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عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا كَمْ يَعْلَمُ

TAUGHT MAN THAT WHICH HE KNEW NOT

## ISSRA PAPERS

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**AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES:  
A CENTERPIECE OF US-AFGHANISTAN  
DRAWDOWN POLICY BEYOND 2014**

*Ms. Afifa Kiran*

***Abstract***

*Afghanistan internal dynamics did not allow the society to prosper peacefully and the confrontations at various tiers continued between ethnic groups to dominate Afghanistan through power projection. Keeping in view the global economic pressure, America may fail to muster economic supports from its allies for very long time and the possibility for the US to support its client in Afghanistan alone become difficult. Thus, permanent solution to the Afghan problems lies from within and can't be imposed by external forces. Therefore, understanding international dynamics of Afghanistan is crucial to develop such strategy to bring sustainable peace in Afghanistan. Pakistan has been and would continue to be an important player in the outcome of Afghanistan issue. While Pakistan may not be able to help the US to win a lost war, but without Pakistan's support, the US can't even lose the war gracefully.*

*“The first step toward building a national army in Afghanistan is broadening the base of the government, which will promote political stability, public trust, and security in the country.”<sup>1</sup>*

## **Introduction**

Building capable Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) is the central pillar of the US–Afghanistan drawdown policy beyond 2014. On May 21, 2012, the leaders of the 50 countries contributing to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) mission in Afghanistan met in Chicago and agreed to a new transition plan that would put Afghan Security Forces in charge of security throughout the country by 2013.<sup>2</sup> US strategy for Afghanistan is critically reliant upon the transfer of responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) for fighting the miscreants in Afghanistan. Towards that end, United States and its coalition partners have been building the ANSF to a combined strength of 352,000 soldiers and police which will cost \$4.1 billion per year to maintain a force of this size.<sup>3</sup>

Afghan National Security Forces are made up of two main forces; the Afghan National Army (ANA), including Afghan Air Force (AAF) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) under the authority of the Ministries of Defense and Interior of Afghanistan. For the security after 2014, the ANSF are being prepared by NATO forces to play their due roles. In this regard, these factors are critical. US-NATO should not regress from paying for the Afghan army and police. Their overall funding has been set at \$4.1 billion a year for a slightly smaller force than the current one, with \$3.6 billion provided by foreign donors.<sup>4</sup> Americans and the Afghans must quickly reach a

bilateral security deal. US will keep up to 20,000 forces in the country to train the ANSF and assist it with logistics, air support, medical evacuation and intelligence.<sup>5</sup> The ISAF participating countries have committed and re-committed at various level summits held at Lisbon, Bonn, Istanbul, Chicago, and lately at Tokyo to support Afghanistan over the next one decade.<sup>6</sup> While Afghan National Army (ANA) operational capabilities, by all accounts, continue to grow, the Army continues to contend with critical gaps and challenges. Like the Iraqi Army, the ANA lacks sufficient enablers, including logistic, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), and air capabilities such as Close Air Support (CAS). It heavily depends on US and coalition forces for all kinds of support.

Security is fragile in Afghanistan. There are limited government resources to provide protection. ISAF fundamental strategy is to build strong ANSF to enforce security throughout Afghanistan. There now are about 67,000 US troops in Afghanistan, and their mission is evolving from combat to advising, assisting and training Afghan forces. Apart from strict follow-up approach by US, Afghan army is still incompetent in terms of capabilities. Without US/NATO military support, Afghan army is unable to conduct Counter Insurgency Operations (COIN).

In fact, army combat readiness has been undermined by weak recruitment and retention policies, inadequate logistics, insufficient training and equipment and inconsistent leadership. The long term stability of Afghanistan is linked with

sustenance of Afghan economy. Logistics is still an issue due to variety of reasons. In addition, the ANA faces a significant demographic gap of personnel between the ages of 35 and 55, the legacy of Afghanistan's recent history of warfare. While the ANA can draw on its "older" personnel now to serve in leadership capacities, it will effectively take a generation to fully train and prepare the next contingent of ANA senior leaders. Further, ANA suffers from a ravaged supply of Afghan human capital. Moreover, an enduring concern is the ethnic makeup of the ANA. After years of civil war and mistrust among various groups in Afghanistan, achieving an ethnic balance has been a significant challenge.

This study is envisioned as analysis of US drawdown plan which includes the development of ANSF for handling future security of Afghanistan. This paper provides an overview of present status of ANSF with US efforts to improve and facilitate the training and development of Afghan security forces till 2014. It covers emerging structure of the Afghan security forces including its preparation level and major challenges that ANSF are facing with regards to their financing, training and security.

### **An Overview of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)**

Afghans future security is related with the overall performance of the ANA. Efforts to rebuild the ANA have been going on for about six years, and the judgments about its progress and displayed performance have been mixed. The



overall standing of ANA revolves around the factors like manpower, infrastructure, training, operational proficiency, and most importantly, public perceptions. While the progress on the first four factors is steadily growing and would still take lot of time, if ANA is to succeed, however, it is encouraging that Afghan people view its army positively.<sup>7</sup> Within Afghanistan's National Security Forces, **ANP organization includes Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP): 84,000, Afghan Border Police (ABP): 22,200, Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP): 16,500; and others: (Intelligence, Anti-crime/ CID, Counter Narcotics, Fire, Medical) 18,200.**<sup>8</sup>

### **Major Responsibilities of ANSF**

Major responsibilities of ANSF are as under:-

- Serve as a frontline security force against Taliban.
- Provide an Afghan face to the security in Afghanistan.
- To maintain law and order and security in Afghanistan beyond 2014 when bulk of NATO forces would have been withdrawn.

### **Afghan National Army**

The President of Afghanistan is the Commander-in-Chief of the military, acting through the Ministry of Defense that is headed by General Abdul Rahim Wardak. The National Military Command Center in Kabul serves as the headquarters of the Afghan armed forces.

Table 1-Number of Afghan Security Forces

<b>Month</b>	<b>ANF</b>	<b>ANP</b>	<b>Total Afghan Security Forces</b>
December 2011	179,610	143,800	323,410
January 2012	184,437	145,577	330,014
February 2012	187,874	148,932	336,806
March 2012	194,466	149,642	344,108
December 2012	195,000	157,000	352000 <sup>9</sup>

Structurally, ANA is divided into six regional Corps of two to four brigades, with about 195,000 active troops as of June 2012<sup>10</sup>. Each brigade (4000) is comprised infantry kandaks (Afghan battalions), combat support kandaks, and combat service support kandaks in Central, Southern, Eastern, Western and Northern Afghanistan. These Infantry Battalions and the Brigade HQs are capable of conducting operations with minimal ISAF support.

<b>Afghan National Army Current Deployment by Province and Area</b>	
<b>ANA Corps Commands</b>	<b>Province (Area)</b>
201 Sailab ("Flood")	Kabul (Pul-e-Charkhi) (Central Afghanistan)
203 Tandar ("Thunder")	Gardez (Eastern Afghanistan)
205 Atal ("Hero")	Kandahar (Southern Afghanistan)
207 Zafar ("Victory")	Herat (Western Afghanistan)
209 Shaheen ("Falcon")	Mazar-e-Sharif (Northern Afghanistan)

Source: US Department of Defense, 2009.

The ethnic balance of the ANA remains an issue. Currently, Tajiks are overrepresented based on their share of the population, and Hazaras and Uzbeks are underrepresented.

**Major Military Operations:** ANA has conducted 90 percent of all operations with US/NATO troops, however, they have lead some 40 percent of operations themselves. Some of the successful operations are mentioned as under:-

- Operation Achilles.
- Battle of Musa Qala.
- Operation Panther's Claw.
- Operation Eagle's Flight.
- Operation Khanjar (Strike of the Sword).

**Afghan Air Force:** Afghan Air Force now has 134 trained pilots and has 98 aircrafts including gunship, attack and transport helicopters and light aircrafts. Shindand Airbase is a newly built airbase which will enable Afghanistan to develop its own air training capability.

	<b>AAF Current Force Level</b>	
<b>Nov 09</b>	<b>Oct 12</b>	<b>2016</b>
-	<b>4,257</b>	<b>8,060</b>

**Afghan National Police:** The role of the Afghan National Police is shifting from countering the insurgency to a more civilian policing role by further developing capabilities

from criminal investigations to traffic control. The ANP is composed of the following sub-agencies:-

<b>ANP Current Force Level</b>		
<b>Nov 09</b>	<b>Oct 11</b>	<b>December 12</b>
<b>94,958</b>	<b>134,000</b>	<b>157,000</b>

- **Afghan Uniform Police (AUP):** The AUP is the primary civil law enforcement agency in Afghanistan. It is divided into five regional command centres as well as the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) Other forces falling under the command and control of the ANP include local traffic police departments and the fire department.
- **Afghan Border Police (ABP):** ABP is responsible for securing the borders of Afghanistan against the illegal entry of persons and the smuggling of illegal goods.
- **Afghan Highway Police:** The highway police is a sub-department of the national police that is currently being dissolved. Their primary responsibility is to provide traffic safety and overall security of the 'Ring

Road' highway that connects most of the major population centres in Afghanistan.

### **US Strategy for ANSF- Leading towards Transition**

The basic approach of COIN operations in Afghanistan is “shape, clear, hold, build.” However, in recent years, it has shifted from COIN to (Security Force Assistance) SFA. To achieve the end, building the ANSF became one of the United States’ top priorities in Afghanistan. It has been realized at planning level that only professional, capable, respected, multi-ethnic ANSF, capable of directing, planning, commanding, controlling, training and supporting the ANSF would be the successful end state. At this point of time when US has announced its drawdown plans, it has become critical to build self-reliant Afghan security forces that can lead the counterinsurgency and counterterrorism fight with minimum US support. Today, the US divides its strategy for fielding the ANA into three phases:-<sup>11</sup>

- ANA Development.
- Transition to Afghan Primacy.
- Transition to Strategic Partnership.

In phase 1, the US, with coalition assistance, mans, equips, and trains a self-sustaining 122,000-man army. With an estimated population of 30 million people, it would not seem difficult to recruit an army of 122,000, particularly given the salaries, which are very good relative to the civilian population. In Phase 2, ISAF teams evaluate the ability of ANA units to conduct independent operations for six

consecutive months. In Phase 3, the ANA continues to conduct independent operations capable of planning, executing, and supporting multi-unit operations without oversight, while the US-Afghan relationship transitions to a traditional security assistance partnership.

As part of the overall transition security responsibility to ANSF, starting in early 2012, the Army and Marine Corps began training and deploying small teams of advisors with specialized capabilities, referred to as Security Force Assistance Advisory Teams (SFAATs). These teams will be located throughout Afghanistan and will work with ANSF personnel from the headquarters to the battalion level and advice and assist in areas such as command and control and intelligence.<sup>12</sup>

#### **NATO Support for Development of ANSF**

NATO's involvement with the ANA and ANP largely involves assisting the Afghan government and the United States with the operational employment and training of the ANA units. Germany was given lead role for training the ANP. In February 2002, representatives from 18 nations met in Berlin to discuss details of the ANP support mission. COIN efforts in Konar province in Eastern Afghanistan, along the border with Pakistan, are presented as an instructive model of future US and ANSF coordination. As in some areas in Afghanistan, US Army battalion working with a capable ANA unit first clear the area, and then establish outposts to provide

presence US forces, supported by a Provincial Reconstruction Team, then negotiated deals with local tribal shuras—if the shuras were provided security, they would receive economic development “in the form of roads, bridges, schools and health clinics.” The road gave forces the access they needed to secure village populations; it made it harder for insurgents. It gives civilian assistance agencies freedom of movement, and it gave local residents a critical tool to support economic development. In August 2002, the Germans officially instituted a three-year training plan for officers and a one year plan for Non-Commissioned Officers. As the largest donor for ANP training, the US assisted the German-led efforts.<sup>13</sup> Although, early efforts had trained 35,000 officers in basic recruit schools during 2003 and 2004, this training was insufficient to strengthen the structures and senior command levels needed to create an effective police force. It receives funding, training and equipment from NATO states. Initially, it was Germany that took the lead role but later on various local and Federal government employees from the US as well as Germany and the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence Police provided most of the training.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 2-Afghan Army Units Partnered with NATO**

2007	2008	2009	2010	2012
0%	0%	10%	70%	89%

### **New Approaches- Lingerin** Questions

US proposed level of Afghan troops is 352,000 approximately. However, keeping in view the threat environment in 2017, Center for US Army Analysis concluded that 230,000 ANSF would offer the best probability of success in given security milieu in Afghanistan. The military and political fracturing of Afghanistan would jeopardize core US interests such as preventing the reestablishment of safe havens for terrorists, forestalling regional conflict of the kind that Syria is now generating in the Middle East, and preventing the destabilization of careful but fragile regional stability.<sup>15</sup> ANA would need around 6 billion dollars per annum to maintain such size of Army.

**Major Challenges:** Given the prevailing geopolitical setting and political environment in and around Afghanistan, the ANA is expected to provide military backing for the central government, which will entail offsetting the factional militias, disarming illegal armed groups, and backing up law enforcement agencies and other security forces in the country.

➤ **Formal Recruitment and Training Processes:**

The training period of ANA is just eight weeks. It is about one-half or less of the time any Army takes to turn an educated young recruit, from the same or similar human communities, into a disciplined professional soldier in an army based on the ethnicity-based regimental system. ANA has lack of training to



maintain equipment or if they broke once, ANA don't know how to fix modern equipment.

- **Inside Attacks:** Green on blue attacks by Afghan security forces on their NATO coalition partners have disturbingly increased. In 2007, it was only 2 incidents. However, in 2012, there have been 36 inside attacks which resulted into 51 casualties. Due to such situation, most of the collaboration confined at the battalion level. Out of all the attacks 2008-2012, over half (31 out of 60) took place in Kandahar, Farah, Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul. According to the report, 10% were by Taliban forces that had sneaked into Afghan military and police ranks.<sup>16</sup> The implications of Green on blue attacks resulted into lack of trust felt by ISAF troops in terms of their ability to interact with Afghans that they are mentoring. An initial order to reduce the numbers of joint operations in September 2012 was in part motivated by a desire to reexamine the vetting procedure of Afghans joining the ANA or ANP<sup>17</sup>. It would be unsustainable for ISAF to permanently reduce the number of joint operations, especially given the small numbers of individuals involved in these attacks.<sup>18</sup>

**Table 3-Attacks by Afghan Security Forces against  
Allied Troops<sup>19</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Causalities</b>	<b>Attacks</b>
2003-2009	12	N/A
2010	20	11
2011	35	21
2012	51	37

- **Security Challenges:** Al-Jazeera cites a recent analysis of Gilles Dorronsoro, Afghan expert with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, writes in recent analysis that “After 2014, the level of US support for the Afghan regime will be limited and, after a new phase in the civil war, a Taliban victory will likely follow.” Political competition is likely to turn violent on the heels of NATO’s withdrawal. “There is a real risk that the regime in Kabul could collapse upon NATO’s withdrawal,” said Candace Rondeaux, senior Afghanistan analyst. The security condition in Afghanistan does not support the reform program. In addition, corruption is a major issue in the Afghan society. The Transparency International reported that Afghanistan’s public sector ranks as the third most corrupt in the world. The previous US efforts to fight corruption met with failure and only resulted in worsening of ties. The operational and maintenance

cost of ANA is about \$3-4 billion per annum. According to Venda Felbab, “the post conflict Afghanistan had the lowest ratio of international peacekeeping troops to population as compared to other post conflict regions despite several heavily armed warlords”.<sup>20</sup>

- **Corruption:** Corruption is one of the acute challenges which Afghanistan facing. Corruption among their officers, poor food and equipment, indifferent medical care, Taliban intimidation of their families and, probably most troublingly, a lack of belief in the army’s ability to fight the insurgents after the American military withdraws.<sup>21</sup>



- **Literacy and Leadership:** ANA is operating with 86% illiterate soldiers. There is insufficient ANSF

leadership capability specifically at junior officers/non-commissioned officers (NCOs) level. It will take lot of time to produce a leader. A significant majority of soldiers are illiterate, ANA training relies on methodologies that do not utilize written language; and a number of literacy instruction opportunities are available.

- **Financing:** Afghan economy is unlikely to match with its upcoming financial demands for establishing strong and capable ANSF. There is plan that the force level has to cut down by 120,000 troops by 2017. There is no clear direction as to where these well trained and battle hardened soldiers would be absorbed. In case, they are let free, it is anybody's guess as to where they would land up.<sup>22</sup> In the US, Congress has budgeted \$12.8bn to support the ANSF for 2012, but Defence Secretary Robert Gates has said that level cannot be sustained for many years, meaning that much depends on a successful transition to the Afghans themselves. And at the moment, the Afghan government raises few national taxes to pay for its security force, despite its own ambitious plan to expand the final number of security forces by a quarter. Those on the front lines in Afghanistan working closely with the recruits of the ANA are all too aware that it is one thing to train and equip an army but another to lead and sustain it, which

is the ultimate aim in a very short time-frame indeed. For example, pay of Afghan police, starting with basic pay of about \$165 (£102) per month, which rises to roughly \$250 to \$280 per month when longevity bonuses are taken into account, or extra pay for specialisation or serving in the most high-threat areas such as Helmand and Kandahar. However, that pay is still below what a young recruit could earn by joining a private militia or security company. It is also below that offered by the insurgents, who pay \$10 (about £6) a day - assuming a recruit worked every day.

- **Logistics:** The logistics capacity of the Afghan national army and police does not seem to have caught up along with everyday operational capacity.<sup>23</sup> This is, somewhat, understandable given that logistics were not prioritized for many years, but it calls into question the sustainability of continued funding to the ANSF post-2014, when American logistics capacity will be heavily curtailed as a result of their own scaling-down; thus, even if money continues to be provided, it will be difficult for Afghan security forces to ensure the continued flow of supplies around the country without the air capacities, for example, that the current international troop levels facilitate. Moreover, the patches of stability that have appeared across the country do not appear to have meant an overall decline in the armed opposition's ability to carry out

attacks.<sup>24</sup>If logistical problems persist, the Afghan army will have no choice but to close some of its bases, leaving the Taliban more room to maneuver.

- **Lack of Resources and Motivation:** Major challenge for the strong ANSF is the motivation. US is leaving around 200,000 Afghan soldiers without the equipment or wherewithal to defeat a resilient enemy. Moreover, 830 Afghan army personnel had been killed from April to November 2012. Afghan National Army and Taliban come from the culture that managed to drive out the British and the Russians; Afghans of any stripe will fight tenaciously even against great odds when the outcome matters to them. It is possible that the various insurgents simply care more about their mission. They may be paid a stipend, or ideologically motivated (pro-Islam or anti-foreigner), or politically opposed to the Karzai regime, or profiting from the drug trade, or simply happy with a job close to home. (It has been reported that most Taliban are fighting within 20 km of home.) The assignment of ANA soldiers often puts them some distance from home and in battles they do not want to fight. (Witness the number of desertions of ANA headed for Marjah in 2010.) While the ANA have gained respect from the population, at least relative to the police, they do not appear to be motivated by any great cause. There is

anecdotal evidence of families covering their bases with one son in the ANA and another in the Taliban.<sup>25</sup>

- **Ethnic Composition:** Ethnic identity within ANSF is a core issue. Addressing the ethnic dimension of the identity discourse, which has emerged as one of the most daunting challenges in taking forward the process of state building and ‘reconciliation’ in Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup> There have been substantive efforts to recruit a balanced, ethnically diverse army, proportionally representative of Afghanistan’s population. Afghanistan has four dominant ethnic groups (42 percent Pashtun, 27 percent Tajik, 9 percent Hazara, and 9 percent Uzbek) and numerous smaller groups that constitute the remaining 15 percent.<sup>27</sup> The predominantly Pashtun southern and South Eastern provinces, Kandahar, Helmand, Oruzgan, Zabul, Paktika and Ghazni make up about 17 percent of Afghanistan’s total population, yet, they contributed just 1.5 percent of the soldiers recruited since 2009. ANA loyalty could not be trusted when the military moved against their home turf. In such cases the government usually disarmed units affiliated with the revolting area or tribe. As of summer 2012, that number has been reduced to 40 percent. For several years, the ANA has been nominally ethnically balanced, but it managed to recruit disproportionately low numbers of southern Pashtuns. Most of the

Pashtuns recruited for the ANA had come from central and northern Afghanistan.<sup>28</sup>

- **High Desertion:** High rate of turnover in the ANA, driven by extremely high rates of desertion has serious implication for US strategy. Presently, Army's desertion rate is now 7 to 10 percent.

### **Present Shortfalls**

US is facing serious disappointment to make the ANSF a full partner for transfer of lead security responsibility beyond 2014.

- There is lack of unity of command between ANSF and US/NATO forces across the operation areas in Afghanistan.
- There is a persistent lack of effective coordination among the ANSF.
- A lack of capability and willingness on the part of the government of Afghanistan to honestly and efficiently develop and deploy the security forces.
- In most of the conflict areas, ANSF is unwilling to directly deal with war loads and criminal figures, and insurgents.
- There is strong perception among ANSF that US/NATO would be unable to fund the ANSF till Afghanistan achieves enduring security and stability.
- Resources which are necessary to implement the transition goals and objectives are inadequate.



Expansion plan of ANSF demands adequate numbers of mentors and partners and to fund the level of effort required.

- No effort has been made to review and assess the motivation of ANSF forces by force element for recruiting, performance, motivation, and retention problems.
- A series of major shifts in the training effort for the ANP involving repeated changes of mission and policing concepts coupled to a failure to prepare police for the reality of counterinsurgency and the Taliban threat, and to tie police development to the creation of a practical approach to the rule of law that could provide a functioning mix of formal, informal, and prompt justice<sup>29</sup>.
- A focus on creating large numbers of battalion sized Kandaks in the ANA with emphasis on quantity over quality, and formal training without effective mentoring and partnering of newly created units; failure to understand that newly formed units require extended training at the whole unit level.<sup>30</sup> Young officers lack adequate professional training. Many are former guerrilla fighters with no education. Many are illiterate. It will take at least ten years for Afghanistan to build a qualified officer corps, one which can help restore the military culture and replicate the units trained by the international community.

## **Way Forward**

Key to Afghanistan's future stability will be a credible and inclusive presidential election in 2014, followed by a constitutional transfer of power.<sup>31</sup> However, following factors are needed due consideration:-

- It is necessity to create effective forces on a financially sustained basis to compete with the Taliban and other insurgents.
- The ANSF has to be rationalized as per the population graph where Pashtun represents close to 60 percent of the total population.
- Afghanistan needs a military force capable of rapid deployment to any part of the country. This requires a force with high maneuverability and effectiveness. ANA needs to be composed of three elements:-
  - Defense force to maintain local stability, the lines of communication, and provide logistical support.
  - Mobile troops to security threats in their zone of deployment.
  - A central rapid deployment force to serve as the central reserve, responding to crises in any military zone.
- The persistent international funding commitments for building and training the national Afghan army. Insufficient funding will be devastating to the US ANA development plans beyond 2014.

- Maintenance/sustenance of the ANSF would continue to be serious challenge in the post US/ISAF drawdown. Although, pledges have been made to support ANA up to 2025, but it all depends as to what shape the security environment takes in Afghanistan and what kind of arrangements the ISAF would place before they leave. If the win-win situation is created, the ANSF would be able to perform as well as survive. But if Taliban are kept outside the power loop, then the chances of their success as well as stay as an organized force would be less.
- These Afghan “militias” are supposed to increase security in areas where ANA, ANP, and ISAF presence are highly limited.
- Effective military cohesion, leadership, particularly at the small unit level, is of vital importance. This further signifies the need for a highly trained and professionally effective officer and NCO corps, which is currently conspicuously absent in Afghanistan.
- Anti-corruption efforts should focus on limiting tribal or ethnic discrimination in access to jobs, especially in the ANA and ANP.
- Afghanistan security is vital to Pakistan national security interests. Strong and capable Afghan National Force would be an added factor for Pakistan to secure her western border. At the same time, Pakistan’s involvement is crucial for long term peace and

prosperity of this region as a whole, it is a reality that the US will have to live with it. If it does not happen, Pakistan will be at disadvantage and face the blow back.

### **Conclusion**

Success will be all cosmetic and unreal, if real problem is not addressed properly. Due to inadequate troop levels, unit unity, bribery, and low literacy, and poor logistics systems, Afghanistan would not be able to operate and maintain its own security forces beyond 2014. The targets set for the Afghan security forces are extremely ambitious. Without effective logistics, close air support and better leadership, the Afghan army is likely to have an extremely tough time facing down the insurgency without the kind of US/NATO support, it currently enjoys. Success in the mission requires three parallel strands, Afghan Security Forces capable of keeping the Taliban from regaining control, credible governance at national and local level to give the Afghan people confidence in their democratically elected government, and economic development that gives Afghans a stake in their own future.

There is no military solution to the ongoing problem. The US can't win militarily even if it continues to fight for two more decades. It has the 'power' to disperse the Taliban, as it did within weeks of its invasion in October 2001. But it does not have the power to eliminate them from the fabric of Afghan society. Even placing of over 350, 000 Afghan troops are unlikely to yield the desired results in isolation, even

though they are well trained and well organized too, if political reforms are not compatible to the Afghan societal make up. The US can't achieve the lasting peace in Afghanistan by being selective as to who should and should not participate in the peace process. Thus, understanding internal dynamics of Afghan society is crucial to develop such a strategy. Besides Pakistan, other regional countries especially those which shares border with Afghanistan are also equally important to play their role.

## End Notes

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## **CURBING THE MENACE OF VIOLENCE IN KARACHI**

*Ms. Asma Sana*

### **Abstract**

*Karachi once the 'city of lights' has become a 'city of crime'. Since last three decades, it is overwhelmed by the menace of violence. The purpose of this research essay is to find out those systemic issues and social conditions that generated violence and bloodshed in Karachi. There is also a need to carve out possible solution which lies in roots of violence i.e. political fragmentation, economic disparity, lack of governance and alienation in society. The data used in the paper is based on secondary sources. The demographic and migration patterns of the city are analysed. The genesis of violence has also been traced in the history. The three dimensions of violence, ethno-political, sectarian and criminal has been examined for tracing out the factors of violence in the city. This paper focuses on ethnic, demographic, and political structure of Karachi and it highlights the causes and carving out the possible solutions for the curbing the menace of violence in Karachi.*

### **Introduction**

Karachi is a cosmopolitan city with the total population of 18 million,<sup>1</sup> spreads across 3,530 square kilometres. It is a hub of Pakistan's commercial activity and has a highest literacy rate i.e. up to 90 percent. The city is repeatedly hampered by the ethno-political, sectarian, militant, and criminal violence

erupted over the last three decades. Thousands of people have lost their lives in this violence. In the year 2012 alone, more than 1,800 people have been killed. Most of them were innocent common people.<sup>2</sup> In the first week of November 2012, Karachi alone counted for more than 90 deaths, mostly on the sectarian grounds.<sup>3</sup>

Economic stability of a country is essential for national stability. Karachi being the hub of economic activities plays a vital role in economic health of Pakistan. According to the official statistic, Karachi accounts for 25 percent of Pakistan's Gross Domestic Products (GDP), 65 percent of national income tax revenue<sup>4</sup>, 54 percent of central government tax revenues, and 30 percent of industrial output.<sup>5</sup> Thus, peace and stability in Karachi provide guarantee to the economic security and subsequently, national security at large.

The violence in Karachi is a multifaceted phenomenon. The ethno-political tensions and demographic pressures provide a favourable environment to the terrorist organizations like Tehrek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to seek sanctuaries in Karachi. It is also significant as North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) supplies are transported through the Karachi port to Afghanistan.

From the perspective of domestic politics, Karachi is a battleground of political parties as all major political parties hold their influence in different ethnically segregated constituencies. Thus, clashes among those groups create chaos and law and order problem in the city. Violence is also

used as a tacit to influence decision-making at provincial or national level. To curb the violence in the city, the proposal to hand over Karachi to the Pakistan Army repeatedly emerged in different political debates.

In the above backdrop, the aim of this research essay is to find out possible solutions to eliminate the menace of violence in Karachi. The problem of violence in Karachi has genesis in the patterns of migration when the balance of ethnic composition transformed. The violence in Karachi is multifaceted; ethno-political, sectarian and even criminal elements are also involved. The actual factors of violence lie in struggle for land, resources, lack of law enforcement, weak judicial system, madrassas, socio-economic disparities, and lack of political representation. At the end, the recommendations are given for curbing violence in Karachi.

### **Migration Patterns**

Karachi is not only a large city of Pakistan but also most diverse one, demographically. As a result of unplanned migration over the past many decades, the city is divided into planned and unplanned settlements. The migration towards Karachi has been identified in five phases.<sup>6</sup>

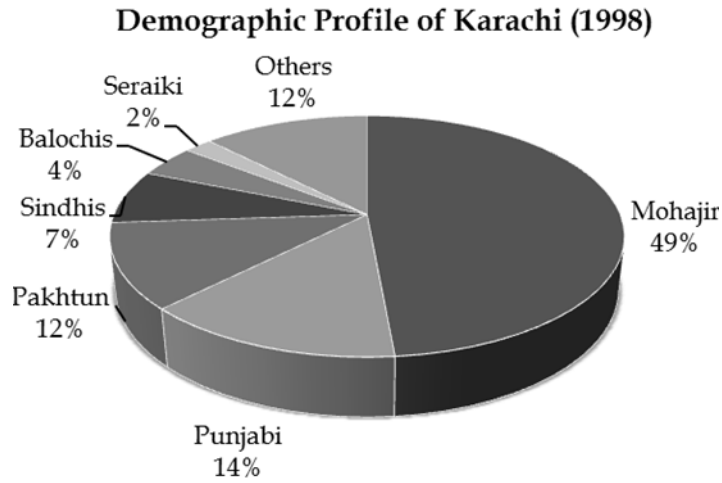
- The **first phase** was seen after partition when large number of refugees migrated from Northern India to Karachi which became a source to change the demographic profile of the city. These migrants are known to be Mohajirs and Urdu speaking community.

- The **second phase** of migrants was seen from the 1960s, when large number of Pashtuns from North Western area of Pakistan migrated to Karachi for better employment opportunities. Till 1980s, Pashtun population got hold of considerable squatter settlements.
- The **third phase** started from 1970s to 1990s, when large number of rural Sindhis shifted to Karachi for better jobs.
- The **fourth phase** started from the 1980s to 1990, when Afghanis and Iranian influx have been seen in Karachi due to Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and Islamic revolution in Iran.
- The **fifth phase** has been started from the 2001 after the US attack on Afghanistan. Large number of internally displaced people from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) migrated to Karachi as a result of military operations. The economic opportunities have been developed after opening of NATO supply lines also attracted people across country particularly from KPK to settle in the city.

### **Demographic Patterns**

The last 1998 official census shows the demographic profile of Karachi by the linguistic breakdown as Urdu speaking (Mohajir) population at 48.52 percent, Punjabi 13.94, Pakhtun 11.42, Sindhis 7.22, Balochis 4.34, Seraiki 2.11 and other 12.4 percent.<sup>7</sup> The geography shows the ethnic

patterns of Karachi. Language data in the 1998 census shows that District Central and District East were dominated by Urdu-speaking community.



**Source 1998 Census**

**Ethnic Structure of Karachi (1998)**

District	Urdu	Punjabi	Sindhi	Pushto	Balochi	Siraiki	Other
<b>Karachi East</b>	60.75	14.72	3.8	5.95	1.64	2.11	11.02
<b>Karachi West</b>	39.64	12.95	6	24.55	5.29	2.05	9.52
<b>Karachi South</b>	25.65	18.84	11.37	7.95	9.77	1.82	24.6
<b>Karachi Central</b>	73.57	8.63	1.59	4.56	0.77	2.3	8.58
<b>Malir</b>	15.87	17.46	25.08	20.67	8.51	2.36	10.06

**Source 1998 Census**

## **Violence in Karachi**

### **Ethno-political Violence**

The ethno-political landscape of Karachi can be identified as a major reason of violence in Karachi. The ethnic rioting has been a hallmark of Karachi's history. Many scholars regard it as a natural part of urbanization in a city that lacked proper planning. In such an environment, where different ethnic communities lived in ghettos, getting political control over an area resulted in violence. "MQM which consists of Urdu-speaking migrants set a plate for a face-off with Pukhtoons who control the transportation and construction arenas in Karachi."<sup>8</sup> From 1947 to 1970, there was no delineation between ethnic parties and political parties in Karachi. The migrants joined Islamist Parties while others were on the side of Pakistan's People Party (PPP). However, in 1970s the ethno-political landscape changed with the policies of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to address Sindhis grievances. Under this policy, government introduced quota system, 60 percent state jobs and admission in government owned educational institutions were fixed for rural and 40 percent for urban population.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the language bill was also passed in July 1972 by the Sindh Legislative Assembly under which Sindhi was declared as the official language of the province and included as a compulsory subject in schools and colleges. Thus, it created grievances among the Mohajirs who regard it as conspiracy against them and the language riots broke out in 1972.

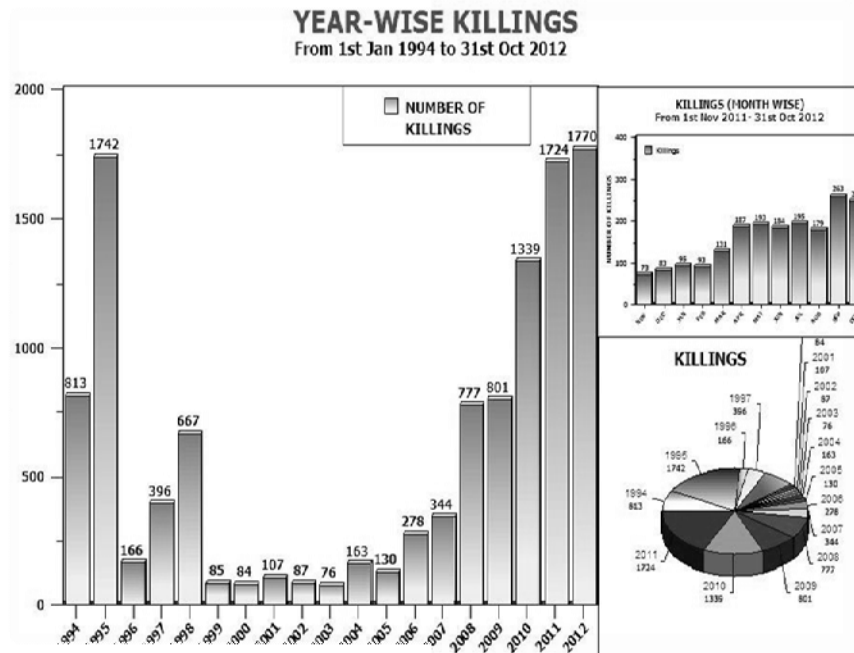
As a result, the first Mohajir Students Organization was formed in 1978 on ethnic lines. In mid 1980s, city politics became overly marginalized with the emergence of Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM), the party claimed to be a community of migrants and their descendants. PPP retained its support among the Sindhis and Balochis.

The ethnic violence erupted in the city after a deadly traffic accident of Mohajir girl, Bushra Zaidi by a Pakhtun bus driver. MQM retaliated against Pakhtuns who hold transport business.<sup>10</sup> The clashes were over the control of inadequate resources and city's infrastructure. In the early 1990s, when the law and order situation extremely deteriorated, Pakistan Army launched 'Operation Clean Up' to eliminate militants in the Mohajir settlement areas. Latter on, Sindh police and paramilitary rangers took over the operation. The charges of treason were levied on MQM. Thus, tension exacerbate between the ruling party (PPP, 1992 and PML, 1994) and MQM. As a result, in late 1990s, to some extend peace was restored in Karachi.

In mid 2000s, Pushto-speaking community found political representation by Pashutun nationalist party- Awami National Party (ANP). The MQM after changing name from Mohajir to Muttahida is trying to have ingress in all provinces of Pakistan being representative of middle class. The two political parties ANP and MQM are the coalition partners of PPP since 2008 elections. Any stern action against the militant groups or mafia can severed the ties with any party which can result in

collapse of government. Since elections, MQM had thrice quit the coalition on the disagreement over sharing power and resources. Every time, people paid the price with their blood.

According to an estimate, in the second quarter of 2012 (April-June), 268 political violent incidents occurred.<sup>11</sup> Another report by the Citizen Police Liaison Committee (CPLC), most homicide cases happened in the city’s central and south zones. These areas are the battleground of the political areas for the struggle of land and resources. However, the majority of victims have no political affiliations; only 31 percent belong to MQM, 20 percent ANP, 19 percent PPP, 4 percent MQM (Haqiqi), 6 percent Sunni Tehreek and only 3 percent belong to Jamat-e-Islami.<sup>12</sup>



Data based on open sources by CPLC<sup>13</sup>



## **Military and Sectarian Violence**

The Soviet intervention of 1979 in Afghanistan fuelled the violence by increasing the flow of arms in Karachi and creating a drug mafia. The second intervention in Afghanistan by International Security Assistance Force/US forces resulted in an increase in sectarian violence with the threat of Talibanization of the city. The sectarian violence originated in the 1990s due to Afghan Jihad and spread of Madrassas in Karachi, the extremist Sunni Muslim groups targeted prominent Shia Muslims. Since 2006 of Nishter Park bombing, Karachi has been tormented with sectarian violence. The militant threat gave a new dimension to the violence as ethno-political violence was confined to the national level but the militant threat is regional one. It is evident from the spill over of militancy from the Northwest to Southeast. In the first week of November 2012, Karachi alone counted for more than 90 deaths on the sectarian grounds. Militant and Sectarian groups operating in Karachi are as followed:-

- Jundullah
- Lashkar-e-Jhangvi
- Harkatul-Jihad al-Islami (HuJI), Arakan
- Harkatul-Mujahideen al-Alami (HuMA)
- Tehreek-e-Islami Lashkar-e-Muhammadi (TILM)
- Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP)
- Sunni Tehreek
- Taliban
- Sipah-e-Muhammad

- Jafria Alliance
- Tehreek-e-Jafria

### **Criminal Groups**

There are more than two hundred well-armed and well-organized criminal gangs, which operate independently and in conjunction with political parties. Their activities including extortion, arms trafficking, smuggling, kidnapping, and robberies have severely degraded the overall security situation in Karachi.<sup>14</sup> In 2012, there were 4,485 reported vehicle thefts/snatchings, more than 23,442 mobile phone thefts/snatched, 1,683 armed robberies and 114 kidnappings for ransom in Karachi.<sup>15</sup> The criminal syndicates are as followed:-

- Shoaib Group
- Lyari Gangs
- Rehman Dakait Group
- Arshad Pappu Group
- D-Gang

### **Factors of Violence**

There are systemic factors that contribute to exacerbate the ethnic, political, sectarian and militant violence in the city. These factors are as followed:-

- **Land:** Since 1947 with the influx of refugees, the struggle over land resources is one of the factors of conflict. The refugees settled in unplanned areas without proper sanitations, roads, and other facilities. The squatter settlements in the city also made difficult

for law enforcement agencies to maintain peace. The crime syndicates are also involved in the land grabs. They worked as a freelancer to grab land from one to the other who paid high price. The political parties also have contacts with the land mafia, as for winning votes they need support of population of squatter settlements. Promises of better housing facilities and roads can easily do this. Moreover, Karachi is among the fastest growing city of world with annual growth rate of 5.4 percent.<sup>16</sup> Around one million people from the rural parts of Pakistan migrated to Karachi and take up residence in squatter settlements annually which are growing at an annual rate of 100,000 plots.<sup>17</sup> Since 2001, the government is trying to increase the land acquisition and regulation of the existing settlement bringing them under their jurisdiction through mega development projects such as building roads and railway line.

- **Lack of Law Enforcement:** There is a serious lack of law enforcement in Karachi. The police force is inadequate to handle the city as for the population of about 18 million, only 32, 534 police officers are available and out of them 12,000 are deployed on special security duty and 8,000 are protecting important persons and government officials. Thus, 20,000 officers left to police the city.<sup>18</sup> The city police is highly politicized and work according to the order of

'high ups'. Most of the recruitments in the police were also made on the political grounds. The politicization of Karachi's police force also escalated after Sindh government repealed the Police Order 2002. Now, the Sindh government can authorize appointments to higher position. Thus, such appointees do not take action against land mafias, extortionists, target killers and criminals operating on behalf of their patron political parties. It is evident from the security crackdown against target killer between July and September 2011 when 291 suspects were arrested and police submitted only 130 charge sheets against suspects to the court.<sup>19</sup>

- **Weak Judicial System:** There are certain judicial flaws in the judicial system of Pakistan. In most of the cases, criminals are acquitted because of absence of any witness as they refused to testify. There is no mechanism for the protection of witnesses from the retaliatory action by the suspects' criminal gang or militant organization. Moreover, those who are in the court are left pending for the years. The appointments in Anti Terrorism Courts are also overly delayed or done on the political grounds. The Anti Terrorism Act is also flawed and failed to meet the demands of present security environment. The act does not apply on the residents of FATA even held in Karachi nor deal

with the specific terrorists' acts such as suicide bombing.

- **Madrassas and Extremism:** Karachi has a large number of Madrassas. These are involved in indoctrination of young children with extremist Islamic ideology. Most of them are run by the funds coming from the outside. They are spreading religious extremism and intensifying the sectarianism in the city. Such Madrassas are used as a place of recruitment and training by the militant groups. It also provides an opportunity to extremist groups to generate funds, as there is no monitoring of Madrassas funds. According to government estimates, there are more than 1,000 but the social society organizations estimate the total to be over 3,000.<sup>20</sup>
- **Socio-economic Disparities:** The socio-economic disparities among the population are also one of the factors as the city is divided into two classes. The Mohajir and Punjabis are affluent groups and the Pashtun and Balochs are among the poor class. The small segment of Pashtun population linked with transportation sector has immensely benefited from the NATO supply route. In addition, Karachi has a large number of unemployed youth. Lack of jobs, education, and entertainment activities attract the youth towards violent and criminal activities. Another aspect is of migration of low skilled labor from rural areas towards

the urban centre. This also created a void between the urban and migrant rural population. The locals saw it as usurpation of their employment opportunities. Employment is also based on ethnic background as to reduce tension at workplace employer's recruited employees from the same ethnic background.

- **Lack of Political Representation:** Over the last decade, the demographic pattern has been changed in the city. The Pashtun population has grown from 10 percent to 22 percent and ANP has consolidated as representative of Pashtun population and gained two seats. PPP has a strong base among the Baloch and Sindhi population but could only secure 6 seats. MQM is holding 34 seats in Karachi and they wished to maintain their position in next elections.<sup>21</sup> Demographically, ANP and PPP should have more shares in the government. Claims of 'Pashtunization' and 'Wahabization' are common talking points of MQM to maintain their monopoly over body politics.<sup>22</sup>

### **Recommendations**

- **De-politicization of Police Force:** To maintain law and order situation, the police force should be depoliticized. Sindh government should reinforce the Police Order 2002 as under it, the Provincial Police Officer had the power to appoint and transfer all police officers. Thus, it will decrease the influence of political parties in appointments at higher posts. Moreover,

police force should be increased and distributed according to the ratio of population. Interagency security cooperation is also necessary for effective policing. The existing police force should be trained according to the current security threats.

- **De-weaponization of Karachi:** There is an urgent need of de-weaponization of not only Karachi but also all of Pakistan. The de-weaponization bill was also submitted by the MQM in January 2011. However, no genuine step has been taken on this issue, as it is not in the interest of political parties. The government should at least ensure that all weapons are under license. In this regard, the city government also launched the Computerized Arm License Management System in November 2011. After just one month of the launch, the process was halted due to transfer of local government system from decentralized city government system to commissioner system. Now, National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) re-initiated the process of re-validating arms license.<sup>23</sup>
- **Special Parliamentary Committee:** To improve the law and order situation, a Special Parliamentary Committee consisted of all political parties should be formed. It will help to improve law and order situation, as it will bring consensus among the political parties on major issues. In August 2011, National Assembly formed seventeen members 'Special Committee on Law

and Order Situation in Karachi and Balochistan' consisted of multiple parties, but the committee failed to yield any results. Therefore, parliament is working on forming a special committee specific to Karachi.<sup>24</sup>

- **Delimitation of Constituencies:** The settlement pattern of the city polarized the ethnic population into different constituencies. There is a need to delimit city in a manner that they comprise 'mixed population'. In this regard, Supreme Court has also issued notice to the Election Commission.<sup>25</sup> Secretary Election Commission, Ishtiaq Ahmad Khan said, "we are fully prepared for the delimitation in Karachi but the first step has to be taken by the Sindh government through its revenue department, but no action has been taken so far by the provincial government."<sup>26</sup>
- **Reforms in Judiciary:** There is a serious need of reforms in judicial system. The Anti Terrorism Courts need to improve their efficiency in terms of ensuring speedy justice. The vacant posts should be filled by the judges on merit not on political references. There is a dire need of witness protection programme so that criminals could not escape punishment for their crimes. The Anti Terrorism Act should be amended according to the requirements of present security environment. Sindh High Court and Supreme Court should monitor the Anti Terrorism Courts to ensure impartiality, transparency, and early disposal of cases.



- **Regulation of Land and Resources:** The issue of squatter settlements is a major problem in the development of the city. They also provide safe havens to terrorists and recruitment ground for the potential terrorist. Thus, it is important to regulate the land and resources by the government. New infrastructure projects and developments in the areas of illegal settlements can eliminate the problem. However, these development projects should be started after conducting a land use survey. For the residents of illegal settlements, there is also need to ensure the adequate provision of low-income housing and public spaces.
- **Proper Representation:** The last available data on demography is of 1998 census, almost 14 years have been passed thus the demographic pattern of the city has been changed. There is a need of transparent data collection at governmental level. This will help to bring inclusive political representation and in delimitation of constituencies.
- **Local Self Government System:** Restoration of local government system in Karachi is more beneficial for the people of Karachi. The unnecessary delay in the holding of elections has inflicted colossal damage on the process of good governance. Local self-government stands for the rights and ability of local authorities to regulate and manage a substantial share of public

affairs under their own responsibility and in the interest of local population.

- **Job Opportunities:** The government should take steps to increase the job opportunities for particularly young generation. Youth is a target group for militant and criminal groups. The government should take proper steps to indulge the youth in creative and productive activities. The government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should start free technical education and vocational training courses to produce skilled labour. The services sector should be at the top for the economic progress. Only by focusing on producing skilled labour, the issue of population bomb can settle.
- **Ban on Religious Groups and Monitoring Madrassas:** To curtail sectarian violence, the government should ban religious groups from disseminating hatred against other sects. In this regard, the government should strictly monitor the madrassas to ensure that funds raised by them could not end up in the hand of extremist religious groups. In the recent act of terrorism on Muharram, the Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, Syed Khursheed Shah identified the involvement of Taliban and said, “Talibanization has risen in Karachi and the government is trying to curb it.”<sup>27</sup>

- **Eliminate the Militant Wings of Political Parties:** The political parties should disband their militant wings. Almost all political parties have militant wings in Karachi. At the local level, the supporters and activists are mostly armed and involved in turf wars which escalated into ethnic violence. The mixed population settlements encouraged parties to become involved in enforcement activities, which can easily transform into extortion rackets. Over last five years, these activities have led to increase in violence and instability. Thus, to restore peace, all should negotiate and particularly close down the militant wings. Similarly, display of weapons should also be banned.

### **Conclusion**

Karachi is a metropolitan city, divided in the terms of ethnicity, development, and class. There is not a one political party, which enjoys popular support. There are certain constituencies, where one ethnic group is in majority. The political parties are immune to the charges of maintaining links with armed groups and exacerbating violence. The economic and political disparities are visible across the city.

Curbing the menace of violence in Karachi is an uphill task, as the problem is multifaceted and the interest of political parties is involved. Solution of ethno-political violence is in negotiations and peace deals amongst the political parties. The religious and sectarian violence is not just an issue of Karachi; it is national security issue and needs

to tackle be tackled with the encompassing policies such as Madrassa reforms. There is a need of cleansing Karachi from the criminal groups. The Army intervention or deployment of rangers in the city is a short-term solution to the problem. For long-term peace and stability in the economic and commercial hub of Pakistan, effective policing is necessary along with good governance. The improvement in law and order situation can restore peace of ‘City of Lights’.

### **End Notes**

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