# Embedded Intentions in Expressions: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Doha Peace Agreement (DPA)

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**ABSTRACT:** Doha Peace Agreement (DPA) was inked on 29 February 2021 to pave way for the United States (US) exit from Afghanistan after the war on terror for around twenty years and to secure guarantees from Afghan Taliban regarding not letting anyone or any group use Afghan soil for terrorism against the US and its allies. The US started withdrawing troops but Taliban advance towards Kabul ahead of the agreed time, forced President Ashraf Ghani to flee. Taliban took over Kabul on 15 August 2021 and once in total control did not initiate intra-Afghan dialogue and refused to form an inclusive government, violating its commitments. This study is aimed to explain the content of the DPA qualitatively using the Fairclough model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for failing its objectives. The findings of the study highlight that USA framed a specific discourse in the agreement apparently objectifying the establishment of peace in Afghanistan as its core aim and justifying its decision to withdraw from Afghanistan. However, USA failed to realize the importance of a strong guarantor and defined guarantees in the agreement to ensure that once the Taliban are back in power, must adhere to the terms of the agreement. The agreement also neglected the issues of an inclusive government, women's rights, and freedom of speech. The study has extending consequences on the U.S. hegemonic discourse about countering terrorism strategies and conflict resolution as it tends to fail in the case of Afghanistan because of the way the discourse of DPA was drafted.

**KEYWORDS:** Afghan Taliban, Unites States Exit, Establishment of Peace, Fairclough Model of CDA, Inclusive Government, Countering Terrorism

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## Introduction

The vitality of discourse to construct realities for the subjects of contemporary society is undeniable (Ademilokun, 2019). Fairclough (2013) agrees that discourse significantly chips into the formation of societal characteristics, social associations, and the baskets of knowledge and meaning. Therefore, a discourse can be called a socially grown linguistic form or a pattern of argument that create and spread an intelligible body of meanings concerning any notion or issue (Schmied, 2020). In other words, it is a society's collective pattern of thoughts, observations, and conduct that is exhibited in frequent texts and may belong to different genres (Scollon & Scollon, 2005:538). In Social Sciences, discourse is generally assumed to be an established way of reasoning and a social limit or the red lines about what can be expressed about a particular issue (Hassen, 2015). The effects of discourses can be seen in almost everything - various guerrilla movements seeking

independence use violence and those who support them develop discourses expressing such people as "freedom fighters" while those against whom they fight to call them "terrorists" in their discourses (Eager, 2013). So, discourse brings the lexis, terms, and possibly also the panache desired to be communicated (Hassen, 2015). Discourses are sometimes called the most commanding means that have the potential to make or break relations among states, therefore take a significant role in diplomacy and international politics (Epstein, 2008).

Political discourse is viewed as the most dominant one as is developed by the elite having key and important positions in the socio-political ladder. Therefore, it mirrors the ideology of more powerful groups. Hence, political discourse can be termed as a devious linguistic approach that obeys vested interests. Negotiations, peace talks, treaties, and agreements are types of political discourse. The impacts of such constructed discourses are huge and therefore need attention.

The current research study, therefore, intends to analyze the text of peace agreements using the interdisciplinary framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to describe, interpret, and explain the mechanisms used for the construction, maintenance, and legitimization of social injustices. The paper is structured into the introduction of the broader perspective of the peace agreement as a form of political discourse and elaborates on the background of the Doha Peace Agreement (DPA). Then it describes the methodology adopted for qualitative research, followed by explaining the relevance and role of the theoretical framework of Fairclough's 3D Model for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to identify embedded intentions in the text and highlight its social implications. The Results and Discussion section has covered in detail the textual, process, and social analysis of the discourse in the peace agreement. It is followed by the Conclusion section which has sum up the topic in light of the major findings.

## Discourse of Peace Agreements

The discourse of peace agreement is constructed carefully as, the warring parties are skeptical of each other real intentions and intend to seek the maximum of assurances, guaranties, and clarity from the other party while they try to secure their motives within the text of the agreement. Here comes the role of language as it has more purposes than just sharing information or knowledge. It performs an expressive function which is the human need to express and share feelings, interests, and preferences; and the other purpose includes the desire to influence the feelings, interests, or preferences of others which is called vocative. The text of peace treaties performs the latter, hence containing certain linguistic features to ensure clarity and at the same time bound all parties involved (Pehar, 2001). The text needs to be clear and precise to ensure there is no ambiguity or confusion. This includes the use of legal terms and definitions to ensure that all parties understand the agreement. It needs to contain specificity which is to specify exact terms, such as dates and amounts, to ensure the agreement is binding. It lays specific obligations that both parties must abide by. This may include the payment of reparations, the return of prisoners, and the implementation of certain policies. The treaties are typically legally binding meaning that they must be respected by all parties involved. This allows for the enforcement of the agreement in the event of a breach. Moreover, the formal language of political discourse contains a respectful tone to show respect for all parties having different power dynamics.

The tendency of analyzing the language of peace treaties through political discourse for the presence of interplay of power dynamics and larger political interests has been witnessed in many studies (D'Acquisto,

2017; Javaid, et al., 2021; Sibtain et al., 2021; Mehmood et al., 2022). However, most of the previous research on peace agreements (Horváth, 2009; True et al., 2019; Bell, & O'rourke, 2010; Wise, 2018; Bormann, & Elbadawi, 2021) are conducted to expound on the broader political arena. Comparatively little data is available involving critical discourse analysis of peace treaties except for Suppan's, (2019) study on the peace treaty between the "Allies and Germany", Amalia's, (2019) paper on peace treaty concerning "the government of Indonesia and the Aceh Movement" and Cajiao et al., (2021) research on peace pact amid the "Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia commonly known as People's Army (FARC-EP)". It indicates that a research gap exists in terms of providing a critical discourse analysis and therefore, the recent DPA signed between the USA and Taliban in 2020 has been chosen for CDA.

## The Doha Peace Agreement (DPA)

The US invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 to topple the Taliban from power who declined to abdicate from the protection of Osama Bin Ladin (OBL) Al-Qaeda leader and act against other ideological extremists living in Afghanistan (Council on Foreign Relations, 2022). The US held OBL responsible for waging a holy war against the West and the attacks carried on the World Trade Center. In response to these attacks, the two-decade-long war on terror started, in which more than 157,000 Afghans lost their lives, the US losses are also phenomenal; they spent more than USD 2.3 trillion, lost 2,324 men in uniform, more than 3,900 civilian contractors and 1,144 died from the allied troops in these two-decade fighting, but could not defeat Afghan Taliban decisively and had to finally agree to talk to the Taliban in 2014 (Bergen, 2023, March 17).

In protracted conflicts, parties agree to talk, when the conflict reaches its 'mutual hurting stage' and the parties involved realize none can win clearly (Zartman, 2019). The USA made up its mind immediately in June 2011 after killing OBL in May of the same year to withdraw and relinquish the responsibility of security to the local forces by 2014. Qatar offered facilitation giving a villa on the outskirts of Doha to the Taliban for their political office on 18 June 2013 (Salami, 2021). Indirect negotiations in secret were held since then between the US and Afghan Taliban representatives ignoring the then-Afghan governments (Yousafzai et al., 2016). In 2017, President Donald J. Trump gave a solid indication to withdraw all troops and in 2018, talks in Doha Qatar made headlines (Schwarz & Mackey, 2017). On 29 February 2020, an agreement was formally signed which is known as the "Doha Peace Agreement (DPA)".

Though comprising of four pages only, this agreement has impacted and will keep on impacting the future of the Afghan nation, security dynamics in the neighborhood and beyond, therefore instigating critical analysis from the perspective of both peace and conflict studies as well as linguistics viewpoint, to extrapolate the embedded intentions in the written expression. Hence, the present paper aims at showing precisely how the tool of language is used in written discourse by both parties of the DPA. Alongside exploring the linguistic features of the peace agreement, the study will also unveil the political/diplomatic intentions embedded in the text utilizing certain linguistic features. Moreover, the study would also reveal the larger political perspective established because of this agreement.

## Methodology

The data for this study comprises a peace agreement known as the DPA signed on 29 February 2021, between the USA and Afghan Taliban. The text of the agreement is retrieved from a Google link. The research is

qualitative and descriptive in nature. The qualitative nature of research, which normally focuses on a comprehensive analysis of a phenomenon on a relatively limited data set, precludes any statistical or quantitative interpretation of data to avoid reaching unnecessary conclusions. Therefore, the reliance on numbers is limited to the frequency counts of certain important lexical items for better interpretation of the qualitative findings. The chosen research design, therefore, appropriates the purpose of research to explore the selected peace agreement. Fairclough 3-D model is used as a theoretical framework to conduct the analysis.

## Theoretical Framework

Discourse analysis is the learning and understanding of language in use so the approaches to discourse analysis may be descriptive or critical. Descriptive as it defines how language functions to comprehend it and critical in which the goal is not only to describe and offer deep explanations but also to dive deep into the larger issues, problems, and conflicts concerning the social as well as political domains globally. For the current study, the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis has been applied.

## Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

According to Gee, (2001), "Analysis of a discourse should have the critical angle, not due to the reason that such analysis is necessary to be political but for the reason, that language is fundamentally political." So, the interpretation can be that words of the language have some hidden motives, making language a keyway to make or break interstate relations. It helps in surfacing the embedded intentions in expressions available in the form of spoken or written text from social and historical perspectives. The consequential nature of discourse trigger debate about the important issues of power, inequality, and domination (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

## Fairclough 3D Model of CDA

This framework tells how through language, power, and domination are exercised, social power is abused, and inequality is justified and defended with the tools of text and talk on the socio-political spectrum (Van Dijk 1999 p 23). For CDA, Prof Norman Fairclough, (1989) of Lancaster University proposed a 3D model to explain the relation of language and discourse through the process of mapping three separate dimensions or forms of textual analysis: -

## Figure 1

*Fairclough 3D Model of CDA.*
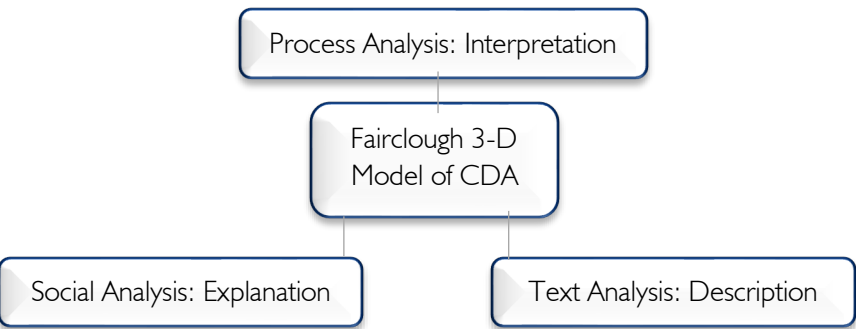
The three dimensions are interdependent and may move in a "to and fro" manner between each other (Janks, 1997). In this paper, textual analysis of the Fairclough Model, focusing on the form of power raised between the US and Afghan Taliban to analyze the intentions embedded in expression in the DPA has been used. Due to its ability to develop readers' focus on the etymological choices, their sequencing, and layout, the framework helps them to distinguish between the historical reasons and purpose of choosing such discourses to comprehend that these choices are linked to the circumstances and possibilities of those utterances.

Since the written discourse of DPA falls under the emblem of social as well as political heads, therefore, justifies the selection of this methodology. It also suits best to unveil the socio-political challenges that unfolded because of this agreement. The deeper textual analysis and interpretation of the agreement will help to explain the larger political perspective in the post-US exit scenario.

## Results and Discussions

According to the US State Department (2020), "The DPA objectivates four major subjects; lowering violence, the exit of US troops, initiation of intra-Afghan negotiations, and promising Afghanistan would not again harbor terrorists on its soil. The treaty has been made in four parts and the initiation of the next part depends on the completion of the first part meaning these are interdependent of each other:

(1) The guarantees and enforcement to inhibit transnational terrorist groups or persons from using Afghan territory to plan or launch attacks on the US and its allies,

(2) The guarantees and enforcement regarding the timeline for the exit of US and coalition forces from Afghanistan,

(3) Guarantees to a political solution through intra-Afghan dialogue, in the presence of international witnesses, involving the Taliban and all ethnic groups as a step towards an inclusive government that will work for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and

(4) A permanent and comprehensive ceasefire.

The abovementioned four parts are correlated, and their implementation will be as per the terms of the agreement and stipulated timeline. The execution of the last two parts is dependent upon agreement on the first two parts. Similarly, to ensure the implementation of parts one and two of the above, a three-step mutually agreed interconnected mechanism is given (Hakimi, 2020). The mutually agreed main objective mentioned in the text is "*bringing peace in Afghanistan*", followed by the "US commitment to withdraw troops from Afghanistan" and the "*Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan known as the Taliban*" is obligated to implement terms of the agreement in their under-control territories till the time a new Afghan Islamic government, as a result of intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations, is formed.

In Part 1 & Part 2 above, the use of nouns such as "*guarantees*", and "*enforcement*" are for emphasis to comply with the commitments of the agreement by both parties. It is also a clear indication of the balance of power both parties hold during negotiations. For example:

(1) "*The US is committed to…*" in Part 1 and in Part 2 the phrase "*The Taliban is committed to deal with…*"

Part 3 once again mentions the word "*guarantees*" by both parties is an indication of the fact that there is still a lack of trust. The last part is an emphasis attaching the condition of intra-Afghan negotiations for the permanent and comprehensive ceasefire:

(2) *"The partakers of intra-Afghan negotiations will deliberate upon the date and way forward for a lasting and complete ceasefire, including joint implementation mechanisms."*

## Applications of Fairclough 3-Dimensional framework in the analysis of DPA

Using the Fairclough 3D framework for CDA of DPA, a diagram given below was developed by the authors to identify the presence of important elements in the text. This can be used as a tool to analyze such texts:

### Figure 2

*Application of Fairclough 3D Model of CDA on DPA Based on linguistic and sociopolitical key points identified above, detailed discussion of the agreement is as under:*
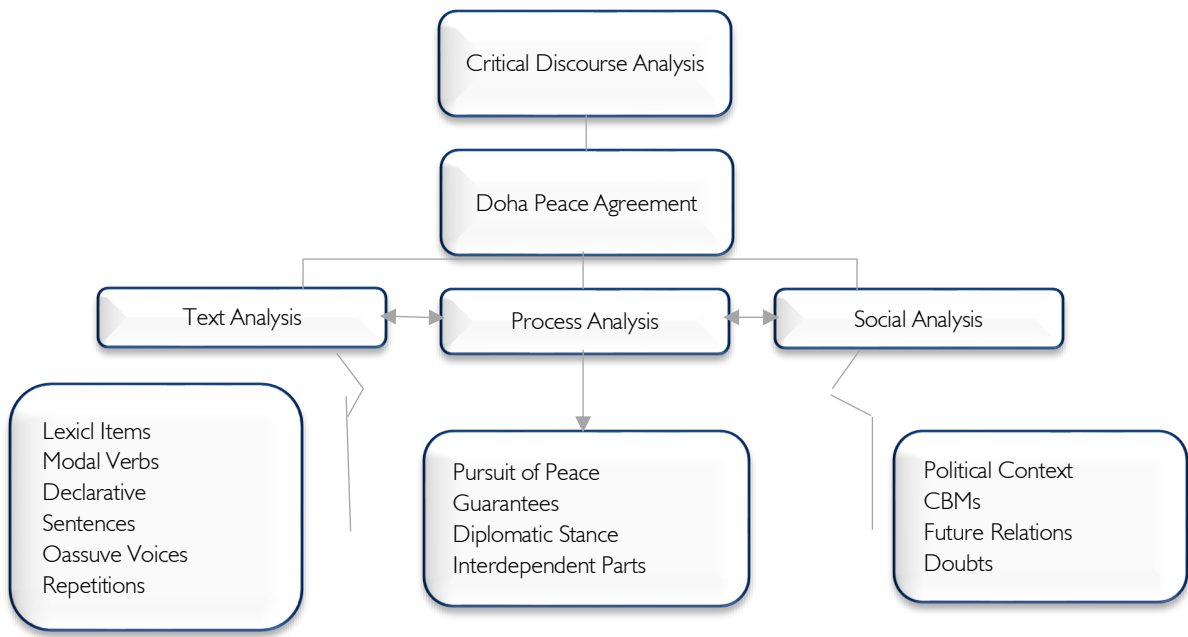
## Text Analysis

According to the first stage of Fairclough's, (1989) model, "the frame of interest here is to describe how language is utilized to serve the purpose of the peace agreement." As in such texts, lexical elements are the primary information to be described or to create specific ideology behind these words. Henceforth, analysis of the text for important words has been tabularized keeping in view its importance in terms of frequency count given in Table 1 below which can help in unearthing the embedded intentions in the text.

### Table 1

*Frequency of Important Words used in the DPH*

| S. No | Words | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | United States | 39 |
| 2 | Afghanistan | 31 |
| 3 | Allies | 18 |
| 4 | IEA or Afghan Taliban | 16 |
| 5 | Will | 39 |
| 6 | United States will | 04 |

| S. No | Words | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | Taliban will | 06 |
| 8 | Afghan soil will | 01 |
| 9 | Not recognized | 16 |
| 10 | Security, Agreement | 13 |
| 11 | Intra-Afghan Negotiations / Dialogue | 09 |
| 12 | Commit, Committed, Commitment | 09 |
| 13 | With the | 09 |
| 14 | Withdraw, withdrawal | 06 |
| 15 | Prisoner(s) | 05 |
| 16 | Guarantee | 04 |
| 17 | Political | 03 |
| 18 | Measure, Peace, Ceasefire | 02 |
| 19 | Obligation of IEA | 02 |
| 20 | Obligation of United States | 00 |
| 21 | They | 02 |
| 22 | Economic Cooperation / Reconstruction | 01 |
| 23 | Recognition, Endorsement | 01 |
| 24 | Education, Human Rights, Women | 00 |
| 25 | Democracy, Development, Afghans | 00 |

The table above demonstrates the explicit use of certain lexical items, which shows the partiality towards certain important issues and the frequency count of these lexical items reveals its significance with respect to issues mentioned in the agreement. For example, names of the "*US and Afghanistan*" which are proper nouns too, are used 39 times and 31 times respectively. Similarly, the nouns "*Allies and Taliban*" are used 18 times and 06 times respectively. This usage is indicative of the fact that more importance is given to the US and its Allies than Afghanistan and the Taliban from the power dynamics point of view. Other nouns such as "*Security*" and *Guarantee*" have been used 13 times and 04 times respectively as compared to nouns such as "*obligation*" which is used 02 times for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) or Taliban and not used at all for the USA. It describes the fact that the US is more concerned about its own security and its allies rather than its obligations towards other more serious issues such as human rights, economic cooperation and reconstruction of Afghans who remained the biggest victims of this conflict. The words "economic cooperation and reconstruction" have been used once and on the other hand "education, human rights, women's rights, development, and democracy", are not used even once in the entire text of the agreement.

Sequel to the above, it is also noted that the modal verb "*will*" is very frequently used in the text of the peace agreement. Generally, a modal verb functions in a helping role for the main verb in a sentence with an aim of adding more information about the varying stages of requirement and likelihood. The modal verb "*will*" alongside performing the function of futurity conveys the meaning of obligation, requirement, or no choice. In the order of higher certainty, "*will*" takes second place (first is taken by must) out of ten modal verbs (Zhang, 2019). In the DPA, the modal verb "*will*" appears the highest (39 times). Also, what is more, important to note is that with the United States, it is used only 04 times but with the Taliban, it is used 07 times, which depicts that the agreement bounds/obligates the Taliban more as compared to the United States. Similarly, the use

of the modal verb *"will"* for both parties regarding measures and steps they are to take is also indicating promises and voluntary actions on part of both parties. In case of the USA for example:

(3) *"The United States and its allies will take the following measures...",*

(4) *"They will reduce the strength of U.S. forces in Afghanistan..." and*

(5) *"The United States and its allies will withdraw..."*

Same use of modal words is done for the Taliban...

(6) *"... will not allow any of its members",*

(7) *"... will send a clear message that..." and*

(8) *"... will prevent any group or individual..."*

Other linguistic features of the text of the DPA include declarative sentences and the device of repetition. As per Sujatana, (2007), "sentences are classified in two ways, on the basis of their syntactic properties and the type of clauses with reference to the syntactic properties, there are four kinds of sentences that are statements, questions, imperatives, and exclamations. In DPA, the declarative sentence construction is highest which is why the researchers have focused on the significance of declarative sentences. Declarative sentences represent indicative moods as they are used to communicate information or to make statements. Sneddon, (1996) further highlighted that statements act as carriers to exchange information or cast an opinion. It may also take a passive and a negative form. The same is observed in DPA as the declarative sentence construction suits well the purpose of stating the facts, indicating the conditions, and expressing the commitments by both the involved parties. The declarative constructions can be seen in mentioned below selected quotes:

(9) *The U.S-Taliban agreement streamlines the avenue for a political settlement and a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire through intra-Afghan negotiations.*

(10) *The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Afghan people reaffirm their backing for peace and their commitment to agree upon ending this war.*

(11) *The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan also reaffirms its continuing commitment to stop any transnational terrorist groups or individuals, such as Al-Qaeda and the ISIS-K, from using Afghan land to threaten the security of the United States, its allies and other countries.*

In declarative sentences of the text of the DPA, passive voice construction (25 times) is also observed. Some examples are:

(12) *Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban.*

(13) *The commitments set out here are made possible by these shared achievements.*

(14) *Prisoners of the other side will be released by March 10, 2020.*

As Inzunza, (2020) said, "passive voice construction in an agreement is significant as it is considered to be more objective than the active voice construction but at the same time can also be ambiguous". In the above-mentioned quotes, the ambiguities lie in the subject '*the commitments*', it is not clear which commitments are referred to, and at the same time '*the shared achievements*' are also ambiguous.

## Processing Analysis

The second stage of Fairclough's model was implied to interpret the discourse used in the DPA. It involves analyzing the process of production and reception in discourse and focuses on the situational milieu and the inter-textual setting, both paramount to the progression of interpretation (Fairclough, 1989, 2015). In DPA, the quest for '*Peace*' is the objective of both parties after the two decades of war. One party that is Taliban seeks an independent and peaceful Afghanistan with no foreign interference while the second party the USA is more focused on guarantees for no use of Afghan soil in terrorism particularly against itself and its allies. The four parts of DPA carries different themes which further consist of sub-themes. These sub-themes are interpretations or the details of issues covered in the agreement.

Interpreting the title of the agreement, the very first phrase "*agreement for bringing peace to Afghanistan*", intends that both stakeholders are desirous to bring peace for the people of Afghanistan as Maizland, (2020) calls this deal as the first step towards durable peace. The second phrase in the title, *"Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban"* is highlighting that the Taliban used this name once were in power for the first time in 1996-2000 as recognized rulers. Taliban are using the same name after being allowed to have a political mouthpiece in Doha Qatar. In the DPA, the US has agreed to use their chosen name in the text but at the same time have added the words, "*which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as Taliban*" which shows a diplomatic compulsion, an embedded intention in the text on part of USA. The date on which the agreement has been signed is mentioned in the Christian calendar, Muslim Lunar, and Muslim Solar calendars. It shows a kind of dominance on part of the US for having a Christian calendar first but mentioning two Muslim calendar formats is a move by the US to appease the Taliban as well though is something having no strategic gain or loss attached to it. Moreover, the conjunction "*and*" between the two parties is an indicator of recognizing the same role and equal weightage of each other.

The part 1 of the agreement is about US commitments to withdraw completely from Afghanistan within 14 months of the announcement of DPA. In this regard, the measures the US will take comprise six sub-parts. The first two sub-parts further have two clauses each. Sub-part A mentions US commitments about reducing troops in Afghanistan to 8600 and vacating 05 military bases in the first 135 days of the agreement. Sub-part B spells about complete but conditional withdrawal from Afghanistan within 9.5 months. This is conditional on the Taliban's fulfillment of obligations mentioned in Part 2 of the agreement. The subject "*withdrawal*" is used four times in agreement and each time the subject complements refers to the actor which is the US.

Sub-part C is about Confidence Building Measure (CBM) that pledge the exchange of combat and political prisoners between the US (1000) and Taliban (5000) by 10 March 2020. On the same date, intra-Afghan negotiations are also to start and if implemented, the remaining prisoners would be released within three months. Commitment from IEA for not letting their released prisoners to not involve themselves in acts that will pose threat to the US and its allies has been made part. The US will not target or attack the Taliban or meddle in the political or domestic affairs of Afghanistan. Sub-part D again interdependent with the preceding condition of intra-Afghan negotiations is regarding the US review of sanctions and reward list (head money) against Taliban members by 27 August 2020. Here no mention of any legal procedure against those on the reward list who have been involved in killing of hundreds of innocent people. Sub-part E is about the US

commitment to engage members of the UN Security Council for removing the Taliban from the sanction list while sub-part F once again mentions US assurance of refraining from internal affairs and respecting the territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

Similarly, in Part 2, the important subject is "*security of the United States and its allies*" which is linked to the Taliban. It further consists of five sub-parts giving a description of the steps to be taken and commitments of the Taliban regarding preventing any individual or organization including Al-Qaeda from acts against the US and its allies using Afghan soil. Taliban are responsible if could not stop their recruitment, dismantle training facilities, and fundraising inside Afghanistan. Taliban will not host such people and none of its members would cooperate with such individuals or groups working against US interests. They will not give asylum, passports, visas, travel permits, or any other authorized documents to such people. There is no mention of the security of those countries who remained neutral or were not declared US allies.

Part 3 of the agreement comprises three (03) clauses and discusses the US pledge towards efforts it will make to get UN Security Council approval about this agreement, provided that the Taliban fulfill the demands mentioned in Part 2 about a political solution through intra-Afghan dialogue in the presence of international witnesses. All ethnic groups in Afghanistan have been mentioned but no women representation has been highlighted. It also talks and expresses joint efforts about bilateral relations between the Taliban and the US and between the US and the future Afghan Islamic government. However, there is no elaboration about the legal status of witnesses or forum to take up differences with in case of a deadlock. The last clause of this part 3 is about the US desire for economic cooperation with, and reconstruction of, Afghanistan once the post-settlement Afghan Islamic government is established. This seems only to be a diplomatic statement with no concrete mechanism given.

Part 4 is about a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire whereas from the conflict resolution point of view, ceasefire is one of the initial steps in any conflict to resolve peacefully and not the last step. No details about the date and ceasefire mechanism are given, rather it has been kept as an agenda point for intra-Afghan dialogue. No joint implementation mechanism is given and made conditional to the completion and agreement over the future Afghan political roadmap. Similarly, no mention of the disarmament of the Afghan Taliban after the signing of the treaty can result in the failure of the ceasefire and subsequently complete agreement.

The concluding part only mentions the date of signing and the three languages (Pashto, Dari, and English) points towards ignoring the Tajik and Turkic languages spoken widely in the northern areas of Afghanistan. Such a conclusion is an indication of haste at least on part of the US and is unlike other peace agreements (Williams & Simpson, 2011).

Process analysis of the text has unveiled that there is no mention of serious issues such as human rights, women's education, freedom of speech, and inclusive Government. Moreover, the term "*timeline*" is mentioned for the withdrawal but not for the Taliban to adhere to, which gives the Taliban an edge to manipulate the terms of the agreement with respect to its implementation, once US forces would be out. Similarly, the agreement further gives the Taliban a freeway by mentioning the words, "*agreement apply in areas under their control until the formation of the new post-settlement Afghan Islamic government.*" These terms give the Taliban freedom of violent actions against their opponents in areas where they still pose resistance.

Similarly, for the government to be established, the name "*Afghan Islamic government*" has been used, while the whole US invasion of Afghanistan was based on the narrative of war against terror and bringing democratic system of governance. This indicates that the US had already acceded to the Taliban's dominant role in future affairs of Afghanistan.

## Social Analysis

In this stage, sociocultural practices are analyzed, and those dimensions that are related to meaning and circumstances outside the given text having impacts on institutions and society are studied. In the case of the DPA, analysis of the text highlight that the terms of the agreement might have not been drafted according to the situation on the ground. During the peace talks and signing of the agreement between the Afghan Taliban and the US, the then-Afghan government including the Northern Alliance was completely kept out of the loop. Afghan Taliban were already in control of 60% territory and government institutions such as the Afghan National Army, police and state functionaries were not ready to confront the Afghan Taliban. Afghan society is conservative, traditional, and tribal, therefore, would happily welcome the Taliban especially when Government institutions are not in a position to provide them security and justice, which the Taliban are using as their narrative. Moreover, the agreement was reached and signed in the absence of a guarantor who could bind parties if intend to breach, violate or not fulfill commitments of the agreement. The institutions of the United Nations or the Organization of Islamic Countries could have been made involved and used as guarantors. This explanation of the text or social analysis points to a complex power dynamic embedded in linguistic discourse. One of the major and initial steps for the success of any peace agreement is the measures or steps taken or pledged to be taken for CBM among the parties in conflict.

The socio-political position of the Taliban and the US in Afghanistan is detrimental to defining the power relationship and is evidently existing in the discourse of the DPA. As the Taliban had a strong battlefield position and the U.S. was eager to withdraw troops, the Taliban maintained a rigid stance in talks with the Afghan government held in September which eventually stalled. Apparently, the US as an actor is holding power and seems the initiator of the peace agreement but has given many leverages to the Taliban instead of seeking the welfare of the Afghan people, since they are hierarchically below would receive and interpret the message from the text of the agreement accordingly. Taliban's disposition, attitude, and the ground realities, in fact, place them as an announcer in a position of power. Thus, the findings of CDA highlight that throughout the text, the main authors identified are the US and Taliban, whereas, it is Afghan people who are the most important yet not even mentioned once, leaving a question mark on the validity of the agreement and US embedded intentions.

From linguistic as well as peace-building scholars' point of view, the misgivings can be due to one of the three possibilities: one it may be a grammatical error in the edifice of the text, which supports the premise that the indecorous use of words has altered the actual objective of the agreement; second is that if the oversight of this subject was intentional, then the question arises why the authors have done so; and third, whatever is the actual reason for this omission, the outcome has resulted in distrust among the descriptors and interpreters of the message in the text assuming that if the neglect of "Afghans" is an escape ploy for US in the future of Afghanistan.

## Conclusion

This study focuses on a two-pronged analysis: linguistic as well as the political discourse analysis of the DPA and its impacts on the political landscape of Afghanistan and the security of regional states. The agreement achieved its first two goals; US exit from Afghanistan, and securing guarantees from Afghan Taliban not to let Afghan soil be used by any individual or group in terrorism against the US and its allies. However, the execution of intra-Afghan dialogue, formation of an inclusive government, economic development, and re-integration with the world could not be accomplished due to the Taliban's non-adherence to the terms of the agreement. Critical discourse analysis of the text of the agreement has highlighted that the terms of the agreement were tailored in such a way that it was to fail. The absence of guarantor(s), no mechanisms to enforce the Taliban commitments, exclusion of the Afghan government from the negotiation process, and no mention of common Afghan people, human rights, and women's education are areas identified by the CDA that if incorporated would have paved way for the success of DPA. The agreement lacks mechanism for the reintegration of fighters when released from prisons so that they again not drift back into violence and pose a threat to the security of the United States and its allies. The absence of steps to create a balance of power between the government of Afghanistan and the Afghan Taliban and absence of guarantors has appeared in the text of agreement that would lead to stalemate in intra-Afghan negotiations. Based on the textual analysis that refers to the prominence of actors, lexical/diction choices, and sentence structure in the DPA, it can be stated that the power dynamics between the US and the Afghan Taliban are not balanced, and the Taliban seems more dominant than the US. Textual analysis from a political perspective posits that by giving more leverage to Afghan Taliban in the agreement, would result in an increased chance of chaos after the US exit. After the deal was signed, the Taliban stopped attacking the US and its allies and also refrained from attacks in major cities. The United States reciprocated by reducing air support for government forces. It emboldened the Taliban on the pretext that their agreement is with the US only and kept targeting Afghan government forces in the periphery of the capital. Taliban assassinated many Afghan government officials, security force members, civil society leaders, journalists, and human rights workers including several women in broad daylight. Extremist groups such as the ISK and TTP are operating from Afghan soil and carrying attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan on Russian, Chinese, and Pakistani nationals. The agreement thus succeeded only till part of the US exit from Afghanistan and failed in the rest of its commitments much before its anticipated fate.

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