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Kalmar Växjö

Bachelor Thesis

External States as Spoilers in Peace processes:

A case study of the USA in Afghanistan



Author: Habib Said

Thesis Adviser: Manuela Nilsson

Examiner: Ludwig Gelot

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Abstract

The complexity of spoilers in the conflict resolution and the breakdown of the peace process through violence or other method have made spoiling an interesting topic. The discussion and the research on the spoiler has contributed to understanding the nature of the issue of spoilers. However, the discussion is rolling over the perception of spoiler and the obstacle of spoiling behavior. Some researchers are focusing on spoiling behavior of internal and external spoiler who are within the country of the conflict, while some of the recent researches concentrate on the spoiling actions of states or actors who are geographically external to the conflict which can derail the peace processes. Obviously the role of external states actors especially the US was not covered by the research with the only exceptions in which the United State has been highlighted as the external state spoiler in Colombia.

In the case of the Afghanistan there are several states involved in Afghan conflict but there is no research has been done on democratic countries, such as the US as having potential spoiling behavior in the Afghan peace process. Therefore this study is trying to see if the US has a spoiling behavior in the context of Afghanistan. The analytical framework developed in this study outline some condition to spoiling behavior and activities which is applied to case of study US in Afghanistan to find out if the US acting as potential spoiler in Afghan peace process. The role of US in Afghanistan is one of the reason that encourage looking into the US impact on the country and its long pursuit of peace. In this study, the US opinion, role, and activities towards Afghan peace process and conflict are discussed throughout this study. The analytical framework which has been developed in this study suggests that the US has the potential to spoiling behavior.



Table of Content

Acknowledgment	
Abbreviations	
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Literature Review and Research Problem.....	1-3
1.2 Relevance of the Study.....	3-4
1.3 Objective and Research Question.....	4
1.4 Analytical Framework.....	4-5
1.5 Methodology.....	5
1.6 Structure.....	5-6
2 Theoretical Framework	7
2.1 Defining Spoiler and spoiling	7-8
2.2 Spoiling behaviors	8-9
2.3 Inclusively and exclusively	9-10
2.4 Third party or mediators	10
2.5 Potential spoiler	11
2.6 Analytical Framework.....	11-13
3 Methodological framework	14
3.1 Qualitative method and case study.....	14-15
3.2 Sources of Information	15-16
3.3 Limitation and delimitation	16
3.4 Ethical consideration.....	17
4 Background	18-19
4.1 Regional and International Interests	19
4.2 Ethnic conflict.....	19-20
4.3 Peace negotiation in Bonn Germany (2001).....	20-21
5 Findings	22
5.1 Role of United States in Afghanistan.....	22



5.2	United States role in Bonn Process (2001)	23-24
5.3	United States legacy in Afghan war.....	24-26
5.4	Strategic Partnership Agreement (2012).....	26-27
5.5	United States involvement in Peace talks (2008-2013).....	27-28
5.5.1	Secret peace dialogues in Germany and France (2012).....	29
5.5.2	Failure of negotiation with the Taliban (2010-2012).....	29-30
5.5.3	United States direct talks with the Taliban (2012-2018).....	30-32
5.6	United States interreference in political spheres	32-35
5.6.1	United States prison and violation of human rights.....	35-36
5.7	United States Interests	36-37
6	Analysis.....	38
6.1	Violent spoiling behavior	38-39
6.1.1	The military spoiler	39-40
6.2	Non-violent spoiling behavior	40
6.2.1	Spoiling behavior in the political process.....	40
6.2.2	Indirect support to the internal spoiler groups.....	41
6.2.3	Spoiling behavior in the peace talks.....	41-43
6	Conclusions.....	44-45
7	Bibliography.....	1-11



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Abbreviations

AFP	Afghan National Police
APP	Afghan Public Protection Force
BSA	Bilateral Security Agreement
CDR	Committee for Defense of the Revolution
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
FARC	The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
ISI	Inter-service Intelligence
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PC	Plan Colombia
PDFA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PSCs	Private Security Companies
QCG	Quadrilateral Coordination Group
SPA	Strategic Partnership Agreement
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNITA	Union for Total Independence of Angola
USA	United States of America
US	United States



1 Introduction

1.1 Literature review and research problem

There are a lot of conflicts ongoing in this world and many of them have been resolved through peace negotiations, which aim to reach a durable peace between warring parties or states. Negotiations are as one of the strategies which create an opportunity to understand the motivation and interests of parties involved in the conflict. After the Second World War, most of the peace conflict have been resolved through third parties; international mediation and peacekeeping missions. Their appearance in managing conflict has been recognized by some observers as effective and crucial in decreasing conflicts (Greig and Rost, 2013).

However, most of the conflict resolution have shown that the presence of the spoilers during the negotiation has created a major problem, by using different violent and non-violent tactics in order to disrupt peace process (Newman and Richmond, 2006). Spoilers are one of the debated issues which have created a considerable discussion among many scholars who have different perspectives on issues when it comes to hindering the peace process.

On the emergence and the behaviors of spoilers, Johan Stedman, argues that spoilers emerge when there is a peace settlement. He focuses on violent and non-violent spoiling behavior of actors who are geographically internal to the conflicts and see peace negotiations as a threat to their power, interest, and worldview (Stedman, 1997).

While, Stedman (2001) and Mutwol (2009) argues that the traditional concept that could be sensed from the literature of the external actors are perceived as those who have been physically excluded from the peace process, there are other actors who exist outside the geographical boundaries such as neighboring states which can have potential spoiling impacts.



However, Newman and Richmond (2006), and Zahar (2003) distinguish the role of mediator and the international community in the peace negotiation that could generate spoiling behavior. Furthermore, they also focus on the actors who are geographically outside the conflict country, such as Diasporas and States or other organization that could have spoiling potential by helping the internal spoilers which might undermine peace settlement.

Quite much has been written about the characteristic of internal and external spoilers within the country of the conflict. However, there are not so much research on the external states actors which does not seem to fit in the categories of spoilers, particularly when these actors are democratic countries but there is only one source that pointed out to the US as a spoiler in the case of Colombia. The US counter-drug policy which was known as Plan Colombia (PC) in 1999 was meant to fight drug cartels, however as noted by Nasi (2006) this campaign by the US did not help peace in the country. He argues that the US intentionally or unintentionally generated spoiling actions, because the US military support to the Colombian government encouraged it to continue fighting FARC instead of signing peace agreement. If we examine the PC role in the peace process in Colombia, it could strongly be argued that the plan was derailed from fighting the drugs trafficking to strengthen the Colombian military. As a result this strategy led to arms race between FARC and Colombian government which leading FARC to pursue military strategy rather than resorting to peace. What can be noticed here, is that the US indirectly affected the peace process (ibid: 232-233).

In the case of Afghanistan, there are some literatures pointing out to regional state such as Pakistan having spoiling behavior in the peace process in Afghanistan due to their involvement in the country politically (Motwani and Bose, 2015). However, there are other countries that involved in the Afghan conflict such as U.S. Britain, Germany, and France but no research has been done on them being spoilers. Nothing on the U.S., especially not on spoilers. Considering the long engagement of the US in Afghanistan this study is trying



to look into if the US has spoiling behavior. As this would necessitate examining and evaluating the impact of the external states involved in Afghan peace process as facilitators while in the same may contribute negatively to the peace process.

1.2 Relevance of the Study

The persistence of the Afghan conflict coupled with the efforts aiming to ending that spiral make the demand for finding a solution always on increase. Different levels of response have been tried ranging from military intervention to a traditional ways of peace building. A series of negotiations have been on and off, but they could not find any solution. Why peace process is always doomed to failure or stalling necessitates widening our perspective in looking into the issue. By examining spoilers that spoil the Afghan peace process it is important to look into all types of spoilers. We need to take into consideration that other actors that we so far have not looked upon as spoilers who could have spoiling behavior. It is also essential to look into the external state actors from a spoiler perspective and examine the extent of their spoiling potential either directly, intentionally or unintentionally. Therefore, the case selected for this study could contribute to the understanding of how external state actors might become peace spoilers. Previous researches on external spoilers have focused on the geographically located actors but less attention has been given to external state actors. Performing as a facilitator in the peace negotiation and having spoiling potential is one of the aspects that the study is trying to highlight especially when the actor is a democratic country. This is important because a democratic country involved in conflict resolution aim is to bring peace not to act as a spoiler to disrupt the peace negotiations for their own interest. Newman and Richmond, propose that *“As the UN Peacebuilding Commission begins to plan its work, it is important to consider how to deal with ‘spoilers’ as a threat to security...”* (Newton and Richmond, 2006:101). Therefore having deep understanding of the different spoilers of peace process



and the different levels of spoiling behaviors are necessary element in analyzing spoiling in peace process.

1.3 Objective and Research Questions:

The objective of this research paper is to contribute to the spoiler debate of peace processes by going further into the concept of external spoilers especially if these spoilers are democratic countries. Which has in that debate. This research will look particularly into the case of Afghanistan and the United States of America's involvement in the Afghan peace process. The study is also motivated by the mixed role of the US in Afghanistan. On one hand taking an active role as facilitator to the peace process while at the same time being a party to the conflict.

Research question

- Has the United State been acting as a spoiler in the Afghan peace process?

1.4 Analytical Framework

A number of studies on spoilers mention some spoiling behavior, for example, using violence, stalling, or providing aid to other spoiler actors (Newman and Richmond, 2006). So far there exists no specific description of what spoiling actually entails. Therefore, this study tries to develop its own analytical framework by analyzing possible literature on the concepts of peace spoiler's activities and spoiling behavior. By establishing all these spoiler characteristics together in an organized way. This study develops a framework that will support forthcoming investigators to evaluate possible spoiler activities and behavior of external state's actors involved in the peace process.



By identifying the different activities, characteristics, and conditions that could posture as opportunity or risks for external states actors to become engaged in spoiling movements. The analytical framework build in this thesis will then be applied to the case study of USA to find out if they have any type of spoiling behavior using in the Afghan peace process.

1.5 Methodological Framework:

The methodology of this thesis is a qualitative and abduction desk study. The subject chosen in this research is applicable for a desk study and the objective is to investigate the case study of the USA, possibly behaving as a spoiler in the Afghan peace process. It will go in depth into the existing literature on the concept of spoilers, such as (Newman and Richmond, 2006; Stedman, 1997; Zahar, 2006, and Aggestam, 2006) and it will also make use of different articles and newspaper in both Persian and English in relation to the argument. Thus, the data and information to the case study will be derived from secondary resources including peer-reviewed articles and books, reports, newspapers in both English and Persian. Regarding the decision of selecting the case study is based on fact that the characteristic of the political landscape in Afghanistan reflect aborted peace processes due to the presence of spoiler groups. The focus will be from the start of the Bonn agreement in 2001 and onwards.

1.6 Structure

The thesis structure is followed by

Chapter 2: which develops the analytical framework that has been developed in this study, and following by spoiler's debate where it examines the spoiling behavior and activities in the peace process. This will help to understand the spoiling triggers in order to develop the analytical framework which will identify the behavior and characteristic of external states spoiling potential.



In Chapter 3: I present the methodological framework explaining the research methods, the viability of the different sources used in this study.

Chapter 4: It gives a short background of the Afghan conflict and peace process.

Chapter 5: present the findings by giving a description of US role in the Afghan conflict and peace process. By doing this it gives a better understanding behavior and activities of US possible spoiling potential in the Afghan peace process.

Chapter 6: Analysis; answer the research question on whether the US has spoiling potential in the Afghan peace process by looking into the analytical framework that developed in this study.

Chapter 7: presents conclusion.



2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Defining Spoiler and Spoiling

Newman and Richmond examine spoilers as “*groups and tactics that actively seek to hinder, delay, or undermine conflict settlement through a variety of means and for a variety of motives.*” (Newman and Richmond, 2006:102). These parties or groups are either inside or outside the peace process, which use violence or other means to derail the process in pursuit of their aims. Further, other parties which join peace process at one stage and withdraw from the process at other stage. The spoiling behavior can also include obstructing or threatening to obstruct the process (ibid).

Stedman defines spoilers as “*...leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it.*” (Stedman, 1997:5). There are three types of spoilers according to Stedman, limited, greedy, and total spoilers as well as their demand and goals differ from each other. Limited spoiler demand and goals are limited such as “*recognition and redress of grievance, a share of power or the exercise of power constrained by a constitution and opposition, and basic security of followers.*” (ibid:10). But their goals do not always indicate limited commitment to accomplish those goals they have. On the other hand, there are greedy spoilers which fall in between the total and the limited spoilers. These type of spoilers demand and goals are flexible and depend on “*expand or contract based on the calculation of risk and cost.*” (ibid:11)

The most difficult spoilers in a peace process to deal with are total spoilers since their goals and interests are non-negotiable and they see the whole negotiation in all or nothing. In other words, their interests are pursued of total power. However, this type of spoilers commitment to achieve total power depends on their locus, if their locus has to do with their leader then a change



in leadership help to shift them into limited spoilers. The locus here refers to the prime mover of the spoiling behavior (ibid).

2.2 Spoiling behaviors

According to Stedman (1997) spoilers of peace process emerges when there is a peace negotiation and those actors who are inside a process, use peace negotiation as mean to gain more political and economic advantages, political recognition, and to exercise a share of power. Similarly, Aggestam (2006) argues that during the negotiation internal spoilers have more opportunity than the external spoilers in term of expressing their interest and demand. In addition, Zahar (2010) argues that they hide their violence as long the negotiation is benefiting them to achieve their commitment. For instance, in the case of Angola civil war, where the UNITA group who were supportive of the peace talks before the election, but after losing the election UNITA resumed the war. However, if the peace negotiation poses as a threat to the legitimacy of internal spoilers, they spoil the peace process and return to violence (Goren and Elman, 2012).

On the other hand according to Stedman there are external spoiler inside the country of the conflict, who are excluded or exclude themselves from peace negotiations, to disrupt the process they use violence or other tactics, such as *“assassination of moderates who stand for a negotiated peace, massacres that coincide with any progress in reaching a negotiated settlement, and the creation of alliances with conservative members in the armed forces and police to sabotage any agreement.”* (Stedman, 1997:8-9). For example, in the case of Rwanda, the CDR (Committee for the Defense of the Revolution) acted as an external spoiler by concentrating on their use of violence and committed genocide to disrupt the peace process. External actor’s method and strategy include execution, massacre, and genocide that correspond with any improvement in the peace negotiations or building of alliance among each camp or groups to derail any peace agreement (ibid).



In addition, Aggestam (2006) and Zahar (2003) agrees with Stedman's states on spoilers behavior when it comes to their spoiling activities, mentioning that violence takes place in relation to the outcome of peace negotiations.

Zahar (2006) indicate that outside actors or parties often become external spoilers if the negotiation threatens their legitimacy and power. Further, Zahar, point out about the sense of insecurity which exists among the external spoilers on what would happen to them after the negotiations. For instance, in the case of Palestinian Hamas according to Zahar, the peace negotiation between Palestinian and Israel could have undermine Hamas legitimacy if an agreement had been negotiated.

According to Zahar (2010), there might be several motivations that could trigger external actor's behavior regarding disrupting of a peace process. He further argues that not all external actors involved in the peace process want to disrupt it, neither all internal do want to preserve them. These external actors gain financial benefits from the continuation of conflict which is a threat to the peace process. Further, their presence in the peace process either has to do with the preventing of other parties to be included in the peace negotiations or they may not be considered important for being a part of the process. Further, the decision to disrupt a peace process is motivated by "*fears of losing one's political voice as opposed to concerns over one's economic benefits*" (ibid: 269).

2.3 Inclusively and exclusively issue

Greenhill and Major (2007) propose that Stedman concept of spoilers does not focus on spoiling potential of actors or parties that are minor to be considered in the peace process. As a result, actors might also increase their force in case if their preference is not consistent in the peace negotiation. Moreover, Greenhill and Major, considered importance of the dynamics within the weight of actors in terms of impact and power due to the shifts in relative power which



will change actor's decision-making about some actor who may later appear as a potential risk. Suggesting that shift in power sometimes end in a favor of one party which generate spoiling potential (ibid). In this matter, Goren and Elman (2012), argues that spoilers emerges before an agreement is signed. They furthermore acknowledge the importance of numbers warning parties or actors to be included into peace negotiations due to the risk for potential spoiling. Moreover, Blaydes and De Maio (2010) stress that *"negotiation between only some of the potential parties to the conflict, is more likely to generate spoiler violence whereas a more inclusive peace process reduces incentives for the strategic use of spoiler violence."* (ibid, p. 4). They also emphasize that including more parties or actors in the peace negotiation and reaching an agreement would be beneficial for all of them (ibid).

2.4 Third Party or Mediators

Furthermore, it is also important to consider the role of international community and custodian who perform as a mediator during the conflict management. Their performance could also potentially lead to spoiler's problem (Zahar, 2006). As Zahar point out the importance of third parties character in peace negotiation which could be more harmful rather than beneficial by supporting the creation of spoilers if the peace negotiation does not guarantee the security of parties involved in the peace process (Zahar, 2003). In this case Newman and Richmond, agrees with (Zahar, 2003) in term of external actors role and their involvement in peace negotiation, thus they identify third-party interests in a peace negotiation *"in term of resources, recognition, and favouritism to one or other party"* (Newton, and Richmond, 2006: 107). Furthermore, Newman and Richmond also mention about the role of the international community when it comes to their involvement in peace negotiations and implementation, which can generate liable conditions for spoiling, considering the significance and impact of the third parties on different actors on the peace talks (ibid).



2.5 Potential Spoilers

Newman and Richmond indicates that it is important to consider that spoilers comes in different form. External actors outside the country of the conflict could have spoiling potential by helping domestic spoilers and their tactics in order to influence the peace negotiations, such as Diasporas, government political allies, and other multinational corporations or any other bodies who profit from the conflict and violence (Newman and Richmond, 2006). For example, in Angola, there were civil society organization and church which has been identified as potential spoilers in the peace process (Grobelaar, 2003).

Furthermore, Stedman (2001) and Mutwol (2009) distinguish the role of neighboring countries that could generate spoiling potential in the peace process, by providing aids and other essential tools to the spoiler groups within the conflict state that decrease the likelihood of peace and security. Furthermore, Stedman also distinguishes the presence of major and regional power interests. Meaning that powerful states who support invasions and characterize the importance of the conflict for their own security concerns, which would decrease the likelihood of a successful peace process (Stedman, 2001).

2.6 Analytical Framework

Violent behavior of spoilers is something that is obvious to everyone, such as genocide, military confrontation, breaking peace process with casualties or *“assassination of moderates who stand for a negotiated peace, massacres that coincide with any progress in reaching a negotiated settlement, and the creation of alliances with conservative members in the armed forces and police to sabotage any agreement.”* (Stedman, 1997:8-9). Furthermore, military support as defined by Yonekawa and Stedman through supporting the internal spoilers by providing arms and intervention in favor of a group decreases the possibility of peace and security and generate spoiling potential behavior (Yonekawa, 2014 and Stedman, 2011).



But there also is the non-violent behavior which could be more harmful than violent behavior. These type of behavior can be strategic and wide-ranging such as: refusing the term of negotiation or non-acceptance, refuse to sit in the table, non-recognition of parties, or stalling the peace process by both violent and non-violent actions (Stedman, 1997). Further, parties may refuse to demobilize or withdraw from negotiations settlement (Zahar, 2010). Labelling of parties or actors as spoilers to discredit certain opponents might decrease the likelihood of successful peace (Newman and Richmond, 2006). Supporting invasion for their own economic, political, or security interest which would decrease the possibility of peace generate potential spoiling behavior (Stedman, 2001). A peace process can be also spoiled through providing aid to the spoiler groups that strengthen one party and weaken other (Zahar, 2010). Spoilers can either sabotage the negotiation process or shape the negotiations settlement in a way that undermine other actors rights, access to resources, or legitimacy as well as “...*shaping of the negotiation can be manipulative, as spoiler keep their threat hidden and prolong the violent conflict or negotiation process as long as it promises to give them an advantage over their adversary.*” (Yonekawa, 2014:162).

The analytical framework of this study is based on the discussion of existing literature on spoiling behavior and activities. Since the study does not adopt any existing analytical framework. Because there exists until today no analytical framework to assist in answering the research question, particularly the question on the prospect of external state actors, such as the US. This framework will be used in the peace process in Afghanistan in order to evaluate the involvement of the US and its actions as potential spoiling behavior. Concerning the applicability of the two above definitions, this thesis will rely mostly on (Newman and Richmond 2006) definition of spoilers.

Spoiling behaviors





Violent behavior	Non-violent behavior
Military confrontation	labelling
Massacres	Providing aid to the spoiler groups
Military support	Support invasion for its own purposes
Intervention in favor of one party	Non-recognition, refuse the term of negotiation
Excessive use of force	Manipulations, non-cooperation
Sabotage	Stalling
	unwilling to demobilize

These spoiling behavior could be intentionally or unintentionally undertaken by the spoiling actors (Newman and Richmond, 2006).



3 Methodological Framework:

This section will define and examine the choice of research methods, design, and sources.

3.1 Qualitative method and case study

This research is a qualitative and abductive desk study, it will go in-depth on already existing literature published on the concept of spoilers in relation to the argument and case study will be used. A qualitative desk study will “*rely on text and image data*” as well as it will “*draw on diverse strategies of inquiry*” (Creswell, 2009: 173). Additionally, the choice of the method will enable the researcher to go in depth into the particular case, it will also allow looking at stakeholder involved in the selected case from a different perspective. Particularly in the case of Afghanistan, there are a complex network of actors and the dynamic between them need to be highlighted. The involvement of external states such as the US in the Afghan peace process will be looked from a spoiler perspective by looking into the behavior and activities of spoilers defined above. This could be a starting point to establish and increase an analytical framework that could analyze the spoiling potential of external states involved in the Afghan peace process. The decision to select Afghanistan as the case study is based on fact that the characteristic of the political landscape in Afghanistan reflect aborted peace processes due to the presence of spoiler groups.

By the use of the abductive method, the research ground a theoretical understanding of the context (Bryman, 2012). This study is using the concept of spoilers as lens to understand the US involvement in Afghanistan and contributing to the spoiler debate. This analysis includes the role of US in the Afghan conflict and their involvement in the peace process. The focus will be from the beginning of Bonn process in 2001 and onward. The aspect of possible external states spoiling behavior is interesting since this study has not been examined before. The choice of US as external state actor is based on the



long engagement and the leading role that it has played in Afghanistan throughout nearly 18 years.

However, due to the limitation of time and personal resources as well as because of the possibility of risk and danger in identifying the spoilers and their behavior and activities in the conflict country (Shepherd, 2010), a desk study is applicable for this research. Thus, through the viable documentation and supported text, enough and fair evidence will be given as much as it possible in doing case study research, as recommended by (Yin, 2009:9). Moreover, since the research topic is based on a single case study of external states though this research topic will not represent the behaviors and activities of all external states of the planets involved in the peace processes. But this will help and give an option to broaden and establish theories, as the analytical framework developed in this particular study (Yin, 2009).

3.2 Sources of information

The information and data for the concept of spoilers in this thesis is gathered from existing books and peer-reviewed articles such as (Newton and Richmond 2006; Zahar 2006), journal articles such as (Greenhill and Major 2007; Zahar 2003; Stedman, 1997; and Aggestam 2006), These literature has been used to understand the characteristic and behavior of spoilers in general in order to find out if the US posing any spoiling behavior in Afghan peace process. Further, some case studies have been analyzed in order to understand the condition and characteristics of the possible spoiling potential of external states involved in the Afghan peace process.

The data and information in the finding section are gathered from a number of scholastic books, and articles published by both Afghanis and western authors. The Afghani author (Spanta, 2017) worked as a foreign minister and security adviser to the Afghan president who has been also active in the Afghan peace process. In this regard, this can also requires putting into consideration the objectivity of the opinion expressed by the author. Further, the data for the



findings section has been gathered from different international news media such as (New York Times, Washington post, and Aljazeera). Also in order to balance the source of information, the study relied on the Afghan national news media in order to bring the local perspective into the discussion, such as (Afghanistan Analysts Network and Tolonews). There are some of the writers in the Afghanistan Analysts Network, such as (Clark,2013 and Brooking, 2011) which has been following closely the political development in Afghanistan.

3.3 Limitation and delimitations

This thesis will be delimited to studying the impact of the spoilers on the peace process and how they could determine the success or failure of peace process. The topic will be focusing on spoilers of peace process in Afghanistan. The scope of the study will be delimited to the part of the peace process that began 2001 with Bonn peace negotiation and onwards. It is also worth noting that this research will focus on US involved in the Afghan peace process. As spoilers to peace process could fall within abroad range of categories the study will focus on the external spoilers who are geographically outside the recent conflict of Afghanistan.

The analysis of the findings will be delimited to the developed analytical framework. In order to draw the analytical framework, a number of case studies and research materials on spoilers are analyzed with the aim of identifying the spoiling behavior and characteristics. Therefore the analysis is subject to the range of these criteria and concepts identified within this frame, as this could pose a limitation. Since this study is a desk study, it will rely on data collected by others and whose perspective on the topic is one of the aspects that should be considered. Additionally the research relies on the material and resources on the article, books, and newspaper in Persian which could be a limitation due to the effect of the translation process.



3.4 Ethical Consideration

Since the research is a desk study it does not merit any ethical consideration due to that it does not involve any direct contact. However, being from Afghanistan myself, I am using the analytical categorization in order to show the US behavior.



4 Background

Afghanistan is a landlocked country which is located in the southwest of Asia. The country had changed its name and boundaries several times. Afghanistan was known as the Ariana Empire, and during the expansion of the Islamic period Afghanistan it was known as Khorasan. Further on, in the 18th century, the country name was changed from Khorasan to Afghanistan by a Pashtun leader known by the name Ahmad Shah Durrani (Jalali, 2018). Afghanistan means the land of Afghan, while it can be translated also as “Land of the Pushtuns”. However, the name of the country itself is a matter of belief, since the word Afghan means “Pashtuns” which is reflecting only one single ethnic group (Maley, 2009). Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic country with different languages where most of the population are Muslims. The major ethnicities are Pashtun (42%), Tajik (27%), Hazera (9%), and Uzbek (9%). In Afghanistan there have never been any population statistics, however, this statistic has been estimated by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 2004 (Wahab and Youngerman, 2007).

Looking back to the case of Afghanistan, the situation is moreover complicated by several phases of conflict and its geopolitical position. Afghanistan’s richness in mineral resources has attracted foreign powers and since its founding in 1747 as a state it has faced several decades of war and invasions. Despite the numerous wars and interventions by the outside powers Afghanistan still managed to survive and maintain some sort of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Indeed, concerning the issue of security among these superpowers was the fact that they determined Afghanistan as a state more than the elements of its sovereignty (Stobdan, 1999). Afghanistan is the only country that has been faced with several interventions by outside powers; twice by Great Britain during the nineteenth century, at the beginning of 1980s by the Soviet Union, and later on in 2001 by USA (Saikal, Farhadi, and Nourzhanov, 2004). During the Najibullah Ahamdzai’s presidency, in late 1989, the Soviet Union withdrew their forces from Afghanistan. Najibullah



was a member of the communist party (PDFA) People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (Maley, 2009). However, the conflict continued between the Najibullah government and Mujahideen groups who were supported by the US (ibid).

4.1 Regional and International interests

A value of regional approach explains the common interests and opportunities of Afghan neighboring countries and other states. Thus, most of the conflicts that engaged in neighboring or other states such as major power with one another has created instability in Afghanistan. As Saikal states *“any state that has any interests in Central Asia (or for that matter, South and West Asia) is interested in what happens in Afghanistan.”* (Saikal, Farhadi, and Nourzhanov, 2004: 8). Due to this, the geographical landscape of Afghanistan could play an important role at the crossroads of the Central and South Asia as well as the Middle East (Tellis and Mukharji, 2010).

4.2 Ethnic Conflict

After the fall of the Najibullah government in 1992, the civil conflict escalated between the ethnic groups. Despite the fact that they raised their insurgency collectively against the Soviet Union. Pashtun is one of the ethnic groups that makes the majority of the Afghan population and it dominated Afghanistan since its recognition as a state. In that matter, after removing of the communist party, a power-sharing among the parties took place and resulted in domination of Northern Alliance which at the time was a non-Pashtun group (Saikal, Farhadi, and Nourzhanov, 2004). In this regard, Pashtun leaders who disagreed with the result, took opposition against the government. On the other hand, Pakistan who has culturally and linguistically much in common with the Pashtuns, the Tajik domination could lead to defeat of its Pashtun policy in Afghanistan. This resulted in civil war between the ethnic groups and led to the emergence of the Taliban (Ibid). Thus, Pakistan was also a major supporter of extremist Pashtun (Taliban) during the war against the Soviet Union in a



collaboration with the US, and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan beside its military and financial support to the Taliban also supported them politically (Sial, 2013). In addition, the Saudi Arabian role in the Afghan conflict was to defeat the Soviet Union and their role during the Afghan ethnic conflict by supporting of their radical Muslims in collaboration with Pakistan was to expand their traditional Sunni Wahhabism. Due to that, Saudi Arabian as a rivalry group to the Shia Muslim tended to view the Northern Alliance resistance groups as vulnerable to the Iranian influence. At the same time, Iran was funding their Shia Muslims and the Tajik groups which have culturally and linguistically in common with the Iranian (Saikal, 1998). Furthermore, Saudi Arabian support for the Taliban as anti-Iranian forces perceived the US useful for constraining of Iran influence in the region, as well as to boost Washington's access to Central Asia resources (ibid).

Burnell et al (2017), argue that the root causes of the conflict in Afghanistan go back to the cold war era. He argues that during the cold war era Afghanistan was used as a battlefield between superpowers which later on created many repercussions as well as shaped many aspects of the recent conflict which include ethnic dimension (ibid: 200-202). Furthermore, Mazhar et al (2012), states that "*The geo-strategic location of Afghanistan has attracted many world powers time and again and for their very vested interests, they have used these ethnic groups by raising conflict among them.*" (Mazar et al., 2012:98).

4.3 Peace negotiation in Bonn Germany (2001)

After removal of the Taliban from government power, to bring peace, the United Nation in 2001, through the Bonn conference in Germany, started the peace process for Afghanistan leading to the "*Agreement on Provisional Arrangement in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institution*". The agreement proposal was to establish a power-



sharing government between the conflict actors in Afghanistan (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003).

However, the Taliban insurgent groups that had control over most of the provinces in Afghanistan were excluded from the peace negotiations (Quie, 2016). In addition, the mediator and rival groups to the Taliban agreed to sign the agreement with little consideration for the idea that power-sharing serve as a mechanism that enables all groups a share of power. Due to that power-sharing among the conflict actors, could minimize the risk of any group to become dominant and threat the security of others (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003). Greig and Rost (2013), distinguish the role of third party in the mediating a civil war is related to their interests in such as historical ties, shared economies, and alliance linkages that motivates their participation in mediations. They furthermore argue that mediations and peacekeeping mission is linked to the interests of major powers due to the veto power in the UN and without their interests or effort the peacekeeping mission may not happen at all. In this matter, the UN peacekeeping mission would act towards the interests of superpower (ibid).

Furthermore, after excluding the Taliban from the peace process and bringing the rival groups to the power conflict and violence have escalated in the country. This has been a motivation for the Taliban to fight against the government and the international forces. Due to this, Taliban define the presence of International forces as an intervention on their sovereignty and the Afghan government as the puppet state of the US (Garfield and Boyd, 2013).



5 Findings

5.1 Role of United State in Afghanistan

United States during the Second World War has sought to destabilize the Soviet Union by supporting the Pakistan, the ally of US, and this furthermore sustained the Afghan Mujahideen (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003). Despite that, president Najibullah who was a member of communist party hoped for peace talks but the United States refused to talk with his government. Instead, the US continued its shipment of military weapons through its ally Pakistan to the Islamic fundamentalism that posed instability in the region (Gargan, 1992).

Further on, Burrough (2009) argues that US foreign policy goals towards Afghanistan was to prevent Soviet Union expansion and to end the communist power in the country. The US achieved its goal in 1992 when Najibullah resigned from his position. Burrough argues furthermore that US policy towards Taliban was unclear, due to that two of US-allies in the region, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. These countries were aiding the Taliban groups against the Northern Alliance (ibid).

In addition, the US and the Taliban peace dialogue goes back to the 1990s, before Al-Qaida attacked the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya and even after these attacks in the late 1990s. The US aim of negotiations with the Taliban was to broaden their government and oil companies (Sheikh and Greenwood, 2013). Thus, the US wanted to sustain their companies approach towards oil and gas pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to South Asia. In this case, the US even threatened the Taliban with military invasion if they did not accept their demands and comply with the negotiations, which basically means extortion from the American side (ibid).

However, after the terror attack on the United State in September 2001, the US launched a military operation in Afghanistan. The US established relations with Northern Alliance whose common goal was to remove the Taliban's who were an ally to Al-Qaida (Burrough, 2009).



5.2 United States role in the Bonn process (2001)

In late 2001, after the removal of Taliban from power, the US military operation led to exclusion of Taliban from the Bonn process. The fact is that the peace negotiation advantaged the Northern Alliance who fought against the Taliban in many years. The US strategy of arming the non-Pashtun strongmen as aim to eliminate the Taliban group has heightened the danger of fragmentation. Many of the provinces and suburb are lawless because of the existence of the armed groups and their position in power could undermine any efforts of the central government (Quie, 2016). In addition, Fields and Ahmed (2011) argue that US policy in shaping the Bonn process led to the expansion of the Northern Alliance and warlords in government power. The US president George Bush stated that US will not negotiate with the Al-Qaida and their allies, nor the Northern Alliance wanted such a negotiation with the Taliban and Al-Qaida (ibid).

In this matter, Jalali (2009) argues that excluding of the Taliban from the peace talks rather than to address the root causes of war in the Bonn process has decreased the possibility of peace in Afghanistan. Even though some of the Taliban leaders who wanted to join the political process and live in peace were imprisoned by the Afghan government and the US personnel. The US and Afghan government's unwillingness to provide protection for some of the Taliban leaders who surrendered themselves to the states named above. Due to this, the Taliban position towards peace talks has been more complicated (ibid).

The US creating of hunting marketplace by offering financial resources for those who handed over the Taliban rather than to invite the Taliban into peace negotiation and offer them protection. This strategy of US has decreased the likelihood of peace and security in Afghanistan. For example, one of the Taliban leader known by Abdul Haq Waseq who handed him selves to the Afghan government in late 2001 and was imprisoned by the US in



Guantanamo Bay prison. These tactics played by the US military forces revealed that Taliban after fall of their regime are not allowed to live in peace (Clark, 2013).

5.3 United States legacy in Afghan War

Spanta (2017) argues that the US authority and their military commanders who believe in the principle of coercion considered that anything could be accomplished through the continuation of force. Meaning that US military forces underpinned rule of law by collective prisoning, unilateral houses searches, or killing of civilians through their operations. This has increased frustration among civilians and government leaders. For instance, in 2002, a wedding party in the central of Afghanistan in Uruzgan province was targeted by the US airstrikes which killed 40 civilians and wounded more than 100 people (Constable and Graham, 2002).

Similarly, in 2008 the US military airstrikes targeted a wedding party in Afghan province Herat and killed more than 90 civilians including children and women. In this matter, the US government was not taking the responsibility for their causes and stated that in this operation they have targeted the insurgent group. However, this is not the first time the US airstrikes targeting civilians and then labeling the report of innocents people as Taliban propaganda (Leithhead, 2008). According to Spanta (2017) the US was stating that this operation took place in a collaboration with the Afghan government. While the Afghan government was not aware of such an operation. Even though the Afghan government wanted to condemn the US military force crime through media but the US officials were threatening that if the Afghan government publish it, this might affect the US assistance to Afghanistan. This has been investigated by the UNAMA (United Nations



Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) and showed that more than 90 of the dead bodies belonged to the civilians (Spanta, 2017).

In addition, Amnesty (2016) argues that civilians unlawful deaths by the US forces, their family member do not have any direct access to the US justice mechanisms to report the crimes instead they hold public protest in order to draw attention. Due to the US *“Existing of mechanisms for transparency are clearly insufficient. The US Government’s freedom of information system, meant to ensure transparency when government bodies fail to provide information, does not function effectively when civilians casualties are at issue.”* (ibid:4).

Similarly, in 2010 US military troops masacraed innocent civilians for fun in separate attacks, posed for the picture, and collected the death bodies fingers as a war trophy (McGreal, 2010). According to Spanta (2017) the Afghan government discussed this issue with the US government but the US did not show any responsibility for their action until the picture of death bodies was published by German newspaper Spiegel online in 2011.

In 2011, one of the US army soldier after drinking alcohol stalked home to home and masacraed 16 civilians in Afghan province Kandahar. The victims were men and women including children who were not younger than 6 years (Shah and Bowley, 2012).

Moreover, burning of Muslims book (Koran) by the US forces in their military base in Afghanistan led to violent demonstration in the country. Additionally, the Afghan government wanted to press charges against those responsible while the US government described this act as a mistake that took place unintentionally These type of unlawful confrontations by US military forces is leading to anti-foreigners hatred and may threat their future presence in the country (Whitlock, 2012).

Furthermore, in 2017 the Afghan National Police (AFP) that demanded support from the US air forces in order to retake the security outpost from the



insurgent groups. The area was recaptured before the US airstrikes bombarded AFP and killed at least 16 soldiers and wounded several others (Tolonews, 2017).

However, Amnesty (2016) argues that US army forces withhold overall data and accountability of the prisoner's torture and civilians causality to be published publicly. Furthermore, argues that not all of the US army who commit crimes and kill civilians face prosecution.

5.4 Strategic Partnership Agreement (2012)

The Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) between Afghanistan and US provides a long-term framework partnership between two states as a fundamental aspect of their long-term cooperation. Both parties commit to strengthening their long-term collaboration based on areas of mutual interests, including:

1. Protecting and Promoting Shared Democratic Values
2. Advancing Long-Term Security
3. Reinforcing Regional Security and Cooperation
4. Social and Economic Development
5. Strengthening Afghan Institution and Governance

Furthermore, both parties agreed to respect Afghanistan sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence, and rule of law and maintain free and fair election without internal or external interferences.

In term of security, the parties agreed that US will not seek a permanent military base in Afghanistan as well as that the US will not use Afghan territory as a launching point for strikes against other states. Further, Afghanistan shall provide US forces to use Afghan facility for combating Al-Qaida and training Afghan National Security forces through 2014 and beyond. *“The parties shall enhance information and intelligence sharing to counter common threats, including terrorism, narcotics trafficking, organized crime,*



and money laundering.” Any military operation should be continued under the frameworks: “*Memorandum of Understanding on the Transfer of U.S. Detention Facilities (2012) and the Memorandum of Understanding on the Afghanistan of Special Operations (2012)*” (The White House, 2012: 3-4)). In addition, Both parties indicate their support for peace and reconciliation. In this regard, insurgent or actors should cease their violence and break ties with Al-Qaida as well as to accept the Afghan constitution and rights for both men and women (ibid).

After signing of SPA between the Afghan state and US in 2012, Afghan and US government obliged to negotiate a bilateral security agreement (BSA) within one year. However, the Afghan president Karzai suspended the negotiation due to the US inconsistent actions and statements in relation to the peace settlement (Spanta, 2017). Additionally, in order to sign the BSA, the Afghan president preconditions from the US were: “*transparent elections[...]**no raids on Afghan houses and a breakthrough in talks with the Taliban.*” (Tolonews, 2013).

5.5 US involvement in the Afghan peace process (2008-2013)

In 2009, the Afghan government had put their effort to start peace negotiations with the Gulbuddin Hekmatyar the leader of Hizb-Islamic an ally to the Taliban group. In this matter, the Taliban claimed that any talks aiming to split the Taliban groups would be disrupted. Despite this, some efforts took place from Afghan government in order to re-open the talks with the Taliban. In this regard, the Afghani Taliban from Southern Afghanistan sent their intermediary for the peace talks with the standing government. However, the talks were stalled after the US personnel imprisoned the Taliban intermediary Ahmad Jan (Aljazeera, 2009).



Similarly, a member of the Taliban movement in Pakistan was encouraged by the Afghan National intelligence agency with regard to the peace talks. This operation was under-covered by the Afghan intelligence agency and the Americans were present during the investigation. The US forces that were aware of the time and place of meeting, kidnapped him from the Afghan intelligence agency and never handed over back to the Afghan government. Meanwhile, in 2010 Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar who was member of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan was captured by the US CIA and handed over to (ISI) the Pakistani Intelligence Agency (Spanta, 2017). According to Afghan High Peace Council member arresting of Mullah Baradar was a conspiracy to disrupt peace talks. Due to the fact that, he could play an influential role in peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban (Clark, 2013).

In addition, Spanta (2017) argues that Mullah Baradar was sitting in custody in Pakistan before he was used by the Pakistanis in the Afghan peace talks as a representative of the Taliban. However, the Afghan government insists that Baradar was under the effect of drugs during the dialogues. Baradar revealed that during the time he spent in the custody in Pakistan, he did not have any coordination with the Taliban. Spanta furthermore points at the US double standards manifested in not exercising direct pressure on Pakistan and having informal dialogue with the Pakistan government on mutual strategy in Afghanistan instead (ibid).

According to Sheikh and Greenwood (2013) in 2011 the Bonn Conference that was assumed to create a common position between the Afghan government, US, and Pakistan was rejected by Pakistan. This was due to the fact that US-led NATO airstrikes targeted two Pakistani military checkpoints which killed 24 Pakistani soldiers. Meanwhile the US explanation is Pakistan's facilitations of US interests (ibid).



5.5.1 Secret Peace Dialogues in Germany and France (2012)

In December 2012, an organization known by the name Strategic research organized peace talks between the Northern Alliance and Taliban in Paris, France. In fact, it was the first time that the Taliban were sitting in peace talks with their rivalry (Imtiaz, 2013). However, the Taliban in this meeting rejected the Afghan constitution by claiming that the current constitution was implemented while the country was under invasion by the US. Further, the roadblocks for this meeting according to the Taliban representative was due to the double standard position of US in Afghanistan. Meaning that they insist to achieve peace while on the other hand they are adding some actors to the blacklist is leading to stalling of peace. Moreover, the US want to maintain the weak Kabul administration to prolong their occupation (ibid).

Spanta (2017) argues that this meeting was arranged by the US and European organization, where the opponent parties were present there (Taliban and Northern Alliance). The agenda of this meeting was power-sharing among those groups resembles the way it happened Bonn process in 2001. Even though the US Congress member wanted to continue with such talks in Berlin Germany. However, the process was breakdown after that Afghan government accused the US for the double standard position. It is worth mentioning that the Afghan government warned that the process should not be carried on because it would delegitimize the government (ibid). In addition, Sayare and Rosenberg (2012) confirmed the informal talks between two old enemies Northern Alliance and Taliban in Paris including some French officials.

5.5.2 Failure of negotiation with the Taliban (2010-2012)

Gebauer (2012) points out the secret talks between US and Taliban representatives that took place on the behalf of the Afghan government in Germany in 2010 and 2011. In these talks the German played the role of



mediator for political rapprochement between the Taliban and the US. The aim of the meetings was exchange of prisoners between the parties and to allow the Taliban to establish their political office in Qatar (ibid).

According to Sheikh and Greenwood (2013) the US talks with the Taliban leaders in 2011, took place before the Taliban's political office was unofficially established in January 2012, their talks were based on the exchange of prisoner. But the peace talks were stalled by the Taliban due to the US ineffective position to push through scheduled prisoner exchange which was a sign of "confidence building measures". They furthermore argue that the US try to re-open the peace talks negotiation with the Taliban at the same time as they offer rewards on capturing and killing of Taliban leaders. This has increased the fragmentation of the Taliban. For example, In 2013, the US drones killed one of the Taliban leaders known by Mullah Nazir in Pakistan which has led to lack of cooperation from the part of Taliban in the peace talks (ibid). Obviously, the participation of the Taliban is conditioned by the withdrew of International forces from Afghanistan (Yousafzai, 2012).

5.5.3 United States direct peace talks with The Taliban (2012-2018)

According to Brennan (2013) the Taliban political office was established in order to build a platform for peace talks between the Afghan governments, US, and the Taliban. Thus, in 2013 the US official been to Doha to open the debate on the stalled peace talks that was based on the exchange of prisoner with the Taliban.

The Taliban had officially opened their Political office (Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan) in June 2013 with using the same flag and name they had before 2001. However, the Taliban office was closed in the same year and the talks were stalled. This was due to that the establishment of Taliban political office in Qatar under US and Qatari government initiative, though it was seen as step



forward to the peace process in Afghanistan. It was viewed by the standing government in Afghanistan as an illegitimate Afghan government operating in exile, which has led to the lack of cooperation from the part Afghan government (Imtiaz, 2013). Commenting on this matter, Spanta (2017) argues that Qatari and US talks with the Taliban which took place on the behalf of Afghan government had nothing to do with Afghan peace, their talks were mainly based on the release of their own military soldier who was surrounded by the Taliban (ibid).

In 2016, the peace process broke down after the US airstrikes killed the leader of the Taliban known by the name Mullah Mansour Akhtar on May 21 (Khan, 2016). According to the US secretary John Kerry, Mansour was posing a threat to the US military, Afghan civilians, and the peace negotiations (Bonne and Engel, 2016). However, the Taliban believed that it was a conspiracy to disrupt peace talks. The Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) which was prearranged by the US, China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan to start negotiation and to start the peace talks with insurgent groups (Khan, 2016). The demands of the Taliban to join the QCG was the removal of their names from UN blacklist and repeal of sanction in return, which it was not approved by QCG. Additionally the Taliban leader had an internal discussion in Qatar regarding the disagreement of their precondition by the QCG, that resulted in a positive decision in favor of peace talks and Mullah Mansour was supposed to announce it before he was killed by the US (ibid). Furthermore, Mansour was the one who took the Taliban leadership after Mullah Omar's death and changed the Taliban strategy from only fighting towards negotiations and fight (Farrell and Semple, 2015).

The US president Donald Trump in January 2018 rejected the continuation of peace talks with the Taliban and condemned them for the killing of innocent people (Rampton and Landay, 2018). According to Osman (2018) the discouragement of the Taliban to the peace talks is due to the lack of progress in peace negotiation and dominant attitude of the US and Afghan government



through their military escalation. Meaning that the US and Afghan government suggested the Taliban into peace talks meanwhile the US sent more troops that encourage or leave no choices for Taliban other than to fight (ibid).

In addition, the US effort to the direct peace talks with the Taliban increased in June 2018, when the insurgent group agreed to cease fire at the end of Islam's holy month Ramadan. But the talks ended quickly and the negotiation stopped after the Taliban did not agree over the issue that the US wanted to keep their two largest bases in Afghanistan. The two largest US bases are Bagram Air base in northern Kabul and Shorabak in Helmand province which the US wanted the Taliban to accept their requests as well as the Afghan constitution. Additionally, the Taliban accepted almost more than 80 percent of Afghan constitution even though they believe that its formed under US occupation but they did not accept the US to have their bases in Afghanistan (Voanews, 2018).

5.6 United States interference in political spheres

According to Spanta (2017) In 2006 the UN has appointed a German diplomat Tom Koenigs as the head of UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. In this matter, the US and British ambassadors rejected the position from the appointment of the Tom Koenigs as the head of UN Assistance in Afghanistan. They were arguing that the Koenigs is communists and opponent to the US. Additionally, the US played a major role in interrupting the Afghan presidential election which held place in 2009. Thus, the US was reflecting to maintain loyal leaders in the government and exclude those who could potentially oppose the US strategy in the country. In this regard, the US wanted to prevent Hamid Karzai continuing being a president for the second time period. In regards to this, the US embassy in Kabul who was controlling the ballot boxes and not the UN representatives as it was expected (Ibid).



However, Boon et al (2011) also confirm that the US interfere in Afghan presidential election that held in 2009. They argue that one of the US diplomate known by the name Peter Galbraith who was appointed as UN representative was fired from his position by Ban Ki-Moon. Due to that, he was responsible for holding up the election by pushing his full recount to prevent Karzai win the process. Further, Glanz and Oppel Jr (2009) mention that according to the UN officials, Galbraith was close to the top US envoy in Afghanistan named Richard Holbrooke. Their common scheme was to replace Karzai in order to install western figure in the government (ibid).

According to Spanta (2017) US had also tried to convince the Afghan government to accept the role of Pakistan in Afghanistan in an attempt that could furthermore block the Indian expansion inside of Afghanistan. This goes in line with the political polarization battle between India and Pakistan over Afghanistan. The US position in this regard was characterized as unclear. Furthermore, Armitage et al (2010) argues that Pakistan is safe haven for the terrorists groups who threat the likelihood of security and peace in Afghanistan. The Haqqani network, which is an insurgent group in Afghanistan and have their bases in Pakistan, who work with Al-Qaida, is responsible for the deadly attacks.

The US strategy in Pakistan, according Armitage et al (2010) is *“to degrade and defeat the terrorist groups that threaten American interests from its territory and to prevent turmoil that would imperil the Pakistani state and risk and security of Pakistan’s nuclear program.”* (ibid:8)

Spanta (2017) argues that the US establishment of Afghan Local Police (ALP) as a defense armed group, has overshadowed the security and peace in Afghanistan. The US sponsored the ALP through arms and financial support as an aim to defend their villages from Taliban. Meanwhile these armed groups used these opportunities for elimination of their ethnic advisories as well as some of its members indirectly coordinated with the Taliban. He also points



out that US private security companies collaboration with the local warlord has weakened the security through their abuses of power (ibid).

In addition, Van Bijlert (2011) argues that Private Security Companies (PSCs) was created by the US without the supervision of the Afghan government. The PSCs such as Blackwater and DynCorp were established in order to guard their security bases such as CIA headquarters and US embassy. These companies had been accused of murdering civilians in Iraq as well. The PSCs was contracted with local warlords to provide men in order to guard the US security bases (ibid).

According to Holdren et al (2014) most of the PSCs belonged or linked to the powerful warlords who were functioning allied to the CIA in the war against Al-Qaida and Taliban. Thus, the US leverage of goods and material through security contracts provided opportunities for the local warlords and other militia commanders legitimized their forces. Meanwhile funding of them contributed to threat to insecurity in the country. Further, among these warlord or militia leaders, there were strongmen and commanders who compete the government for gaining political power. In addition, these security contractors were also funding the Taliban through their protection payment that they were paying to the Taliban (ibid).

Furthermore, Brooking (2011) argues that the illegal activities PSCs were threatening the likelihood of security. In 2010, some of the PSCs licenses were cancelled after being accused for weapon trafficking. The government suggested to establish the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) instead. However, the US official were concerned that APPF might not provide the same facility as PSCs and demanded from the Afghan government to allow the PSCs to continue their work. Thus, the US remain the only user of private security throughout their monopoly and continued to contract with the unlicensed PSCs (ibid).



Spanta (2017), argues there are rumors that CIA is playing a double standards positions in war against Al-Qaida and Taliban such as shipping of insurgent groups from one to other place. The Afghan intelligence agencies are aware of the CIA existence and their equipment's but not about the elements (Spanta, 2017). Additionally, the US personnel's had performed unlawful activities before in which they undermined the rule of Afghan law, such as distributing of Afghan National Identity Cards on the behalf of Afghan government and searching of civilian's houses (ibid).

However, Prados (2002), argues that the CIA played a major role in global game changer by extra funding Al-Qaida and other militia groups in their clandestine war against Soviet Union. In that regard, the CIA was supporting warlords through operations plan and military support against Taliban which is closely related to the past event (ibid).

5.6.1 United States Prisons and violation of Human rights

According to Spanta (2017) US had built several secret prisons at their military bases in Afghanistan. The largest one is located in the Northern Kabul and the prisoners are those who were arrested during the US-led NATO. However, some of the detainees were dangerous terrorist leaders, meanwhile there were also other people who had nothing to do with terrorist groups. In fact, arresting of Afghan people by US forces and keeping them in custody were very controversial from a legal point of view. The US troops violated human rights and the Afghan rule of law by using extreme abuses in their detention facilities (ibid).

According to the Human Rights Watch, after the declaration of the war on terror in 2001, the US military forces system of arresting and jailing as part of their operation violated human rights and humanitarian law. Due to their *“excessive force during arrests; arbitrary and indefinite detention; and*



mistreatment of detainees.” (HRW, 2004:1). In addition, there are at least thousands of people detained by the US military and CIA at their unknown custodies. Further, HRW also points out that there are people in the US custody which has nothing to do with the insurgent groups. The US personnel tortured prisoners to death through their medical examinations and other abuses. For instance, in 2002 two Afghan prisoners “*deaths were ruled homicides by U.S. military doctors who performed autopsies.*” (ibid: 4).

According to Spanta (2017), the US military troops had committed war crimes in Wardak province, where they tortured several students to death and death bodies discovered with catted fingers. In addition Aikins (2013), agree with Spanta and arguing that some of death bodies had been found buried outside the US military base belonged to those missing people. The US forces war crime was also have been found credible by the UN and Red Cross after the investigation (ibid).

Furthermore, the US personnel’s are intervening on Afghan sovereignty by interfering on Afghan social justice, which is against rule of law. Thus, the US had built an independent organization for combating heavy crimes, where they for whatever reason had detained several Afghan governmental staffs and military generals. The US strategy of detaining governmental staffs giving them electric shocks is violating the Afghan rule of law. Additionally, the US in a corporation with the British installed a technology in order to have control over Afghan mobiles. Indeed, spying on communication system in Afghanistan is forbidden, while installation of such a technology could even provide them access to the regional countries as well (Spanta, 2017).

5.7 United States Interests

Researchers disagree when it comes to US interests in involvement in Afghanistan.



Scott (2003), argues that US engagement in the Middle East and military intervention in Afghanistan is related to their drug, oil, and gas interests. Due to that US war engagement in four major areas after the Korean was near to oil-producing areas and it also involved drug traffickers. For example, Vietnam (1961-1975), the Persian Gulf during (1990-1991), Colombia (1991), and Afghanistan since (2001). After the Second World War, the US played a major role in financing and arming of their allies and drug trafficker as an aim to secure the oil resources from the communists. For instance, financing and arming of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar a drug dealer who was supported by the CIA and Pakistan Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) during the Afghan and Soviet Union war (Scott, 2003). Furthermore, Saikal, Farhadi, and Nourzhanov (2004) argues that despite the US intervention in Afghanistan and removal of the Taliban from the power, the opium cultivation has increased (ibid).

Miller (2011), on the other hand, sees the long-standing of US military in Afghanistan as a strategic goal and a crossroad to Russia. As it could create an important role for the importing of natural gas and fuel which will lead to comparative advantage and disadvantage to the regional opponents (ibid).

However, Mueller et al (2017) argue the US involvement in Afghanistan as power interests and goals which include a shift in power from one super power to another one. As the Soviet Union left out from Afghanistan it created opportunities for the US military domination in the region by using Afghanistan as a crossroad to the Central and South Asia as well as to the Greatest Middle East (ibid). Jones and Gates in (Miller, 2011) distinguish the role of US counterinsurgency in Afghanistan as *“goal of protecting the dominant position of the US in the global power structure.”* and *“the need to preserve the fearsomeness of the US as a deterrent to defiance.”* (ibid: 117-118).



6 Analysis

This part will answer the research question: Has the United State been acting as a spoiler in the Afghan peace process? By the help of Analytical framework developed in chapter 2, which outline some condition of spoiling activity and behavior will be applied to the case study of US in order to answer the research question. The following analysis underlines that US in fact has spoiling behavior.

6.1 Violent spoiling behavior

The US legacy in Afghanistan especially when it comes to human rights violations. Large sector of the Afghani people had been affected directly or indirectly by US military operations in Afghanistan. US operation and security policies associated with the US presence in Afghanistan. Under this 17 years of US presence in Afghanistan, the Afghani population suffered a lot of loses throughout this years a negative image of the US developed in the memory of the Afghani people and it is not easy to be forgotten. Therefore when the US sponsor any kind of peace processes the Afghani people will certainly recall that image. Although the declared US intention is to restore peace and democracy in the country. Obviously the US in this process allocate many resources. However, that role is always hindered by the long legacy that it has left in Afghanistan. This perception of the US among many actors is discouraging them from seriously being part of the peace process due to their tense relation and the mistrust with the US. As long as the peace process in Afghanistan is intend to be an inclusive peace process, the US presence in overall process is not encouraging the inclusivity of all actors. It could be assumed here that the US role is counterproductive especially if we intend to bring onboard all actors in peace process. The US intentionally or unintentionally acted as spoiler during the war, because it has been engaged in violent behaviors as characterized in my analytical framework, the US has



used excessive force through bombarding civilians wedding parties and masaras of innocent civilians as it also demonstrated in my findings.

6.1.1 The Military Spoiler

The US military confrontation represented in (capture and kill of the Taliban) leaders in order to push them for peace negotiation has led to hardening of the Taliban position from the peace process. Thus, it was one of the reason that stalled peace process between Afghan government and Taliban. The US airstrike who targeted one of the Taliban in Pakistan has led Pakistan to boycott the Bonn conference, the absent of Pakistan from that conference certainly overshadow security and peace in Afghanistan. The chances of changing the mindsets of the Taliban's from fighting to peace that opportunity also missed by killing of Mullah Mansour who could play a significant role in peace negotiation. This assumption also be supported by Stedman (1997), that the US used their strategy of assassination of Taliban leader who stand for peace negotiation. Thus, in the context the violent spoiling behavior US military escalation was to weaken the Taliban but the result led to the stalling of peace process in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the US intervention alongside the Northern Alliance opposition to the Taliban and Al-Qaida aimed to destroy Al-Qaida and Taliban safe haven in Afghanistan due to the security threat to the US and world. Additionally, regarding the actors and their activities that could have spoiling potential in the peace process as it characterized in the framework established here in defining the violent spoiling behavior, this kind of spoiling behavior initiated by the US could be manifested in intervention in favor of one party and military support to the internal spoiler groups as the US did with the Northern Alliance.



The different categories of violent behaviors mentioned above and which have been exercised by the US can be classified under the main category of violent behavior established by the analytical framework. This is a strong indicator for the US being as a spoiler in this regard.

6.2 Non-violent spoiling behavior

This part will present the non-violent behavior of the US in relation to the peace process in Afghanistan.

6.2.1 Spoiling behavior in the political process

Newman and Richmond (2006), argues that peace process are not always fair and equitable to all actors and labeling of a particular groups such as what the US did with the Taliban. The US labeled Taliban as terrorist group leading to non-recognition of Taliban as genuine stakeholder in the peace negotiation.

The non-violent spoiling activities and behavior can be strategic though the peace settlement can be spoiled whether to sabotaged or to shape the process in way that undermine other groups rights, access to resources, or their privileges. The non-violent spoiling behavior highlighted in analytical framework and which can be observed here is the US refusal to negotiate with the Taliban in Bonn peace process. as the result the conflict has been sustained for almost 18 years.

US unwillingness to provide guarantees for the some of the influential Taliban leaders who wanted peace as well as imprisoning and blacklisting some of them has led to missing some of the opportunities that could have been used to take the peace further. This type of actions can be categorized under non-cooperation highlighted in the analytical framework.



6.2.2 Indirect support to the internal spoiler groups

One could question the US private security companies to resolve the political instability alongside the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO forces in Afghanistan. As Zahar (2010:271), outline that sometimes foreign aid provider or powerful supporter may sustain a ground for potential spoiling. Meanwhile such a patronage or aid provider may strengthen one actor and weakens other actors. The US PSCs contracts beneficiary to the warlords which undermined the National Police duty. Further, they used their arms on elimination of their adversary that led also to ethnic conflicts. On the other hand, providing aid to the warlord as some of this aid ends up in the hands of Taliban. In this context the US intentionally or unintentionally sustaining the insecurity in the country by providing in the form of aid to this warlord and Taliban.

Similarly, US financial support to Pakistan which obviously has a double standard policy towards Afghanistan. While on hand they claim that they fight terrorism and at the same time they provide military and financial support. This contradicting role played by the Pakistan and which is supported by the US is lacking transparency as well as can be described as counterproductive to the peace processes in Afghanistan. The intentionally or unintentionally spoiling behaviors at this point were providing of aid to the internal spoilers such as warlords and Taliban.

6.2.3 Spoiling behavior in the peace talks

The US approach regarding peace talks in dealing with the actors of the Afghan conflict is characterized by unclarity, particularly the secret talks that took place in Germany where the US and Taliban met to negotiate prisoners exchange as well as to establish a political office in Qatar. This kind of strategy is perceived by the government of Afghanistan as unilateral steps taken by the US without the involvement of the Afghan government. It would certainly provoke the legitimate government in Kabul and lead to lack of cooperation



from its part as well as creating a sense of mistrust among conflicting parties. By referring to the analytical framework at this point could fit with the manipulation and non-cooperation with the Afghan government.

Further, the unclear US strategy with regards to peace process with the Taliban is sometime reflecting double standards in dealing with the whole process. The US attempt to achieve security gains is negatively affecting its facilitating role in the talks with the Taliban. In this case, the US is focusing on their own agenda rather than the peace process. This could be seen in US intention to release its prisoner who had been held by the Taliban at the cost of the progress of that talks. This US-centered security interest is not creating the desired rapprochement between the actors. To conclude, the typical spoiling behavior at this point were refusal to the term of negotiations in which led to stalling of the process.

By examining the military presence of US in Afghanistan and its implication on the peace process. It could be argued that the US insistence to maintain its military base in the country is negatively affecting that process. because the withdrawal of the US troops comes in the heart of the Taliban's demand to initiate serious peace talks. Considering the suggested reality in Afghanistan the US refusal to withdraw its military bases constitutes hindrance to the accommodation of Taliban in the peace process. By referring to the analytical framework in which the lack of unwillingness to demobilize troops is considered as one of the spoiling behaviors.

The US intervention in Afghanistan could be perceived as Yonekawa (2014), argues that states intervention in favor their own "*political, economic, and military interests*" or engaging themselves in war by supporting the internal spoiler would generate spoiling potential.(ibid:163). The economic interests of US could be difficult to ruled-out by examining some the evidence which go back to 1998 when the US government had negotiations talk with the Taliban on expanding their oil and gas pipeline through Afghanistan to south. The US intervention in the political spheres in Afghanistan was reflected in its attempt



to maintain loyal leaders in the government and exclude those who could potentially oppose the US strategy in the country. In this regard the elections of 2009 could be recalled as an evidence for US interference in the political space by supporting the opponents of Hamid Karzai in that elections. Additionally the US and British ambassadors rejecting position from the appointment of Tom Koeings as the head of UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. This stances and actions carry along signals of an attempt to clear the way for specific figures to hold high profile position. While at same time can guarantee their future compliance with the US strategy. This type of intervention if considered from different angles, they would certainly result in distorted and illegitimate administration in the country. This section dealing with the US manipulation in the system in order to serve its interests through appointing people who can also serve that type of interests. By putting their own interests first and insuring the government that follow US interests, I consider this as spoiling behavior because it is not conducive for the country but peace that suits for the US. The US continuous intervention in shaping the government structure and the elections could certainly lead to the frustration of political constituencies. This can also result in people losing faith in the whole political process which could also have implication on any current and future peace process.



7 Conclusions

The analytical framework developed in this study was based on spoiler debate by focusing on spoiler activities and behaviors to investigate on the United States as being revealed to conditions that could possibly generate spoiling activities and behavior.

Based on the criteria's which comes as part of the analytical framework and which have guided the analysis by looking into the conformity of those criteria with the US behavior regarding with respect to reaching peace in Afghanistan. It could be argued that, some of these criteria have been established to some extent and the degree of conformity is measured by the relevance of US actions in relation to the peace and stability in Afghanistan. These actions were measured against these criteria which describe the direct or indirect spoiling activities and behaviors.

Based on that the analysis conclude that the non-violent and violent spoiling behaviors have largely been demonstrated as some of the major findings of this research. These non-violent behaviors can be summed up in the following: labeling, providing aid to internal spoiler actors, non-cooperation, stalling, manipulation, and unwillingness to demobilize. While some of the violent behavior can be seen in: mascaras, military confrontation, military support, intervention in favor of one party, and excessive use of force.

The lack of transparency overshadowing the US military operations in Afghanistan could make the overall US role in Afghanistan questionable and lacking clarity. This would also justify the notion that the US is acting beyond what is basically declared.

The US interests in Afghanistan can only be guaranteed in different levels in the region, firstly by maintaining and establishing a loyal government structure in Afghanistan which will be fully compliant with the policies dictated by the its administration. Secondly, this is also applied to the regional structure especially the countries surrounding Afghanistan and how they relate to the



US. This objective is difficult to achieve in the presence of a hardline group within this local and regional structure. Considering the dynamics between those local and regional political actors and the US, the process of building government could almost be impossible or might always be obstructed by the conflicting interests of all these actors.

This thesis further underline with the pervious study on Colombia showing that United States indeed even being a democratic country has conducted quite bit of spoiling behavior. Based on the spoiling debate that means we have to expand our views on spoilers. This study is not focusing so much on what we immediately define spoilers such as rebel groups, militants groups, or illegal armed groups but also on actors, that usually appear as democratic countries, that could have potential spoiling behaviors in the peace processes. The United States is a good example and the case study of Afghanistan shows how it has been done. This study recommends an expansion of further research on democratic countries not only as characteristics of peace-loving but also as potential spoilers.



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