

Afghanistan civil war and ethnic conflicts 1992-2018

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Published: 24 December 2019

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Abstract

Although civil war and ethnic conflicts are not unfamiliar phenomena in the contemporary world, they are more relevant than any other time for the citizens of Afghanistan who have been going through more than four decades of civil conflicts. The Afghanistan civil war which has been ongoing for several decades, is the consequence of some factors that have caused the country to be prone to civil and ethnic conflicts. Despite the complexity of Afghanistan's civil war and ethnic conflicts, understanding the factors playing a significant role is important for preventing further civil conflicts. This study is trying to focus on causes and factors of civil war and ethnic conflicts in general, and to uncover the factors which, have caused civil and ethnic conflicts of Afghanistan in particular.

Keywords: Civil war, Ethnic conflicts, youth bulges, foreign intervention, ethno-linguistic diversity, causes.

1 Introduction

Afghanistan remained a shared home for several ethnicities, languages, religions, and different beliefs for thousands of years. Along the history, citizens of Afghanistan have chosen peaceful living despite, what ethnicity, language or religion they practice, although this country suffered a lot from civil war and ethnic conflicts either. One of the most famous criteria of the people of Afghanistan is collective action while they feel their country is attacked or invaded by foreigners. Rough terrain, mountainous geography, collective action, and hardship of its people made this country unconquerable.

World's strongest powers such as Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and recently the United States of America (USA) have invaded this small but highly tough country, while the outcome for all was the same, which is defeat and defection. U.S. President Donald Trump during his cabinet meeting argued: "Russia used to be the Soviet Union, Afghanistan made it Russia because they went bankrupt fighting in Afghanistan. So, I have decided to withdraw my troops from Afghanistan" (Cohen, 2019).

Contemporary invasions and continuity of wars added Afghanistan to the bottom of the list of poorest countries in the world. Ethno-linguistic diversity, religious sensitivity, widespread poverty, foreign intervention, untouched rich resources, illiterate young generation, geographical rough terrain and strategic location caused this country to highly vulnerable to civil war and ethnic conflicts. Since decades this country is suffering from civil wars and ethnic conflicts, several studies have been done about Afghan civil war, and the factors which, are on the play. Mertz (2011) believes, "Afghanistan civil war which is going on for decades, have several dimensions and many factors are playing role in fueling the current civil war, and if we think about ending this war, we should take care about all of these factors and causes to be solved."

For the case of Afghanistan, most of the studies so far have been done, are focused on civil wars and ethnic conflicts, but regarding to peace building and its process, key factors, and motivation there are less or no studies have been made. This study aims to discover key factor and causes of civil war, and challenges against peace building and resolving the conflict situation.

One of the causes of present challenges against conflict solving situation in Afghanistan is the absence of peace building. Ethno-linguistic diversity of Afghanistan caused this country to be prone to civil-ethno conflicts. Afghanistan is the home for several different ethno-linguistic tribes and ethnicities such as the Pashtuns and the minorities of Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, Baloches, Aimaqs, and Pashayes, which are living in different parts of the country, and are practicing their own particular religion and cultures.

Foreign and neighboring countries have strong ties with particular ethnic and political groups in Afghanistan. While these countries intervene, they use their linked ethno-political groups against the central government and motivate them to engage in civil and ethnic conflicts.

This paper aims to uncover the factors that caused Afghanistan to prone to civil war and ethnic conflicts, and to specify the challenges against conflicts solving situation and peace building process in the country. Foreign intervention is a key factor of civil war in Afghanistan. Afghanistan civil war is the causal effect of foreign intervention particularly the countries such as, Iran, Pakistan and Russia, with addition of few other above-mentioned factors, which will be discussed in details in this study.

1.1 Outline

Section two will discuss about the definition of civil war, and the causes and factors of civil war. Section three will argue about Afghanistan's civil war escalating factors, external factors of Afghanistan civil war including foreign intervention, and supporting the war factions, U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the new phase of foreign intervention. Section four will explain the external factors of Afghanistan civil war, with addition of ethno-linguistic diversity, economic factors, geography, and youth bulges. Section five will discuss about U.S. Government peace talks with Taliban. Section six will argue about Settlement and resolution and the final section will include the conclusion.

1.2 Methodology

While studying the causes and factors of civil war in general and Afghanistan's civil conflicts in particular, this study uses qualitative, secondary research method in order to understand the factors and motivations for civil war. Hence, the present study approach would be more interpretive and descriptive. Material providing sources will include: academic researches and the reports of international organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights commission reports, History books, and media reports, in English, Pashto, and Dari languages.

2 Civil war definition

Since World War II, civil war defined by several scholars of Political science. "Civil war, a violent conflict between a state and one or more organized non-state actors in the state's territory" (Gleditsch, 2011). Reagan says; "armed combat between groups within state boundaries in which there are at least 200 fatalities" (Reagan, 2000, 21 cited in Woo, 2017). While Roser & Nagdy (2018) present a simpler definition for civil war and argues; "In the broadest sense possible, a civil war is a war between citizens of the same country." Among all of the definitions the main focusing point is the 'war between the citizens of the same country within the boundaries of a single state', which allow us to consider a war as a civil conflict.

Civil war is a phenomenon that almost all of the world's nations are familiar with. The following questions, kept the International relations scholar's minds busy since long time. "Since World War II about 16 million people have been killed in civil wars. What causes these civil wars? Why is there costly violent conflict when most people would be better off by settling their disputes peacefully? What makes individuals take up arms and risk their lives in an insurgency?" (Heoffler, 2012).

Since the end of the World War II, civil wars are the most common type of conflict among the nations of the world. Civil wars are greater in number than the international conflicts, among 225 general conflicts in the world from 1946 to 2001, 163 conflicts can be identified as internal conflicts (Gleditsch et al, 2002 cited in Woo, 2017). Woo continues, Gleditsch et al (2002) argue that internal conflict has been the dominant form of conflict since World War II. While civil wars have become as a common type of war instead of interstate wars, and definitely the outcome and effects of these wars are not as a single aspect of a single state but to interstates also, it caused to draw the attention of political science and international relations scholars.

2.1 The causes and factors of Civil war

Civil wars and ethnic conflicts occur under specific circumstances such as, foreign intervention, external financial support, migrants and remittances as external factors, ethno-linguistic and religious diversity, economic, geography, youth bulges, history and illiteracy, are known as internal factors of civil war and ethnic conflicts. Civil war and ethnic conflicts have so many factors that cause to fuel and prolong the domestic conflicts. All civil wars are the affect of some causes which, varying according to their particular geographies, religions, ethnicities, languages, and some other aspects that facilitate the conditions for these conflicts to be happen. Two of the main categories of causes of civil war addressing the internal factors and external cause of the civil conflicts.

3 Factors escalating the civil war in Afghanistan

The civil war in Afghanistan is one of the most complicated and multi dimensions conflict in the world which, several factors and causes are involved. Foreign intervention, diaspora, financial support

and remittances, are known as external factors of Afghanistan civil conflicts, while internal factors such as ethno-linguistic diversity, religious, poverty, youth bulges, geography, history, economic, financing and level of income are the internal causes of civil war and ethnic conflicts in Afghanistan. The above-mentioned factors have caused the Afghanistan civil war and ethnic conflicts to be prolonging for several decades. Some of these factors are known as the main factors and has roots in Afghan society, geography, behavior of the citizens of Afghanistan, and ethno-linguistic diversity. While some of them are the effect of another cause, such as, economic factors, poverty and illiteracy which, are created by continuity of civil war and ethnic conflicts.

3.1 External factors

External factors play significant role in prolonging and fueling the civil war and ethnic conflicts. External causes of civil war that, ethnic conflict is an absolute consequence of these factors are one of the most common type of the civil conflicts, that the current section will focus on the causes such as, foreign intervention, financial support, diasporas and remittances and few other related factors.

Afghanistan civil war like many other conflicts has deep roots in out of its borders, particularly in the neighboring countries of Iran, Pakistan, Russia and few other countries. At least in the past half of a century two of the superpowers, Soviet Union and United States of America have attempted direct military intervention in Afghanistan, but soon after these forces defeated by Afghans, civil war has begun shortly after withdrawal of their armed forces.

Brown (2011) argues, "The possibility of yet another civil war after the majority of U.S. troops leave Afghanistan looms large". During the civil wars, each of invaders with addition of some other countries started to support the war factions of the civil conflicts. Financial support of the war factions including to the ethnic, religious, and political groups was part of their mission to fuel the Afghanistan civil war and ethnic conflict, that will be discussed in the current paper in details.

3.2 Foreign intervention and supporting the war factions

Without a strong financial support, it's almost impossible to keep on civil war for a long period of time. Albornoz and Hauk (2010), conducted a study and their finding show that foreign intervention is playing a key role in fueling the civil conflicts, and argues; "Yet, a key feature of civil war is the involvement of foreign governments supporting one of the sides in conflict. The examples are many, even after the end of the cold war". Mostly the intervener states try to hide or legitimate their intervention under the different titles such as human rights, humanitarian aids, cultural cooperation and etc. "Such interventions are often secretive and indirect and therefore unlikely to be fully reflected in available data" (Albornoz and Hauk, 2010).

The significant of foreign intervention is absolutely clear, although it's not the only factor in civil conflicts. Woo (2017) conducted a study about the foreign intervention and civil war, he believes, third-party intervention can affect the outcome and the duration of civil wars. The author continues, "Thus, we can assume that the intervention of third parties in civil wars has meaningful consequences for the manner in which those wars evolve." The outcome of foreign intervention is definitely differing for each side of the war factions. Woo believes, civil war represents opportunities for some and challenges for others.

As already pointed out, the main causes of civil war in Afghanistan have deep roots in out of the country, particularly in the neighboring countries of Iran and Pakistan. The foreign intervention has a long history in Afghanistan, and the outcome of foreign intervention is bold in contemporary civil

wars and ethnic conflicts. Each one of the interfering countries, have their particular interest in Afghanistan and has deep linkages with war factions and armed groups. Albornoz and Hauk (2010) believe that, one of the main causes of civil war is the involvement of a third party or a foreign state, that is providing aids to one of the war factions and creating ethnic conflicts.

The major part of Afghanistan Civil wars and ethnic conflicts are not the consequences of Afghanistan's internal problems, but because of foreign interventions. The argument of Woo (2017) can be so accurate about the civil war and ethnic conflicts of Afghanistan which believes; "ethnic wars do not just happen they are made". Human Rights Watch (2002) report says, ISI, the Pakistan Intelligence Service and army have been providing military aids and operations planning to Taliban. The report said, the Emirates and Saudi Arabia have been providing transportation, logistics and money to the Taliban. Afghanistan ethnic conflicts and civil wars are the product of foreign states intervention. Almost all of the civil wars in Afghanistan, particularly the past four decades are mad by foreign countries, such as Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and recently the United States of America.

Human Rights Watch (2002) report adds; United Front or Northern Alliance¹ are receiving funds and military aids from Russia and Iran. According to this report, countries such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan were also involved in civil wars and ethnic conflicts of Afghanistan. The Human Rights Watch (2002) report emphasizes on the leading role of Iran in fueling the ethnic conflicts and civil war, with addition of Russia that were supporting the United Front. Research of, The RAND Corporation by Dobbins (2007, p.4) says; "During the decades of 1990, Russia, India, Iran and Pakistan have supported the war factions of Afghanistan to guarantee and extend their regional influences."

Civil war and foreign military intervention caused Afghanistan to face mass migration and millions of casualties. Afghanistan is one of the biggest migrant sender countries that, Pakistan and Iran have hosted millions of Afghan migrants and diasporas and a main portion of the resistance forces and some of the financial support of fighters against Soviet invasion on 1979 and the U.S. invasion on late 2001 were provided by these migrants and remittances.

3.3 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the new phase of foreign intervention

After the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001, a new phase of foreign intervention in Afghanistan has begun. Pakistan which was supporting the Taliban against Northern Alliance, and providing military and financial aids to Taliban, has changed the the way and strategy of intervention in Afghanistan. Following the 9/11 attacks and U.S invasion of Afghanistan, CIA and U.S. forces have provided the Northern Alliance² with huge amount of financial aids, military support, particularly air strikes against Taliban. Dobbins (2007, p.4) continues; "by the support of American airpower and postponing the Pakistan support of Taliban, the Northern Alliance have prevailed."

¹The Northern Alliance or United Front are the former Mujahidin armed parties that, during the Soviet Invasion were established in Pakistan and Afghanistan to fight against Soviet Union and Soviet backed communist government which, after the overthrowing from power by the Taliban on 1996, gathered in North of Afghanistan to fight against Taliban.

² Following to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance armed parties including former president of Mujahidin's government, Burhanuddin Rbbani have provided with the land operation forces to Americans and U.S. forces and CIA have provided the military aids particularly the air support to the Northern Alliance to fight against Taliban(Dobbins, 2007).

U.S. government has appointed the warlords and Northern Alliance leaders and fighters in high ranking positions. “in the government which, was agreed in Bonn, from 30 members of cabinet, Americans gave the most important roles and positions to 17 Northern Alliance warlords for the service they have been done” (Iqbal, 2014, p.2). Iran, that was supporting the Northern Alliance against Taliban, have started supporting the Taliban against the U.S. backed government of Afghanistan and U.S. troops, and providing them the military artilleries, training camps, weapons, and financial support. Russia have started political and military support for the Taliban, that was supporting the Northern Alliance prior to U.S invasion.

The intervention of the above-mentioned countries has been continued for decades to prolong the civil war and ethnic conflicts of Afghanistan. As already pointed out, each one of the intervenient countries were trying to prolong the Afghanistan civil war and ethnic conflicts to protect their influence in Afghanistan and region. The invasion of United State in late 2001, has opened a new phase of intervention in Afghanistan. The neighboring countries of Afghanistan such as Iran and Pakistan with addition of Russia have been changing their intervention policies and continuing the intervention in Afghanistan.

4 Internal factors of Afghanistan civil war

As mentioned elsewhere, several theories show that, internal factors play key role in fueling and prolonging the civil war and ethnic conflicts. having knowledge of internal factors of civil war allow us to be able to prevent further conflicts and civil wars. Ethno-linguistic diversity, geography, economic, financing and history are known as causes of civil war and ethnic conflicts.

Countries with diverse ethnic and religious groups are more prone to civil war and ethnic conflicts (Bassaug, 2006). Fearon and Laitin (2003) argues; the rich countries experience no or less civil war or ethnic conflicts, even if these countries are ethnically diverse. Likewise, Collier and Hoefler (2012) noted that, if an ethnic group makes up the majority of 45 percent up to less than 90 percent of the population of a country, the chance of civil war will increase. “Countries with mountainous terrain are more prone to civil conflicts” (Hoefler, 2012).

4.1 Ethno-linguistic diversity

Afghanistan is a diverse country in the means of ethnicity, religions and languages which, several ethnicities, tribes, languages and cultures are living for thousands of years. Bassaug (2006) believes that, the countries that have diverse ethnicities and different religious groups, has greater risk of civil war and ethnic conflicts. Ethnic and linguistic diversity will facilitate the situation for political leaders and warlords to absorb and recruit their supporters from particular groups that they belong to, and can lead to increase tensions and conflicts among these groups or can collapse the state.

Even though, Afghanistan is a diverse country, and contains several ethnicities, languages and religions, but generally, the citizens of Afghanistan have always been chosen to live in peace and respect of each others for thousands of years. The major causes of civil wars and ethnic conflicts of Afghanistan is not because of the ethno-linguistic or religious diversity it self, but the foreign intervention and the countries that have been using the ethno- linguistic diversity as a tool to create tensions among the different ethnic groups of Afghanistan. “relations between different religious, ethnic and linguistic groups and communities of Afghanistan is not well, but the existing tensions are primarily the consequences of civil war rather than the cause.” (Dobbins, 2007, p.4)

Since several years, different countries are supporting the particular ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in Afghanistan. Iran is supporting the Shia Hazara religious groups that is sharing the same (Shia) religion with Iran³. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is supporting the Pashtun, Sunni, religious, linguistic and ethnic groups. Tajikistan, Russia and India is supporting the Tajik and Uzbek, ethnic groups. The reasons behind supporting of intervenient countries is not always the sympathy they share with the groups they have support, but the strategic interests and influences these countries needs to access to in the region. Surprisingly, after the invasion of U.S. in 2001, the Shia Iran, is supporting the Sunni, Pashtun, religious fundamentalist group of Taliban. Pakistan, in addition of Taliban, have started to support the Northern Alliance and Tajik ethnic groups in Afghanistan which were the enemy of Pakistan for several years.

4.2 Economic factors

Although, Afghanistan is one of the richest countries of the world in terms of natural resources and mines, but still remained as one of the poorest nations in the world. the recent surveys that have been done by Americans in Afghanistan, show that this country have trillions of dollars untouched natural resources and mines. Leowenstein (2015) says; in an interview with *The New York Times* on 2010, Gen. David Petraeus, U.S. Central Command Head in Afghanistan stated that; the value of mining's in Afghanistan is between \$1 trillion to \$3 trillion. But more than 80 percent of the people of Afghanistan are living below the poverty line.

Decades of civil wars and ethnic conflicts have caused Afghanistan to remain as one of the poorest countries in the world. Heoffler (2012) believes that, aside from the main causes of civil war, some other issues will be creating during and by the civil war it self. Heoffler continues; sometimes the issues that have been created by civil war, becomes much more important than the main causes of civil conflicts and increases the complexity of civil conflicts. For instance, Increasing the level of poverty will add to the complexity of conflicts resolution, or it can become more difficult than the main conflict it self (Heoffler, 2012).

Last four decades of civil wars and ethnic conflicts have created widespread poverty in Afghanistan. The poverty which, has been created during and by civil conflicts, has become as one of the important causes of civil war in the country. Poverty of the citizens of Afghanistan have caused that, war faction can recruit cheap and easy fighters and prolong the civil conflicts for decades. Likewise, the intervenient countries can create the war factions easy and cheap, to fight proxy wars on the ground of Afghanistan on their behalf.

4.3 Geography

Particular geographic characteristics can facilitate the situation for civil war and ethnic conflicts. The countries with rough, mountainous and forested geography will not be easy to control. Mountainous geography of countries can cause the civil war. It will be easier for rebels to hid and launch attacks easier (Heoffler, 2012).

Afghanistan is a mountainous country that a big part of its lands are surrounded by high and rough terrain. Its believed that, one of the reasons of defeating the most powerful enemies by the people of

³ Iran is supporting the Shia Hazara former Mujahidin armed groups since the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan on 1979 that during the Taliban regime on 1996-2001 continued supporting of Shia parities. After the U.S. invasion on 2001, Iran have started supporting the Taliban against the U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is the rough and mountainous geography. Likewise, these particular characteristics of Afghanistan has mad it more prone to civil war and ethnic conflicts.

4.4 Youth bulges

More than half of the population of Afghanistan is under 15 years old and majority of the population of this country is young generation. Children who since the U.S. invasion became 18 years old, have spent all their life in war. According to the Central Administrations of Population of Afghanistan, 48 percent of 32 million population of Afghanistan is under 15 years old, which shows, majority of Afghan population is young. According to Save the Children of Afghanistan, 84 percent of the victims of war in Afghanistan are the children under 18 years old. (2019).

The recent studies show that youth bulges can cause the civil war and ethnic conflicts. Henrik (2006) examination in cross-country studies show that the populations of age between 14-25 years old, either can facilitate the opportunity or the motivation for rebels. The main portion of young and illiterate population have facilitated the situation for war factions to recruit their fighters from young proportion of the society in Afghanistan. Contingency of civil wars and ethnic conflicts for several decades have caused Afghanistan not to be able to provide the educational condition and facilities to the citizens, particularly in the rural areas, where the rebellions are more active and powerful. Hence, the illiterate, poor, and unemployed young citizens of Afghanistan is one of the main causes of civil war and ethnic conflicts. In the case of Afghanistan, youth bulges it self is not the cause of civil war, but the combination of illiteracy and young generation is conceder as a factor of civil war.

5 U.S. Government peace talks with Taliban

In an interview with the radio BBC on 2002, Mola Mohammad Omar the leader of Taliban, said; “The Americans have money and power, we have time. And at the end of the day, we will win this war”. While the Taliban are much more powerful than the time they have been thrown from power in 2001, and are capable of launching any kind of attacks in any location of Afghanistan they want, the U.S. President, Barak Obama have announced the official end of war in Afghanistan on 2014. Several U.S. military generals, experts and politicians have accepted and stated that they cannot win the war in Afghanistan. Admiral Mike Mullen Chief of Staff of U.S. has stated in 2008; “I am not sure if we are winning in Afghanistan”. U.S. forces and the coalition have left all the war on the shoulders of Afghan National Army and Police which, is weak, less trained, and fragile.

Since the beginning of peace negotiations between Taliban leaders and the representative of U.S. President for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, at least nine meetings have been held in Doha, Qatar. “its looks like, after months of direct talks and 18 years of war with Taliban, the U.S. government is close to a deal which, will allow the withdrawal of foreign troops and a ceasefire between the warring sides. In the 9th round of peace talks on 22 August 2019, four key issues were discussed and agreed between the Taliban leaders and Khalilzad; Taliban guarantee that the foreign militants will not be allowed to launch attacks from Afghanistan on outside of the country, the U.S. and NATO troops complete withdrawal, a permanent ceasefire and an intra-Afghan peace talks⁴” (Qadir and Jain, August, 22, 2019, RUETERS).

⁴Since the establishment of Bonn agreement government of Afghanistan on 2001, Taliban repeatedly have rejected the peace talks with the government of Afghanistan. Taliban believe that the government of Afghanistan has no authority of the decision making in peace regard and emphasizing on direct talks with U.S. government.

It looks like United State is about to withdraw all the U.S.-led NATO troops from Afghanistan. U.S. President Donald Trump recently said; “the role of U.S. military in Afghanistan has basically turned into a “ridiculous” police force, and he is going to drawdown U.S. troops from there after 18 years of war” (Qadir and Jain, 2019). But the main question is that; what will be the consequences of such a dramatic and quick withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces from Afghanistan? A satisfying consequences of peace talks with Taliban may guarantee a long lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

6 Settlement and resolution

Peace, such as for any other society in the world, is the urgent need of citizens of Afghanistan that the necessity of achievement to a real and permanent peace, in any cost is required. Afghanistan and its citizens have suffered the worst conditions because of civil wars and ethnic conflicts in last four decades that a secure, stable, and developed country with a long lasting peaceful condition is the urgent need of citizens of Afghanistan.

The latest developments in peace talks between U.S. and Taliban and an international consensus regarding peace in Afghanistan, have created a hopeful condition among the citizens of Afghanistan and the involved impartial countries that support the peace and stability in Afghanistan. Regarding the peace process and recent peace talks between Taliban and U.S. four main “still agreed” points are very important, and could be a better platform towards a permanent and long lasting peace in the country.

The four main issues that each one of these agreed points were the prerequisite of different sides of war factions. According to Tolo News (2019), the agreed points⁵ are; a). Withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, something that Taliban from the beginning of U.S. invasion have been asking for. b). Not using the Afghanistan territory by any of foreign militants against foreign countries, particularly U.S. that the Americans want to be guarantee. c). A permanent ceasefire, something that the Afghan government and all citizens of Afghanistan is asking for. d). Intra-Afghan peace talks, something that, citizens and the government of Afghanistan, and U.S is asking for.

Likewise, recently Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has provided a seven stages plan about peace talks and post peace agreement, that provides the road map for post civil war Afghanistan which, includes; withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan, cooperation of the U.S. forces in fighting against terrorism after the withdrawal, starting an intra-Afghan peace talks, ceasefire between all war factions, providing plans to find a nationwide solutions for the issues and role of the Afghan citizens in future political structures (Tolo News, 2019). By considering of all the above-mentioned highly important and agreed, and required conditions, it seems that the “resolution and settlement” of a permanent peace is closer than any time in the last four decades. The only considerable challenges against peace process at the moment is; the Taliban fragmentation, and the existent of warlords in the government of Afghanistan which, created the lack of consensus in the government and sabotage the intra-Afghan peace process.

7 Conclusion

Civil wars are very common in the contemporary world compared to previous periods. Afghanistan is a case in point. Civil wars and ethnic conflicts occur under particular circumstances such as geographic, economic, ethno-linguistic, political, demographic factors, and foreign interventions.

⁵ All the agreements have been made so far during the peace talks between U.S. and Taliban representatives are Oral, no written agreement is signed yet.

Afghanistan civil conflicts of 1992-2019, likewise, all other civil wars in the world are affected by some causes which create the civil wars and ethnic conflicts. Despite, the complexity of Afghanistan civil wars and ethnic conflicts, understanding the war factors playing a significant role in preventing the further civil conflicts. Achieving to a better result of understanding in deep points that, what have caused such complicated civil conflicts for so long periods of time, in a country like Afghanistan which, is the home for diverse ethnic groups, languages, and religious, that have been living for centuries in the same territory, needed better and further studies that has attempted in the current research.

By arguing this way, the linkage of the consequences of the studied literature and research, addressing the two main portions of the causes, which are; internal and external factors of civil wars in Afghanistan. External factors led the research to causes such as, foreign intervention, external financial support of war factions, migrants and remittances, and foreign invasions. The role of Afghanistan neighbors, such as Iran and Pakistan particularly following to Mujahidin victory on 1992 and U.S. invasion on 2001, is higher than any other country, while Russia, India, and U.S. are playing the secondary role in the current conflicts of Afghanistan.

Ethno-linguistic diversity, religious, economic, youth bulges, geography, history, and widespread poverty are known as internal factors of the conflicts in Afghanistan. Despite, all the above-mentioned factors have been playing significant role in a degree of more or less in prolonging and fueling the civil war and ethnic conflicts in Afghanistan, but some of the factors are critical. Even though, ethno-linguistic diversity is being used by foreign intervenient countries as a tool for creating tensions among the ethnic groups, and most of the ethnic tensions being raised after the starting or during the conflicts, but still has known as one of the most critical factors of civil war in Afghanistan. Illiteracy, poverty, and youth bulges are each one after another are playing important roles in fueling and prolonging the civil war and ethnic conflicts in the country.

While the causes of civil war and ethnic conflicts are bold and considerable, the challenges against peace process, settlement and resolutions is not less than the causes in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the challenges against peace process, such as, the strong presence of Northern Alliance, warlords, and former Mujahidin in the government, fragment structure of the Taliban leadership, particularly after the death of the Taliban former leader Mola Omer, and lack of a good strategy for managing the peace talks in Afghan government is still existing. Despite, the existing all these challenges, citizens and government of Afghanistan, U.S. and Taliban themselves are willing to achieve a peace agreement.

Even though, studying the above-mentioned sources about civil war and ethnic conflicts have facilitated the condition to be able to achieve progress in understanding the nature of civil conflicts, and knowing the causes and factors of civil war, but having access to more and better sources such as government archives and documents, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission documents and archives, and Afghanistan Peace Council archives may have enabled the current study in providing much better knowledge about civil war and ethnic conflicts in Afghanistan, which would allow this research to present better suggestions and theories regarding preventing the further conflicts.

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