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# Just Peace Diplomacy Journal

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Tanks or Tractors: US' Military Missions or Multilateral Regional Support for ...  
European Union and Iran's Shared Mutual Interests in Afghanistan  
Ethnic Gap and Political Stability in Afghanistan (2001 to the present)  
The relationship between poverty and violence in Afghanistan  
The Active Role of the Iranian Geo-strategy, The Persian Gulf as ...  
*... 8 Persian articles*



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## **Our Vision:**

*In the beginning all people were one nation* (Holy Qur'an, 2:213)  
Throughout human history, peace has always been the 'primary state' and war the 'accidental state'. Peace is beautiful, compassionate and constructive, while war is fearsome, merciless and destructive. Unfortunately, despite this, war has been one of 20<sup>th</sup> century's most major problems, and has proved to be the symbol of the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As portrayed by the contemporary history of international relations, particularly in the Middle East and Central Asia, war is not the solution, nor is it constructive or helpful in solving problems; rather, it causes problems and is the root of the continuation of violence, instability and insecurity.

War is not the solution to the differences between governments and nations. Only with peace which is based on justice, i.e. '*Just Peace*', can we reach a stable and permanent solution to our differences. Diplomacy and constructive dialogue which take into consideration the rights of both parties, is the only path to establishing '*Just Peace*', stability and world security. Our aim is to change international relations with the active participation of nations on the basis of '*Just Peace*'.

*Let there be a group among you who will invite others to good.*  
(Holy Qur'an, 3:104)

We, as part of the international network of intellectuals, are able to play an important and constructive role in the establishment of mutual understanding, of dialogue and in the reduction and amelioration of global problems. Our intention is to provide solutions and means for the positive and just cooperation of nations with each other, and to reach this end independent of governments, through a realistic understanding of nations and governments from each other, and through clear, truthful and constructive dialogue.

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2. Mutual respect between different nations and different governments.
3. Respecting and considering the valid interests of all parties which have a vested interest in any given conflict.
4. Thinking globally and acting against extreme nationalism.
5. Realistic understanding of the realities of the world.
6. Upholding and respecting human rights and the principles of democracy.
7. Accepting and moving towards the destruction of weapons of mass destruction throughout the world/on a global scale

Our priorities in the current situation are to analyse the issues and problems of conflict-zones such as those of the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and Central Asia.

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1. Inviting and facilitating for intellectuals from different parts of the world to engage in dialogue with each other.
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4. Organising international scientific conferences dealing with regional and global issues.
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6. Providing education internationally on the culture of dialogue, understanding, compromise, justice, freedom and spirituality.

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## **European Union and Iran's Shared Mutual Interests in Afghanistan**

Mohammad Moadab  
International Peace Studies Centre

### **Abstract**

Events unfolding on September 11, 2001 and United States' subsequent invasion of Afghanistan at the start of the third millennium gave shape to the New World Order. We need to see what domestic, regional, and international impacts the attack on twin towers in New York (i.e. terrorism) and invasion of Afghanistan (i.e. legitimate defense) have had on global power politics. At the domestic level, these developments have resulted in transformation of Afghanistan's political system. At the regional level, they have tilted the power balance and equation. And at the international level, they have facilitated the rise of a global coalition to combat terrorism – related threats. Given the vast scope of research that can be done on this subject, the present article attempts to focus on how successful democratization has been at the domestic level, and how impactful the two main players, namely Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union (EU), have been at the regional and international levels.

**Keywords:** Afghanistan, reconstruction, the European Union (EU), Iran, Middle East, Security

## Introduction

Geographically, Afghanistan is located in the heart of Asia and serves as the crossroads of major areas in this continent.<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan's socio – cultural fabric is a far cry from modern global criteria. Its economy is based on traditional agriculture, and its community is tribal. Nation – building has not occurred correctly or not happened altogether, mainly as national identity has not fully developed in Afghanistan since the people living there, before being Afghans, are of other backgrounds: Hezarah (20%), Uzbek (10%), Pashtu (50%), and Tajik (18%)<sup>2</sup> As such, Afghanistan is known as the country of crises<sup>3</sup> due to several factors as follows:

- 1) Ethnic structure
- 2) Religious structure
- 3) Linguistic structure
- 4) Geographical structure and stretch of tribes and populations
- 5) Power mongering leaders of groups
- 6) Illiteracy or under- education
- 7) Conflicting political outlooks
- 8) Public poverty
- 9) Becoming the venue of regional and international rivalries

Even though Afghanistan has not seen a powerful government since its inception and even though quest for popular democracy and free thinking have not existed in the modern sense of the word and in an extensive manner, “justice” and “quest for democracy” date back to many years in Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup> In the past, these ideals crystallized in the form of the tribes seeking justice and collaborating to overpower the exclusive monopoly of the Pashtus. The latest example of such quest for justice could be seen in the 1990s, specifically in the “Hezarah (Shiite) Movement for Justice”.<sup>5</sup>

The new, post 9/11 political trend in Afghanistan is the product of mediation of international organizations and countries having a stake in the Aghan crisis. It actually emerged following a major conference held

in Bonn, Germany by Afghanistan's political power hubs. The conference ultimately resulted in the international "Bonn" agreement which, like the holding of the conference itself, was backed by global powers and neighboring states. All political sides involved in Afghanistan committed, in the agreement, that the United Nations oversee the country's new political order and all political groups be fully involved in the process.<sup>6</sup> The "Bonn" agreement based the formation of new institutions and political systems in Afghanistan on democracy, fair general elections, and adequate participation of all Afghan tribes and political groups in the process.<sup>7</sup>

Regional and trans - regional rivalries to control Afghan politics, exodus and immigration, Afghanistan becoming a safe haven for terrorists, controlled substances, ...<sup>8</sup> have placed the country's reconstruction process in the spotlight. The present article, therefore, attempts to analyze reasons behind the European Union's active involvement in Afghanistan's peace and security, as well as decisive impacts any developments in Afghanistan can have on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The article will first focus on how the European Union (EU) and Iran mutually affect each other and then explore how they are politically in unison to reconstruct Afghanistan.

### **Part I: The European Union's Presence in Afghanistan**

Prior to September 11, 2001, European Union (EU) member states had individual and lackluster presence in Afghanistan. The post 9/11 developments, however, presented the European Union (EU) with an imminent and serious threat. Following 9/11, the European Union viewed terrorism a fundamental and major global threat and sided with the US to combat it. As terrorism was rooted in Afghanistan, the European Union (EU) actively participated in re - establishing security there.<sup>9</sup> At the time, the European Union (EU) was accepting new members and expanding its domain of influence; therefore, it was automatically getting close to hubs of crises and insecurity. In other

words, the European Union (EU) realized the importance of security right when it was increasing its membership and expanding its domain of influence. The closer the European Union (EU) got to hubs of crises and insecurity, the more its military weakness became evident.<sup>10</sup>

In its relations with Afghanistan, the European Union (EU) has faced several problems: terrorism, failed states, controlled substance proliferation, and asylees. In order to describe how the European Union (EU) has grappled with these setbacks, it is necessary to analyze the goals, types of coalitions, and means to combat the Afghan crisis.

### **A: The European Union's National Security Strategy and Its relationship with the Afghanistan Issue**

In the wake of September 11, 2001, the European Union devised a new national security strategy in 2003 which addresses regional skirmishes, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, failed states, and network - based crimes. In tandem with its new national security strategy, the European Union (EU) started dealing with Afghanistan with the goal of promoting peace, stability, and democracy, as well as improving EU security through containment of foreign elements that destabilize Afghan security. Contrary to the US military approach to Afghanistan, the European Union (EU) opted for political solutions and promotion of development and welfare in the country.<sup>11</sup> Overall, the European Union (EU) objectives in Afghanistan can be summarized as follows:

- Supporting stability and development
- Supporting human rights, especially women's rights
- Controlling production of poppy and reducing heroin flow to the EU
- Repatriation of Afghan refugees who live in EU member states
- Promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan through helping shape the government, creating democracy, and supporting political elections

- Ensuring the European Union's security through bridling foreign elements that cause insecurity (such as terrorism, regional conflicts, weapons of mass destruction, and failed states)
- Participating in Afghanistan's reconstruction<sup>12</sup>

## **B: Relations between the European Union (EU) and Afghanistan**

The European Union (EU) aims at materializing the Bonn Conference agreements. The European Commission and the European Union (EU) both have representatives in Kabul who oversee the progress there.

The European Union (EU) has commercial and trade relations with Afghanistan based on two agreements: General System Preference (GSP) and Everything but Arms (EBA) which is the highest level of trade the European Union (EU) can have with any country. As for the relations between the European Union (EU) and Afghanistan, the EU has provided significant aid to Afghanistan.<sup>13</sup> The Bonn 1 and 2 Conferences recognized Afghanistan as a state and allocated about \$10 billion global aid to its reconstruction, \$3 billion of which the European Union (EU) committed to pay. This trend continued in the Tokyo Conference as well, where the European Union (EU) again committed to pay another \$3 million to Afghan reconstruction. During the 2010 London Conference, too, the European Union (EU) agreed to pay another \$2 million to the Afghan cause.

The European Union (EU) financial aid has been spent in the following major areas:

- Revamping human resources and public services
- Paying the salaries of 266,000 Afghan state employees
- Assisting with agriculture and irrigation and drawing Afghan rural community away from dependence on narcotics revenues toward other forms of agriculture
- Spending on health care

- Repatriating Afghan immigrants and resettling them back in Afghanistan, a project which the European Union has collaborated with Iran on.
- Sweeping mines left from the Soviet and Taliban invasions.<sup>14</sup>

Military relations between the European Union (EU) and Afghanistan are regulated by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations (UN). Since April 2007, the 25 member states of the European Union (EU) have provided about half the NATO troops stationed in Afghanistan.

Key European Union (EU) member states, namely France, Germany, Britain, and Italy, assumed a more effective role in Afghanistan. Germany has had the highest share in Afghanistan's reconstruction. Since 2002, France has devised a practical plan to reconstruct Afghanistan based on two prominent features: Food donations and expansion of schools in which French is the medium of instruction. So far, France has established two schools and provided massive food donations to Afghanistan. After Sarkozy came to power, France decided to play a more active role in Afghanistan and even opted to send French military troops to dangerous areas in Afghanistan. There has been dramatic increase in socialist, communist, and green movement endeavors to justify French (military) presence in Afghanistan within the framework of NATO's new strategy.<sup>15</sup>

NATO's new strategy has three major ramifications:

1. Involving the NATO member states, including Germany and France, in Afghanistan
2. Making the war in Afghanistan an Afghan war by delegating responsibilities to the Afghan Armed Forces
3. Providing the needed security for Afghanistan's reconstruction

### C. European Union (EU) Efforts to Exit the Crisis

The European Union (EU) has presented three major ideas to exit the Afghan crisis:

1. Long- term strategy which, according to the European Union (EU), has the following four criteria:
  - Involving the Taliban in Afghanistan's power politics: The European Union (EU) is of the view that the Taliban should be involved in Afghan politics and should help restore the country's peace and stability. The European Union (EU) contends that the Taliban still has supporters among the Afghans. The Pashtus, in particular, highly favor the Taliban. As a result, negation of the Taliban will be costly and dangerous and will deter Afghanistan's stability.<sup>16</sup>
  - Changing US policy toward controlled substances. Many people in Afghanistan make a living by selling controlled substances. And any US policy to curb narcotics without finding an adequate way for the people who make a living with it will create public dissatisfaction and subsequent insecurity and instability in Afghanistan. As such, the US should rethink its policies on controlled substances.
  - Granting local authority to people: The European Union (EU) believes that giving increased authority to local officials and states and decentralizing Afghan affairs will culminate in increased security and stability in Afghanistan. The European Union (EU) opposes centralization of authority in Kabul.
  - Regional Collaboration: The European Union (EU) regards cooperation with Afghanistan's neighboring countries an important way to get Afghanistan out of the existing crisis. As such, the European Union (EU) attaches importance to Iran and Pakistan.

The European Union (EU) contends that Afghan peace and stability will not be possible without the cooperation of its neighboring states.

2. The need for greater commitment toward Afghanistan by the West will involve the following:

- Increased commitment of the West to provide military troops and remove hurdles along their way
- Increasing aid to develop the military forces and to provide their expenses. In other words, the West's current military expenses in Afghanistan are insignificant and ineffective and need to be increased several fold.

3. The need for stronger international leadership. This involves the following three factors:

- Promoting the United Nations Secretary General's envoy to senior envoy and encouraging all countries to support him. The European Union (EU) is of the view that the United Nations and UN Secretary General's envoy to Afghanistan should be given more extensive authority and enjoy full – fledged support of all member states.
- Covering the provinces. This means that the other provinces in Afghanistan should also be focused on rather than have all efforts zooming in on the capital.
- Coordinating the local donors.<sup>17</sup>

## **Part II: Iran's Security and Strategy in Afghanistan**

Numerous reasons, including joint cultural, linguistic, and religious commonalities, as well as around 600 kilometers of common borders, ranging from the rim of Zolfaghar to the Siyah kooch, have inextricably linked the fate of Iran and Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup> According to Iran's Trade Development Organization, Afghanistan is the primary trade priority for Iran. Over the past several years, Tehran – Kabul trade relations

have been on the rise. Iran's exports to Afghanistan increased fourfold and its imports from Afghanistan rose twenty fold over the last few years. Afghanistan has an 8 percent share in Iran's exports market.<sup>19</sup>

Iran's foreign policy, in general, does not focus on power struggle inside Afghanistan. As such, it has mainly supported Afghanistan indirectly. Tehran has, therefore, succeeded in pursuing various interests in Afghanistan, while preventing its ties with neighboring states (such as Pakistan, for example) to be seriously undermined.<sup>20</sup>

Iran's strategy in Afghanistan is based on development and security. Afghanistan's development has direct correlation with Iran's national interests. Also increased stability and sustainable development in Afghanistan will ensure fulfillment of Iran's national interests. As such, Iran favors Afghanistan's infrastructural development, economic advancement, and peace and stability. Increased poverty, as well as political – social unrest, will force Iran to pay a hefty price due to the influx of immigrants, rise in the production and trafficking of controlled substances, and incompetence of Afghanistan's central government. This part, therefore, will discuss security threats posed by Afghanistan and elaborate on how the Islamic Republic of Iran is impacted by events taking place in Afghanistan.

#### **A. Iran's Vulnerability toward Developments in Afghanistan following September 11, 2001**

- A major ideological rival for Iran in the region, namely the Taliban, was removed from the scene of power. Even though US measures to depose the Taliban resulted in removing a major security threat to Iran's eastern borders, the move resulted in the US forces replacing the Taliban and stationing near Iran. Stability emanating from the presence of foreign troops in the region will be less beneficial for Iran. In any event, US presence alongside Iran's eastern borders will not be detrimental in the long term since the US cannot remain in the region for good.

- Regional supporters of this rival (such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia) which would have dominated Afghanistan and bothered Iran have assumed a more lackluster role in the area.
- Taliban's removal from power gave rise to relative balance in the northern front (namely the supporters of Iran).
- Farsi language and Shi'ism became more widespread in the region.
- Grounds were amply paved to utilize the available opportunities, such as cooperation in the field of education, development, political – economic collaboration, communications, transit of goods, as well as exports of goods and services to Afghanistan.

#### **A. Security Threats Facing the Islamic Republic of Iran**

- Political instability and formation of weak and failed states: Instability in Afghanistan is rooted in various structural factors and history of foreign intervention in this country. The Afghan government controls only limited sections of the country, while the Taliban military troops are again trying to gain control over more areas. The Taliban actually are very powerful in certain parts of Afghanistan. Despite being supported by foreign powers and some domestic political personalities, Hamed Karzai's government has not as yet gained widespread approval in certain parts of the country.
- Narcotics: Absence of a powerful government and existence of multifarious economic hardships have boosted controlled substance production from 2,200 tons to 8,500 tons. <sup>21</sup> Increased narcotics production results in lower prices, which in turn is linked to increased number of Iranians who abuse drugs.
- Increased religious extremism: Certain political trends in the countries neighboring Iran escalate regional religious conflicts, which in turn pose a security threat to Iran. This can be mainly seen along Iran's eastern borders. Rivalry between political groups and different religions can always create tension in a country or between different countries.

In Afghanistan, as well, religion has been a source of insecurity for the country. Religious skirmishes, especially between Shiites and Sunnis or Shiites and other religions in Afghanistan have impacted Iran as well. Afghanistan's religious trends and tensions have had different impacts on Iran during various time periods.

In the wake of September 11, 2001, Shiites in Afghanistan found themselves in a new situation: Conflicts between Iran and the US created problems for the Shiites after the power structure changed in Kabul. The Afghan Shiites decided to adapt themselves to the new conditions. Iran actually approved of this and even preferred that Shiites have a lion's share of power in Kabul; however, Tehran ultimately did not favor this development, as the Shiite rise to power, backed by the US, would have undermined the Shiite groups' affiliation with Iran.

- Foreign military troops stationed in the region: After the US toppled the Taliban, US troops stationed in various parts of Afghanistan and set up numerous bases, assisted by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This in itself served as a threat for Iran, given that enemies of Iran's national interests were stationed in the area.

- Ethnicity: There are more than 50 different ethnicities in Afghanistan. These have their specific ethnic – linguistic features and traditions.<sup>22</sup> Ethnic demands have been a source of instability in Afghanistan. This issue has affected Iran as well.

Afghanistan's relative stability and reduced ethnic skirmishes, following the coming to power of the new administration and the formation of the new constitution, have diminished the threats posed to Iran, especially from ethnic Afghan groups. In other words, the ethnic - inspired tension the two countries faced alongside their borders has subsided; however, the coming to power of a liberal democrat regime in Afghanistan will create an indirect challenge for Iran. For this reason, the rise of liberal democracy can serve as a challenge toward Iran.

- Afghan refugees living in Iran: All things considered, influx of Afghan refugees has been costly for Tehran. If Afghanistan reaches political and social stability, the Afghan expatriates might return to their homeland. From this perspective, Afghan stability will undoubtedly help Iran's national interests and security, while instability will affect Iran in many ways, the least of which is a rise in Afghan refugee influx. For this reason, Iran has had a tremendous role in reconstruction of Afghanistan, more than any other country participating in the Tokyo Conference.<sup>23</sup> Among measures taken by Iran, reference can be made to allocating credit, implementing development projects, and creating roads, especially in neighboring townships in Herat and Sistan region. In any event, repatriation of Afghan refugees will not only relieve Iran of imposed expenses and other problems but will also bring about positive results for Tehran. Over the last several years, Afghan refugees have become fully familiar with Iranian culture, language, and traditions.

### **Iran's Strategies to Afghanistan**

Iran's strategies toward its eastern neighbor have been based on collaboration. Iran works for the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan, since any problem stemming from instability in Afghanistan will speedily spill into the region and into Iran. As such, Iran has the following two strategies toward Afghanistan:

- Helping the formation of stable and developed governments in Afghanistan
- Establishing friendly relations with Afghanistan and promoting political, academic, economic, and cultural cooperation with Kabul
- Countering drug trafficking, especially through Iranian borders
- Endeavoring to provide regional security in the east and preventing chaos in the area

- Providing financial aid to the Afghan administration to improve the country's infrastructure and assist in its economic development
- Using the trade route from the East to the West
- Helping extremist religious groups' power adjustments

### **Part III: Differences and Commonalities**

#### **A. European Union (EU) and US Difference in Relation to Afghanistan**

The European Union (EU) wants “strategic balance” in Afghanistan, while the US has, from the start, wanted “hegemonic stability”. The European Union (EU) has all along contended that the issue of Afghanistan is primarily a political matter and that military solutions do not help resolve a political problem. In other terms, the European Union (EU) opts for a political approach to the problem of Afghanistan and holds that military muscle has bolstered the Taliban and even legitimized their terrorist moves. The European Union (EU) holds that Washington's use of military muscle to resolve the Afghan issue has further complicated matters. Influenced by this outlook, participants at the London Conference concluded that true security in Afghanistan can be established only through the rule of law, justice, and accountable government and that security cannot be established with military might. In order to establish Afghan stability, Europe has thought about involving the Taliban in Afghan politics. From the onset, the European Union (EU) evaded accepting military responsibilities and mainly sought to assume reconstruction duties and non- military assistance. Of course, it seems that the European Union (EU) and the US tactically differ on most issues related to Afghanistan. In other words, they have different approaches to how to reach defined objectives.<sup>24</sup>

Nonetheless, Obama's presidency has been more pleasant for the European Union (EU), encouraging the EU to further assist in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, in particular in the realm of nation – state building.<sup>25</sup> In a letter to Obama, European

Union (EU) foreign ministers presented the EU's unanimous request for a change in US strategy toward Afghanistan. Apparently, Obama has satisfied Europe by stressing multilateral approach to Afghan developments. Obama has stressed that effective combat with the Taliban and Al – Qaeda has two major facets:

- Military muscle and hardcore combat
- All – out combat with ignorance which is the founding ground for terrorism and extremism in Afghanistan

Obama contends that combat with ignorance will prevent the Afghans from wanting to follow or join the Taliban and that this will diminish the Taliban and Al – Qaeda popular base.

### **B. Joint European Union (EU) – Iran Interests in Afghanistan**

An overall review of European Union (EU) presence in Afghanistan proves that there are many commonalities between the stances of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union (EU) at least in four important areas:

- UN involvement in Afghan affairs
- Multilateralism
- Recognizing other players, in particular neighboring states
- Empowering the people of Afghanistan and local officials to run the affairs of the country

On the other hand, the European Union (EU) has time and again stressed the need to get Iran's buy – in to succeed in Afghan reconstruction, the latest example of which is the Madrid Conference (March 30, 2009) which noted, "Iran has been involved in Afghanistan at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels over the past seven years. In 2008 alone, trade between Iran and Afghanistan totaled \$1 billion".<sup>26</sup>

"Iran has run successful drug abuse programs and has extensive experience in police training. Therefore, its policies in combating drug

trafficking and abuse could be of great assistance to Afghanistan.” “Iran aspires to be a key player in its neighborhood and, as such, expects recognition of its role as a regional leader”. Given Iran’s inclination to play a role in the region, the European Union’s suggested strategies toward reaching its objectives in Afghanistan can be of paramount importance to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Some of these strategies are as follows:

- Collaborating in enforcing the Bonn Conference agreements
- Enforcing the Security Council resolutions on Afghanistan
- Encouraging regional players and Afghanistan’s neighbors to play a decisive role in Afghan issues.

## **Conclusion**

In order to fulfill its objectives in Afghanistan, the European Union (EU) has numerous plans and strategies in place, one of which is collaboration in full and correct implementation of Bonn 2001 agreements, as well as statements of other international conferences on Afghanistan, and enforcement of United Nations and Security Council resolutions, such as resolutions 1378 and 1419.

The European Union (EU) has also worked on encouraging regional players and Afghanistan’s neighbors to play a positive role in cementing the Afghan peace process. In actuality, the European Union (EU) has recognized the role of Afghanistan’s neighbors in its strategy. This is where the interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan merge.

Supporting the pivotal role of the United Nations, in particular the UN Secretary General envoy to Afghanistan, is among other measures taken by the European Union (EU). The main goal behind this was to ensure that the US was not the only player in Afghanistan and that any measure taken in regard to Afghanistan would be coordinated by the United Nations so that all international players could partake in it and

prevent US unilateralism. The Islamic Republic of Iran has supported this policy.

Finally, the European Union (EU) has emphasized that connection with major players in Afghanistan's politics at the domestic and foreign levels, as well as European Union's strengthened and expanded relations with international and regional organizations active in Afghanistan, can bring about positive results.

Without a shade of doubt, the European Union (EU) involvement in Afghanistan has paved the ground for the Islamic Republic of Iran to actively enforce its foreign policy toward Afghanistan, mainly due to the common views the two players shared. Another impact of the European Union (EU) presence in Afghanistan has stemmed from the EU's dire need for Afghanistan's neighbors to collaborate and assist in rebuilding Afghanistan. In other words, the European Union (EU) believes that its policy in Afghanistan cannot succeed without the assistance of Afghanistan's neighboring states and without recognizing their legitimate demands. The European Union's emphasis on recruiting the Taliban, while rejecting its extremist members, is in tandem with the Islamic Republic of Iran's outlook toward empowering the Afghan people.

At any rate, there are commonalities between the Afghanistan strategies of the European Union (EU) and the Islamic Republic of Iran. And this affords Iran a chance to seize the opportunity stemming from Afghanistan's status quo. Put in other words, Iran can make maximum use of existing commonalities.

In addition, the individual involvement of some European Union (EU) member states in Afghanistan, such as France and Germany, is beneficial for Iran. In other words, the more influential members of the European Union (EU) are involved in Afghanistan, the more Iran will benefit and can collaborate with EU member states.

## Proposals to Solve the Afghan Crisis

### European Union Suggestions:

- Focusing on mechanisms to maintain peace
- Recruiting police forces from among local applicants
- Getting the peoples' commitment by respecting them
- Minimizing the use of military muscle
- Controlling and consistently supervising poppy production
- Initiating an all – out political concession process
- Supporting economic reconstruction in tribal areas
- Controlling the borders shared by Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran
- Using Pakistan and Iran's military troops
- Training young elites<sup>27</sup>

### Islamic Republic of Iran's Suggestions:

- Indigenizing democracy: It is best for Afghanistan's democracy to have a collaborative pattern known as "associative democracy" in which ethnic groups share power, just as in Lebanon. This would be the best way to materialize democracy in the multi – ethnic Afghanistan. The country's existing democracy is only working in the political and administrative realms and lacks social and cultural depth.
- Absorbing the opposition and the insurgents
- Generating employment and meeting the needs of insurgents linked to the Taliban
- Removing some names from the black list and calling for national reconciliation
- Establishing and strengthening the national armed forces
- Stressing common identity grounds during the nation – state building process
- Collaborating with all regional states to resolve issues
- Supporting a substitute crop and reforming the agriculture system rather than merely supervising and controlling poppy cultivation

- Bolstering the bureaucracy and political – judicial institutions throughout the country
- Holding talks with some moderate Taliban insurgents

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مجله بین المللی مطالعات صلح و امنیت

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