population. State building is, therefore, declared as the virtuous circle of legitimacy, projected as both the means as well as an end for successful state building.[11] Constitution making, elections, democratic participation of individuals and groups in political settlement and promotion of civil society, independent media and free market are some of the tools for experimenting with liberal governance in post-conflict societies. The discussion below argues that the pursuit of rapid political and economic liberalization strategies in conventional state-building model has proved to be paradoxical, and has generated many dilemmas, thereby impeding the attainment of state building goals.

Post-conflict societies are usually characterized by a lack of agreement on basic rules of political engagement and competition and strengthening of institutional capacity for service provision. Introduction of liberal democracy in such post-conflict settings may not complement the process of state building. Donor's brand of democratization, which encompasses active role for civil society and local media, promotion of women representation and guarantees of minority rights, may not blend in because of incompatibility with the shared local norms of conflict and post-conflict societies. Western donor's emphasis on the growth of civil society organizations, without corresponding development of essential qualities of moderation and accommodation, may act as a recipe for political instability in nascent democracies.[12] Introduction of factional democracy in a weak and divided country can spell disaster. Examples of Somalia (mid 1980s), Ethiopia (early 1990s), Sudan and Mozambique (1980s) show that a lack of agreement on basic rules to manage conflicts and weak

economic safeguards to the elites, encouraged conflicts to manifest freely in the wake of democratic reforms; political parties deliberately promoted ethnic and religious identities whereas the elites established monopolistic positions.[13]

Recent literature highlights the disruptive impact of transition to democratic legitimacy.[14] Nascent democracies may prove more indulgent in neo-patrimonial and clientelist practices, nullifying the arguments of democratic regimes being more accountable and responsible in running state affairs.[15] Cambodia's example serves to illustrate that democratization reforms and electoral competition in societies dominated by factional politics, there is likely to develop distrust between coalition partners, which may exacerbate violence, produce intimidation and suppression of political opponents.[16] And Angola's case suggests that holding elections before consolidating parties and disarming groups may give a setback to the democratization process, and a push the society into war and violence.[17] Reservation is also expressed on promoting democracy in poor, ethnically divided and religious societies, which are characterized by lack of effective state structures and absence of a tradition of political accountability or local self rule.[18] Similar findings are also suggested by Enterline and Grieg's study on 'imposed democracies' in intervened states. Their study suggests imposed democracies to have a high co-relation to failure, especially in the first ten years of democracy's inception. This was most likely in those post-conflict states that were ethnically heterogeneous and had very low GDP levels (domestic environment). Both positively co-related with the failure of weak democracies in intervened states.[19]

Democratic legitimacy's main thrust in post-conflict situations is holding of free, fair and transparent elections for the purpose of installing a government that is representative of wider sections of population. Elections in post-conflict settings have generated their own set of controversies; especially contentious has been the issue of timing of elections. External state builders have found it problematic to balance the decision between holding elections at the earliest after restoration of minimal order, or afterwards, when objectives of stability and disarmament are achieved. There have been attempts by external state builders to devise electoral rules in conflict settings to achieve desirable results through a process of 'electoral engineering.'[20] It has included measures, such as, increased financial assistance to moderates for increasing their chance of winning elections (1998 Bosnian elections), devising rules that bar warlords from running for elections (parliamentary elections in Afghanistan) and requiring candidates to seek multi-ethnic votes for success. These engineering attempts by external actors have raised doubts over the legitimacy of elected candidates as genuine representatives of the locals. Engineering of votes has also failed to check the issue of ethnic votes going to ethnic leaders, who at times (as Bosnian case suggests) may be involved in war crimes. In such cases, given the history of repression and conflict among ethnicities, as in the Balkans, candidates may feel difficulty in appealing to multi-ethnic votes. And moderate candidates adopting multi-ethnic vote appeal may be dubbed anti-nationalists by their respective groups. In the 2010 presidential elections in Bosnia, the Serb

presidential candidate was largely seen as anti-Serb by his fellow Serbian population for the concessions he promised to secure Muslim votes.[21]

Liberalization for the sake of promoting peace building and an all-inclusive political process may carry strains in conflict states. Efforts for peace making may collide with those necessary for creating effective statehoods. For example, political deals for ending conflicts may undermine requirements of justice and peace by giving concessions to leaders responsible for civil war and human sufferings. Brokered deals with elites through allocation of economic rents may stabilize the political system briefly, but undermine economic viability of the state in the longer term. Peace deals may grant special concession to particular powerful groups, in terms of the exclusion of more marginalized groups. And conversely, the threat of prosecution, for example, by the International Criminal Court (ICC), may discourage the militant leadership from negotiating peace.[22] Furthermore, as Afghanistan's case suggests, local warlords may be deliberately strengthened by external actors for the sake of cooperation in counter-terrorism objectives, leaving the central government with little choice but to co-opt them in important positions in the government.[23] The state builder's reliance on warlords for counter-insurgency is highly criticized by scholars, who express reservations regarding their submission to centralized state authority.[24]

The pursuit of liberal economic order in intervened states also produces paradoxes and limitations. The neo-liberal economic theory argues in favour of curtailing state's intrusive role in the economy. It is argued by the neo-liberals that markets are more efficient in resource allocation, therefore, intervention by the state in the natural working of markets generated negative effects on growth rates.[25] Intrusive management of economy by the state provided opportunities for officials and entrepreneurs to engage in corruption and rent seeking.[26] The neoliberal market consensus,[27] in short, argued that the state was supposed to act as a manager of a market economy, having responsibility for legal order, stable property rights, infrastructure and social services, provision and promotion of democratic accountability, and civil society participation. Therefore, polities needed to be based on market economy, democracy and institutional reforms of rightsizing bureaucracy in order to reduce incentives for corruption and rent seeking. Neo-liberal theory influenced an ideological re-orientation in the UN and donor agencies, which stressed strategies for promoting liberal market and democratic practices as a remedy to conflicts in the developing countries.

These principles of liberal governance were exported to developing countries, while International Financial Institutions (International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) promoted the ideology under its loan conditionality in relation to its Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Based on the above assumptions, free market economy demands the restructuring of an economy by removing state subsidies and curtailing extra governmental expenditures, usually through cuts in public welfare systems. The liberalization experiment, by limiting state functions in the absence of strong regulatory institutions for overseeing the working of financial bodies and by demoting state's institutional

capacity through its free markets system, increased poverty and led to a decline in living standards for many African and Asian countries. It also failed to carry any impact on the conflict states intervened by the UN under the Liberal Peace Thesis.[28] In post-conflict states, such reforms hit low-income groups badly and created a legitimacy deficit for the state-building process. Reduction in tariffs or export duties as an instrument of enhancing free trade, (another structural reform of the IMF), narrows the revenue base of the government. Privatization of public enterprises, without defining property rights enforcement and regulatory frameworks such as monopoly laws, creates further problems.[29] A recent research suggests a rise in income inequalities in free market transitions.[30] Such economic transitions may end up benefiting some groups at the expense of others. Scholars, therefore, argue that such economic growth will seldom help stabilize a political system, unless the benefits of economic revival are shared across all social constituencies.[31]

To sum up, this section argued that the emphasis on liberal political and economic reforms in post-intervention state-building model generates several paradoxes and inhibits the achievement of state-building goals. The liberal variant of state building is Weberian and western-inspired, and its imposition in failed and conflict settings generates a set of paradoxes and dilemmas. The findings of the paper suggests that such paradoxes inhibit the performance of state building interventions and complicates the attainment of state-building goals. State-building practice, as the building of a liberal political and economic order creates its own set of paradoxes. These paradoxes are generated as electoral experiments are conducted. Issues in relation to the timing, sequencing and conduct of elections have complicated the state-building exercises. Dilemmas are also generated as a result of the introduction of political and civil liberties in a divided society, where democratic culture is factional and, where viable state structures are hardly functioning. Civil society growth in the absence of moderation and accommodating political culture results in instability. And democratic political settlement involving the inclusive participation of conflict parties creates tensions between peace-building and state-building requirements. Economic liberalization experiment affects state's effectiveness by reducing its income generation under the free trade policy. Reduction of state subsidies under IMF's restructuring programmes hurts the economic position of low-income groups and reduces the legitimacy of state-building processes. In short, the liberal variant of state building as the construction of a liberal political and economic order generates paradoxes that negatively affect the attainment of state-building goals. The following section attempts to investigate liberal paradoxes in the democratic practice of elections in post-2001 Afghan state building process.[32]

Liberalization paradoxes in post-2001 Afghan state building: The experiment with democratic elections

The post-2001 state building process in Afghanistan began with a promise of introducing a democratic representative system in the country. In order to lay the foundations for a liberal democratic system, the Bonn

Agreement provided timelines for a new constitution as well as elections to legitimize a new post-intervention political setup.[33] Since then, democratic experiment has been conducted multiple times for electing the president as well as members of national and provincial assemblies.[34] These experiments in democratic transition have highlighted the tensions associated with the liberalization of a political system in post-conflict settings. Rapid liberal exercises have created a set of dilemmas that have been particularly difficult for international state builders to handle. The following paragraphs discuss the dilemmas that have complicated the democratic legitimacy experiment in Afghanistan.

The fundamental issue in Afghan experience with democratic elections has been a shortage of population data as well as clear demarcation of electoral boundaries. For a successful electoral assessment of population, it is important to have a population census first and electoral demarcation of boundaries to create clear constituencies. The last known population census in Afghanistan had taken place in 1979; since then, no national based census of population has taken place. Lack of population census is complimented by still vaguely defined electoral boundaries especially at the district level.[35] These issues have made constituency determination problematic.

The lack of census and demarcation issues notwithstanding, a very complex system of Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) was adopted for election of Wolesi Jirga (lower house of Afghan Parliament). Scholars termed this system too complicated to fill the 249-member Wolesi Jirga (181 seats for open contestation by men and women and 68 reserved for women). It was because voters were perplexed about choosing thousands of candidates vying for multiple seats in five separate balloting.[36] SNTV is also discouraging the growth of a healthy political party culture. In SNTV, majority seats do not go to a party winning the largest number of votes, but the number of seats depends on individual candidate's performance within his party. Therefore, individuals win votes for parties, not the other way around.[37] As a result, although more than 50 political parties registered for the first parliamentary elections,[38] the adoption of SNTV meant political parties were banned from contesting elections and individual candidates were discouraged from running on party tickets.

At the provincial level too, the use of SNTV was criticized for favouring candidates who secure solid voter bloc in a single area, rather than getting votes in multiple areas, which resulted in assemblies that represented only a few communities to the detriment of others.[39] This system, it is argued, promotes a culture of corruption and vote buying by encouraging candidates who win on the basis of fewer votes.[40] Rubin criticized SNTV for creating an unrepresentative parliament of local leaders, with no incentive to cooperate with one another or the government, and for discouraging the growth of a genuine political culture.[41] It is rightly emphasized that political parties flourish and strengthen their organizational coherence only when candidates are allowed to contest on party tickets and campaign as well as when they share public information from their respective party's platform.[42]

An electoral trend that the different presidential and parliamentary elections has demonstrated is the corresponding receding number of voter turn-out for each of the subsequent elections in post-2004 period. In 2004, when the first elections for the President's office were held, there was a relatively higher voter turn-out of 70%.[43] In the second presidential elections (2009), the voter turn-out was 49.8%, which was much lower than the 2004 Presidential elections. Regional variations in voter turn-out were also witnessed. For example, the turn-out in the North was higher (60%) than the South (30%).[44] Voter turn-out in the April 2014 Presidential elections has been modest; around 6.3 million voters out of a total of 12 million turned out to vote.[45] This is higher than the 2009 elections, but much lower than the 2004 one. In legislative elections of September 2005, a modest 6.4 million voters turned out to vote for approximately 6,000 candidates fighting over 249 parliamentary (Wolesi Jirga) and 217 provincial council (Da Vilayat Shura) positions.[46] The voter turn-out for the 2010 parliamentary elections was also lesser and amounted to just 3-4 million.[47] Other accounts cite only 33% of the registered voters elected 249 members from a list of 2,577 candidates in the 2010 elections.[48]

It is pertinent to discuss the issue of receding voter turn-out in each of the subsequent elections in post-2001 Afghanistan. An analysis of the electoral literature reveals several issues. First, the process of voter registration for presidential and parliamentary elections suffered from allegations of irregularities. In the presidential elections, both at the national and sub-national levels, there were reports of either under-registration or over-registration of voters. For example, out of the 9.8 million eligible national voters in the 2009 Presidential elections, only 9 million were registered nationally. In the same elections, some provinces reported around 140% over-registration of voters.[49] Irregularities in voter registration procedures delegitimized the process of elections at its very root. Such irregularities were not only witnessed in pre-election registration process, but also in the post-election period. The Presidential elections of 2009 especially carried allegations of widespread frauds in votes. One account (EU Election monitors) cited that one-third of the votes casted in favour of Hamid Karzai were suspected of being fraudulent in nature.[50] Second, in the case of parliamentary elections, the Electoral Law of 2010, which devised rules for the new parliamentary elections, was passed quite late by the President's office. This late passage of 2010 Electoral Law not only raised questions on the President's non-consultation with the parliament, but also that of giving limited time for implementation of new procedures and regulations. Therefore, less than 3,000 candidates competed for 249 Wolesi Jirga seats, which are divided proportionally among the 34 provinces.[51]

Third, security issues have marred each of the Afghan presidential as well as parliamentary elections and hampered electoral preparation by the Election Commission of Afghanistan (ECA). One of the manifestations of lack of security and violence was reflected in fewer numbers of polling stations available in the 2010 parliamentary elections as compared to the 2005 one. The figure was 6,300 for the 2005 elections, which came down to 5,900 in the 2010 elections.[52] Fourth, the election campaign for parliamentary elections (2010)

was riddled with violence and intimidation of voters and candidates. Three candidates, thirteen workers and two election officials were reportedly killed in these campaigns.[53] And lastly, there is not only a corresponding decline in the total number of votes cast in each elections, but also a decline in the total number of female votes cast and female candidates that ran for parliamentary elections. In the 2010 parliamentary elections, for example, only 16% of the candidates were female.[54] This figure reflects gender bias in these elections, not only in relation to female candidates running for elections, but also in relation to their low turn-out on the actual day of the election.

The post-election scenario is also discouraging in that a large number of votes have been cancelled as a result of voting irregularities. It happened in the case of 2010 parliamentary election results, which were scandalized due to voting irregularities. The Election Complaint Commission ECC (a temporary administrative adjudicatory body dealing with electoral complaints and formed 120 days before an election) received 5,856 complaints relating to polling and counting in the wake of the 2010 parliamentary elections. Resultantly, 1.3 million ballots were cancelled by the ECC. But the process of scrutiny of ballots was mostly adjudicated at provincial level with little oversight from ECC headquarters, raising questions over the legitimacy of such annulments.[55] The ECC also disqualified one in ten of the winning candidates.[56]

Another factor, which has served to delegitimize the process of elections in Afghanistan, is the issue of warlords getting elected into the Parliament in large numbers. Interestingly, among the candidates winning seats in the 2005 parliamentary elections, 90 were militia commanders and their close associates. This suggests, in turn, that these leaders were able to get their positions legitimized for influencing the state-building priorities in Afghanistan through elections.[57] Many among these found their way to the Parliament in the 2010 elections too. Another retrogressive impact of election related dilemmas is that elections have also, in the more recent examples in Afghanistan, produced divided votes. This happened in the very current Presidential elections of April 2014, where none of the eight candidates running for President's office could secure a majority vote. Resultantly, the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (IEC) announced a new run-off for June 2014 between the two top candidates,[58] Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani. Such delays and uncertainties create doubts in the minds of ordinary Afghan citizens about the utility and legitimacy of the entire democratic election process.

Why do these dilemmas arise in the conduct of democratic exercise of elections in post-conflict societies, such as Afghanistan? One shade of opinion finds the absence of political culture in Afghanistan responsible for electoral problems, such as fraud and irregularities. Such deficiencies, it is emphasized, are hard to remove through technical reforms. It is also argued that deficiencies in legal framework, weak electoral management bodies, ineffective checks and balances system and undeveloped political parties affected the credibility of elections in Afghanistan.[59] Such an argument about technical reforms not working in the absence of a political culture is negated by the emphasis on legal and administrative reforms that the viewpoint recommends. This conundrum

stands as an example of a complex liberalization dilemma. Historically, there may be a lack of democratic traditions in Afghanistan, but on a technical front too, there are several problems that can be addressed through appropriate institutional and legal mechanisms.

Coburn and Larson, on the other hand, expound upon another aspect. They stress that the rulers deliberately keep the electoral process ambiguous for manipulating it in their favour. Such ambiguity is manifested in several forms, including: lack of clarity over electoral procedure and timing; poor adherence to electoral rules in counting procedures; delays in final results; the Electoral Complaints Commission's inconsistent method of dealing with electoral complaints; MPs' disguise of political allegiance so that they have bargaining space with the presidency; local leader's involvement in arranging for votes; and provincial governors latent support to insurgents in some constituencies to prevent opponents from being elected.[60] The result is that instead of clear winners and losers, elections produce violent and secret political negotiation and bargaining process, which creates a legitimacy crisis for the state and its political institutions.[61] This is the paradoxical aspect of liberalization in Afghanistan. Elections are held to secure greater legitimacy for the incumbent regime and political system. But the manner in which elections are held, with their concurrent dilemmas, end up delegitimizing the entire state-building process. Enterline and Greig, therefore, paint a bleak democratic future for Afghanistan on account of not only the structural weaknesses in its economy, such as low per capita GDP of just $800, but also its unfavourable political and social milieu, including a high level of ethnic heterogeneity.[62] The issues of poverty and underdevelopment may positively co-relate with the choices voters make in the elections, in terms of voting for money or for obliging their patrons as clients. However, the issue of ethnic heterogeneity may have a poor co-relation with election dilemmas. This is because almost all the new states, which attained independence in the wake of end of Second World War, are beset with the problem of multiple ethnicities residing within single boundaries. However, ethnic heterogeneity has seldom served the cause of conflict and disputed votes in few of these states. In the case of Afghanistan, ethnic differences alone have never been the precursors to war,[63] although these identities did get politicized in the wake of the civil war of 1990s primarily because of a regional actor's support to varied factions.[64]

Schetter, explores another argument in the debate on liberalization dilemmas. He blames democracy as a system to be responsible for politicizing ethnic identities by making boundaries and character of the people significant. Since the struggle for power is perceived, he argues, as a conflict between ethnic and religious groups, leaders portray themselves as representative of their people to get maximum share of power in the central government.[65] These assertions explaining the reasons for the failures of liberalization experiment in Afghanistan are relevant if seen in the light of such experiments in other post-conflict societies. In the various examples of post-conflict state building, elections could not produce stable governments. However, despite such problems, the electoral experiment is repeated every few years to meet an

important conditionality in aid provision, i.e. the restoration of a legitimately elected government. Electoral process becomes more of a procedure rather than the spirit of a true democratic system.

The history of state formation in Europe shows that stability is prior to democracy. It is highly undesirable to expect the Third World, especially post-conflict societies to achieve the opposite, i.e. democracy before stability. Afghanistan too is treated as one of the many state failure cases, where the prescribed formula for success is building state institutions in tandem with addressing its legitimacy deficit through democratization reforms. What is conveniently forgotten is that with a low literacy ratio and political consciousness, a barely functional economy and a history of monarchical government setups, the socio-economic, political and historical conditions in Afghanistan are hardly suitable for liberal orientation's success. It is for this reason that the initial euphoria in Afghanistan for democratic participation and elections is on demise; and after more than a decade in democratic experimentation, each new elections (presidential and parliamentary) witness a decline in people's participation and a corresponding rise in electoral violence, intimidation and contested results.

How to manage liberalization strains?

Notwithstanding the difficulties of ensuring reasonable cooperation among groups with a history of ethnic animosity and war, Call argues for ensuring local ownership and participation of the main political parties and social groups before the process of deciding on the timing, sequence and conduct of elections.[66] Others prefer what Paris names, 'institutionalization before liberalization model,' to counter liberalization dilemmas. This model suggests measures including: delaying elections until moderate parties are formed; judicial mechanism to decide election disputes; electoral rules that reward moderation; responsible civil society associations; economic reforms and effective governmental structures.[67] Rotberg also emphasizes establishing security and legal structures, disbanding and disarming militias and rejuvenating the economy before considering democratic elections in post-conflict settings.[68] Dziedzic, in a similar vein, proposes moderating political conflict through a number of initial steps before undertaking the exercise of elections. These include, humanitarian relief, demobilization of former combatants, political settlement, rule of law by developing institutional capacity of security agencies, and establishing a fiscally sustainable state based on the promotion of free market enterprise.[69]

Rondinelli and Montgomery also stress upon security and settlement of conflict, including efficient service provision, rule of law and national-based political parties to precede the introduction of democratic reforms. They also suggest regional consensus building, local ownership of the state-building process, control over grey, black economies, and investment in social sector, including poverty reduction.[70] The merits of such steps aside, it is essential to remember that state building does not proceed in a linear fashion and, therefore, no time limit may be sufficient for creating functioning institutions before

liberalization is experimented. On a negative note, donor support may falter (because of no time limits involved) before such stabilization is achieved. And when elections are unnecessarily delayed for achieving stability, the whole legitimacy of intervention may be called into question by the locals. The legitimacy of the premise of intervention is restoration of self-government to locals and, therefore, delayed elections work against securing local support to prolonged reforms. Elections need not be unnecessarily delayed, however, such decision should be context specific and undertaken with reasonable preparation for holding free and fair elections. In the light of these reservations, balancing different priorities and gradual implementation of political and economic reforms may be a better option.

State and peace-building need domestic ownership and local support and this process should not be rushed, in terms of holding elections or drafting constitutions to suit donor agendas over and above the domestic needs. It is important to make the political process inclusive and participatory of major stakeholders. These stakeholders would participate, only when they genuinely believe that the process is legitimate and that they would be better off working and participating in the system rather than staying outside it. Renegade factions and their leaders may be involved in power-sharing arrangements through deliberations and consultations. On the part of interveners, such deliberation may require more time, patience and consistent monitoring of the state-building process and its subsequent growth.

In order to manage the liberalization strains in economic reforms, capacity building in public finance management institutions should be attempted at the earliest. This will help stabilize the economy, besides gaining legitimacy for the entire state-building enterprise. Absence of centralized financial institutions and banks, presence of informal grey and black economy, and bypassing of government agencies for aid disbursement are some limitations of improving capacity of financial institutions in post-intervened states. It is important to understand that technical solutions may not be enough to help build the tax base of the state. For taxation reforms to succeed there is a need to build a tax morale among the elites of a society. Phillips calls this a fiscal social contract and argues that such a contract can be built through varied steps. These include, targeting political attitudes (of the elites) towards paying taxes, ensuring accountability and transparency in public revenue spending, creating perceptions of equitable treatment by the revenue authority, effective public spending of taxes, commitment of political leadership to shared prosperity, official recognition of social and economic institutions (property rights) and state builder's understanding of the historical political context of taxation.[71] While these measures are highly desirable, it is also imperative to understand that economic growth is a highly desirable aspect of state building, yet post conflict governments, which are just emerging from war, may face extraordinary problems in developing their domestic revenue base. Again, the approach must be step-by-step stimulation of growth and infrastructure provision.

To sum up, neo-liberal political and economic state-building models are inspired from contemporary discourses on failed states, wherein these are

portrayed as deficient in liberal features of democratic governance and economic system. Liberal models — when practiced in a contextual environment different from the western societies — lead to what some scholars term mixed or hybrid systems.[72] Such hybrid systems carry the leftover features from previous models, creating a dichotomy between the old system leftovers and the dictates of the new system, thereby affecting adversely the state building performance. There develops a non-alignment between liberal state-building strategies and the history as well as context and practice of state building in intervened states. The original character of state-building model undergoes change. Liberal becomes hybrid/mixed, democracy becomes procedural, and market economy functions on the foundations of black and grey economy, corruption, and market distortions.

Conclusions

Liberal paradoxes are generated from an international state-building understanding that considers liberal democratic practices and free market reforms as a panacea for failed state's political and economic problems. Liberal political and economic strategies aim at stability and growth, but instead, exacerbate instability and produce economic upheavals. The most contentious issues have come out from the timing and sequencing of holding elections in post-conflict settings. In the absence of functioning service-providing institutions and of agreement on rules to manage conflict, elections in such settings become more of a procedural exercise, riddled with factional competition, fraud and irregularities. It is not uncommon for donor's brand of liberalization to fail in blending with the traditional concepts of legitimacy and the shared social norms of a society. In particular, emphasis on civil society growth without a culture of moderation and accommodation highlights rather than suppresses political conflicts. Pursuit of free market economic measures, such as the restructuring of economy though subsidy cuts on welfare services hurts public interests and creates legitimacy deficit for the state. Free trade policies diminish state's revenues from export duties, precisely around the time when finances are direly needed to initiate state building reforms. Free market economy transitions are said to worsen income inequalities among groups and classes in the society. These paradoxes associated with liberal model end up adversely impacting the state-building process in post-intervened states.

The debate on the paradoxes of liberalization is explored by indulging in Afghan experience with elections in post-2001 period. Elections in Afghanistan began with much fanfare, but the varied issues in the holding of free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections marred the process, and in turn compounded the problematic experiment of elections in Afghanistan. Liberalization paradoxes are generated when the need for quick democratic transition goals obfuscates the necessary electoral preparation in post-conflict societies like Afghanistan. Electoral dilemmas in Afghanistan consist of vague demarcated boundaries, lack of population census, adoption of a complicated SNTV system, late passage of electoral law, inadequate security and denial of electoral participation to candidates to run on party tickets, all in tandem

discourage the growth of party culture. These dilemmas are generating electoral paradoxes, including, irregularities in voter registration, low voter turn-out, and voting processes riddled with violence and bloodshed. Resultantly, elections become a farce, and instead of legitimizing regimes, they serve to destabilize and delegitimize it.

Notes and References

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Force Report," (September 2002), pp. 3-4, accessed 16 September 2007, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLICUS/Re>.

3. See the above reference for an understanding of failed states as lacking in liberal economic institutions.

4. The term 'nation building' has been used by American scholars and leaders to refer to US state-building interventions, historically in cases of Germany and Japan and currently for Iraq and Afghanistan. Nation building is the process (by elites) of building a sense of common identity among diverse inhabitants by overcoming ethnic, linguistic, cultural and other differences. State building focuses on political institutions and processes; nation building addresses issues of identity. The two are complimentary because viable political institutions and processes help strengthen national identity. Fukuyama and Call and Cousen criticize its use to describe state-building interventions in conflict societies at the end of Second World War, especially Germany and Japan, which had developed strong identities prior to their invasions. For more recent state-building attempts, the use of nation building term makes it difficult to assess international community's role in state building as distinct from nation building. See Fukuyama, "Nation-Building and the Failure of Institutional Memory," in *Nation Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq*, edited by Francis Fukuyama (Baltimore, M.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), pp. 3-4; and Charles T. Call and Elizabeth M. Cousens, "Ending Wars and Building Peace: International Responses to War-Torn Societies," *International Studies Perspectives* 9 (2008): p. 4.

5. James Dobbins, "Learning the Lessons of Iraq," in *Nation Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq*, edited by Francis Fukuyama, p. 218.

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households. However, quick liberalization experiment led to the growth of a highly independent and polarized media, which contributed much in inciting ethnic hatred among the locals. See Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge, 2004), p. 161.

13.   Marina Ottaway, "Democratization in Collapsed State," in *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, edited by William Zartman (Boulder, C.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), p. 235-49.

14.   Alina R. Menocal, "State Building for Peace: A New Paradigm for International Engagement in Post-Conflict Fragile States?" European University Institute, EUI Working Papers, March 2010, <http://ddrn.dk/ papers_and_reports-thematic-news-administration-democracy-human-rights-papers-and-reports.html>; Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict,* pp. 160-170; Ottaway, "Democratization in Collapsed State," pp. 235-49.

15.   Menocal, "State Building…" ref 14, pp. 12-13.

16.   This happened in 1988 in the first elections after the UN withdrawal; unhealthy political competition and suppression of political opposition became a prelude to a military coup by Hun Sen's party in July 1997, who then managed to win elections through control over state resources and machinery. See Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict*, pp. 79-90.

17.   Ottaway, "Democratization…," op.cit., ref 13.

18.   Ignatieff argues democratic models to be unsuitable for countries like Afghanistan on account of its incompatibility with religion (Islam) that serves as the basis for politics there. See Michael Ignatieff, "Intervention and State Failure." *Dissent* (Winter 2002): pp. 68-72.

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42.   "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: Parliamentary Elections: 18 September 2010," (OSCE/ODIHR Election Support Team Report, Warsaw, 26 November 2010), p. 15.

43.   Out of the 18 candidates vying for President's office, Hamid Karzai succeeded in the October 2004 elections, after receiving 55.4% of the total votes, 3 more times than any other candidate. See Goodson, "Nation Building in Afghanistan," p. 157.

44.   Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post Taliban…," op.cit., ref 41, p. 15.

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52. See Coburn and Larson, "Undermining Representative Governance," op.cit., ref 46, p. 3,

53. "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: Parliamentary Elections," p.3.

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THE CHALLENGE OF HALVING POVERTY BY 2015: WHERE DO INDIA AND PAKISTAN STAND?

SYED IMRAN SARDAR

Wherever we lift one soul from a life of poverty, we are defending human rights. And whenever we fail in this mission, we are failing human rights.

— *Kofi Annan*
former United Nations Secretary-General

On the onset of twenty-first century, the United Nations Millennium Summit unanimously adopted a millennium declaration. The declaration set out eight goals in which halving extreme poverty and hunger was prioritized as the goal number one. The remaining seven goals (education; gender equality and women empowerment; reduction in child mortality; maternal health improvement; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria & other diseases; environmental sustainability, and global partnership for development) deal with other dimensions of poverty. All the member states (189 at that time) pledged to halve poverty levels in their respective countries between 1990 and 2015. The aim of the paper is to provide insights into this prolonged effort. It seeks to answer the following questions: Would the target be achieved in the given time frame? How far are India and Pakistan from attaining this goal? Are both states on the right track to accomplish this task? What are the problems and prospects vis-à-vis poverty reduction?

In order to assess the progress of India and Pakistan towards attaining the millennium goal of halving poverty, the paper is structured into three sections. The first section begins with a theoretical debate over poverty definition and its measurement. It presents a comparative analysis of two methods of poverty measurement, i.e. the (traditional) income-consumption

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method with that of the new multidimensional poverty method. It also discusses the importance of Human Development Index (HDI) in evaluating the status of the two countries at a global level. This section argues that the new multidimensional method is far better in addressing the poverty dimensions than the traditional method of income-consumption. The second section presents the poverty profiles of India and Pakistan while utilizing the above mentioned income-consumption and multidimensional methods, as well as the HDI method. It also discusses the indigenous progress reports of India and Pakistan for Millennium Development Goals. This section argues that Pakistan is comparatively better in using a multidimensional approach; its poverty rate is below that of India. The third section sums up the entire debate over poverty reduction and suggests policy recommendations. The research is timely because the universal effort is approaching its promising end in 2015.

Although most of the MDGs signatory countries have achieved the target of halving extreme poverty five years ahead of 2015 time frame, yet the 1.2 billion people still live below the poverty line of 1.25 (US) dollars per day. Statistics reveals that one-third of the world's 1.2 billion people living below the poverty line live in India alone (see also figure 1). In 1990, 52 per cent of South Asian population was living in extreme poverty, but in 2010 the percentage went down to 30 per cent. If we exclude India, the percentage sharply declines to 22 per cent – which is above the target. In the region, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal have a marginal share in the extreme poverty index; however, multi-dimensional poverty is still rampant. This is primarily because of a lack of commitment and political will on behalf of decision-makers. Moreover, natural disasters and financial crisis potentially affect the struggle towards poverty reduction as in the case of global food crisis of 2007 and 2008, which almost reversed the progress achieved since 2000.

Within this context, the paper maintains that poverty reduction is a collective effort and meeting the target of halving poverty by 2015 is only possible through a close cooperation between South Asia and the global community at large. India and Pakistan, on their side, need to prioritize poverty reduction goal and revisit their strategies to deal with it. The paper finds that there is a fundamental gap in theory and practice in poverty reduction strategies. These strategies have failed to produce satisfactory outcomes because they are often formulated on the basis of the conventional approach (income-consumption) for measuring poverty rather than the multidimensional approach. The paper argues that both urban and rural poverty have entirely different dimensions, and hence, demand separate strategies to address poverty issues at both ends. The global community, on its part, should fully cooperate with developing countries in formulating comprehensive mechanisms in advance in order to deal with emergency situations such as floods, earthquakes and food security issues.

Poverty discourse: Who is poor? How is poverty measured?

Identification of what constitutes the 'poor' is a critical step in the estimation of poverty. Different people have different understandings; some

people define it on the basis of statistical data, facts and figures. Others negate this approach and argue that statistical indicators just cannot address all aspects and dimensions of poverty. In line with this thinking, they describe that a person is considered poor if he or she is suffering from sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power that are necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living in addition to a deprivation of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights."[1]

Aku* defines 'poor' from five different dimensions; (i) who suffers from personal and physical deprivation of health, literacy, educational disability and lack of self-confidence; (ii) economically deprived due to a lack of access to property, income, assets, factors of production and finance; (iii) socially deprived as a result of denial from full participation in social, political and economic activities; (iv) culturally deprived in terms of lack of access to values, beliefs, knowledge, information and attitudes which deprives him/her of controlling his/her own destinies; and (iv) politically deprived in terms of lacking political voice in decision-making. Thus, poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that includes the lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure a sustained livelihood, thereby resulting in hunger or malnutrition, ill health, increased chances of mortality, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, homelessness, and inadequate, unsafe or degraded environment as well as social discrimination and exclusion. Moreover, it also includes the lack of participation in decision-making in civil, social and cultural life.+

Besides, measuring poverty in itself is also a complex issue. However, a common method takes into account the calorie requirements of an individual on daily basis. For both India and Pakistan, the official poverty line is based on calories intake. The cost for fulfilling the nutritional requirement, along with consumption expenditure on non-food items, is aggregated to construct a poverty line. For instance, India's poverty line for rural areas currently stands at 32.4 rupees per day, and 46.9 rupees for urban areas.[2] In Pakistan, according to available data, the overall poverty lines for both rural and urban areas stand at 31.6 rupees per day.[3] The World Bank, on the other hand, has reference lines set at 1.25 (US) dollars per day for extreme poverty line and 2 dollars per day for moderate poverty line.[4]

At this juncture, Amartya Sen* argues that poverty is a complex phenomenon. "You cannot draw a poverty line and then apply it across the board to everyone with the same way, without taking into account personal characteristics and circumstances."[5] The people who fall below the poverty line experience multiple deprivations. Poverty, being multidimensional in nature,

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* Aku Patricia Sati is a professor at Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria. Poverty definition is taken from its paper 'Perspective on Poverty Alleviation Strategies in Nigeria' presented at annual conference on poverty alleviation in Nigeria in 1997.

+ World Bank, United Nations definition

* Amartya Sen is an Indian economist. In 1998, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences awarded him the Nobel Prize for Economics for his work on reviving an ethical dimension to the discussion of vital economic problems.

cannot be measured by income or calorie-based poverty methods. To fill this gap, Sabina Alkire and James Foster introduced a multidimensional poverty measure approach. This approach takes into account the multiple deprivations faced by the poor. It is largely adopted across the world. Firstly, Mexico used this approach for official poverty estimates in 2009 and then, Human Development Report in 2010 based on Alkire-Foster model introduced the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). This report contains the MPI for 104 countries including India and Pakistan. The standard indicators were: education, health and living conditions. The report subsequently provided the ranking of countries in the above-mentioned indicators (findings shall be discussed in the next section). There is a consensus among all researchers that the MPI provides a more elaborate and precise picture of poverty as compared to the traditional approach, however, with addition of more dimensions in the MPI, this index would be more accurate.

Similar to the measurement of poverty at personal level, a popular method of Human Development Index (HDI) is used to know whether a country is poor or rich. It is quite appealing as it sums up the status of any country in the form of comparative ranking that is easy to understand. The index was created jointly by a Pakistani economist Mehbub ul Haq and Indian economist Amartya Sen. Its ranking is largely used to evaluate the countries' progress in the human development sector. The HDI measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions that include life expectancy at birth (longevity), education attainment, and improved standard of living determined by per capita income.[6] The HDI stands as the geometric representation of the three indices mentioned above. The formula for calculating the HDI is given below.

HDI = Life Expectancy Index (LEI) + Education Index (EI) + Gross Domestic Product Index (GDPI)
$$\frac{}{3}$$

LEI = Life Expectancy (LE) -25
$$\frac{}{85\text{-}25}$$

EI = 2/3 x Adult Literacy Rate (ALR)/100 + 1/3 x Combined Gross Enrollment Ratio (CGER)/100

GDPI = $\frac{log\,(GDP) - log\,(100)}{log\,(40000) - log\,(100)}$

Explanation

Suppose a country has the following figures:

Life Expectancy = 65 years
Adult Literacy Rate = 75.5 per cent
Combined Gross Enrollment Ratio = 85.2 per cent
Gross Domestic Product = 5,865 US dollars

Then its Life Expectancy Index (LEI) would be

LEI = Life Expectancy (LE) -25
$$\frac{}{85\text{-}25}$$

$$= \frac{65 - 25}{85 - 25}$$

$$= \frac{40}{60}$$

= 0.6666

and Education Index (EI)

EI = 2/3 x Adult Literacy Rate (ALR)/100 + 1/3 x Combined Gross Enrollment Ratio (CGER)/100

=2/3 x 75.5/100 + 1/3 x 85.2/100

=0.666x0.755 + 0.333x0.852

= 0.50283 + 0.28371 = 0.7865

and its Gross Domestic Product Index (GDPI)

GDP = $\frac{log\,(GDP) - log\,(100)}{log\,(40000) - log\,(100)}$

$$= \frac{log\,(5,865) - log\,(100)}{log\,(40000) - log\,(100)}$$

$$= \frac{3.7682 - 2}{4.6020 - 2}$$
= 1.7682 / 2.6020 = 0.6795

its HDI ranking can be calculated as

HDI = Life Expectancy Index (LEI) + Education Index (EI) + Gross Domestic Product Index (GDPI)
$$\frac{}{3}$$
=(0.6666 + 0.7865 + 0.6795) / 3
= 0.71086 [7]

Note: For calculating HDI for any country, the values for GDP, Adult Literacy, Combined Gross Enrollment Ratio and Life Expectancy can be obtained from human development reports of United Nations and World Bank.

The resultant HDI of 0.71086 is almost equal to that of Ecuador, which is at 98th position in the overall ranking of 187 countries and placed among the high human development category.

It is worth mentioning here that the HDI divides countries into four broad human development categories: Very High Human Development, High Human Development, Medium Human Development and Low Human Development. According to the 2014 report, the "very high" human development ranking starts from 0.944 (Norway) and ends at 0.808 (Argentina) and the "high" human development begins at 0.790 (Uruguay) and ends at 0.700 (Dominican Republic). The "medium" human development starts from 0.698 (Maldives) and ends at 0.556 (Equatorial Guinea) and the "low" human development starts from 0.540 (Nepal) and ends at 0.337 (Niger). The following section shall present the Human Development Index along with other reports for South Asia to assess the regions' status in achieving the target of poverty reduction.

Apart from producing a quality definition of poverty, today's situation demands dealing with the different aspects of poverty. Over the period of 15 years from 1990 to 2005, the number of people living below the poverty line decreased from 1.8 billion to 1.4 billion. But the global financial crisis has reversed the progress achieved. Some 55 million to 90 million more people were estimated to be living in extreme poverty in 2009 than anticipated before the crisis.[8] Moreover, recent floods as of 2014 in India and Pakistan have put the target at stake; particularly, the situation in Pakistan is highly volatile where economy was already deteriorated. Owing to the grim situation, it would be naïve to rely heavily on one or two sources to deal with this complex phenomenon – for instance, foreign aid or governments alone. Since poverty has many faces and dimensions, its resolution requires total participation from local, regional and global communities.

The international community, while acknowledging the importance of this issue, took the challenge to halve the level of poverty from the world by 2015. In September 2000, the United Nations General Assembly, representing 189 countries, unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration. Acting on the General Assembly's request, the Secretary General and the various UN agencies, as well as representatives of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), devised a plan for achieving the Millennium Declaration's objectives, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They put obligations on both rich and poor governments, and endeavoured to place a heavier burden on rich countries. The international community has declared poverty reduction a 'fundamental objective' of development; hence, alleviating poverty has become a benchmark for assessing effectiveness. The MDGs gave first priority to the elimination of poverty and hunger. The seven other goals are given below:

2. To achieve universal education,
3. To endorse gender equality and empower women,
4. To reduce child mortality,

5. To improve maternal health,
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases,
7. To ensure environmental sustainability, and
8. To develop a global partnership for development.

Goals one to seven are inter-related and address poverty in a multidimensional framework. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to evaluate progress from within this broader concept. In line with this, the next section shall present poverty profile for India and Pakistan and provide meta-analysis of facts and figures given in the domestic and international reports.

Poverty profile of India and Pakistan: A comparative analysis

India

Official poverty line estimates

Based on the latest Expert Group Report (prepared under the supervision of Dr Rangarajan[*] and published by the Planning Commission of India), monthly per capita consumption expenditures of Rs.972 in rural areas and Rs.1,407 in urban areas respectively are set as the poverty line at the all India level. This implies monthly consumption expenditures of Rs.4,860 in rural areas or Rs.7,035 in urban areas for a family of five at 2011-12 prices[9] (See Table-1 for state-wise poverty line). The poverty lines estimated on daily basis are as follows: Rs.32.4 for rural and Rs.46.9 for urban areas. The monthly per-capita consumption (of Rs.972 for rural areas) includes all food and non-food expenditures. It sets Rs.554 for food items, Rs.141 for essential non-food items, and Rs.277 for other expenses (554+141+277). Similarly, Rs.1,407 for urban areas is the sum of Rs.656 for food items, Rs.407 for essential non-food items and Rs.344 for other expenses.

According to the report, 30.9 per cent of the rural population and 26.4 per cent of the urban population were below the poverty line in 2011-12. The all-India ratio was 29.5 per cent. As many as 260.5 million individuals in rural India and 02.5 million in urban areas were below the poverty line. In total, 363 million were below the poverty line in 2011-12 (See Table-2 for poverty ratio and number of poor).

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[*] Dr. C. Rangarajan is the chairman of Chairman of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council of India.

Table-1
State-wise Poverty Line in Rural and Urban areas for 2011-12

S.No	States/UTs	Poverty Line (rupees)	
		Rural	Urban
1	Andhra Pradesh	1031.74	1370.84
2	Arunachal Pradesh	1151.01	1482.94
3	Assam	1006.66	1420.12
4	Bihar	971.28	1229.30
5	Chhattisgarh	911.80	1229.72
6	Delhi	1492.46	1538.09
7	Goa	1200.60	1470.07
8	Gujarat	1102.83	1507.06
9	Haryana	1127.82	1528.31
10	Himachal Pradesh	1066.60	1411.59
11	Jammu & Kashmir	1044.48	1403.25
12	Jharkhand	904.02	1272.06
13	Karnataka	975.43	1373.28
14	Kerala	1054.03	1353.68
15	Madhya Pradesh	941.70	1340.28
16	Maharashtra	1078.34	1560.38
17	Manipur	1185.19	1561.77
18	Meghalaya	1110.67	1524.37
19	Mizoram	1231.03	1703.93
20	Nagaland	1229.83	1615.78
21	Orissa	876.42	1205.37
22	Punjab	1127.48	1479.27
23	Rajasthan	1035.97	1406.15
24	Sikkim	1126.25	1542.67
25	Tamil Nadu	1081.94	1380.36
26	Tripura	935.52	1376.55
27	Uttar Pradesh	889.82	1329.55
28	Uttarakhand	1014.95	1408.12
29	West Bengal	934.10	1372.68
30	Puducherry	1130.10	1382.31
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1314.98	1797.69
32	Chandigarh	1303.17	1481.21
33	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1008.39	1540.81
34	Daman & Diu	1200.60	1434.93
35	Lakshadweep	1327.77	1458.69
	All India	972	1407

Source: Planning Commission of India, Expert Group Report, 2014

Table 2
Poverty Ratio and Number of Poor in 2011-12

S. No.	States/UTs	Rural		Urban		Total	
		% of Persons	No. of Persons (lakhs)	% of Persons	No. of Persons (lakhs)	% of Persons	No. of Persons (lakhs)
1	Andhra Pradesh	12.7	71.5	15.6	45.7	13.7	117.3
2	Arunachal Pradesh	39.3	4.3	30.9	1.0	37.4	5.3
3	Assam	42.0	114.1	34.2	15.4	40.9	129.5
4	Bihar	40.1	376.8	50.8	61.4	41.3	438.1
5	Chhattisgarh	49.2	97.9	43.7	26.9	47.9	124.8
6	Delhi	11.9	0.5	15.7	26.3	15.6	26.7
7	Goa	1.4	0.1	9.1	0.8	6.3	0.9
8	Gujarat	31.4	109.8	22.2	58.9	27.4	168.8
9	Haryana	11.0	18.4	15.3	14.0	12.5	32.4
10	Himachal Pradesh	11.1	6.9	8.8	0.6	10.9	7.5
11	Jammu & Kashmir	12.6	11.7	21.6	7.6	15.1	19.3
12	Jharkhand	45.9	117.0	31.3	25.5	42.4	142.5
13	Karnataka	19.8	74.8	25.1	60.9	21.9	135.7
14	Kerala	7.3	12.3	15.3	26.0	11.3	38.3
15	Madhya Pradesh	45.2	241.4	42.1	86.3	44.3	327.8
16	Maharashtra	22.5	139.9	17.0	88.4	20.0	228.3
17	Manipur	34.9	6.7	73.4	6.3	46.7	12.9
18	Meghalaya	26.3	6.4	16.7	1.0	24.4	7.4
19	Mizoram	33.7	1.8	21.5	1.2	27.4	3.1
20	Nagaland	6.1	0.8	32.1	1.9	14.0	2.8
21	Orissa	47.8	169.0	36.3	26.0	45.9	195.0
22	Punjab	7.4	12.9	17.6	18.7	11.3	31.6
23	Rajasthan	21.4	112.0	22.5	39.5	21.7	151.5
24	Sikkim	20.0	0.9	11.7	0.2	17.8	1.1
25	Tamil Nadu	24.3	91.1	20.3	72.8	22.4	163.9
26	Tripura	22.5	6.1	31.3	3.2	24.9	9.3
27	Uttar Pradesh	38.1	600.9	45.7	208.2	39.8	809.1
28	Uttarakhand	12.6	8.9	29.5	9.4	17.8	18.4
29	West Bengal	30.1	188.6	29.0	86.8	29.7	275.4
30	Puducherry	5.9	0.2	8.6	0.7	7.7	1.0
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	6.6	0.2	4.9	0.1	6.0	0.2
32	Chandigarh	12.0	0.0	21.5	2.3	21.3	2.3
33	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	55.2	1.0	15.3	0.3	35.6	1.3
34	Daman & Diu	0.0	0.0	17.6	0.4	13.7	0.4
35	Lakshadweep	0.6	0.0	7.9	0.0	6.5	0.0
	All India	30.9	2605.2	26.4	1024.7	29.5	3629.9

Source: Planning Commission of India, Expert Group Report, 2014

The poverty ratio has declined from 39.6% in 2009-10 to 30.9% in 2011-12 in rural India and from 35.1% to 26.4% in urban India. The decline was

thus a uniform 8.7 percentage points over the two years. The all-India poverty ratio fell from 38.2% to 29.5%. In tandem, 91.6 million individuals were lifted out of poverty during this period.

World Bank, UNDP estimates

- The level of inequality is rising, the income share of the richest 20 per cent to the poorest 20 per cent has increased from 4.7 (1993) to 4.9 per cent in 2004.
- 33.5 per cent of the total population living below a dollar a day
- 292 million adults are illiterate, the same as in 1995
- 4.5 million children are out of school (third highest in world ranking)
- 47 per cent of children below age 5 are malnourished
- 97 per cent of the total South Asian AIDS patients live in India
- 152.2 million people have no access to safe water
- 67 per cent of total population is without access to sanitation
- The share of females in the total labour force declined from 32 per cent to 28.3 per cent

According to the World Bank's latest report, India alone shares 33 per cent of the total number of people living below the poverty line of 1.25 dollars a day in the world (See figure 1). Pakistan is better off in dealing with extreme poverty. It has already achieved the target of halving extreme poverty before 2015.

Figure 1
Top ten countries with largest share of the global extreme poor
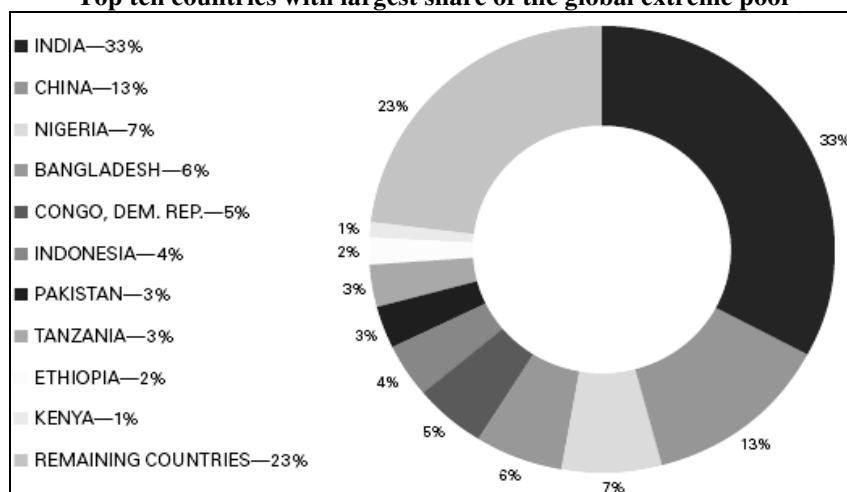
Source: *Prosperity for All: Ending Extreme Poverty*, World Bank, 2014

The looming urban sprawl in India further accentuates the extreme poverty. The urban population of India alone in the entire region is expected to touch 627 million by 2031, equivalent to 40 per cent of the Indian population.

Megacities — with population above 5 million — will also double in size over the same period, from 61 million to 133 million people. Indian cities with population between 1 and 5 million will register the highest absolute increase in urban population, from 46 to 126 million, equivalent to an increase from 15 to 20 per cent in their share of India's urban population. The average annual population growth rate for urban India is expected to stabilize at 2.5 per cent per annum, in line with the population growth rate recorded over the period 1995-2000, although below the record growth of 3-4 per cent registered in the previous decades.[10] According to Indian Census authorities, the urban population of India will exceed 300 million by the year 2016. Slums are the most visible manifestation of urban poverty and reveal the failure of urban development and housing policies. In India, 93 million people are estimated to be living in slums. Around 50 per cent of Delhi's population live in slums. The situation in Mumbai is even worse where around 60 per cent of the total city's population are slum dwellers.[11]

No city in India has round-the-clock supply of water, which is limited to some hours of access per day and, in some cases, with alternate day access. In the case of sanitation, the national average for sewerage network coverage is only 33 per cent with some states receiving virtually no service.[12]

HDI ranking

In the latest HDI ranking, India stands at 135 with 0.586 value among 186 countries, and is placed in Medium Human Development. In Gender Equality Index, it stands at 127th position with 0.563 value and, in the Gender Development Index, it stands at 132nd position with 0.828.

MPI ranking

In MPI, India's index value is 0.282 that translates 55.3 per cent population suffering from multidimensional poverty. If we go into details, 51.5 per cent population comes under "Intensity of Deprivation" (which measures the "extent of deprivation"), 27.8 per cent under "Severe Poverty" (as rated by the MPI). The contributions of deprivation in the various dimensions of overall poverty are as follows: education 22.7 per cent, health 32.5 per cent and living standards 44.8 per cent.* If we compare with the old method (1.25 dollars a day and national poverty line), we find that 44.8 per cent of total population of India live under 1.25 dollars a day and 21.9 per cent of whole population live under the national poverty line.

MDGs country report

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* For details see Human Development Report 2014

Table 3

India: Progress in MDGs

No.	Description	Targets	Status
Goal 1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.	(On –track)
		Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.	(Slow or almost off-track)
Goal 2	Achieve universal primary education	Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.	(On –track)
Goal 3	Promote gender equality and empower women	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.	(On –track)
Goal 4	Reduce child mortality	Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the Under- Five Morality Rate.	(Moderately on – track due to the sharp decline in recent years)
Goal 5	Improve maternal health	Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.	(Slow or off-track)
Goal 6	Combat HIV/aids, malaria and other diseases	To halt by 2015 and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.	(On-track, as trend reversal in HIV prevalence has been achieved)
		To halt by 2015 and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.	(Moderately on-track, as trend reversal has been achieved for Annual Parasite Incidence of Malaria and on the prevalence of TB)
Goal 7	Ensure environmental sustainability	Integrate the principle of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.	(Moderately on-track)
		Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.	(On-track for the indicator of drinking water but slow for the indicator of Sanitation)
		By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.	(The pattern not statistically discernible)
Goal 8	Develop a global partnership for development	In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.	(On-track)

Source: MDGs Country Report 2014, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India

Pakistan

Official poverty estimates

Similarly, in Pakistan the poverty line is also calorie-based. Cost of calorie intake of 2,350 calories of an individual per day, along with consumption expenditure on non-food items, is aggregated to construct a poverty line. According to the Planning Commission, 'this poverty line is adjusted at the time

of the poverty estimation after accounting for the inflationary impact in intervening years.'[13] According to the latest data, the official poverty in Pakistan stands at 22.3 per cent.

Table 4

Pakistan Poverty Line in Historical Perspective (Rs)	
Year	Poverty Line
1998-99	673.40
2000-01	723.40
2004-05	878.64
2005-06	948.47

Source: Economic Survey of Pakistan

World Bank, UNDP estimates

- 73.6 per cent of the population is still living below two dollars a day
- Half the adult population is still illiterate; 76 per cent of the female adult population is illiterate
- The percentage of the rural poor has increased to 35.9 from 31 per cent
- 15.5 million people have no access to safe water
- 41 per cent of the total population is without access to sanitation
- 6.5 million children are out of school (second highest in world ranking)
- 9 million (38 per cent) children under the age of 5 are malnourished
- 85,000 people are with HIV/AIDS
- The share of females in the labour force is 26.5 per cent
- 72 million people have no access to sanitation

Pakistan, too, is urbanizing rapidly. It is considered the most urbanized country in the region. In 1981, around 24 million people were living in urban areas, constituting 28 per cent of the total population. Now, the total population has reached 173.5 million in which the share of urban population has risen to around 36.3 per cent (63.1 million). If that continues, it would surpass 121 million by 2030 and the level of urbanization would be 45.6 per cent — highest among South-East Asian countries.[14]

In Pakistan, owing to inadequate investment and management, the quality of urban infrastructure has deteriorated. Less than one per cent of water-waste is being treated; the rest is thrown into streams and rivers turning them into sewers and seriously affecting downstream users. The city governments remain unable to recover and dispose of all the solid waste. Less than 50 per cent of the solid waste generated in the cities is being recovered. The rest is dumped mostly in open fields, polluting the groundwater and creating air pollution.[15]

HDI ranking

Pakistan's ranking in HDI is 146 with 0.537 value and is placed in Low Human Development (LHD). Pakistan is slightly behind in surpassing LHD, since the value of 0.556 is placed in the Medium Human Development category which belongs to Equatorial Guinea (with 144 ranking). In the latest Gender Equality Index, it stands at the 127th position with 0.563 value, whereas in the Gender Development Index, it stands at 145th position with 0.750.

MPI ranking

In MPI, Pakistan's index value is 0.237, which translates into 45.6 per cent population suffering from multidimensional poverty. If we go into details, 52.0 per cent population comes under the category of "Intensity of Deprivation", with 26.% living in "severe poverty". The contributions of deprivation in the various dimensions of overall poverty are as follows: Education 36.2 per cent, health 32.3 per cent and living standards 31.6 per cent.[*] If we compare with the old method (1.25 dollars a day and national poverty line), we find that 21.04 per cent of total population of Pakistan live under 1.25 dollars a day and 22.3 per cent of whole population live under the national poverty line.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute of Pakistan (SDPI), while utilizing this multidimensional approach, measured district-wise poverty in Pakistan using the "Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement Survey" conducted in 2008-09 over four dimensions; education, health, living conditions and asset ownership. The results of headcount estimates for national, provincial and district levels are given below.

One-third of the households in Pakistan live below the poverty line (33 per cent). Based on current population estimates, around 58.7 million people are "multidimensionally" poor. Huge disparity is also observed in urban-rural areas. In rural areas, 46 per cent households fall below the poverty line, whereas, 18 per cent do so in urban areas.

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[*] For details see Human Development Report 2014

Table 5

Poverty Estimates at National Level

Population Group	Headcount ratio H (per cent)
Total	33
Urban	18
Rural	46

Source: 'Clustered Deprivation: District Profile of Poverty in Pakistan', *Sustainable Development Policy Institute*, 2012

       The highest incidence of poverty found in Balochistan, where more than 52 per cent households are "multidimensionally" poor. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 32 per cent of households are poor, as compared to 33 per cent in Sindh. In Punjab, only 19 per cent households fall below the poverty line.

Figure 2

Poverty Estimates at National Level
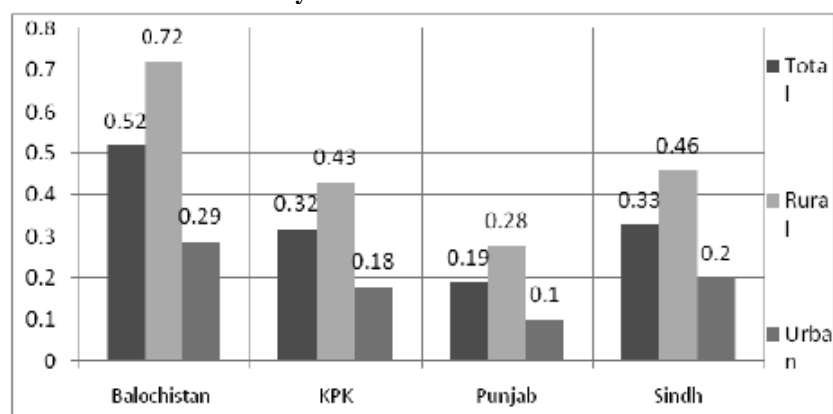
Source: SDPI, 2012

       District-wise statistics show that in Punjab, higher incidence is found in Ranjanpur with 44 per cent households falling below the poverty line, whereas, 40 per cent in Muzaffargarh, 36 per cent in DG Khan, 33 per cent in Bahawalpur, 31 per cent in Layyah, Lodhran and Pakpatan, and 28 per cent in Multan, Khanewal and Bhakar, respectively. The situation in Balochistan is extremely deplorable as the whole province is found with high incidences of poverty. Majority of the districts have more than 60 per cent households below the poverty line. In KPK, some of the northern districts have 'extremely high' incidences of poverty, whereas the southern parts showcase 'very high' incidences of poverty, with 'average' levels in central parts of KPK, and 'low' levels in areas adjacent to Islamabad. Districts of Kohistan in KPK and Musakhel in Balochistan are the poorest districts of Pakistan. In Sindh, the southeast is the poorest region in the province, whereas, the central part is

comparatively less poor and the southwest part is the least poor region (See Annex A for districts-wise map).**(16)**

MDGs country report

Table 6

Pakistan: Progress in MDGs

No.	Description	Targets	Status
Goal 1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.	Proportion of population below the calorie based food plus non-food poverty line.	(On –track)
		Prevalence of underweight children under 5 years of age.	(Off –track)
		Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption.	(Off –track)
Goal 2	Achieve universal primary education	Net primary enrolment ratio (percentage).	(Off Track)
			(Off Track)
		Completion/survival rate Grade 1 to 5 (in percentage).	(Off Track)
		Literacy rate (in percentage)	
Goal 3	Promote gender equality and empower women	GPI Primary Education.	(Off Track)
		GPI Secondary Education.	(Off Track)
		Youth Literacy GPI.	(Off Track)
		Share of Women in Wage Employment.	(Off Track)
		Proportion of Seats held by Women in National Assembly.	(Achieved)
Goal 4	Reduce child mortality	Under 5 Mortality Rate (Deaths per 1000 Live Births).	(Off Track)
		Infant Mortality Rate (Deaths per 1000 Live Births).	(Off Track)
		Proportion of Fully Immunized Children 12-23 Months.	(Off Track)
		Proportion of under 1 year children immunized against measles.	(Off Track)
		Proportion of Children Under 5 Who Suffered from Diarrhoea in the Last 30 Days (in percentage).	(Achieved)
		Lady Health Worker's Coverage (in percentage of target population).	(Off Track)
Goal 5	Improve maternal health	Maternal Mortality Ratio.	(Off Track)
		Proportion of births attended by	(Off Track)

		Skilled Birth Attendants.	(Off Track)
		Contraceptive Prevalence Rate.	(Off Track)
		Total Fertility Rate.	(Off Track)
		Proportion of women 15-49 who had given birth during last 3 years and made at least one antenatal consultation.	(Off Track)
Goal 6	Combat HIV/aids, malaria and other diseases	HIV prevalence among 15-49 year old pregnant women.	(On Track)
		HIV prevalence among vulnerable groups.	(Off Track)
		Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective prevention and treatment measures.	(Off Track)
		Incidence of TB/10,000.	(Off Track)
		TB cases detected and cured under DOTS.	(Achieved)
Goal 7	Ensure environmental sustainability	Forest Cover (in percentage).	(Off Track)
		Land Area Protected for Conservation of Wildlife (in percentage).	(On Track)
		GDP (in 1980-81 Rs.) per ton of oil equivalent (energy efficiency).	(On Track)
		Sulphur Content in High Speed Diesel (On Track).	(On Track)
		Proportion of Population with Access to Improved Water Sources.	(On Track)
		Proportion of Population with Access to Sanitation.	(Off Track)
		Proportion of Katchi Abadies Regularized.	(Off Track)
Goal 8	Develop a global partnership for development	In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.	No records found

Source: *MDGs Country Report 2013*, Planning Commission of Pakistan

Findings and policy recommendations

According to the official estimates, 21.9 per cent of the whole population in India is below the poverty line, whereas, 32.68 per cent is below

the World Bank poverty line. For Pakistan, official estimates show that 22.3 per cent of the entire population is below the national poverty line, whereas, 21.04 per cent live below the World Bank poverty line.

In the Multidimensional Poverty Index, Pakistan fares better than India with 0.237 points, whereas India scored 0.282. Both states share the same Gender Equality ranking. In terms of poverty headcount estimates, 55.3 per cent of the whole population of India is "multidimensionally" poor, whereas in Pakistan it is 45.6 per cent of the population. The multidimensional method has questioned the validity of traditional income-based approach because it takes the incidence of multiple deprivations into account.

In the Human Development Index, Pakistan's ranking is 146 with 0.537 value and is placed in Low Human Development (LHD). On the other hand, India stands at 135 with 0.586 value among 186 countries, and is placed in the Medium Human Development.

Country reports for MDGs placed India in better position (except in halving extreme poverty target). Pakistan is found off-track in most of the targets set in MDGs, however, it has achieved the target of halving extreme poverty before 2015 timeline.[*] Pakistan is off-track on all three targets and, therefore, unlikely to achieve MDG number 2 (universal education). Overall, with all four indicators or set targets of MDGs being off-track, Pakistan is unlikely to meet MDG 3 (gender equality). Despite the gains, Pakistan is off-track on five out of six indicators and hence unlikely to attain MDG 4 (reducing child mortality). Overall, Pakistan is off-track on all indicators and, therefore, unlikely to achieve MDG 5 (improving maternal health). Pakistan is off-track on three out of five indicators and, therefore, unlikely to achieve MDG 6 (environmental sustainability). Overall, with four out of seven indicators on track, Pakistan is likely to achieve MDG 8 (global partnership for development) with continued efforts; this is the only goal where the majority of indicators are on-track.

India and Pakistan unfortunately are lagging behind in achieving the target of halving poverty by 2015 with respect to both estimates of the National Poverty Line and of the World Bank. Pakistan has shown overt progress in halving extreme poverty and has met the target before 2015 timeline; however, the progress in the other seven, six goals (dealing with poverty dimensions), more or less remains unsatisfactory. Thus for Pakistan, halving poverty with all its dimensions by 2015 is extremely challenging. India, on the other hand, has shown modest progress in goals dealing with the various dimensions of poverty; however, halving extreme poverty is still a distant dream.

The paper argues that the National and World Bank poverty lines do not provide cogent estimates of poverty. For many economists, this income barely meets an individual's daily food requirement; how can it then address, they argue, the other dimensions of poverty such as health and education?[17] Most of the strategies based on national poverty lines do not portray a true picture of poverty, and hence, fail to address poverty on the ground. In this

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[*] According to World Bank latest estimates

study, we found huge differences in poverty estimates at both levels – at the National Poverty Line and the World Bank Poverty Line, particularly in case of India. Both approaches ignore the multiple deprivations of poor, health, education and living standards. Hence, there is a dire need to redraw conventional methods to include other dimensions of poverty for better estimation of the poor and by extension, the concurrent poverty line. Policies required meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) demand for a multidimensional understanding and measurement of poverty. The formulation of effective policies to achieve MDGs and to monitor their progress requires identifying the groups of population concurrently deprived in multiple poverty dimensions.[18] The new multidimensional poverty approach fills this gap. A study by Arif Naveed and Nazim Ali titled "Clustered Deprivation" is an exemplary resource for further research in this regard. In the study, the authors strongly suggest that this approach should be adopted officially to measure the poverty in both states and then make strategies and set targets accordingly. This should be the case especially since Pakistan has made a commitment to implement the multidimensional poverty measures in the near future.[19]

Inferring from multidimensional poverty discourse, a workable poverty reduction strategy must include the following points:

Enhancing agriculture productivity

- Strengthening of agriculture sector by increasing investment.
- The focus should be on increasing agricultural production.
- Introducing a more knowledge-based agricultural system.
- Adopting proper mechanism to halt the decline in the agricultural sector's labour force.
- Supporting small farmers, providing them maximum incentives and opportunities.
- Supporting the poor in their small businesses with funds and interest-free loans.
- Continuity in development programmes is essential; it should not be disturbed with the change of governments. In this matter, strong commitment from institutions is required.

Over 70 per cent of India and Pakistan's livelihood come directly from agriculture. However, decades of neglect have weakened this sector's capacity to become self-sufficient in food production. The growth in crop yields has been more or less stagnant. Decline in subsidies and rise in input prices have hit the small farmers hard. Although the structures of the economies have changed significantly, agriculture is still the largest sector in the region and serves as the engine for overall growth. It can provide effective means not only to alleviate poverty but also to accelerate economic growth.

Ensuring social safety nets

The process of alleviating poverty would be incomplete until we properly address issues responsible for the widespread poverty. In this regard it

is the governments' responsibility to ensure social safety net to the poor; the task should not be left to the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community organizations.

- Governments need to identify groups that are marginalized and face discrimination on the grounds of gender, economic status, and vulnerability as single parents or widows heading households, disability and illness. These groups must have the protection of food security. In this regard, there is a need to establish and strengthen public distribution systems that target food support to these groups.
- Initiate or support public employment guarantee schemes, such as food for work or cash for work schemes.
- Ensure well-functioning health system with maximum availability of free-of-cost and quality essential medicines and vaccines to the poor community.
- Increase the share of spending on education.
- Ensure a well-functioning uniform education system, with maximum attention being given to the rural areas and maximum enrolment of both genders at least at the primary level.
- Ensure access to basic sanitation.

Proper mechanism to deal with natural disasters and food crisis

Ending extreme poverty by 2015 is unlikely until governments come to term with the increased risk of natural disasters. Recent floods in India and Pakistan have seriously put the target at risk, and particularly, for India, the target of halving extreme poverty is impossible. Similarly, the food crisis of 2007-08 completely reversed the progress achieved since 2000. The latest report of the Overseas Development Institute tilted 'The Geography of Poverty, Disasters and Climate Change in 2030', examined the nexus between climate change and its impacts on poverty. It concludes that without proper management, upto 325 million extremely poor people could be living in the 49 countries most exposed to the full range of natural hazards and climate extremes in 2030.[20] The report puts 11 countries into the category of 'the most at risk of disaster-induced poverty' including Pakistan and also singles out India for a special mention. (See annex C for climate change and poverty levels in 2030). There must be a comprehensive mechanism in advance to deal with emergency situations. Here, cooperation between the states, donors and non-governmental organizations dealing with poverty, is highly demanded, in order to cope with the consequences of natural disasters.

Liberalize trade regime

Trade has the potential to reduce poverty, if both states follow liberal policies. Many economic experts argue that trade liberalization is a win-win proposition for both Pakistan and India, especially for Pakistan since it is in need of growing export markets in order to utilize the potential industrial hubs present in the country, and trade with India could significantly help achieve this goal. As

for India, trade with Pakistan would not only be beneficial for itself, but also facilitate its trade with Afghanistan, Iran, China and Central Asian states.[21]

Improve governance

Above all, success in achieving targets depends entirely upon good governance. Governments need to make themselves efficient and capable enough with having maximum resources available and a strong will to respond to the aspirations of the citizens. Furthermore, they must be accountable in terms of what they are doing and what they have done. Unfortunately, India and Pakistan's progress in managing poverty issues and providing social safety nets to its people has been disappointing. (See Annex B for Governance ranking for India and Pakistan). Both states have to come a long way to address poverty issues. Meeting all targets by 2015 is quiet difficult. By addressing fundamental methodological and governance issues and increasing in public investment, however, we can come out from a vicious cycle of poverty.

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Ranking for all districts over the incidence of poverty

Province	District	Headcount Ratio	Rank	Province	District	Headcount Ratio	Rank
KPK	Kohistan	0.89	1	Sindh	Tando M Khan	0.41	31
Balochistan	Musakhel	0.88	2	Punjab	Muzaffargarh	0.40	32
Balochistan	Washuk	0.78	3	Balochistan	Pashin	0.40	33
Balochistan	Awaran	0.75	4	Sindh	Thatta	0.40	34
Balochistan	Dera Bugti	0.72	5	Balochistan	Mastung	0.40	35
Balochistan	Chaghi	0.69	6	Balochistan	Sibbi	0.39	36
Balochistan	Qillah Abdullah	0.66	7	Balochistan	Zhob	0.39	37
Balochistan	Jhal Magsi	0.65	8	Sindh	Nawabshah	0.39	38
Balochistan	Kohlu	0.64	9	KPK	Swat	0.39	39
Balochistan	Bolan/Kachi	0.63	10	Sindh	Jamshoro	0.39	40
KPK	Shangla	0.63	11	Balochistan	Loralai	0.38	41
KPK	Upper Dir	0.55	12	Balochistan	Gwadar	0.38	42
Balochistan	Nasirabad	0.54	13	Sindh	Larkana	0.38	43
Balochistan	Jafarabad	0.54	14	Sindh	Shahdadkot	0.38	44
Balochistan	Qillah Saifuallh	0.53	15	KPK	Tank	0.36	45
Balochistan	Barkhan	0.52	16	Sindh	Jacobabad	0.36	46
Balochistan	Nushki	0.51	17	Punjab	D.G. Khan	0.36	47
Balochistan	Lasbela	0.51	18	KPK	Malakand	0.35	48
Balochistan	Kharan	0.51	19	Balochistan	Quetta	0.34	49
KPK	Batagram	0.50	20	Sindh	Kashmore	0.34	50
KPK	Bonair	0.50	21	KPK	Lower Dir	0.33	51
Balochistan	Kalat	0.49	22	Sindh	Ghotki	0.33	52
Balochistan	Kech/Turbat	0.47	23	Punjab	Bahawalpur	0.33	53
Sindh	Tharparkar	0.47	24	KPK	Lakki Marwat	0.33	54
Sindh	Mirpur Khas	0.44	25	KPK	Mardan	0.33	55
Punjab	Rajanpur	0.44	26	Sindh	Tando Allah Yar	0.32	56
Balochistan	Khuzdar	0.43	27	Balochistan	Panjgur	0.31	57
Balochistan	Ziarat	0.43	28	Punjab	Layyah	0.31	58
Sindh	Badin	0.42	29	Punjab	Lodhran	0.31	59

Province	District	Headcount Ratio	Rank	Province	District	Headcount Ratio	Rank
Sindh	Dadu	0.29	61	Sindh	Noshero Feroz	0.20	86
Punjab	Pakpattan	0.29	62	Sindh	Karachi	0.20	87
Punjab	Multan	0.28	63	Punjab	Nankana Sahib	0.19	88
KPK	Hangu	0.28	64	KPK	Nowshera	0.18	89
Sindh	Sanghar	0.28	65	KPK	Abbottabad	0.18	90
Sindh	Shikarpur	0.28	66	Punjab	Sahiwal	0.18	91
Punjab	Khanewal	0.28	67	Punjab	Sheikupura	0.16	92
Punjab	Bhakkar	0.28	68	Punjab	Sargodha	0.16	93
Sindh	Khairpur	0.27	69	Punjab	Mianwali	0.14	94
Punjab	Rahim Yar Khan	0.27	70	Punjab	Narowal	0.14	95
KPK	Karak	0.27	71	Punjab	Khushab	0.14	96
Punjab	Vehari	0.27	72	Punjab	Hafizabad	0.13	97
Punjab	Bahawalnagar	0.27	73	Punjab	Lahore	0.12	98
KPK	Mansehra	0.26	74	Punjab	Attock	0.11	99
KPK	Kohat	0.26	75	KPK	Haripur	0.11	100
Punjab	Jhang	0.26	76	Punjab	T.T. Singh	0.10	101
Sindh	Sukkur	0.25	77	Punjab	Faisalabad	0.09	102
KPK	Bannu	0.25	78	Punjab	Rawalpindi	0.08	103
Sindh	Hyderabad	0.25	79	Punjab	Sialkot	0.07	104
KPK	Charsada	0.24	80	Punjab	Gujranwala	0.07	105
KPK	Peshawar	0.24	81	Punjab	Mandi Bahuddin	0.06	106
KPK	Swabi	0.22	82	Punjab	Chakwal	0.05	107
KPK	Chitral	0.22	83	ICT	Islamabad	0.05	108
Punjab	Kasur	0.21	84	Punjab	Gujrat	0.04	109

Source: SDPI, 2012

The recent World Bank Governance Indicators (WGI) are useful tools to measure the governance of any country on the basis of voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption. The following table adapted from the WGI rankings for the year 2009 shows India and Pakistan's status in a regional perspective.

India and Pakistan ranking (regional perspective)

Country	Ranking						
	Voice and Accountability	Political Stability & Absence of Violence	Government Effectiveness	Regulatory Quality	Rule of law	Control of Corruption	Average
Bangladesh	35.1	7.5	16.7	23.3	27.8	16.7	21.1
Bhutan	29.4	71.2	64.8	13.8	59.4	75.2	52.3
India	60.2	13.2	54.3	44.3	55.7	46.7	45.7
Maldives	44.1	39.2	42.4	37.1	52.8	29.5	40.8
Nepal	30.8	5.2	18.1	23.8	17.9	25.2	20.1
Pakistan	20.9	0.5	19	33.3	19.3	13.3	17.7
Sri Lanka	32.2	11.8	49	43.3	53.3	44.8	39

Source: *World Governance Indicators (WGI), 2009.*

Projected poverty levels in 2030 in countries ranking highest on the multi-hazards (earthquakes, cyclones, droughts, extreme heat and floods) index
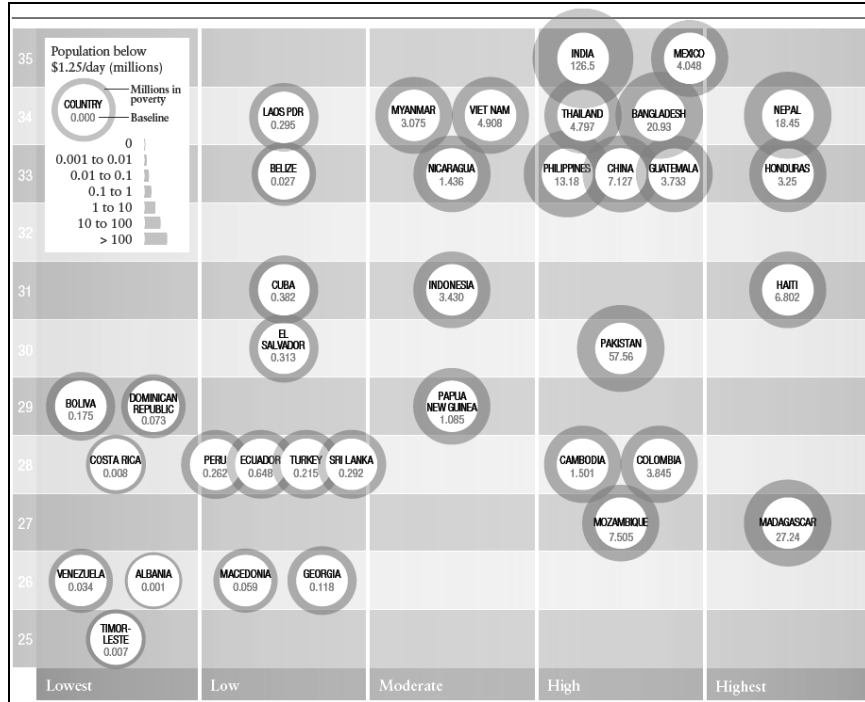
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THE 2014 US WITHDRAWAL – AN UNSETTLED QUAGMIRE FOR PAKISTAN

LUBNA SUNAWAR

Introduction

The deployment of international troops in Afghanistan led by the US in 2001 brought new challenges for Pakistan to deal with. With American troops based in Afghanistan's side of the border, the question of where the border was and Pakistan's responsibilities for maintaining peace, law and order in its own territories acquired international attention. Militants were allegedly hiding on both sides of the borders and were entering Pakistan through this porous border.[1] After a decade of war in Afghanistan, the US remains spiteful to regional sensitivities and the Global War on Terrorism (GWoT) has been a struggling venture for the US and the coalition forces. It was believed that the death of Bin Laden would make it easier to create a narrative of victory for the US-led coalition against al-Qaeda and perhaps gave way to negotiate directly with the Afghan Taliban; but the death of al-Qaeda's leader ended up further exacerbating violence and instability in Afghanistan and the Tribal Areas of Pakistan.

Now, however, the US has embarked on a quite different and considerably more difficult task in Afghanistan that has not only affected Afghanistan but also directly impacted Pakistan in general and its tribal areas in particular. The US-led NATO-ISAF troops have been involved in the reconstruction and restructuring of Afghanistan's institutions particularly its security forces, but it is not yet clear whether such efforts will yield any prolific results in a long run, particularly after withdrawal of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) by the end of 2014. The withdrawal of a significant bulk of (ISAF) forces from Afghanistan has dramatically enhanced Pakistan's importance not only as a neighbouring country of Afghanistan, but also as a

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country which is directly affected by the War on Terrorism launched by the US and its key allies back in 2001.

The US invaded Afghanistan in 2001 under United Nation's mandate. At the time of the invasion, it was expected that the US would accomplish its mission by rooting out the Taliban and then establishing a fully functional democracy in Afghanistan. However, the current state of affairs pertaining to law and order is worse than ever before. Insecurity, criminal market economy, unemployment, home-grown insurgency, poverty, war between warring factions, and corruption in Afghanistan are all matters of great concern for everyone.[2]

Despite using extensive military force to eliminate the Taliban and al-Qaeda supporters and networks, the US and coalition forces have faced severe resistance in the form of insurgency and backlash. These forces are defeated to some extent but the US could not eliminate them. They are more organized than ever before and their movement has shown greater resilience over the years, gathered strength from the Afghan populace. Particularly, their resistance has increased in the Pashtun-dominated northern and southern provinces along the Pakistan border, which have become a safe sanctuary for the terrorist groups.[3]

The article is divided into three parts. The first section examines the failure of US-led coalition forces to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan even after fourteen years since the War on Terrorism started; it also discusses the likely repercussions of the US-led ISAF-NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan. The second section focuses on major challenges that lie ahead for newly elected Afghan government and identifies potential scenarios. The third section analyzes the consequences of the fourteen-year War on Terrorism on Pakistan.

Explaining the US withdrawal from Afghanistan

NATO took permanent command of the ISAF force in October 2003 and its mandate was expanded territorially to reach across most of Afghanistan. ISAF's goals were further expanded to cover the maintenance of security, to provide assistance in reconstruction and development, and to facilitate good governance.[4] However, fourteen years after the launch of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), NATO-ISAF has had limited success in achieving its wide-range agenda. Its primary success so far has been the aim of eliminating Bin Laden and eradicating much of the al-Qaeda stronghold in Afghanistan.[5]

The decision to withdraw troops from Afghanistan is taken mainly due to many viable reasons on the ground including: operational exhaustion, low morale, strategic confusion and a sense that the prospects for realizing NATO-ISAF's wider goals in the near future are remote and not easily achieved.[6] Though NATO-ISAF forces have successfully dismantled many terrorists training camps and hideouts, there is confusion, inconsistency and disagreement about its aims and strategic approach.[7] In terms of objectives, there is confusion and divergence between the coalition partners' pertaining to viable political solutions over the elimination of al-Qaeda and the Taliban, and over the security and good governance paradigm in the contemporary Afghan context.[8]

On 28 December 2013, an article in *The Washington Post* reported on National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on the Afghan war, revelled and predicted that the US and its allies' investment in Afghanistan in the form of troop surge would not be adequate in the long run to yield fruitful results.[9] So this would not be an advantageous strategy if Washington leaves behind a few thousand troops and continues bankrolling from Afghanistan.[10] The NIE Report also shows apprehension regarding uncertain political environment of Afghanistan in the post 2014 withdrawal and further added that 'in the absence of a continuing presence of US troops and continuing financial support … the situation would deteriorate very rapidly.'[11]

The Washington Post also reported the debate generated through NIE and its strong impact within administration. This Report exposed the inner weaknesses of the Obama administration pertaining to smooth transaction of power and other security related matters.[12] This is because it showed a clear divergence from the prevailing official narrative of a complicated but yet positive transition process, in which the Afghan side's growing capabilities enable it to take greater responsibility. The NIE has not only given a clear but pessimist picture about uncertain realities after 2014, but also raised a question mark over Afghan armed forces' readiness levels and capacity,[13] stating clearly that in such a fragile situation, it would be difficult, in fact impossible, for Afghan security forces to prevent a reemergence of al-Qaeda.[14]

The challenge is both qualitative and quantitative. Even after fourteen years of investment by the US and the coalition forces, training and funding of the Afghan military remain poor and heavily dependent on ISAF forces when it comes to operational procedure.[15] In order to strengthen the security forces, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) should increase the number of troops up to maximum 352,000 in 2014,[16] which is quite improbable in the present situation when they are set to leave.

The Obama administration inherited a miserable and failing situation in Afghanistan, which is a direct outcome of his predecessor's seven years of mismanagement and mishandling. The administration eventually came up with the formula of intensifying US and NATO efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan by increasing US troops to more than 100,000 and civilian personnel to 1,000[17] in order to undo the deteriorating security situation. NATO-ISAF forces have also increased to 40,400 from 28,250 during this time.[18] The administration has also given approval for military funding of Afghanistan's security forces and it has also increased non-military assistance. All this assistance, which is being provided to Afghanistan on military and non-military basis, comes out to a monthly bill exceeding many billion dollars, out of which much is believed to be lost in corruption.[19]

The most important objective for the Obama administration was to correct the strategic miscalculation characterized by the Bush administration towards Afghanistan. In its two policy reviews in March 2009 and December 2009,[20] it was decided that the ultimate aim of the US in Afghanistan and Pakistan is to "disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan, and to prevent their return to Pakistan and Afghanistan."[21]

US withdrawal strategy raises many questions. Will the US exit-strategy from Afghanistan be a successful or failed venture? Would Afghanistan be a stable state after the withdrawal of NATO-ISAF forces? What would be the serious repercussions for Afghanistan and Pakistan and would Afghanistan be in a position to secure itself in the long run against terrorism? The US exit strategy, without completely eradicating terrorism for which it launched a global campaign in the region, is no more different from US pack-up gamble in the aftermath of the Cold War in 1990. Pakistan was being used as a proxy tool by the US against the Soviet Union to defeat Communism in the region. Once the war was over, the US left Pakistan on its own to deal with the repercussions, and the after effects of the Afghan crisis lasted for 10 years.[22] The non-state actors, i.e. *mujahideen,* turned into Taliban later in the 1990s and due to the quick exit strategy of the US, Pakistan suffered a lot and it is widely believed that Pakistan would become a scapegoat and would have to deal with the mess created by the US and the coalition forces in the post 2014.

So far NATO-ISAF mission has been a combination of fatigue and strategic confusion on the ground. It would not be wrong to say that western contributors in Afghanistan share a similar view based on uncertainty and future deployment of the NATO-ISAF forces.[23] In the second half of the 2000s, though high-profile terrorist bombings on the mainland of the US and Europe faded, the death toll of soldiers stationed in Afghanistan increased dramatically. Domestic outcry against deployment of NATO-ISAF foreign forces in Afghanistan gained momentum with the passage of time. In this pretext, the political elites in Europe and the US have been unable to successfully handle the ongoing crisis and they do not have any coherent long-term sustainable strategy for Afghanistan. They do not feel the need to stay in Afghanistan for any longer duration especially in political and economic contexts where the continued maintenance of national troops in Afghanistan has become almost politically unviable for many NATO-ISAF governments, posing a serious threat to their economies as well.[24] Additionally, in the case of the US, defence analysts are of the view that advancements in defence technology, primarily drone technology, enables the targeting of enemy combatants in difficult terrains, such as Pakistani and Afghan mountainous region, without the need to send troops on the ground, thereby saving time, expenditure and the lives of American national soldiers.[25]

When it comes to NATO-ISAF's operational procedure, the coordination of all of the partners is highly problematic and vague, particularly with regard to their deployment and participation in combat operations.[26] This can be stated by the fact that troops contributing in peace efforts in Afghanistan have different mandate from their governments. From here onwards, differences arise, as it is not clear if troops are authorized by their respective governments to engage in direct fighting with enemy combatants or are required to refrain from combat and only play supporting roles.[27] NATO-ISAF has no coherent strategy or future road map, and the lack of unanimous consensus over the future rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghan society is presently a nightmare for the Obama administration. 'Provincial Reconstruction Teams' have received $57 billion in foreign aid since 2001,[28] but they failed to come up with

satisfactory results and have had relatively little impact in improving health, human security and education on the ground due to continuous backlash and insurgency.[29]

Converging and conflict interests

The hasty announcement of withdrawal is quite well-understood by the fact that the US is facing a deep but challenging financial crisis at home and immense public pressure to roll back from Afghanistan without creating any additional burden on US exchequers. It is not wrong to say that this ongoing conflict in the name of War on Terrorism has cost hundreds of billions of dollars, and many American lives.[30] Afghanistan, being a neighbouring country of Pakistan, has been a constant source of trouble in multiple forms, such as the Durand Line issue, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980s, the rise of the Taliban in 1990s and now finally the issue of terrorism that has become a bone of contention in improving good neighbourly relations. The ensuing Taliban insurgency has a huge impact on Pakistan's politics, economy, security profile and relations with the world community.

Above all, withdrawal of the US forces will hardly achieve any desired result in the long run as the US and international coalition forces have miserably failed to understand the intensity of home-grown insurgency in Afghanistan. The United States' continuous support to its traditional ally India in South Asia, which is steadily emerging as a regional power, and the growing Indian influence in Afghanistan are troublesome factors from Pakistan's perspective which has been acting as a front line state in Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).[31] Traditional rivalry between Pakistan and India and the maintenance of balance of power in the region always play a vital role in determining peace effort in Afghanistan. Some analysts are of the view that India has invested approximately US$2.5 billion in Afghanistan.[32] The basic purpose seems to escalate tension and to facilitate cross border terrorism in Pakistan; this time not from the eastern front but on western borders along with Afghanistan. That is one of the reasons that, for the first time in history of Pakistan, it has deployed over 150,000 of its troops on its borders along with Afghanistan.[33]

A Taliban stronghold in Afghanistan has not only created a safe haven for terrorists but it has also posed a potentially dangerous scenario for the entire region. The ongoing political turmoil, which could be escalated into a bloody civil war and in turn produce a refugee crisis, draws in regional competitors, but comparatively strong states such as India, could destabilize the region in general and Pakistan in particular.[34] Increased militancy in Afghanistan is already spreading to Pakistan's adjacent tribal areas of Fata and Balochistan bordering Afghanistan.[35] Pakistan is already facing a dangerous insurgency as well as political and economic challenges as a coalition partner. The western world, in general, and the US, in particular, strongly believe that Pakistan has drawn distinction between different terrorist groups. It acts in a prompt manner and aggressively against those that have taken up arms against the state, such as the Pakistani Taliban, while elements of its security services provide passive and active support to groups that target Afghanistan, India, and others.[36] So

Pakistan, according to international media, is not a reliable client as it is playing a dual and unsatisfactory role as a US coalition partner. Afghan Taliban leaders have operated from inside Pakistan and many of their top leaders go back and forth to the war in Afghanistan and receive war supplies from Pakistani sanctuaries.[37]

India also sees Afghanistan through the lens of its decades old hostility and conflict with Pakistan. In comparison to Pakistan, which has somewhat difficult history of relations with Afghanistan, India historically has had excellent relations with Afghanistan, apart from the rule of the Taliban, who were deeply hostile to India.[38] India has rebuilt its influence in the country since 2001 by heavily investing in the country, and to date they have only delivered 40% of the total pledged amount of US$2.5 billion. Pakistan is also contributing its part by investing in development sector in Afghanistan and has also given US$360 million for different ongoing projects.[39]

Sectarian violence and terrorist incidents have gained impetus after the death of Akbar Bugti in Balochistan. Quetta is known as the headquarters of the exiled Afghan Taliban leadership. The former ISAF commander, General Stanley McChrystal, declared "Quetta Shura" as the greatest threat to ISAF forces in Afghanistan.[40] Whether or not the *shura* exists in Quetta today, the fragile security condition of the province can be easily exploited by militant groups and there is enough evidence to support that this is happening.[41] Despite tackling the Taliban threat, on one hand, Islamabad also has to deal with the Baloch separatist movement. Pakistan believes India is the main player behind the scene and the major source of provoking insurgency in the province of Balochistan.[42] In addition to that, Islamabad Foreign Office has evidence against India that it is using Afghan soil to destabilize Pakistan and providing regular funding and equipment to militants and separatist elements to continue work against the interest of Pakistan.[43]

As US and coalition forces are all set to leave Afghanistan by the end of 2014, it will be quite easy for India to use Kabul against Islamabad. It is also assumed that India is operating against Pakistan through its intelligence agency RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) and by building consulates along western border with Pakistan.[44] To make the situation worst, the emergence of groups like Jundullah[45] on both sides of the border between Pakistan and Iran has added a new dimension to the ongoing conflict in Balochistan, and is playing an active role in promotion of nationalism, extremism and sectarian violence.

There is evidence that New Delhi and Kabul are also collaborating to support Baloch insurgents within Pakistan.[46] India's main interests in Afghanistan are to offset Pakistani influence and to prevent the return of a Taliban-style regime friendly to Pakistan that would provide a haven for *Jihadi* militants.[47] Since 2001, trade links between India and Afghanistan have increased dramatically and a stable Afghanistan could provide access to India for trade and energy as well as a gateway to Central Asia.[48]

India's growing involvement in Afghanistan is a direct threat and an increasingly destabilizing factor for Pakistan's security. Pakistan believes that India has no geographical, religious or ethnic linkages with Afghanistan.[49] India

is the only country that has no share in Afghan war in the form of blood, commitment and resolve. The US wants India to play a major role after the US withdrawal from the region and help Washington in chalking out any future strategy regarding the Afghan crisis. Pakistan is not happy with this, as this weakens Pakistan's position as far as the new Afghan government set-up is concerned.[50] Pakistan also wants to see a stable and prosperous Afghanistan in its North-west border after the drawdown of US and coalition forces in 2014.[51]

Both India and Pakistan are traditional rivals with nuclear power in the region, and these rivalries are essentially political and geostrategic in nature. In Afghanistan, India and Pakistan are not competing over the country's resources, but to prevent each other from using Afghanistan as a tool against their respective interests and strategies.[52] There is, however, a significant divergence in the way India and Pakistan have projected these strategies in the last few years, particularly in post-9/11 scenario towards Afghanistan.[53] Likewise Iran, which never established diplomatic relations with the Taliban regime in 1990s, now has developed an economic sphere of influence in Afghanistan's west, but its primary aims remain preventing Afghan soil from becoming a launch pad against Iran.[54] China, an emerging global economy, has also invested in Afghanistan in Aynak copper deposit, but is reluctant for any further investment due to uncertain political climate. Another major reason of investment is to protect its Xinjiang province from militancy from Afghanistan.[55]

Richard Holbrooke, special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, regularly convened an International Contact Group of Regional and International diplomatic representatives on Afghanistan.[56] These meetings, however, in one way or the other have often been concealed and the findings of meetings are highly confidential among NATO-contributing countries.[57] This creates an environment of suspicion and distrust among regional countries that are apprehensive of long-term US strategic intentions in Afghanistan and toward its neighbours.[58] But the most troublesome factor for all of them is a new power vacuum following a US withdrawal.

If there is no regional consensus over how to settle the Taliban issue before US withdrawal from Afghanistan, there is a great danger of a proxy war in Afghanistan where regional powers would try to attain maximum gain by promoting different ethnic or sectarian factions in pursuit of their own national interests.[59] Such a conflict would drag both India and Pakistan into the struggle for control of Afghanistan. If such like situation erupts between regional states post 2014, it is possible that Iran and Russia would join India to support anti-Taliban actors, while Saudi Arabia may support Pashtun groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan.[60] Such a conflict would not only be destructive for Afghanistan, but this would bring serious repercussions for regional security and prosperity. It would also lead to ethnic and sectarian violence across the region with proxy groups being used to attain self-vested interests along ethnic and sectarian identities.[61] Moreover, such a regionally sponsored conflict in Afghanistan created by a power vacuum in the aftermath of the drawdown would block any progress towards prosperity, economic integration, nuclear proliferation, water sharing, energy and trade.[62]

As the military drawdown enters its final stage, regional actors are re-evaluating their strategic environment according to recent happenings and have begun planning for the future as they are once again inheriting an unsettled country with numerous challenges to tackle.[63] It is quite true that no regional country is in a position to assert itself in Afghanistan, but they all are capable enough to play their cards against any development contrary to their national interests.[64] Afghanistan's neighbours are likely to try to manipulate Afghan unstable political situation in their favour to ensure their own security.[65] The situation in Afghanistan is far from stabilized. In the north and the west, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) would face difficulty in controlling the insurgency after the withdrawal.[66] By contrast, in the south and the east, the situation is even more precarious, where the Kabul government apparently seems helpless to gain the upper hand against the Taliban and the al-Qaeda forces.[67]

Post-2014 scenarios

Most of the discussion about the role of the US in Afghanistan after 2014 is focused on the United States' future noncombat but military character. The future agenda is ambiguous and may raise questions which merit discussion. For instance, what would be the likely mandate for 9,600 US troops in Afghanistan, and what would be the nature of their mission? What would be the rules of engagement and under what terms and conditions? These above mentioned queries and the major decisions pertaining post-2014 Afghanistan will be made in the coming months.

On 11 September 2001, Afghanistan was a sanctuary for al-Qaeda, which had close association with the Taliban regime.[68] This was evident from the fact that Osama bin Laden decided to move from Tora Bora to Kandahar in the late 1990s and his new place was only a few miles away from Mullah Omer's residence.[69] The Taliban's refusal to handover Osama bin Laden to the US in the wake of 9/11 showed a close bonding between themselves and al-Qaeda.[70]

Today, the US cannot accept a situation in which al-Qaeda and its allies pose a serious threatening situation against it, and the western world in general.[71] Similarly, the US would never accept any leadership friendly to the Taliban forces in Afghanistan. In the post-9/11 scenario, al-Qaeda's continuing relationship with other Taliban groups such as the Haqqani network, and its growing friendship with other like-minded militant leaders including the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, is a clear indication that a Taliban-led government in Afghanistan would be a risky gamble and a serious threat for US national security.[72]

Failure to reach any political settlement in Kabul is, therefore, likely to have a spill-over effect that would further wane Islamabad's ability to control different extremist groups operating inside Pakistan's tribal area.[73] Despite the complexity of the US-Pakistan relations, and being a frontline state in US led Global War on Terrorism, a complete US withdrawal by the end of 2014 would

not only give rise to a security vacuum in the region but also not be in Islamabad's interest.

One of the greatest post-2014 nightmares for the US and the Western world is the potential of a civil war or the return of a Taliban rule, both of which would again make it a safe haven for *jihadi* terrorism. In the pre-9/11 scenario, the Taliban government supported terrorist activities against India particularly in Indian-held Kashmir. Thus, it would also be a source of great concern for China and Russia alike because both countries do not wish to see the expansion of international terrorist networks.[74]

Afghanistan's security problem is not only limited to the military dominion. Even a strong ANSF will be functional only if it provides services to the qualified, functional, and legitimate Afghan government. The legitimacy of the post-Karzai government will not only be the first preliminary test of the ANSF but will be central to the evolution of a new Afghanistan after the US drawdown.[75] The question is open to debate, however, whether the current electoral process can or will lead to such an outcome? The 2009 Afghan presidential election was extremely rigged, despite under a strong international presence of security apparatus.[76] There are also reservations that Karzai used his influence regarding selection procedures to support his preferred candidates in both legislative chambers.[77] Afghanistan's GDP grew since the fall of the Taliban from 2003-04 to 2010 at an annual average of 9.1 per cent.[78] After the foreign forces withdrawal from the region, conflict-afflicted provinces, which have received more foreign assistance and have benefited more in employment, will obviously be more affected in terms of funding. This is because the US and other European countries have no concrete plan to continue with heavy foreign assistance packages for Afghanistan in future.[79] To grow the economy and to rely on its own resources rather on foreign assistance will be the major up-hill task for the new Afghan government. It also means that the transition will be much harder for the next government, whatever its economic incentives, it will be unable to come up with any effective strategy.

On 2 May 2012, Afghanistan and the US signed the Enduring Strategic Partnership Security Agreement. The agreement is significant because it gives a framework for the future US role in Afghanistan, including social and economic development, institution building, regional cooperation and security.[80] It is worth mentioning that the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA), which defines the status of US troops and the details of military operations in Afghanistan, has been approved by Afghanistan's parliament as well as an ad-hoc *Loya Jirga*, but ex-president Karzai refused to sign it.[81] This agreement would strengthen US-Afghan relations post 2014. In addition to this, the agreement would help in handing over powers to newly elected Afghan president in a smooth manner and would boost the morale of Afghan security forces who in turn would not feel abandoned after 2014.[82]

Afghanistan is not yet capable of standing on its own. The process of rebuilding the country by the US and the coalition forces in the aftermath of 9/11 started from an extremely low base. Decades of war and protracted conflicts between the warring factions had destroyed its civilian and military

institutions, deprived young Afghans of education within their country, with many preferring to remain in self-exile. Today, the government of Afghanistan is investing in the development of infrastructure and security programmes and this budget exceeds domestic revenues. More than 70% of Afghanistan's government-administered budget is financed by international donors who manage and run its external budget.[83]

Afghanistan is heavily dependent on donors to run its internal expenditures. This dependence on external support will be continued even after the 2014 withdrawal but to a lesser extent than expected.[84]

One of the questions that could be a focal point of main discussion between international actors is the country's status on the international level. As external actors play a significant role and act as an important component of Afghanistan's problems, it makes sense to examine the possibility of neutralizing Afghanistan in the post-2014 scenario.[85] A neutral Afghanistan away from the politics of great powers and regional states has been proposed on a number of past occasions. After the 1979 Soviet invasion, the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, called for a neutral Afghanistan after the withdrawal of Soviet troops, a proposal that had gained the appreciation of the European Union. It was also authorized by US President Jimmy Carter but finally rejected by Moscow. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev again floated this idea, but the US rejected it.[86]

The US is of the view that it would not abandon Afghanistan as it did after the Soviet Union withdrawal from the region at the end of Cold War. In fact, the US administration has already stated publicly that the US will still be committed to Afghanistan's stability and integrity even after 2014.[87] As far as the process of transition is concerned, the US seeks Afghanistan's willingness through a strategic accord that will allow and give the US exclusive rights to access multiple Afghan military facilities.[88] It is worth mentioning that Bagram Airfield is included on the list from where the US-led NATO carries out drone attacks throughout the region. Apart from Bagram Airfield, through this strategic agreement, the US can continue to launch unmanned drone strikes on high value suspected targets inside Pakistan in future, or even retain the option to use manned helicopter for raids, like the one that resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden.[89]

In actuality, the troop surge of 2010-2012 sought to assuage Afghanistan by delivering a devastating blow to the Taliban elements and driving them out of key areas. At the same time, the primary objective of the US has been to train and equip the ANSF.[90] The ANSF would be the main actor in the aftermath of 2014 withdrawal to ensure Afghanistan's stability and to destroy the Taliban network. However, the surge did not accomplish its goals. The task of training a large security force of a country that has been a bleeding ground for more than a decade, and preparing it for the future in a short span of time has yet to yield results.[91] The ANSF will have to carry out major operations in the future instead of just coping with the Taliban remnants and the ensuing insurgency. At the time of writing, this task is unlikely unrealistic, impossible and very difficult to achieve.[92] The ongoing War on Terrorism

heavily relies upon the continuance of funding from the donor countries to the ANSF. Without their interest, it would not be easy to bring stability and peace to Afghanistan.[93] It is hard to predict any political consensus among conflicting parties, and this could lead to further instability.

In January 2013, the commander of ISAF, General Alan, presented three options for the remaining US troops in Afghanistan.[94] In the first place, 6,000 troops would focus on counter-terrorism missions; a second option of about 10,000 soldiers would be utilized for training, mentoring, and logistical support; and lastly, 20,000 US troops would patrol some areas.[95] The US administration termed this proposal unrealistic due to mounting tensions with President Karzai. However, this plan would be implemented if no security agreement were reached between conflicting parties before the withdrawal.[96]

The most likely scenario of post-2014 Afghanistan is that there will be a small force comprised of 10,000 troops to fulfil security requirements. For example, counterterrorism (CT) operations will be led by US forces, whereas the counter insurgency will be carried out by the ANSF.[97] This small force would act to protect American military installations, provide some limited support to the ANSF, and strengthen the Afghan security institutions by providing training and mentoring.[98] A power vacuum will be the final outcome in any situation, once the US-led coalition drawdown, and this somehow has to be filled.[99]

In his speech to the State of the Union in 2013, President Barack Obama announced that the withdrawal will extend until the end of next year when the US mission in Afghanistan will finally come to an end. He declared that the US would continue its support for Afghanistan beyond 2014 but the nature of this commitment will change.[100] From a military perspective, the US will focus on two missions, i.e. training and equipping Afghan forces to an extent so that the country would not become a victim of political anarchy and disorder because this situation would only give safe passage to al-Qaeda and the Taliban forces.[101]

Paradoxically, if the Afghan Taliban get even a limited victory in Afghanistan, it will strengthen and empower the Taliban forces in Pakistan too, and this victory would give them a chance to get closer and work together in joint collaboration.[102] In either scenario, the US withdrawal does not portend any advantage for the civilian government and the military establishment of Pakistan.[103] The US and the Western world are of the view that the US should remain in Afghanistan after 2014 with limited presence. It is quite essential and necessary for Washington to keep a watchful eye in the region in order to combat the Taliban and the al-Qaeda forces, by using more drone attacks to tame the Taliban.[104] This situation will bring serious challenges to the Nawaz government; the opposition parties will also try to manipulate the situation by criticizing Pakistan's role in the War on Terrorism as well as the severe security and economic crisis it faces as a price of its alliance with the US.

The US forces withdrawal will likely bring drastic and negative implications on Pakistan. The Afghan National Army is not yet in a position to take control of the country especially in provinces where the Taliban forces are exerting influence. They are inexperienced, not trained enough and naïve.[105]

Their competence and eminence to combat terrorism can be easily evaluated from the fact that the Taliban and the al-Qaeda elements consider foreign forces position of deployment as a 'soft belly'[106] to attack and execute suicide bombs in Kabul. It is widely assumed that after the pulling out of the US-led coalition forces, a weak and incompetent entity in shape of the Afghan National Army will replace them. This would definitely lead to more incursions across the border in Pakistan's tribal belt. In fact, the weaknesses in Afghanistan's political structure will have a direct impact on Pakistan's national and domestic security.[107]

There is also a great possibility that a protracted civil war in Afghanistan will force Pakistan to take sides and deploy its limited and rapidly diminishing resources in that struggle.[108] The domestic implications are even worse if a civil war erupts in the country. Pakistan will have to bear the burden of more refugees, which will pose threat to its already fragile economy in addition to social problems. A recent Gelvum poll conducted in the country over Afghan presidential elections found that 61% of voters would vote for a candidate desiring open talks with the Taliban and 51% believed their candidates should build good relations with Pakistan. Other key findings were that 71% of voters supported positive relations with the US and 40% believed it was important for candidates to maintain the presence of international forces beyond 2014.[109] Afghanistan, which has been a war-torn country since its independence, has witnessed four electoral cycles since the US overthrew the Taliban leadership, but the elections failed to prevent armed conflict or alleviate suffering of the people at an unprecedented level.

If the newly elected Afghan government is unable to establish its authority over Afghan institutions, the institutions will be more likely to weaken and collapse, thus giving rise to political chaos.

Pakistan in 'the muddle through' scenario-spillover?

As the 2014 deadline for the Afghanistan transition approaches, Pakistan's role as a main actor is likely to become even more important. Pakistan is already struggling with numerous external and internal challenges in form of corruption, lack of good governance, poor economy, and most important of all, terrorism which has badly damaged its security dynamics and its image as a sovereign democratic state.

Soon after the start of the War on Terrorism in October 2001, Pakistan faced immense international pressure to intervene in the sensitive border region of Fata and flush out elements of the Taliban that were linked with Afghan insurgency and that had been a constant source of disturbance for peace in the region.[110] Initially, President Musharraf regime not only banned several militant terrorist organizations[111] but it acted in a prompt manner in detaining thousands of extremists from its territory. It captured many high value al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorists, thus extending full length support to the US military and law enforcement agencies in rooting out terrorists' network.[112] Many peace accords were signed with the militants in order to restore peace but all efforts failed due to the non-seriousness of Taliban forces. Islamabad urged the tribal leaders to

play an effective role and take serious measures in rooting out foreign elements mainly comprised of Afghan, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Chechens, etc.[113] The basic provisions of these peace deals were that Pakistani territory would not be allowed as a base camp to execute terrorist attacks anywhere in the world. In return for such guarantees, Pakistan Army also provided support to help the local population pertaining to the reconstruction and development of infrastructure destroyed during military operations in the tribal areas of Pakistan.[114]

Immediately after 9/11, Pakistan was a crucial factor in determining US victory in Afghanistan. Pakistan immediately took a U-turn and sided itself with the US-led coalition in its fight against terrorism and unconditionally offered ground and logistical assistance in order to destroy and eliminate the Taliban and al-Qaeda networks.[115]

US military and intelligence forces have conducted extensive blows to al-Qaeda's Command and Control system in Afghanistan and Pakistan; many of these operations have been carried out successfully in co-operation with Pakistani officials.[116]

Al-Qaeda and other militant groups prefer to hide in remote terrain, primarily the mountainous region along the border of Afghanistan. They also flee to other swarming cities like Karachi, which is a home to approximately 18 million[117] Pakistanis. Pashtun community in Karachi is approximately three million, and it[118] is the largest urban Pashtun community in the world. Such big metropolitan cities provide terrorists not only safe havens but also other facilities including telecommunications, financial, and transportation networks to enable a more international reach.[119]

Over the past several years, Pakistan Army has successfully launched numerous operations to defeat terrorists and to eliminate their strong footholds. But the success of these military ventures mainly rest upon effective and strong civilian institutions and efficient law and order situation.[120] Weak or nonexistent police forces and limited judicial facilities in remote areas are some of the factors that are posing additional problems for Pakistani security forces heavily involved in counterinsurgency operations.[121]

Basically, Afghanistan is a diverse country with regard to its ethnic composition. Due to severe fighting ever since the Soviet intervention in 1979, peace has never restored in the land-locked country. Moreover, a continuous civil war like situation has badly damaged ethnic composition of Afghans. Major communities, such as Tajik, Uzbek, Hazaras, have all fought the war, but Pashtuns (45% to 60%) acted as the most powerful block of resistance against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.[122] They have been the dominant ethnic group in Afghanistan since the mid-eighteenth century and also inhabit vast territory on the Pakistani side of the Durand Line.[123] Consequently, they suffered the most. After the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, factional fighting of various *mujahideen* groups ensued, and *mujahideen* commanders turned into mighty warlords.[124]

The geographical dependency of Afghanistan on Pakistan, ethnic links and shared culture make latter indispensable for the former. On top of that, tribal

affinities on both sides of the border are deep rooted and cannot be challenged.[125] This factor has made it a natural route for all Afghans to come and avail health and business facilities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Fata.[126] That is one of the major reasons that Pakistan army has faced severe resistance from the local population who have joined hands with militants and strongly resisted its presence in the tribal areas.

Afghanistan and Pakistan share a strong history of ethnic, cultural, and social bonding.[127] Today, Pakistan is hosting 1.6 million registered Afghan refugees and an estimated one million non-registered Afghan refugees, mostly residing in the border provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) and Balochistan[128] and this could be termed as the largest protracted refugee situation worldwide. Since the fall of the Taliban leadership, some 3.8 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan but the number of those returning could drop off depending upon the worsening security situation in their home country.[129] Hosting millions of registered and unregistered refugees brought many social and economic problems for Pakistan and the crime rate in society has increased with the passage of time.[130] These refugees are a real source of trouble for already ailing economy and resources of Pakistan, so Pakistan is quite reluctant to act as a host to additional refugees.[131]

In economic terms, Pakistan is the largest trading partner of Afghanistan and provides access to foreign markets. Pak-Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) was signed in June 2012.[132] This agreement enables Afghanistan to export agricultural products to rest of the world via Pakistan. According to recent trade figures, Pakistan exports $1.5 billion worth of goods to Afghanistan and imports $111.5 million worth of goods in return.[133] Due to worsening security situation, social and economic links have been badly disrupted between the two countries.

The Obama administration's strategy in Pakistan due to its geo-strategic location and its frontline status in War on Terrorism can be termed more detrimental rather than beneficial.[134] On one hand, US administration tries to build stronger relationships with civilian and military authorities, but on the other, targeted aid, and an inexorable assault by unmanned aerial drones on the militant networks operating in Fata are the main stumbling blocks between the two coalition partners who are fighting the same war but with divergent interests. The US wants to build a long-term strategic partnership with its non-major NATO ally, Pakistan, in order to secure its own interests in the region. For this end, it is seeking Pakistani intelligence and military support to eliminate terrorist networks within its borders.[135]

Apparently, Pakistan lies nowhere in the US exit strategy. It is quite evident that the Bush and the Obama administrations have both miserably failed in Afghanistan. They have not achieved the desired objectives and goals. President Obama stated: "We will not try to make Afghanistan a perfect place; we will not police its streets or patrol its mountains indefinitely. That is the responsibility of the Afghan government.[136]

The US and its coalition forces have time and again raised concern that militants from Afghanistan fled to Pakistan where they find safe asylum with the

help of local population and continue to plan attacks against the US and its allies.[137] But undoubtedly, militants in Pakistan and Afghanistan pose a direct threat not only to the US and its allies but to Pakistan's security forces as well.

Despite Pakistan's deployment of more than 150,000 troops alongside the border of Afghanistan, and losing over more than eight thousand soldiers to contain the Pakistani Taliban in the tribal areas, terrorists have continued to execute brazen suicide attacks in Pakistan's largest cities.[138] Terrorism and extremism are one of the many challenges which Pakistan faces today including rapid population growth, exploitation of natural resources, deteriorating condition of law and order within country, and poor economic prospects, giving way to internal violence and militancy in the society.[139] Pakistan is going through the toughest period and is not prepared to fight these challenges without getting foreign assistance. The prevailing volatile situation has further strengthened militant tendencies, and militants are taking advantage of this power vacuum to expand their networks and exert their influence. Pakistani government apparently seems helpless to contain these non-state actors who challenge the writ of government.

The Waziristan Accords signed with militants brought some early successes, most notably against militants of Central Asian Republics. These peace efforts broke down in July 2007, however, after the Pakistan Army took action against extremists operating in Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad.[140] These elements directly challenged the writ of the government in the capital. The cordon off the mosque, which according to official sources resulted in just over 100 deaths, can be seen as an intense outcome stemming from resentment of military presence in Waziristan.[141] The trend of targeting security forces, government offices and installations, and a range of soft targets (shrines, markets, churches, and other public spaces) gained momentum as time goes by. More significantly, the siege of Red Mosque led to the formation of a coalition of Pakistani militants under the umbrella of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).[142]

The militants who led the Red Mosque confrontation with the government were Pakistani nationals who demanded radical changes in Pakistan's systems of law and governance. These militants were known to have had strong links with the Afghan *mujahideen* in the 1980s.[143] They took a hard stance against Pakistan's role as a frontline state to the US and against the provision of logistical assistance to the US in the post-2001 Afghan war.[144] The formation of TTP brought together different groups of the Afghan Taliban who acted as sympathizers and demanded for the enforcement of Sharia Law in Pakistan, to bring to an end to ongoing military operations in Fata, withdrawal of Pakistan security forces from the tribal areas, and an end to any form of assistance to ISAF forces in Afghanistan.[145] At the time of the formation of the TTP, its founding leader Baitullah Mehsud assured the leader of the Afghan Taliban, Mullah Omar, of his alliance support.[146]

In early 2012, Pakistan's Foreign Office publicly declared a 'strategic shift'[147] in its policy towards Afghanistan which would be based on wide-

ranging reconciliation process and actively reaching out to elements of the Northern Alliance which are believed to be anti-Pakistani.[148]

As a result, Pakistan's conception of a friendly Afghan government, which is vital to Pakistan's strategic interests, has evolved overtime.[149] At the moment, Pakistani security establishment, following pragmatic approach, is of the view, at least for the time being, that the Taliban may not be capable enough of seizing power alone.[150] As a result, officially Pakistan does not float the idea that the Taliban should form the Afghan government alone. This strategic shift reflects that in the post-9/11 scenario, Pakistan's perception has changed vis-a-vis the Taliban and the latter is no longer a reliable proxy.[151]

A continued US presence in region, however, also gives way to numerous additional predicaments. Pakistan's alignment with the West proved to be a blissful factor as a recipient of significant bilateral aid.[152] But Pak-US relations have not been on easy terms and have seen many highs and lows as coalition partners. Anti-American backlash in Pakistan has been accompanied by an unending process of radicalization of the Taliban forces within the country, and the population at large remains indignant of the Western military presence in the region, particularly with regard to the projection of force in the form of drones by the US to eliminate militants and their networks.[153]

Many of the problems affecting Afghanistan and Pakistan are entangled and should be addressed simultaneously. This includes economic cooperation, cross-border issues such as refugees, drugs smuggling, and safe havens for militants groups operating in both countries and thus posing a high security risk. On another level, being a neighbouring country, Pakistan will be in limelight and will have a primary role in the post-2014 period to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan do not want an abrupt withdrawal of US troops from the region as they believe it will exponentially multiply Afghanistan's problems. They believe that the rapid withdrawal may further embolden the Taliban forces, which can become a source of problem for all regional countries in the future.[154] Today Pakistan needs to formulate concrete and effective strategies to address internal extremism, which can spread its tentacles all across the country.

Conclusions & recommendations

The death of Osama bin Laden itself does not signify that terrorism has completely vanished from this region. In fact the Taliban forces have become more organized and come back with full force and vigour. It is widely believed that the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan can only be ended through a peaceful settlement with the help of negotiation including with al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Both the US and the Karzai government tried many times to reach such a settlement but these efforts could not come up with any breakthrough and no progress is ever made.[155] The negotiation process between Afghan-US and Taliban eventually died a natural death with the killing of ex-president Rabbani in September 2011, who was acting as prime negotiator.[156] Both Qatar and Saudi Arabia now try to facilitate Pakistan to create an amicable atmosphere suitable for a dialogue between the Pakistani government and Taliban. At the

time of writing this piece, it seems that the dialogue has lost momentum and Pakistan security forces have finally decided to use force against militants in North Waziristan. It is very much clear that the Taliban forces in Pakistan are not interested and serious to reach out any settlement and this development is quite important with regard to NATO-ISAF withdrawal so closely in sight.[157]

US-led NATO-ISAF coalition forces miserably failed in Afghanistan to bring peace and stability. The announcement of hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan clearly reflects that the Obama administration is trying to get a safe exit by the end of 2014 without fulfilling its commitment towards a war-torn country. American foreign policy makers consider Pakistan as a vital state that can play an important role for political reconciliation due to its ethnic and cultural links with Afghanistan.

Apparently it looks like, the basic objective of the US in South Asia for both Afghanistan and Pakistan are long-term aspirations based on stability, prosperity, and good governance. The central question is not what the US might wish to achieve but what it should aim to accomplish.[158] Since 9/11, US long-term objectives and strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan have been ambiguous with very little clarity. Throughout this period, the US has been failed to formulate any clear vision for both countries of the region. It is important to be realistic with accuracy as to what Washington should seek to accomplish in the region, with what resources, and for how long.

This is a good omen, that all the regional countries express the desire for the creation of a stable, peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan. However, each regional state has respective security and economic concerns and interests in Afghanistan that will have to be understood, addressed, and safeguarded accordingly in the face of any negotiated settlement among Afghanistan's warring sides.

Since the landing of the US-led coalition forces in Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11, Afghanistan has been a trouble-maker for the region in general and for Pakistan in particular. However, events in Afghanistan have had perceptible and profound effects on Pakistan's domestic security, politics and economy, particularly in the last decade. Furthermore, regional political dynamics, where every regional country is trying to influence and work for its own interests, are making it extremely difficult to come up with any 'regional solution' regarding the prevailing situation in Afghanistan.

International assistance for Afghanistan has played a vital and constructive role in the lives of millions of Afghans. Working closely with other donors, USAID successfully launched mega projects pertaining to health care and led an effort to increase the number of Afghans from 9% in 2002 to more than 85% in 2010. Likewise for the development of infrastructure, USAID has invested immensely for the construction of over 1,677 km of roads and has worked to establish four mobile companies that serve 6.5 million subscribers.[159] There is more that can be done to generate economic growth that is essential for creating more jobs and other incentives for the many Afghans who are locked into the war economy or narcotics trade since decades. This assistance should be based on welfare and humanitarian projects. In this way, the US and the major

donor western countries can help build more stable and more secure societies that are less likely to export violence and extremism.

Pakistan's government will have to take action against foreign terrorists on its soil and should expel them within no time. To control the cross border movement of terrorists and to keep a check on illegal movement, Pakistan proposed to fence the border in 2006, a proposition that was vehemently opposed by President Karzai. Pakistan should fence the border with Afghanistan to restrict the movement of militants[160] into its territory and could use landmines only where it is impossible to lay wires.[161] Pakistan should use every means to stop local and foreign militants using its soil for terrorist acts.

Afghanistan's unrelenting political instability could drag the region into a proxy war that would again place still greater pressure on Pakistan, weaken fragile energy-rich Central Asian states, and aggravate tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad. All stake-holders are mindful of the fact that a rapid US withdrawal from an unstable Afghanistan could recreate safe havens for international terrorism. A final US victory in the region is not that the forces of Taliban and al-Qaeda surrender on the negotiation table, but it lies in the commitment from the regional states, particularly from Pakistan and Afghanistan, to secure their own territories against the threat of extremism and militancy so that US forces can withdraw completely.

All past attempts to solve Afghanistan's problems and to bring peace and stability have failed. Any future policy without any deep strategic coherence based on a regional approach is likely to meet the same fate unless the Afghan state itself is strong enough to assert a minimal degree of influence and respect for its sovereignty.

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