

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to analyze the role of United States intervention in the Protracted Social Conflict between Afghani and Taliban under Trump's administration in 2016–2020. To start the synthesis and hypothesis, the author perceives this issue by using 3 important theoretical framework; Protracted Social Conflict by Edward Azar to understand and define the conflict between Taliban and Afghans in Afghanistan with a more comprehensive lens of ethnic relations and other entanglements, Intervention in Intractable Conflict by Ho Won-Jeong to see the role of United States as intervenor and how it has implications of the conflicts, and the Intractable Conflict Management also by Ho Won-Jeong to see the process of conflict transformation in Afghanistan.

The author then harvesting and triangulating data from the existing research as delivered in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of this thesis, the author finally comes into a conclusion that will be divided into three key points: (a) conflict between Taliban and Afghanistan fits the framework of a Protracted Social Conflict and there needs to be further analysis in the field of ethnic aspects of the society to have better comprehension of the issue, (b) The role of United States intervention under Trump's administration in Afghanistan had focused on the ceasefire agreement to create physical stability in the country, and (c) The current transformation process of the conflict is on one of the earliest stages to achieve sustainable peace as it has not covered for structural economic and political changes for Afghans and Taliban.

Going to the first point, the author found that the conflict between Taliban and Afghans in Afghanistan is best if looked at using the lens of Protracted Social Conflict framework by Edward Azar. This was due to the ethnic reality that existed as well as the history that came with it which has made a complex entanglement amongst Afghanistan. The ethnic division and grievances that dated back to the colonial era in 1700s had caused constant power play between the 8 major ethnic groups that existed in Afghanistan. As they are diverse in terms of the culture and identity, finding a common ground to form a national identity is a longstanding challenge even to today's Afghanistan. This is to emphasize that each major ethnic group including the Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazarah had always longed for a majority in the national government that can benefit their identity.

The power play often led to two things: (a) deep communal discontent as there was no capable national government to accommodate the needs of the society as Afghanistan was basically lawless in much period of the time, thus constant fighting creating a constant insecurity of the people, (b) alienation of other ethnic groups, resulting in also a communal discontent of the group as they lacked access to fundamental basic rights such as health and education. The factors of ethnic division, incapable government and a deep communal discontent have attributed to the protractedness of the conflict in Afghanistan. This was proven by (a) the rise of the Taliban has been in fact stemmed from the deep communal discontent by the lack of the capable government and the desire to fill in the gap by establishing a national Islam based government, (b) the strategy used by Taliban in which they utilized those factors to lure the grieving communities to submit and support the

group has been one of the strongest attribute why Taliban managed to claim over many victories and dominated strategic regions in Afghanistan.

Understanding that conflict between the Taliban and Afghanistan is a Protracted Social Conflict, United States role as the intervenor must cater to this nature of conflict. Under Trump's administration, there had been major changes in how United States approached the conflict in Afghanistan. First, Trump changed the time-based presence to utility-based by focusing in counterterrorism in Afghanistan, by means of eliminating threats coming from Al-Qaeda, ISIS and Taliban. To realize this, Trump ordered increase of military capacity in the early stage of the intervention to create negative incentives towards the Taliban, aiming to create war fatigue and exhaustion of resources to push them to the negotiating table. Second, Trump opened up a line of communication in the high level with the key figures of the Taliban to discuss about the possibility of ceasefire agreement, which was finally signed in February 2020. It was concluded that the role of United States intervention under President Trump

However, to the impact of creating a sustainable peace is another matter that the author found has not been covered by the role of United States intervention. This is based on Ho Won-Jeong key thoughts in transforming the protracted social conflict needs to cover the issues of structural political and economic changes, to avoid further alienation and structural grievances amongst the society. Seeing even leading up to the agreement and the intra-Afghan talks there are still cases of escalation of violence from the Taliban, they indicate there are still larger task to

address the systematic issue of deep-rooted grievances in Afghanistan if sustainable peace is the ultimate goal of United States and the related stakeholders.

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