

## **The Military in Nation-Building: A Case Study of the USA Intervention in Afghanistan**

**Awashima Aka-Ajani<sup>1</sup> & Philip T. Vande<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Governance and Development Studies,

<sup>2</sup>Department of Political Science,

Federal University, Lokoja, Kogi State

*Corresponding author:* awashaka@yahoo.com

### **Abstract**

**T**he Nation-building efforts in Afghanistan by the United States' military began with the introduction of combat forces, which were initiated on 7 October 2001, to remove the Taliban regime and eliminate the al-Qaida terrorist network in Afghanistan. This study examined the US military interventions in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2021. The study adopted a secondary methodology and utilized the realist theory as a framework of analysis. It was realized that nation-building takes a long time and its success appears to be linked to maintaining a standing United States military presence in the country. Again, nation-building is more successful if the state has had experience in self-government and if it has had a viable economy. The study also submitted that the military nation-building had a detrimental effect on the moral reputation of the US, as a result of questionable tactics used during military intervention. Again, the long-term military operations in Afghanistan and their failure to achieve set objectives have reduced the US's appetite for military intervention. The study recommended that, the military should design support troop structure to expand the capacity to perform nation-building operations in post-conflict regions. Again, the military must recognize the significance of building capacity to establish good governance, and it must push down to local commanders, greater authority for contracting and distribution of resources. Lastly, there is need to establish a structure and means for routine coordination with other government agencies and expand civil-military collaboration efforts to include international governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations.

**Keywords:** Military, intervention, nation-building, USA, Afghanistan

### **Introduction**

The military of the United States of America (USA) has intervened in different parts of the world, to manage conflict and post-conflict situations. Related to these interventions, it is noteworthy that, the idea and concept of nation-building has a long pedigree in the foreign policy of the US. It was an identifiable feature of Washington's dealings with the colonial empire it acquired in the Spanish-American War, especially with regard to the Philippines. The United States also conducted a nation-building mission lasting nearly two decades in Haiti—from 1915 to 1934. Throughout the Cold War, nation-building was less prominent, because the US foreign policy had a strong realist orientation. As Carpenter (2006) affirms, the US policy makers focused on containing and neutralizing tangible threats to America's security. Thus, most of Washington's military interventions during the Cold War had a hard-edged strategic justification, namely, preventing the Soviet Union or its allies and clients from establishing communist control in regions that were considered important to America's well-being. Although the term nation-building did not come into vogue until the latter stages of the Cold War, a number of US military ventures during that era had characteristics that resembled the concept (Carpenter, 2006).

Bullimore (2006) asserts that nation-building was even more clearly a feature of US policy in the interventions in Lebanon and Grenada in the early 1980s. In the former, the United States intervened to facilitate a withdrawal of Israeli forces that had launched an offensive to the outskirts of Beirut and to dampen the Lebanese civil war that had raged for nearly a decade. In the case of Grenada, US forces ousted a communist regime, restored order to the island, and orchestrated a transition to democracy. Once the Cold War ended, American policy makers showed an increasing fascination with nation-building (Dobbins & McGinn, 2003). Again, the 1994 Haiti intervention was a pure case of nation-building, since not even the most imaginative proponents of US action could portray the disorder in that country as a security threat to the United States. More so, nation-building was a dominant motive in the US-led wars in Bosnia and Kosovo. Given the growing appeal of nation-building as a strategy during the 1990s, it is not surprising that it quickly became – and remains – a major feature of the USA's war on terror in the twenty-first century.

Suffice it to add that the USA's post-Cold War flirtation with nation building received a huge boost with the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. Almost immediately after the 9/11 attacks, an assortment of foreign policy experts and political figures claimed that those events underscored the need for the United States to incorporate nation building into its national security strategy as a means of combating terrorism. Their chief exhibit was Afghanistan (Hechl, 2017). They argued that Afghanistan had become a failed state after the Soviet withdrawal, and with the takeover by the Taliban in the mid-1990s the country became a safe haven for al Qaeda. Therefore, to prevent more 11 September disasters, the United States had to make certain that no other Afghanistans developed. Taken to its extreme, such logic implied that a failed state anywhere in the world posed a potential lethal threat to America's security.

This study is therefore set out to examine the role of the military in nation-building, using the US intervention in Afghanistan as a case study. After the introduction, the study presents a conceptual understanding of nation-building. The theoretical framework within which the framework of analysis is carried comes next. The other sections present a background to the US military intervention in Afghanistan, understanding nation-building in Afghanistan by the United States of America, Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the US and peacebuilding and economic development as solution in Afghanistan. The study has a conclusion and recommendations are made.

### **Conceptual overview of nation-building**

According to Carson (2003), the United States has conducted nation-building operations since 1898 and does so in a uniquely American way. Nation-building is the intervention in the affairs of a nation-state for the purpose of changing the state's method of government and when the United States pursues these efforts there is one goal – democratization. Removing existing governments requires force, and history has shown that the US military is the force of choice. The story of America's nation-building efforts starts with the Spanish-American War when the United States decided that Cuba and the Philippines should no longer be colonies of Spain. After defeating Spain in Cuba and routing their forces from the Philippines, the United States began nation-building efforts to establish democratic governments that were representative of the populace. It is a role that extends long past the time that battles, campaigns, and wars have been won (Hechl, 2017). The military, specifically the Army as the ground presence and symbol of

America's commitment, is required to remain in place long after the fight has been won in order to create the conditions for democracy to take root.

Nation-building is a term used world-wide by politicians, international organizations, and in news and scholarly publications, and yet no single doctrinal definition exists. While the United States military recognizes the importance of doctrine, terms, and words; they must be exacting and understood. Understanding the difference between deter and defend has very real implications to the battlefield commander. Yet, despite a long history of military involvement in nation-building, United States joint doctrine does not define this term nor is there an existing doctrinal guide who outlines the activities involved (Dobbins & McGinn, 2003).

For this study therefore, nation-building is the intervention in the affairs of a nation state for the purpose of changing the state's method of government. Nation-building also includes efforts to promote institutions which will provide for economic well-being and social equity. It is noteworthy that, the United States conducts nation-building in a distinctive style that seeks first and foremost to democratize other nations or peoples. One of the primary tenants is to install or reinstate a constitutional government that recognizes universal suffrage, the rule of law, and separation of church and state. This is based on a long time belief that fostering democracy abroad is not only in the best interest of national security, but is a national responsibility. This is not to say that spreading democracy requires full-fledged nation-building activities. On the contrary, democracy can and does promote itself, sometimes without overt American effort. Providing economic support and humanitarian aid are generally important components of nation-building, although engaging in these types of activities does not signal an American desire to build or rebuild a nation. The fundamental difference between rendering aid and nation-building is the desired outcome. In every nation-building venture that the United States has undertaken, it has attempted to fundamentally change the existing political foundation of that state. The goal of this change is democratization.

To Bullimore (2006), nation-building encompasses a number of objectives. He avers that the two most notable objectives are establishing a representative government and setting conditions which will allow for economic growth and individual prosperity. Security must be established in order to achieve these objectives. This is the role of the Armed Forces. Security is most often achieved by using the United States Army either by fighting or winning in war or through peace-making, peacekeeping, or peace-enforcement operations. Reconstructing the infrastructure is one of the most visible outcomes of nation-building and the United States typically goes well beyond reconstruction by greatly improving and expanding the infrastructure. The American style of nation-building also tends to try to infuse American values. For example, the United States places high value on education and therefore expends great efforts towards establishing compulsory education. Human rights and labor rights, to include those of women and children, are also important values that nation-building stresses to instill. As most often used when referring to the U.S. military, nation-building refers to a range of activities to include repair, maintenance or construction of economic infrastructure such as roads, schools, electrical grids, and heavy industrial facilities and of health infrastructure, water and sewage facilities. They can also include training and assistance to police, the military, the judiciary, and prison officials as well as other civil administrators.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The US military intervention in Afghanistan was seen as a reaction against the September 11 attacks on the US. It was glorified as the war on terror and portrayed America as a serious anti-terrorist crusader. Different theories have different outlooks towards the US move on Afghanistan (Ford and Morton, 2011). While the realist see it as an act of self defence by an insecure country, the just war theorists try to analyze the moral grounds of the attack on an independent state. The Marxist theory offers an influential explanation of the whole war. The US move to attack Afghanistan might be a spontaneous response to the gruesome attacks of September 2001 but the USA already had plans to increase its presence in Central Asia. The US fascination with the vast untapped resources of Central Asia explains the presence of US troops for two decades.

This study is however anchored on the Realist Theory. The Realist Theory proposes that world politics is driven by competitive self-interest. They assume that the international system is anarchic and that the main concern of every state is self-interest. The realist assumption is that the nature of world politics is essentially and unchangeably a struggle among self-interested states for power and position under anarchy (Katzman, 2011). Accordingly, the core aim of every state is to defend its self-interest. Since the states are always insecure they tend to use military power to defend their interest in an anarchic system. The American attack on Afghanistan can be explained from the realist perspective as well. The US military response to the September 11, 2001 attacks is in this regard. The country had started to feel insecure and had to resort to military action to defend its self-interest. The Bush administration decided to wage a war against terror without considering the room for any debate or discussion through the diplomatic channel (Bush, 2002).

The US also believed that this was a war between good and evil and they had to deal with it militarily. The use of the Bush Doctrine, which maintained that the United States had the right to secure itself and act against countries that provide breeding grounds for terrorism, to justify the war on Afghanistan shows how the international environment was moving towards realist principles (Bush, 2002). The US government toppled the Taliban regime in a couple of months but it still carried on its war against Al-Qaeda (Taddeo, 2010). Consequently, the basic assumption of the realist that the war is waged by an insecure state to protect its self-interest is also only partially manifested in the Afghan situation. The attack on US soil was definitely an attack on the self-interest of America and the US retaliation can also be seen as a move of self-defense.

## **Background to the US Military Intervention in Afghanistan**

The United States emerged from the Civil War and subsequent reconstruction period as a world economic power. National policies in the 1890s marked a distinct change in United States foreign policy reflecting in great measure the nation's emotions and personality. Americans exhibited tremendous pride and confidence in the nation's industrial capabilities and in their democratic form of government. With this came a sense of "superiority of American political

and social values and America began to see the world as an arena open and waiting for the embracement of these ideals (Carpenter, 2006). The Spanish-American War was a product of this rise to global power and, it can be argued, led to America's first foreign nation-building effort. The reasons for entering this war and the later actions in the occupied territories are hauntingly similar to the conditions that 100 years later led to United States' involvement in Haiti, Somalia, and the Balkans.

The US military's intervention and nation-building efforts in Afghanistan began with the introduction of combat forces. Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) was initiated on 7 October 2001, for the purpose of removing the Taliban regime and eliminating the al-Qaida terrorist network in Afghanistan. Al-Qaida, founded by Usama Bin Ladin, is an extremist group whose aim is to establish a pan-Islamic Caliphate. Their aim was to rid non-Muslims, particularly Westerners, from Muslim countries and preach that it is the duty of all Muslims to kill United States citizens.<sup>95</sup> Although, their terrorist network is worldwide, Bin Ladin was headquartered in Afghanistan and under the Taliban regime was given a safe haven to plan and train. Associated with many terrorist acts, to include the bombing of United States embassies in Africa and the attack on the US Cole, their most devastating action was the 9-11 attacks (Daxner, 2011).

The situation in Afghanistan and its threat to the United States forced President George W. Bush to abandon his campaign rhetoric against the United States involvement in nation-building. In his 2002 National Security Strategy, he spoke directly about this issue (Bush, 2002). His approach was to partner with international organizations, including the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, as well as other allies to provide humanitarian, political, economic, and security assistance necessary to rebuild Afghanistan so that it will never again abuse its people, threaten its neighbors, and provide a haven for terrorists. Eliminating the Taliban was clearly a vital interest to the United States. Ensuring that Afghanistan does not again become a safe haven for terrorist organizations was also in the nation's vital interest and required a full-fledged nation-building effort.

It is noteworthy that the US military removed the Taliban and al-Qaida no longer had the capability of operating freely in Afghanistan, but filling the void left after toppling the Taliban was problematic (Krassner, 2005). Relatedly, Afghanistan had a warlord culture and has no history of democracy. Hamid Karzai, the then president of Afghanistan, was in power for about a year, yet his span of control was limited to the capital Kabul. Warlords essentially ruled the rest of the country. Suffice to add that a precondition to nation-building is security, and providing security was Karzai's biggest problem. With no standing army and no capable police force, Karzai is incapable of providing for his own security. It was the United States soldiers who escorted Karzai everywhere he went (Jalali, 2002).

Training a professional army and a national police force were of high priority and the United States along with other nations had begun this process. Yet, the warlord mentality made this difficult. Afghanistan had never had a professional army and one of the conditions the United States had established in training this new army was that it be representative of all ethnic groups. However, long-seated distrust existed between most of the ethnic groups and because of this volunteers for this new multi-ethnic army was limited. Compounding the security problem was the warlords' reluctance to disarm, and there was no plan to disarm them (Graham, 2002).

Similarly, Afghanistan was in economic ruin. Although significant financial aid was given and much more had been promised, Afghanistan lacked even the most rudimentary economic structure. There was no banking system nor was there confidence in the existing state currency. The country lacked any form of industry. Cultivating poppy seeds for illegal export had long been their most significant commodity for bringing in revenue (Alm, 2021).

Thus, rebuilding Afghanistan was both compelling and a challenge that required nation-building efforts that far surpassed those seen in the later part of the 20th century. Afghanistan had historically been a country either under colonial rule or ruled by warlords and has little experience with the notion of democracy (Krassner, 2005). This and the lack of any real economic or social structures was challenge and created a vacuum for Karzai, the United States, and the international community to build an Afghanistan that is a viable member of the world community of stable and contributing nations.

### **Understanding Nation-Building in Afghanistan by the United States of America**

The National Security Strategy of the US notes that weak states are more vulnerable to terrorist networks and that these weak states can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states (United States Department of State, 2002). The U.S. policy of pre-emption to eliminate these terrorist networks in Afghanistan leaves the host state in a weakened condition and extremely vulnerable to insurgency and terrorism. As an integral part of the US' overall security strategy, the follow-through to stabilize and rebuild states emerging from conflict becomes a national security priority (Carson, 2003). Consequently, nation-building is a controversial mission that because of confusion over responsibilities and commitment to conduct these operations has limited the inter-agency investments needed to better perform the tasks. Confusing definitions, conflicting doctrine and institutional resistance in both the state and defense departments continue to hamstring efforts to improve and codify tasks and responsibilities for peacekeeping operations (Vigier, 2009).

With regard to the United States' interests, no one agency or group is alone in efforts to conduct nation-building or post-conflict reconstruction. The Defense Department, State Department, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), International partners, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and various supporting contractors are potential stakeholders with the host nation in operations to rebuild a nation. The State Department's daily mission throughout the world is to provide expertise and counsel in presidential decisions on policy. The Department of Defense has robust assets and primacy for providing security and tends to be the workhorse in post-conflict situations. USAID is a major player in support of six critical sectors of democratic governance, education, health, economic growth, infrastructure, and humanitarian assistance (Connah, 2021).

International partners are extremely valuable to the endeavor for the experience, perspective and legitimacy that they bring to the mission. The magnitude of nation-building tasks and the requirements to coordinate efforts with an extensive list of participants resulted in the creation of a new coordinator for reconstruction capable of directing the United States' nation-building effort. As submitted by Graham (2002) the reconstruction phase of nation-building encompasses the rebuilding of political and socio-economic infrastructure, which the military struggles across the unfamiliar ground of governance and capacity building.

On the military side, current joint doctrine recognizes that although coercive military operations may end, the conflict may continue under other means. More so, the military articulates peace-building operation phases as: Emergency, Stabilization, and Normalization. It also states that these phases may not be sequential and can occur simultaneously in various parts of the country, depending on local circumstances (Hamre & Gordon 2002). Similarly, the civilian framework is organized as “initial response, transformation, and fostering sustainability.” This framework is further characterized by suggesting the requirements within the three phases. The initial response often includes military intervention for basic security, stability, and emergency services. The second phase, transformation, focuses on developing legitimate and sustainable indigenous capacity, often with special attention to restarting the economy, establishing mechanisms for governance and participation and securing a foundation of justice and reconciliation. The final phase, fostering sustainability, consolidates long-term recovery efforts, often leading to the withdrawal of all or most of the military (Bullimore, 2006).

Specific descriptions in military doctrine highlight general considerations for transitioning to civilian authority and address specific types of forces required to conduct post-conflict operations. With the exception of Civil Affairs manuals, military doctrine does not adequately address or prioritize post-conflict tasks for the bulk of the military force. For example, Joint doctrine states that harmonization across all agencies and at all levels is essential to Civil-Military Operation (CMO) efforts and that empowerment of civilian agencies leading to a transition of responsibility and ultimate extraction of the military force is a key principle. Further, the stated objectives of CMO are to enhance military effectiveness and reduce the negative impact of military operations on civilians. This doctrine implies that the main focus is to hand over responsibility for stability operations to civilian agencies and extract the military force as quickly as possible and that CMO are always supporting a larger military mission and is not the primary focus of operations. While the military has special troops to perform CMO, civil affairs soldiers are trained to perform a variety of supporting tasks to include assisting in reestablishing a civil government (Bullimore, 2006).

Current doctrine states that because of the disruption that accompanies war, the military may have to assume the lead during the emergency phase of stability operations to prevent loss of life or the destruction of essential infrastructure (Hamre & Gordon, 2002). Military doctrine firmly supports the force capabilities and role expectations in recognizing that the ultimate measure of success is political. Commanders must seek a clear understanding of the political objectives and how military operations support these broader objectives. A key consideration for the military supporting post-conflict security and reconstruction tasks is that the military effort is only one part of the complex nation-building endeavor. Because no other agency or organization can provide the robust security required for post-conflict operations, all military forces have key roles in supporting peace building (Vigier, 2009).

Because service and capacity building usually begin while security operations are underway and continue after it concludes, the military and civil efforts are inextricably linked and harmony and synchronization are imperative (Hamre & Gordon, 2002). Operations Afghanistan have forced the continued development of the military’s stabilization operations platform and the increasing

frequency of civil-military collaboration during these operations implies that this convergence of effort is here to stay (Jalali, 2002).

Further stated, the need to establish a secure environment, ensure the survival of the population and maintain a minimum level of economic activity in a region may require that military units participate in public service tasks during the emergency phase of the operation until such time that civil society organisations, and host nation capacity is established (Jalali, 2002). Recent operations demonstrate the military has the expertise, capability and willingness to conduct the training required to rebuild the police and military.

It is also capable of assisting and advising the medical, judiciary and prison officials in reestablishing basic functions. Operations also demonstrate that the large scale repair, maintenance and construction are largely beyond the capabilities of the military. Basic repair of roads and services are conducted out of necessity, when related to military requirements and then only at great expense of resources. The military can facilitate, focus efforts and provide the security necessary for contractors and private businesses to conduct the maintenance and construction of other economic infrastructure. Because of the military's organizational efficiency and planning capability, the military can also assist in restoring some of the normal administrative functions such as organizing elections, and creating new or reconfigured government departments (Graham, 2002).

### **Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the US**

On August 30, 2021, the United States declared the complete withdrawal of its military intervention in Afghanistan after 20 years of turmoil and chaos. The final troops were pulled out shortly before midnight in local time following a withdrawal deals that current president Joe Biden inherited from his predecessor Donald Trump (Afzal, 2021). The US launched the largest airlift operation in its history during the withdrawal in which an approximate of 6000 Americans and 124,000 civilians were carried out of the country. After the withdrawal, Taliban immediately marched to Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, and declared its control over the entire government. A few days after the withdrawal, Taliban announced its newly established caretaker government headed by Mohammed Hasan Akhund with a deputy prime minister and nine assigned ministers.

The new government however was dissented by the public due to the lack of any ethnic and political representation granted to different segments in the country. Taliban members dominated governmental seats and women were deprived from any political representation which sparked another armed conflict between the government and the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRFA), a branch of the old Mujahedeen movement. Other riots have taken place across different parts of the country from the political opposition and were met with increased violence and armed containment. Taliban appears to have a strong tendency on following the same strategies of the 1990s; they have so far shown an abolishment approach towards political opposition (Pannett, 2021).

The human and financial costs that were consumed during the conflict were massive for both sides. Ever since the beginning of 'Operation Enduring Freedom', Afghanistan has lost more than 68,000 Afghan military combatants, 51,000 fighters deployed by Taliban, and almost 48,000 civilians. For the US, America had lost 2455 war veterans in Afghanistan, a number that



is most likely deflated to preserve American and western consensus for the war. Moreover, almost 2.3 million people were displaced out of Afghanistan and settled mostly in Iran and Pakistan, not to mention the 228,000 Afghani people who were displaced internally. The financial cost for war was extremely high, especially for the US that paid more than two trillion dollars for weaponry, training, reconstruction, and veteran affairs (Crawford, 2021).

Afghanistan is currently witnessing a humanitarian crisis that is only expected to get worse in the coming years (Connah, 2021). The US led intervention in Afghanistan has caused more conflicts than resolved and it intensified the political division that continues to deprive people from their basic needs. As recent as January this year, the United Nations has announced that there were more than 2000 human right violations in Afghanistan including child marriage, child labour, and child abuse. Statistics show that about 10 million children in Afghanistan are in urgent need for humanitarian aid, and a large portion of them are diagnosed with acute malnutrition. Famine is also gradually feeding off the entire population where around 11 million people are in a food crisis and suffer from food insecurity. On the other side, the withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan has eliminated the incentive to send donations and aid to Afghanistan due to the absence of a financial observant. While the US recognizes the humanitarian crisis in the country, it obstructed all means of aid and financial assistance to Afghanistan. According to the World Bank, an estimate of US\$9 billion reserve of Taliban has been frozen in the Central Bank by the US (Wignaraja & Dardari, 2021).

### **Peacebuilding and Economic Development as solution in Afghanistan**

The international community has tried to promote for peace and security in Afghanistan multiple times after the US invasion. NATO for example launched the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in 2015 that was designed to train and assist security institutions in Afghanistan, financed by 36 members from the pact. NATO has also partnered with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) that was launched in 2002 and aimed at securing peace and socio-economic development in the country (Almahrouqi, 2021). The relentless international effort that has been made to cure the country from terrorism and radicalism was however met with failure and delay. It appears that the only effective solutions are those that emphasize on the roots of the conflict that are embedded in the social, economic, and political aspects. This section aims to provide solutions alternatives to peacebuilding and economic development in Afghanistan.

The new Taliban government in Afghanistan has been seeking recognition from the international community through organizing trips to different countries in the World and meeting with representatives from different nations. However, the attempts haven't been much successful due to the international reputation of the group and the political ideology it upholds. The United Kingdom for example fears that the new government will continue abusing the rights of its citizens, especially women, and other European countries have expressed the same concern in United Nations and NATO meetings. Therefore, I believe that the Taliban government must begin with stabilizing and democratising its domestic affairs in order to gain the recognition of the international community. It first must allow the formation of opposition parties and grant them effective representation in the government. The recent terrorist attacks occurring in Afghanistan have been due to the centralization of Taliban members in the government and the total absence of women. The new government can learn from the experience of Britain in pacifying Northern Ireland political parties through signing the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 that resulted in almost eliminating violence and aggressiveness in those regions. Through

including different segments of the society in the decision-making process, the new government will be able to guarantee not only domestic security, but also domestic support and consensus (Almahrouqi, 2021).

Human development is very crucial to Afghanistan's political stance in the international arena. As stated above, international recognition of Taliban has been attached to the security and provision of Human Rights. Upon the rise to power again in August this country, Taliban forces had immediately committed widely criticised human rights' violations. They have example raided the houses of journalists and human rights institution, executed former governmental officials, and captured opposition leaders as an expression of their abandonment of freedom of speech. The right for education is limited to males and access for health is only provided for elites and those who are connected to Taliban. Amnesty international, and organization working for human rights protection, has states that over 6000 schools in Afghanistan have wrecked buildings due to the war or have no building whatsoever. The government must therefore improve its social services and establish efficient infrastructure to increase the standards of living in the country and gain the trust of the world in heading the government.

On an economic level, the new government must invest in building a manufacturing sector that would generate quick revenues and provide job opportunities for the population. Afghanistan is in the midst of an economic crisis where the country cannot afford to feed, accommodate, and treat its people. This could be justified by the fact that 90% of the country's economy is dependent on foreign aid. The US reconstruction agenda in Afghanistan neglected economic aspects or deliberately created a dependent economy to secure the loyalty of the government. The withdrawal of western powers came with the withdrawal of their aid and financial donations as well. NATO for example has announced the suspension of all aid and support to any authority in Afghanistan as of 2021 (Almahrouqi, 2021).

The need for an economic boom has never been this urgent as half of the population lives under the poverty line with 11.6% unemployment rate. These economic conditions however is not a special case, there are countries that have had it much worse but succeeded in developing their economy and raising the welfare of their citizens. Singapore for example was completely impoverished after its independence from the Japanese empire in 1945. Nonetheless, through focusing on developing a manufacturing economy, the country managed to become one of the most developed and richest nations in the world. Countries like South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong have pursued the same approach in overcoming their economic stagnation. These stories provide Afghanistan practical guidelines for reconstructing their economy. A manufacturing base will allow Afghanistan to not only increase its GDP but also establish trade agreements with the rest of the world though importing and opening their market to exports. Strong economic relations will open the horizons in front of Afghanistan for more economic and political partnerships and will attract investors to enrich the economic structure of the country.

## **Conclusion**

The foregoing has submitted that the United States has been involved in nation-building efforts since 1898, and since then it has fashioned a uniquely American style of nation-building, the heart of which is democratization. The measure of success or failure centres on how deeply the roots of democracy are planted. The United States has seen both success and failure. It is also

clear that stability and reconstruction or nation-building operations are likely the most difficult and resource intensive challenges facing the United States government in the next decade. Since the withdrawal of the US, Afghanistan is currently standing at a turning point where it could change the political dynamics of the country for the better or for the worse. Providing a statistical forecast is difficult at the time since the independence of the country is still very recent and Taliban has not identified its foreign and domestic agenda.

### Recommendations

While the US military has a tremendous capability to accomplish many of the tasks required for nation-building operations, the following recommendations are made for effectiveness, peacebuilding and conflict transformation:

- i. The military should design support troop structure to expand the capacity to perform nation-building operations in post-conflict regions. The military must routinely work and plan in concert with civilian organizations and get comfortable in doing so. The military should train all leaders in tasks previously associated exclusively with Civil Affairs units.
- ii. The military must recognize the significance of building capacity to establish good governance, and it must push down to local commanders, greater authority for contracting and distribution of resources. Projects and initiatives must show immediate results to effectively establish the legitimacy of the local government. Visible, fast-yielding and prioritized investments in the community are essential in the early stages of the reconstruction process.
- iii. The United States' ability to conduct nation-building operations is significantly dependent on the size and composition of the military. Thus, sufficient numbers of support troops must be retained to provide the degree of redundancy required to provide a credible nation-building capacity. These support forces are essential to effectively train and develop a police force, oversee and provide technical advice on reconstruction contracts and advise local commanders on a wide variety of civil issues dealing with governance and capacity building.
- iv. There is need to establish a structure and means for routine coordination with other government agencies and expand civil-military collaboration efforts to include international governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations.
- v. Again, there is need for the Taliban to implement a liberal approach and become more protective of human rights in order to gain international recognition considering its urgent need for aid and donations.
- vi. It will be crucial for the new government to resolve the country's domestic instability to become qualified in the international arena.

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