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# The myth of Afghan electoral democracy: the irregularities of the 2014 presidential election

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## ABSTRACT

This article systematically assesses the 2014 Afghanistan Presidential Election, the first transfer of power from President Hamid Karzai to an elected successor, using provincial voting data as well as explicit data from polling centers. The analysis finds unusual voting results in the April election, where no candidate received 50%+1 votes required by the Afghan constitution, versus the voting results realized for the June 'runoff election.' As in other Afghan voting analyses, this article finds voting based on ethno-linguistic preferences, and interestingly found Dr. Ashraf Ghani receiving almost all the swing votes in the runoff election even though the other leading candidate from the April election all endorsed Dr. Abdullah Abdullah. More importantly, however, the research presented here clearly finds extremely strange voting patterns. For example, the polling data center analysis finds 606 polling places where Ghani received all 600 votes and Abdullah received none and another 900 polling centers that gave virtually all its votes to Ghani. These results in combination with other analyses raise the very real possibility that the election results were illegitimate. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications of the research to future Afghan elections and their processes as well as to the long-standing conflict in the country.

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**KEYWORDS** 2014 Afghan Presidential Election; ethno-linguistic voting patterns; illegitimate voting; illegitimate voting results; Dr. Ashraf Ghani; Dr. Abdullah Abdullah; Afghan polling center data; Afghan 2014 June "runoff election

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Some people may ask why I am writing this article four years after the actual election? The answer to this apt question is that new data have recently become available that allowed expanded analyses at the provincial level and explicit analyses at the Polling Center level. Moreover, the analyses have important implications for the upcoming April 2019 Afghan Presidential Election. While some will view this article as controversial, all efforts have made to present unbiased, objective analysis. The author has no preference or is associated with any Afghan Political Party or candidate.

 Supplementary data for this article can be accessed here.

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## Introduction

This article represents the third in a series of publications that assess the Afghanistan electoral process, actual elections, their fidelity and, indirectly, their implications for Afghanistan becoming a truly representative democratic state.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, this article examines the 2014 Afghan Presidential Election which is particularly important because for years there have been rumors concerning the legitimacy of the 2014 Afghan Presidential election results. Moreover, it was the first presidential election in Afghanistan without Hamid Karzai running for the position and it could be argued that it represented the first nonviolent regime transfer of power in Afghan history.

I am only aware of one scholarly publication that explicitly and critically examined this election and, in so doing, challenged the legitimacy of the 2014 Afghan Presidential Election results. This article, published in the influential magazine *Foreign Policy*, went as far as to suggest that the U.S. Government had conducted sophisticated statistical analyses and election modeling using Afghan presidential election data and had concluded that the election results were illegitimate:

The runoff round of the Afghan presidential election on June 14 was massively rigged, and the ensuing election audit was “unsatisfactory,” a result of Afghan government-orchestrated fraud on a scale exceeding two million fake votes, completely subverting the will of the Afghan people. That is the watered-down conclusion of the press release of the European Union’s yet-to-be-released report detailing its thorough and non-partisan investigation of the entire Afghan election. The report was completed last week, according to sources in Kabul who have seen it, but political pressure has so far resulted in heavy redaction and kept it from public release. .*Ashraf Ghani did not win the election.* [A U.S. agency] concluded in July [2014] that it was mathematically impossible for Ghani to win, given Afghan demographics and the initial 46 percent to 32 percent first-round vote spread, according to sources familiar with the analysis. According to sources who reviewed the private report, the top experts in statistical analysis in the United States used every known computer model of election balloting and concluded that a Ghani victory was scientifically impossible. In simple terms, there is no mathematical doubt that *Abdullah Abdullah won* (my emphasis).<sup>2</sup>

While this present article was approached without any explicit biases based on rumors of numerous journalistic accounts of the 2014 Afghan Presidential Election, it would be less than sincere, however, to suggest that we believed that the election was not plagued with significant irregularities. Nonetheless, we wanted to conduct systematic analyses, to the extent possible, to reveal how pertinent and significant the possible irregularities were to the final election results.

We believe this research is particularly apt at this time in Afghanistan’s history because the next Afghan Presidential Election is scheduled for April 2019 and over 17 years since the U.S. invasion to oust Al Qaeda and the

Taliban Regime from Afghanistan and the establishment of the Bonn Accords that laid out the road map for Afghanistan's political future. Moreover, the country is presently at a major 'breakpoint.' A recent Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) Quarterly Report to Congress,<sup>3</sup> for example, suggested among other things that:

- As of March [2018], DOJ views the situation in Afghanistan as 'consistent with a largely lawless, weak, and dysfunctional government' with many corruption cases languishing due to the lack of political will – rather than the capacity – of the Afghan government.
- As of May 15, [2018] the ANDSF failed to improve its control over Afghanistan's districts, population, and territory since last quarter: instead, district and territorial control became slightly more contested between the government and the insurgency.
- According to DOJ, the Afghan attorney general has failed to respond to personal appeals made by several senior U.S. government officials to prosecute stalled high-profile corruption cases to show that no one was above the law. Despite these appeals, DOJ says the attorney general continues to have a poor record of prosecuting powerful and influential corrupt actors.
- USFOR-A classified ANDSF, MOD, and MOI performance assessments this quarter, a reversal from the preceding two quarters, when basic performance assessments were provided.
- According to a recent UN report, two-thirds of Afghanistan's provinces are experiencing a drought due to a precipitation deficit of 70 percent in recent months. USAID has told SIGAR that precipitation and snowpack levels have been so low that, in many areas, the current rain-fed winter wheat crop has been effectively lost. The UN estimates that, over the next six months, more than two million people will face severe food insecurity and will be in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>4</sup>

Afghanistan's Unity Government formed after the controversial 2014 Presidential Election is anything but united. 'President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, in their fourth year of partnership, have so far ostensibly gone their separate ways in dealing with the country's challenges.<sup>5</sup> The initial "power-sharing relationships between Ghani and Abdullah, a direct result of the 2014 election (see below) has been revealed by most indicators to be a dismal failure. Legislative and local elections have been delayed, many prominent Afghans have called for a national Loyal Jirga (traditional Afghan grand assembly of tribal leaders) and referendum concerning Ghani's Government, corruption investigations against Ghani 'critics' have been instituted, and promises for electoral reform have gone unanswered.<sup>6</sup>

And possibly more damning for the long-term success to Afghanistan's stability and progress, ethno-linguistic and regional identity schisms have become increasingly prominent in the country. 'Identity politics remained in the margins during the many decades of political turmoil in the country, but it now vividly stirs up debates among a wider population. Opposition to the move on e-IDs [the electronic ID card or *e-Tazkira* that was to serve as an official national identity card to be used for a wide variety of activities] has so far led to protests in Panjshir, Badakhshan and Parwan provinces, protestors carrying signs defiant of official symbols. Demands for political autonomy were raised by one MP from Badakhshan, Latif Pedram, should e-IDs be distributed in their current format.<sup>7</sup>

This research is based and premised on the fact that the Afghanistan Constitution established free and fair elections for various levels of the Afghanistan state as a bedrock for the country's move towards democracy. Specifically the Constitution of Afghanistan states:

The President shall be elected by receiving more than fifty percent of votes cast by voters through free, general, secret and direct voting. The presidential term shall expire on 1st of Jawza of the fifth year after elections. Elections for the new President shall be held within thirty to sixty days prior to the end of the presidential term. If in the first round none of the candidates gets more than fifty percent of the votes, elections for the second round shall be held within two weeks from the date election results are proclaimed, and, in this round, only two candidates who have received the highest number of votes in the first round shall participate. In case one of the presidential candidates dies during the first or second round of voting or after elections, but prior to the declaration of results, re-election shall be held according to provisions of the law.<sup>8</sup>

Each Afghan election since 2004 has been fraught with some fraud, but the Presidential Election of 2014 seems to be a special case. Here, as suggested above, irregularities were alleged to be so widespread that the Abudullah Abudullah campaign against Ashraf Ghani claimed that:

[L]arge-scale fraud using the code word "stuffed sheep" [was used] to discuss illegally filled ballot boxes. In 15 minutes of sometimes slightly surreal conversation, two men urge[d] an official to fire election staff with suspect loyalties and replace them with known supporters, ramp up plans for vote buying and ballot stuffing, and close down polling stations in areas thought to be unsympathetic. "Take the sheep into the mountain and bring them back stuffed," one man says, before apparently lamenting the growing cost of buying votes. "The price of goats and sheep has gone up these days."<sup>9</sup>

We will see explicit evidence of 'stuffed sheep' ballots below and what can only be interpreted as widespread voting fraud. And the extent of this fraud defies any recent such similar episodes that I am aware of in any country claiming to have a Democratic national election.<sup>10</sup>

## ***Afghan presidential elections***

The explicit purpose of this article is to systematically examine the 2014 Afghan Presidential Election results and to purport their meanings and implications. I have attempted to conduct this analysis as objective as possible and I have not pursued any of this research to validate or invalidate claims of any Afghan electoral party or candidate.

Before systematically assessing the 2014 election, let me first briefly assess the first two previous Afghan Presidential Elections (i.e. 2004 and 2009) to establish context for this analysis.

### **2004 Afghanistan presidential election**

The first Afghan Presidential Election was held on 9 October 2004. Hamid Karzai won the election over 17 other candidates with 54.4% of the vote. Yunus Qanooni finished second receiving 16.3% of the vote while Mohammed Mohaqiq (11.7%) and Rashid Dostum (10.%) finished third and fourth respectively. A number of interesting facts emerged from this first Afghan national election, especially considering that the leading four presidential candidates were all from the four leading ethno-linguistic groups of Afghanistan.

This election represented a massive logistics effort to supply all 4,800 polling stations using over 30,000 ballot boxes. The complexity of this election not only involved the logistics of voting during a time of conflict but also getting the ballots counted. 'More than 2,000 trucks, four Mi8 helicopters, 135 donkeys, and even boats in Bamyán and Jalalabad carried the election material.'<sup>11</sup> This presidential election also represented and reflected 'historical ethnic patterns that have long driven conflict dynamics in the county. No candidate received significant support outside of their particular ethno-linguistic group.'<sup>12</sup> This was a major finding of this initial election assessment. Statistical analysis, based on simple correlation analysis, leaves little doubt that Pashtuns tended to vote for a Pashtun ( $r = .88$  with  $p < .0001$ ) – Hamid Karzai – and explicitly against Tajiks. ( $r = -.44$  with  $p < .01$ ). Similarly Tajiks voted for the Tajik candidate – Yunus Qanooni ( $r = .84$  with  $p < .0001$ ) and against Pashtun Karzai ( $r = -.54$  with  $p < .001$ ). Likewise Hazaras voted for the Hazara candidate – Haji Mohaqiq ( $r = .91$  with  $p < .0001$ ) and Uzbeks voted for the Uzbek candidate – Rashid Dostum ( $r = .88$  with  $p < .0001$ ).<sup>13</sup> These results suggested that no candidate won as a national candidate and the voting in many respects merely reified ethnic dynamics that have helped drive Afghan politics for decades.<sup>14</sup> Hence, one could argue persuasively that the initial 2004 Presidential Election was more procedural than substantive.

More than three-quarters of Afghanistan's nearly 12 million registered voters (70%) were estimated to cast ballots during this election. This is an incredibly high voter turnout considering that this was Afghanistan's first

national election and held during an active insurgency. Only 1.3% of the votes were judged invalid. This is an extremely low figure considering what will be realized in later elections, especially the 2009 and 2014 presidential elections. Moreover it is not improbable that the actual voter turn out was exaggerated but I know of no analyses that have explored this dynamic concerning the 2004 election.

## 2009 Afghanistan presidential election

On 20 August 2009, Afghanistan held its second Presidential Election. Unlike the first election, this election was fraught with enormous controversy. Karzai won reelection with 49.67% of the vote (below the constitutionally required 50%+1 of the vote), while his opponent Abdullah Abdullah finished second with 30.59% of the vote. The election was characterized by poor security, poor voter turn out estimated to be between 30–33% by the United Nations.<sup>15</sup>

As we witnessed in the 2004 presidential election, the 2009 election also witnessed voting almost exclusively along ethno-linguistic lines. The results clearly indicate that ethnicity continues to play an overriding role in Afghan political affairs. This is particularly evident among Pashtuns and Tajiks. Pashtuns voted primarily for the two leading Pashtun candidates – Karzai ( $r = 0.79$ ) or Ahmadzai ( $r = 0.66$ ) – and against the Tajik candidate Abdullah ( $r = -0.71$ ) – while Tajiks voted overwhelmingly for Abdullah ( $r = 0.80$ ) and against Karzai ( $r = -0.64$ ). While ethnic Hazaras tended to vote for Bashardost ( $r = 0.53$ ), they did not explicitly vote against other candidates, although there was a significant but not overly strong anti-Karzai Hazara vote ( $r = -0.37$ ).<sup>16</sup>

Apparent fraud was also very evident during this election:

Though Karzai emerged as the eventual winner, revelations of countrywide electoral fraud by all presidential candidates stripped him of the majority 50% plus votes attributed to him (see: Table 1 for the uncertified and certified final results released by Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) on 16 September 2009 and 21 October 2009). The Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) served as the key electoral watchdog, composed primarily of non-Afghan officials. It was the ECC which exposed the extent of the fraud in electoral registrations and ballots, and which subsequently invalidated about one million or *approximately one-third of Karzai votes in the presidential*

**Table 1.** Uncertified and certified presidential votes.

Candidate	Sept 16 uncertified votes (%)	Oct 21 certified votes
Hamid Karzai	3,093,256 (54.6)	2,283,907 (49.67)
Abdullah Abdullah	1,571,581 (27.8)	1,406,242 (30.59)
Ramazan Bashardost	520,627 (9.2)	481,072 (10.46)
Ashraf Ghani	149,720 (2.7)	135,106 (2.9)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,662,758</b>	<b>4,823,090</b>

*election*, forcing a second round of voting. The EEC investigated 600 of the most serious complaints and 'sample audited' suspect votes at 3377 polling stations. It dismissed all the votes cast at 210 of these stations. In the aftermath of the election analysis, the ECC determined that Karzai only received 48.29% of the vote. On 19 October 2009 the ECC announced the completion of the audit process based on a review of the ballot boxes that had been quarantined by the IEC. The investigation showed that no candidate received over 50% of the vote, and that a runoff vote was required to determine a winner. Karzai's campaign team attributed the decision to foreign interference and hinted at not accepting the results. This triggered a series of high-diplomatic negotiations, encouraging the candidates to accept the findings. On October 21, the IEC announced that Karzai had received 49.67% of the vote and Abdullah received 30.59% of the vote (see Table 1).<sup>17</sup> A subsequent runoff election was scheduled for 7 November 2009 but on 1 November 2009 Abdullah Abdullah withdrew from the race, making the presidential runoff a one-man race. On 2 November 2009 the IEC declared Karzai as president-elect (my emphasis).<sup>18</sup>

Analysts including Anand Gopal reported on fraudulent voter registration policies.<sup>19</sup> 'As early as February 2009, Martine van Bijlert of the nongovernmental Afghanistan Analysts Network published an extensive white paper reporting that an updated voter registration drive might have produced up to three million duplicate voting cards ripe for abuse. In addition, she described how the strange system of "proxy" registration of female voters in Pashtun districts, designed to protect the modesty of local women, was vulnerable to large-scale fraud.'<sup>20</sup> It is hard to believe that these types of violations could occur without planning and without an explicit purpose. On the personal level, when I was in Kandahar in 2009 I was offered hundreds of voting cards for \$10.

## **2014 Afghanistan presidential election**

'Elections in Afghanistan over the past decade have rarely gone smoothly, and those in 2014 were no exception.'<sup>21</sup> It must also be considered that countries in conflict as well as countries going through fundamental changes in their political and economic systems often experience political decay. As suggested by Samuel Huntington, 'what is the reason of political instability and violence in these countries? ... rapid social change and the rapid mobilization of new groups into politics coupled with the slow development of political institutions.'<sup>22</sup> Likewise, Donald Horowitz has pointed out that young democracies often fall victim to the problems of their past as they appropriate colonial institutions or western constitutional provisions.<sup>23</sup> Most certainly, one of the causes of violence and instability in Afghanistan has been because of the lag of the development of political institutions.

The 2014 Afghanistan Presidential Election was hyped as the first peaceful transfer of regime power in the history of the country. In actuality the



election became highly contested with fraud being accused by the leading candidates and bringing Afghanistan to the brink of a very serious political crisis.<sup>24</sup>

The United States and the international community have invested a significant amount of time, energy, resources, and, most importantly, manpower in Afghanistan since 2001. The 2014 Afghanistan Presidential Election marked a crucial milestone in Afghanistan's democratic system, with its first projected transfer of power from President Hamid Karzai to an elected successor. Andrew Wilder, the director of the United States Institute of Peace in Afghanistan and Pakistan, highlighted the importance of the 2014 Afghan Presidential election in testimony to the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, stating '[the] stakes in 2014 are not simply the election of a new Afghan leadership, but the endurance of Afghanistan's constitutional political order.'<sup>25</sup> With substantial investments in Afghanistan's democratic apparatus, a successful election was suspected to be a victory in 'nation building' for the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the rest of the coalition. A failed election could possibly tarnish the United States, NATO, and the entire coalition's reputation and legitimacy.

27 candidates ran for Afghanistan's Presidency, however Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission disqualified 16 candidates for a variety of reasons and by April of 2014 only 8 candidates stayed in the race.<sup>26</sup>

On 4 April 2014 and 14 June 2014, Afghanistan held its Presidential Elections to elect President Hamid Karzai's successor. With Afghans in the 'lead' and the coalition in a 'supporting' role for security and administration of the 2014 Presidential Election, widespread corruption and irregularities were evident when analyzing election results from the first election to the subsequent runoff election. This article's section utilizes election data published by the National Democratic Institute,<sup>27</sup> a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization that has supported democratic institutions and practices in every region of the world for more than three decades, to analyze the fraudulent results of the 2014 Afghanistan Presidential Elections.

On 4 April 2014, the first round of the Afghan Presidential Election recorded 6,645,384 total votes, producing the following results:

- (1) Abdullah Abdullah (44.72%),
- (2) Ashraf Ghani (31.37%),
- (3) Zalmay Rassoul (11.3%),
- (4) Abdul Rasul Sayyaf (7.00%), and
- (5) Others (5.61%).

Voter turnout was considerably high – 58% – considering the threats made by the Taliban concerning the election.<sup>28</sup> Tables 2 and 3 present presidential election results by province. Note Abdullah received the

**Table 2.** 2014 April presidential election results by province.

Province	Dr. Abdullah Votes	Dr. Abdullah Percentage	Dr. Ghani Votes	Dr. Ghani Percentage
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,972,141</i>	<i>44.72%</i>	<i>2,084,547</i>	<i>31.37%</i>
Badakhshan	191,260	64.65%	42,548	14.38%
Badghis	86,620	67.19%	12,577	9.76%
Baghlan	152,560	59.95%	51,953	20.42%
Balkh	238,582	60.54%	109,694	27.83%
Bamyan	113,324	67.54%	18,427	10.98%
Daykundi	128,713	74.70%	19,113	11.09%
Farah	18,029	31.45%	22,708	39.61%
Faryab	77,633	29.12%	173,225	64.99%
Ghazni	194,264	53.85%	68,328	18.94%
Ghor	180,446	59.44%	39,698	13.08%
Helmand	17,905	16.98%	34,110	32.35%
Herat	301,364	60.86%	54,618	11.03%
Jawzjan	29,375	19.57%	101,985	67.93%
Kabul	389,584	49.49%	248,220	31.53%
Kandahar	26,500	10.43%	34,698	13.66%
Kapisa	52,544	78.70%	2,745	4.11%
Khost	4,040	3.56%	83,691	73.69%
Kunar	13,257	12.26%	69,545	64.29%
Kunduz	100,413	46.60%	80,893	37.54%
Laghman	8,495	10.33%	40,673	49.48%
Logar	6,169	18.55%	20,953	62.99%
Nangarhar	63,689	18.93%	200,409	59.55%
Nimroz	9,674	20.39%	15,562	32.80%
Nooristan	23,234	37.60%	9,001	14.57%
Paktika	19,097	10.46%	118,089	64.66%
Paktya	13,610	5.36%	157,826	62.16%
Panjshir	37,925	87.20%	166	0.38%
Parwan	107,478	71.65%	8,395	5.60%
Samangan	86,845	60.69%	37,632	26.30%
Sar-e-pul	74,711	50.00%	57,097	38.21%
Takhar	159,375	49.85%	121,100	37.88%
Urozgan	5,317	23.10%	6,022	26.16%
Wardak	36,253	36.02%	15,064	14.97%
Zabul	3,856	18.74%	7,782	37.81%

majority of votes in 14 of the provinces and a near majority in 2 others. Ghani, on the other hand, received the majority of votes in only 8 provinces while the remaining 12 provinces saw no candidate receiving a majority of the votes. Abdullah defeated Ghani by a rousing 13.35%.

Figure 1<sup>29</sup> presents a map of Ghani and Abdullah's vote by province. As suggested this figure and Table 2 Ghani's support came primarily from Pashtun eastern provinces (Khost, Kunar, Logar, Nangarhar, Paktika, and Paktya) and provinces where his first Vice Presidential candidate Abdul Rashid Dostum has significant control and popularity (Faryab and Jawzjan). Its interesting to note that Ghani did not receive a majority of the vote in the traditional Pashtun homelands of the of Southern Afghanistan – Kandahar, Helmand, Nimroz, Farah, and Zabul. Zalmay Rassoul carried Kandahar.

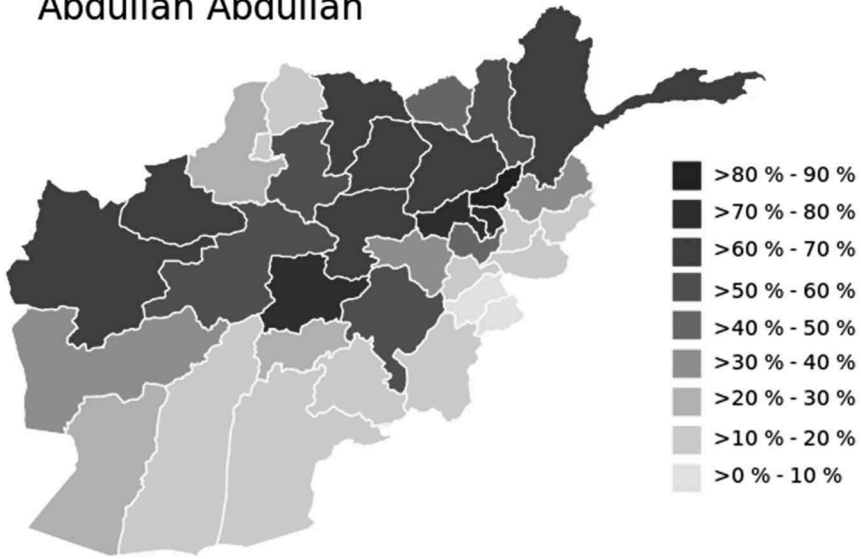
As we witnessed in the 2004 and 2009 Presidential elections, ethno-linguistic populations tended to vote for candidates of their ethnicity.<sup>30</sup>

**Table 3.** 2014 April presidential election results by province.

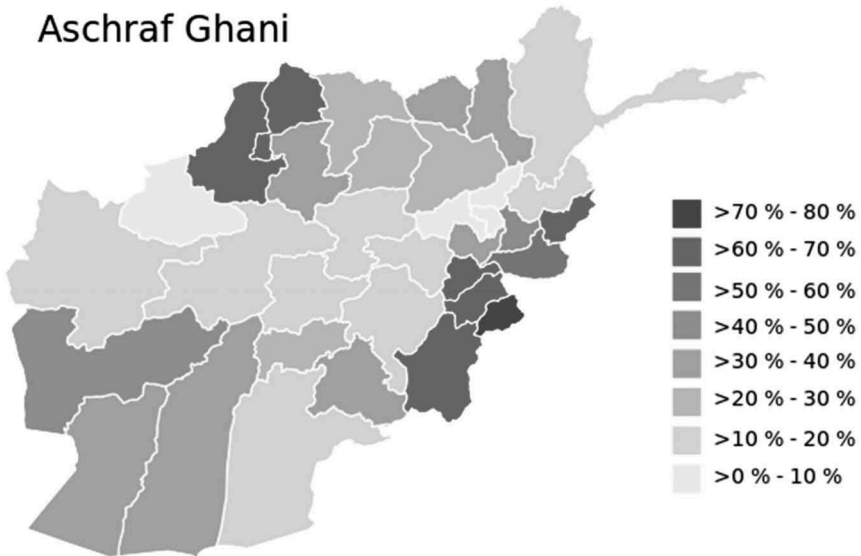
Province	Prof Sayyaf		Other Candidates	
	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage
Total	465,207	7.00%	372,492	5.61%
Badakhshan	25,537	8.63%	8,460	2.86%
Badghis	16,657	12.92%	6,075	4.71%
Baghlan	10,033	3.94%	11,534	4.53%
Balkh	4,512	1.14%	9,241	2.34%
Bamyan	7,695	4.59%	7,628	4.55%
Daykundi	794	0.46%	3,781	2.19%
Farah	6,016	10.49%	3,102	5.41%
Faryab	4,277	1.60%	4,918	1.84%
Ghazni	22,540	6.25%	14,839	4.11%
Ghor	48,565	16.00%	7,753	2.55%
Helmand	3,980	3.77%	21,017	19.93%
Herat	67,892	13.71%	15,051	3.04%
Jawzjan	3,020	2.01%	5,723	3.81%
Kabul	59,107	7.51%	25,437	3.23%
Kandahar	4,175	1.64%	54,011	21.26%
Kapisa	3,825	5.73%	3,907	5.85%
Khost	2,648	2.33%	14,576	12.83%
Kunar	7,416	6.86%	6,046	5.59%
Kunduz	12,272	5.70%	10,683	4.96%
Laghman	8,096	9.85%	17,303	21.05%
Logar	3,721	11.19%	1,621	4.87%
Nangarhar	24,041	7.14%	23,142	6.88%
Nimroz	4,550	9.59%	3,557	7.50%
Nooristan	17,858	28.90%	4,115	6.66%
Paktika	5,630	3.08%	13,152	7.20%
Paktya	34,847	13.72%	28,709	11.31%
Panjshir	946	2.18%	336	0.77%
Parwan	9,191	6.13%	9,123	6.08%
Samangan	3,612	2.52%	4,176	2.92%
Sar-e-pul	3,472	2.32%	5,035	3.37%
Takhar	12,063	3.77%	11,106	3.47%
Urozgan	637	2.77%	5,713	24.82%
Wardak	24,559	24.40%	8,082	8.03%
Zabul	1,023	4.9%	3,540	17.20%

Figure 1 and Table 2 suggest that Abdullah Abdullah did extremely well in the northern and central Afghan provinces where Pashtuns do not hold the majority for most of the provincial populations. Table 4<sup>31</sup> clearly suggests that Afghan voting continues to be almost exclusively influenced by ethno-linguistic lines.<sup>32</sup> Provincial election results for each of the four leading candidates during the first election were compiled and correlated against the ethnic breakdown of the 34 Afghan provinces. The results indicate a significant correlation between Abdullah Abdullah, being supported by Tajiks ( $r = 0.69$ ) and Hazaras ( $r = 0.40$ ) while experiencing a significant negative correlation ( $r = -0.74$ ) in support from ethnic Pashtuns. Although ethnic Pashtuns split their support between several candidates during the April election, Ashraf Ghani, an ethnic Pashtun, had a positive correlation of support from Pashtuns ( $r = 0.50$ ) and Uzbeks ( $r = 0.24$ ). Not only did Afghans vote along ethnic lines, but they also tended

## Abdullah Abdullah



## Aschraf Ghani



**Figure 1.** Election results by province.

to vote against opposition ethnic groups. During the first election, Ashraf Ghani had significant negative correlation relative to the probability of support from Tajiks ( $r = -0.52$ ) and Hazaras ( $r = -0.30$ ).

A significant difference between the 2014 election and the 2004 and 2009 elections was that in 2014 three of the four leading candidates were all Pashtun. Pashtuns, as we saw in earlier presidential elections, also

**Table 4.** Correlation coefficients (Pearson *r*): 2014 April presidential election results by province 2009 and ethno-linguistic provincial votes received (%).

	Tajik Abdullah <sup>a</sup>	Pashtun Ghani	Pashtun Rassoul	Pashtun Sayyaf
Pashtun	-0.7400	<b>0.5043</b>	<b>0.3521</b>	-0.0278
Tajik	<b>0.6891</b>	-0.5239	-0.3116	0.0139
Hazara	<b>0.3984</b>	-0.2971	-0.0469	-0.1406
Uzbek	0.0998	<b>0.2400</b>	-0.3339	-0.3665

<sup>a</sup>While Abdullah Abdullah is the son of a Pashtun father from the Kandahar area, and a Tajik mother from the north, politically he is most closely identified with the main Tajik political party in the north. During the anti-Soviet jihad, Abdullah was a major player in the main Tajik mujahideen party, Jamiat-e Islami and later became the main spokesman for the Northern Alliance.

significantly voted against Abdullah Abdullah. Pashtuns, as expected, voted primarily for two of the Pashtun candidates Ghani ( $r = 0.53$ ) and Zalmi Rassoul ( $r = 0.35$ ). Rassoul had considerable support in Kandahar where he was the leading vote getter with 53% of the vote. He also had considerable election support in other southern Pashtun provinces of Helmand, Nimroz and Urozgan.

Abdul Rasul Sayyaf received only 7% of the total vote and only garnered considerable votes in his home province of Wardak (24.4%), Nooristan (28.9%), Ghor (16%) and Herat, the home of his Vice Presidential candidate Ismail Khan, (13.7%).

Table 4 also suggests that Hazaras supported Abdullah and Uzbeks supported Ghani but spread their votes amongst other candidates.

Since no candidate received the required 50%+1 of the popular vote required by the constitution, a runoff election was required to elect President Karzai's successor. Table 5 presents the results of the runoff election held on 14 June 2014. This election saw an increase in voter participation across the country, with an additional 1,302,143 votes cast for a total of 7,947,527 votes. With a total voting population of approximately 25,354,494, Afghanistan witnessed a 31.35% voter turnout for the runoff election, versus 26.2% during the first election. Surprisingly, Ashraf Ghani claimed widespread support during the runoff to earn the victory with 56.44% of the popular votes, against Abdullah Abdullah's 43.56%. After beating Ashraf Ghani by 887,594 votes during the first election, Abdullah Abdullah ended up losing to Ashraf Ghani by 1,024,249 votes during the runoff election – a swing of 1,911,843 votes, well over twice the number of all the votes that were received by candidates other than Ghani and Abdullah in the April election, even though Rassoul, Sayyaf, and Sherzai threw their support to Abdullah.

Afghans voting along ethno-linguist lines might explain the massive swing from the first election to the runoff in favor of Ashraf Ghani.

**Table 5.** 2014 June Runoff presidential election results by province.

Province	Dr. Abdullah		Dr. Ashraf Ghani		Margin (#)	Margin (%)
	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage		
Totals	3,461,639	43.56%	4,485,888	56.44%	-1,024,249	-12.89%
Badakhshan	247,637	79.32%	64,578	20.68%	183,059	58.63%
Badghis	88,650	65.50%	46,702	34.50%	41,948	30.99%
Baghlan	212,223	55.19%	172,317	44.81%	39,906	10.38%
Balkh	224,506	63.11%	131,259	36.89%	93,247	26.21%
Bamyan	126,570	75.64%	40,758	24.36%	85,812	51.28%
Daykundi	136,779	77.49%	39,743	22.51%	97,036	54.97%
Farah	40,133	53.24%	35,252	46.76%	4,881	6.47%
Faryab	113,228	34.20%	217,895	65.80%	-104,667	-31.61%
Ghazni	181,791	58.47%	129,146	41.53%	52,645	16.93%
Ghor	238,303	72.48%	90,491	27.52%	147,812	44.96%
Helmand	18,083	30.64%	40,943	69.36%	-22,860	-38.73%
Herat	325,843	63.65%	186,118	36.35%	139,725	27.29%
Jawzjan	25,179	19.35%	104,957	80.65%	-79,778	-61.30%
Kabul	422,269	48.17%	454,296	51.83%	-32,027	-3.65%
Kandahar	51,186	15.99%	268,946	84.01%	-217,760	-68.02%
Kapisa	74,364	87.36%	10,756	12.64%	63,608	74.73%
Khost	11,628	2.91%	388,532	97.09%	-376,904	-94.19%
Kunar	25,521	12.03%	186,697	87.97%	-161,176	-75.95%
Kunduz	81,375	42.36%	110,742	57.64%	-29,367	-15.29%
Laghman	16,986	14.21%	102,556	85.79%	-85,570	-71.58%
Logar	8,722	9.15%	86,567	90.85%	-77,845	-81.69%
Nangarhar	91,738	22.37%	318,348	77.63%	-226,610	-55.26%
Nimroz	10,970	34.67%	20,668	65.33%	-9,698	-30.65%
Nooristan	57,193	70.68%	23,722	29.32%	33,471	41.37%
Paktika	47,389	11.71%	357,173	88.29%	-309,784	-76.57%
Paktya	26,960	8.06%	307,445	91.94%	-280,485	-83.88%
Panjshir	60,214	93.65%	4,085	6.35%	56,129	87.29%
Parwan	124,287	86.11%	20,044	13.89%	104,243	72.22%
Samangan	89,141	63.17%	51,962	36.83%	37,179	26.35%
Sar-e-pul	62,117	46.72%	70,830	53.28%	-8,713	-6.55%
Takhar	160,218	52.21%	146,648	47.79%	13,570	4.42%
Urozgan	6,709	32.52%	13,922	67.48%	-7,213	-34.96%
Wardak	49,281	20.91%	186,382	79.09%	-137,101	-58.18%
Zabul	4,446	7.43%	55,408	92.57%	-50,962	-85.14%

With Rassoul and Sayyaf not participating in the runoff election, ethnic Pashtuns it could be argued rallied behind their Pashtun candidate to defeat the Tajik candidate, Abdullah Abdullah.

Although this proposed proposition is probable without circumstantial evidence, additional context into Afghan politics refutes the proposition. As suggested above, both Zalmay Rassoul and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf's camps pledged support for Abdullah Abdullah before the 14 June 2014 runoff election. Zalmay Rassoul, the third-place finisher in the first round presidential election with 11.5% of the votes, announced his endorsement for Presidential Candidate Abdullah Abdullah on 11 May 2014.<sup>33</sup> Zalmay Rassoul is an ethnic Pashtun, whose endorsement of Abdullah was predicted by some as to possibly cause Ashraf Ghani to withdraw from the runoff election. On 3 June 2014, former-Presidential Candidate Abdul Rasul Sayyaf's two vice-presidential running mates, Mohammad Ismail Khan and Abdul Wahah Erfan,

along with Abdul Rasul Sayyaf's other supporters proclaimed their endorsement for Abdullah Abdullah in the runoff election.<sup>34</sup> With all these endorsements for Abdullah one would expect that with his already wide margin lead from the initial election that he was in a good position to win the runoff election.

Table 6<sup>35</sup> represents the differences in voting percentages from the April (initial) to June (runoff) elections. Ghani won six provinces that he lost in the April election. The provinces of Farah, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Sar-e-pul and Wardak all represent significant swing provinces. In Farah, Ghani had more votes during the initial election, but Abdullah apparently gained swing votes. In Kabul, Abdullah had a majority win during the primary (49.5% – 31.5%), but lost by 3.66% in the runoff (possibly all due to swing votes). This is a significant change and as we will see below, this province experienced extremely 'unusual' voting patterns during the runoff election (see Table 8).<sup>36</sup> Whereas Ghani only received 34,698 votes (13.66%) during the initial election, he received 268,946 votes (84%) in the runoff election. This would suggest that even though the leading Pashtun candidate in Kandahar, Zalmay Rassoul, threw his support to Abdullah, Ghani still received almost all of the votes from this province; Ghani gained 217,763 votes! On the surface this seems highly improbable. In Kunduz, Abdullah had a majority win during the April election (46.6% – 37.5%), but lost by 15.3% in the runoff. While Ghani receiving all the swing votes in the runoff election might explain this, this appears highly unlikely. In Sar-e-pul, Abdullah had a majority win during the primary (46.6% – 37.5%), but lost by 15.3% in the runoff – a tremendous change in the province's voting pattern. Again, it seems highly unlikely that this was just a result of Ghani receiving all the swing votes. In Wardak, Abdullah had twice as many votes during the primary, but due to Sayyaf dropping out, Ghani apparently gained Pashtun votes.

Hypothetically, if **all** voters who did not vote for Abdullah Abdullah in the first election voted for Ashraf Ghani during the first election, Ashraf Ghani would have edged out Abdullah Abdullah by a margin of 55.28% to 44.72%. The proposed voting population would include supporters for all other candidates during the first election. Although this idea may seem nearly impossible and unimaginable, the results of the runoff election almost mirrored the hypothetical margin of victory by Ashraf Ghani if he received ALL of votes not cast for Abdullah Abdullah in the April election (56.44% to 43.56%).

During the runoff election, voter turnout in several provinces also raises red flags that signal election fraud that was alleged by many. With the overall voter turnout of 31.35% across the country, Ghor, Khost, Kunar, Paktika, Paktya, and Panjshir all reported over 45% voter turnout. Of note, Paktika – a conflict-ridden province – *reported a 97.77% voter turnout*, where 404,562 of the 413,799 eligible voters traveled to election polls on 14 June 2014 to cast their ballots for the next president. Ashraf Ghani received

**Table 6.** Percentage differences (Changes) of provincial votes from the preliminary election to the runoff election.

	Abdullah	Ghani
<b>Total</b>	-1.17%	<b>25.08%</b>
Badakhshan	<b>14.67%</b>	6.30%
Badghis	<b>-1.70%</b>	24.75%
Baghlan	<b>-4.77%</b>	24.39%
Balkh	<b>2.57%</b>	9.06%
Bamyan	<b>8.10%</b>	13.38%
Daykundi	<b>2.79%</b>	11.42%
<b>Farah</b>	21.79%	<b>7.15%</b>
Faryab	5.07%	<b>0.82%</b>
Ghazni	<b>4.62%</b>	22.59%
Ghor	<b>13.04%</b>	14.45%
Helmand	13.66%	<b>37.02%</b>
Herat	<b>2.79%</b>	25.32%
Jawzjan	-0.22%	<b>12.72%</b>
<b>Kabul</b>	<b>-1.32%</b>	20.29%
<b>Kandahar</b>	5.56%	<b>70.36%</b>
Kapisa	<b>8.66%</b>	8.52%
Khost	-0.65%	<b>23.40%</b>
Kunar	-0.23%	<b>23.68%</b>
<b>Kunduz</b>	<b>-4.24%</b>	20.10%
Laghman	3.87%	<b>36.31%</b>
Logar	-9.39%	<b>27.85%</b>
Nangarhar	3.45%	<b>18.08%</b>
Nimroz	14.29%	<b>32.53%</b>
Nooristan	<b>33.08%</b>	14.75%
Paktika	1.26%	<b>23.63%</b>
Paktya	2.70%	<b>29.78%</b>
Panjshir	<b>6.44%</b>	5.97%
Parwan	<b>14.46%</b>	8.29%
Samangan	<b>2.48%</b>	10.53%
<b>Sar-e-pul</b>	<b>-3.27%</b>	<b>15.07%</b>
Takhar	<b>2.36%</b>	9.91%
<b>Urozgan</b>	9.42%	<b>41.32%</b>
Wardak	<b>-15.11%</b>	64.12%
Zabul	-11.31%	<b>54.76%</b>

357,173 of those 404,562 votes, equaling 88.29%. After further examination of the vote counts in Paktika during the first election and runoff election, several other concerning details emerged. There was a 54.86% increase in voter turnout, as 221,927 additional votes emerged during the runoff election as compared to the first election. Additionally, Ashraf Ghani gained 239,084 more votes during the runoff election in Paktika Province, also a conflict-ridden province. In Khost Province, records indicate that 73.18% of eligible voters (400,160 of 546,800) showed up to polling stations on 14 June 2014 to cast their ballots. Of the reported ballots, 388,532 or 97.09% of the votes were in favor of Ashraf Ghani. Even more alarming is the increase of 286,590 ballots from the first election and the runoff election, representing a 252.35% increase in voter turnout. These are just two extreme cases of



provinces that reported election results that indicated a significant probability of election irregularities in favor of the declared victor, Ashraf Ghani.

As suggested throughout this article, it has been argued that historically, ethnic divides in Afghanistan remain a significant force in Afghan politics.<sup>37</sup> As posited by Table 7, The 2014 Afghan Presidential Runoff Election witnessed alliances of Tajik-Hazara ethnic groups supporting Abdullah Abdullah and Pashtun-Uzbeks ethnic groups supporting Ashraf Ghani.

During the runoff election following the absence of Zalmay Rassoul and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, both ethnic Pashtuns, Ashraf Ghani experienced a significant correlation increase in support from ethnic Pashtuns ( $r = 0.76$  from  $r = 0.50$ ). This correlation further confirms that Afghans voted along ethno-linguistic lines. Or at least votes being counted from these provinces represented this dynamic. Contrary to this theory, Abdullah Abdullah experienced a slight decrease in support from ethnic Tajiks ( $r = 0.66$  from  $r = 0.69$ ) and Hazaras ( $r = 0.33$  from  $r = 0.40$ ) between the first and runoff elections. The latter correlational analysis of the runoff election further possibly promotes the idea of potential fraud regarding the additional votes that elected Ashraf Ghani. These correlations, even when falling, indicate the difficulties involved in overcoming ethnic lines in a tribal society to promote nationalism and unity in support of a legitimate centralized government.

During the April election, Abdullah Abdullah won the popular vote in 19 of the 34 provinces (Ashraf Ghani won 14, and Zalmay Rassoul won Kandahar). Going head-to-head during the runoff election two months later, Ashraf Ghani unexpectedly gained the popular vote in 18 of the 34 provinces, giving him the overall victory in the presidential election (see Tables 5 and 6). In Kabul, Abdullah Abdullah had a firm lead during the first election (49.5% to 31.5%) but ended up losing the province's popular vote in the runoff by 3.7%. This is an incredible voter change in preferences in a city that has a large mixed ethno-linguistic population. Since Zalmay Rassoul won the popular vote in Kandahar during the first election with 53% of the votes, ethnic Pashtuns in Kandahar apparently voted along ethnic-linguistic lines to give Ashraf Ghani a decisive victory in the province during the runoff election. In Kunduz, Abdullah Abdullah again had a firm lead during the first election (46.6% to 37.5%) but ended up losing the province's popular vote in the runoff by 15.3%. Again, a massive voter swing in votes that raise many

**Table 7.** Correlation coefficients (Pearson  $r$ ): 2014 June (Runoff) presidential election results by province 2009 and ethno-linguistic provincial votes received (%).

	Tajik Abdullah	Pashtun Ghani
Pashtun	-0.7552	<b>0.7552</b>
Tajik	<b>0.6562</b>	-0.6562
Hazara	<b>0.3324</b>	-0.3324
Uzbek	<b>0.0258</b>	-0.0258

questions. In Sar-e-pul, Abdullah Abdullah had a large margin of victory during the first election (50% to 38.2%), but ended up losing the province's popular vote in the runoff by 7%. Similar to Kunduz, removal of other candidates alone seemingly cannot explain the swing votes, the ethnic-linguistic composition of the province indicate that Pashtuns and Uzbeks compose of 75% of the province. In Wardak, Abdullah Abdullah had over twice the number of votes during the first election (36% to 15%) but ended up losing the province's popular vote in the runoff by 60% since Abdul Rasul Sayyaf's voters apparently reverted to ethnic-linguistic lines and supported Ashraf Ghani.

After the runoff election Afghanistan descended into chaos as both Ghani and his rival, Abdullah Abdullah, accused each other of fraud. As suggested below, the possibilities of violence concerning the election results<sup>38</sup> reached such a state that US Secretary of State John Kerry intervened to work out a compromise solution with Ghani and Abdullah forming a 'unity government' with the two candidates sharing power; Ghani was made President and Abdullah was made the country's newly created position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

A year and one-half after the election, Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission finally publically confirmed the election results. The 'official' election results changed from those presented in Table 5 as a significant number of votes were invalidated. 'More than 850,000 ballots were invalidated after months of recounting under the supervision of the United Nations. Of those invalidated votes, more than 567,000 were cast for Ghani, while more than 284,000 were cast for Abdullah.'<sup>39</sup>

The official election results gave Ghani the June runoff victory with 55.27% of the vote compared to Abdullah's 44.73%.<sup>40</sup> Table 8 and data presented in supplementary data may be the most important data presented in this article and require attention. And the large amount of data is purposely presented because, as will be argued below, the election results appear extremely irregular if not illegitimate.

Table 8 presents what is referred to as 'unusual' results from a variety of polling places in Afghanistan's largest province and home of the capital city, Kabul. During the April election Abdullah clearly won the province with 49.49% of the vote compared to 31.53% to Ghani. In the runoff election, Ghani won the province with 51.8% of the vote compared to 48.2% for Abdullah.

As suggested by the Table 8 numerous polling places in most of Kabul's districts experienced voting results that virtually all went to Ashraf Ghani. And it should be remembered that we are not talking about votes that had to travel hundreds of miles on mules to reach their final destination. These votes were conducted at Kabul Polling Centers that were easy to gather. Yet these results included polling places that went for Ghani 600-0, 599-1, 598-

**Table 8.** Kabul province unusual polling place data.

<i>Province</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Polling Center (Station)</i>	<i>Abdullah Total Votes</i>	<i>Ghani Total Votes</i>
Kabul	Kabul	101514 (4)	1	595
Kabul	Kabul	101514 (5)	15	584
Kabul	Kabul	101514 (6)	2	429
Kabul	Kabul	101448 (5)	2	595
Kabul	Kabul	101448 (6)	2	597
Kabul	Kabul	101448 (7)	3	597
Kabul	Kabul	101448 (8)	2	598
Kabul	Kabul	101511 (7)	6	586
Kabul	Kabul	101511 (8)	0	596
Kabul	Kabul	101499 (6)	1	592
Kabul	Kabul	101514 (1)	10	582
Kabul	Kabul	101514 (2)	9	582
Kabul	Kabul	101514 (3)	2	597
Kabul	Kabul	101532 (3)	5	590
Kabul	Kabul	101488 (1)	15	579
Kabul	Kabul	101488 (2)	3	596
Kabul	Kabul	101488 (3)	2	596
Kabul	Kabul	101488 (4)	1	597
Kabul	Kabul	101511 (6)	0	600
Kabul	Kabul	101313 (1)	6	343
Kabul	Kabul	101313 (2)	10	424
Kabul	Kabul	101511 (1)	0	600
Kabul	Kabul	101499 (2)	9	587
Kabul	Kabul	101499 (3)	1	588
Kabul	Kabul	101499 (4)	1	595
Kabul	Kabul	101499 (5)	3	594
Kabul	Kabul	101313 (3)	19	505
Kabul	Kabul	101313 (5)	7	423
Kabul	Kabul	101313 (6)	5	276
Kabul	Kabul	101313 (7)	5	241
Kabul	Kabul	101511 (2)	4	571
Kabul	Kabul	101511 (3)	2	597
Kabul	Kabul	101511 (4)	2	596
Kabul	Kabul	101511 (5)	1	597
Kabul	Kabul	101473 (1)	5	591
Kabul	Kabul	101498 (8)	14	579
Kabul	Kabul	101473 (8)	2	589
Kabul	Kabul	101473 (9)	5	592
Kabul	Kabul	101473 (10)	0	591
Kabul	Kabul	101473 (11)	13	584
Kabul	Kabul	101332 (1)	15	585
Kabul	Kabul	101322 (2)	6	586
Kabul	Kabul	101322 (3)	3	596
Kabul	Kabul	101322 (4)	2	598
Kabul	Kabul	101322 (5)	1	298
Kabul	Kabul	101322 (6)	11	585
Kabul	Kabul	101322 (7)	8	589
Kabul	Kabul	101322 (8)	18	580
Kabul	Kabul	101322 (9)	1	597
Kabul	Kabul	101510 (3)	3	589
Kabul	Kabul	101510 (4)	5	594
Kabul	Kabul	101510 (5)	0	597
Kabul	Kabul	101499 (1)	5	585
Kabul	Kabul	101176 (13)	1	317
Kabul	Kabul	101176 (14)	1	207
Kabul	Kabul	101499 (7)	1	596
Kabul	Kabul	101509 (1)	0	428

*(Continued)*

**Table 8.** (Continued).

<i>Province</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Polling Center (Station)</i>	<i>Abdullah Total Votes</i>	<i>Ghani Total Votes</i>
Kabul	Kabul	101509 (2)	5	488
Kabul	Kabul	101509 (3)	0	584
Kabul	Kabul	101509 (4)	0	599
Kabul	Kabul	101509 (5)	0	600
Kabul	Kabul	101509 (6)	3	593
Kabul	Kabul	101509 (7)	7	593
Kabul	Kabul	101535 (1)	7	593
Kabul	Kabul	101535 (3)	10	571
Kabul	Kabul	101532 (1)	11	579
Kabul	Kabul	101473 (2)	12	578
Kabul	Kabul	101473 (3)	0	598
Kabul	Kabul	101473 (4)	0	591
Kabul	Kabul	101473 (5)	0	598
Kabul	Kabul	101473 (6)	0	595
Kabul	Kabul	101473 (7)	0	593
Kabul	Kabul	101176 (4)	9	580
Kabul	Kabul	101176 (5)	18	567
Kabul	Kabul	101176 (6)	3	115
Kabul	Kabul	101176 (7)	1	88
Kabul	Kabul	101176 (8)	4	143
Kabul	Kabul	101176 (9)	7	403
Kabul	Kabul	101176 (10)	3	332
Kabul	Kabul	101176 (11)	10	471
Kabul	Kabul	101176 (12)	10	294
Kabul	Kabul	101331 (4)	0	596
Kabul	Kabul	101331 (5)	0	596
Kabul	Kabul	101331 (6)	0	598
Kabul	Kabul	101331 (7)	0	591
Kabul	Kabul	101331 (8)	0	589
Kabul	Kabul	101331 (9)	0	598
Kabul	Kabul	101331 (10)	0	592
Kabul	Kabul	101331 (11)	0	596
Kabul	Kabul	101513 (6)	9	412
Kabul	Kabul	101249 (9)	2	154
Kabul	Kabul	101249 (10)	1	323
Kabul	Kabul	101249 (2)	14	578
Kabul	Paghman	102408 (5)	1	78
Kabul	Paghman	102408 (4)	0	83
Kabul	Chahar Asyab	103429 (5)	5	465
Kabul	Chahar Asyab	103419 (4)	6	203
Kabul	Chahar Asyab	103536 (2)	6	361
Kabul	Chahar Asyab	103419 (3)	1	125
Kabul	Chahar Asyab	103536 (1)	3	214
Kabul	Chahar Asyab	103419 (2)	2	274
Kabul	Chahar Asyab	103419 (5)	0	399
Kabul	Chahar Asyab	103422 (2)	5	435
Kabul	Chahar Asyab	103536 (3)	0	279
Kabul	Chahar Asyab	103420 (4)	7	581
Kabul	Chahar Asyab	103420 (2)	9	472
Kabul	Bagrami	104461 (4)	5	583
Kabul	Bagrami	104461 (5)	9	582
Kabul	Bagrami	104460 (2)	3	330
Kabul	Bagrami	104460 (1)	3	240
Kabul	Bagrami	104460 (1)	3	240
Kabul	Bagrami	104460 (3)	1	326
Kabul	Khak-e-Jabar	109440 (1)	8	579
Kabul	Khak-e-Jabar	109443 (2)	6	497

(Continued)

**Table 8.** (Continued).

<i>Province</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Polling Center (Station)</i>	<i>Abdullah Total Votes</i>	<i>Ghani Total Votes</i>
Kabul	Khak-e-Jabar	109445 (3)	5	496
Kabul	Khak-e-Jabar	109440 (3)	11	589
Kabul	Kalakan	110354 (3)	97	1
Kabul	Kalakan	110352 (5)	346	4

1, etc. These kinds of results are virtually unknown in fair and free democratic elections. Abdullah did carry two Kabul polling places both in Kabul's Kalakan District by 97–1 and 346–4 but this was the clear exception rather than the rule. It should also be noted that no polling place can receive more than 600 total votes. Considering the number of polling places that received exactly 600 votes is highly unlikely if not impossible.

Even more disturbing are data presented in supplementary data. Supplementary data.<sup>41</sup> presents election results for 1503 polling places where Ghani received virtually all the votes and note how many of these polling places reported exactly 600 votes. In 606 polling places Ghani received all of the votes. In an additional 903 polling places Ghani received all the votes except for a few. These polling places were found in numerous provinces, especially in Kabul, Ghazni, Paktika, Paktya, Khost, Kunar, Ghor, Zabul, Wardak, Logar, Nangarhar, Laghman, Ghazni and Faryab. Even a cursory review of the supplementary data will clearly suggest that the 2014 runoff election was marred by incredibly unusual voting patterns that can only be view as highly suspicious, if not fraudulent. Moreover and more importantly, the voting results could lead an objective observer to conclude that the election and, hence Ghani's presidency is illegitimate, at least, by democratic voting standards.

The probability that these results actually represented valid votes seems to be extremely remote if not impossible. A careful examination of Table 8 and supplementary data clearly suggests that Ghani's campaign was at least partially, if not primarily, based on fraud. There is virtually no chance that 606 polling places would find Ghani receiving all votes and another 900 giving virtually all its votes to Ghani. These results in combination with other analyses presented earlier raise the very real possibility that the election results of Ashraf Ghani in 2014 were illegitimate. Significant allegations of irregularities, including ballot box stuffing, referred to, as 'stuffed sheep' as suggested in the introduction of this paper, must be taken very seriously.

Supplementary data<sup>42</sup> suggests that Abdullah Abdullah received virtually all votes in 35 polling places primarily in Ghor and Badakhshan both of which voted heavily for Abdullah province-wide. Hence, fraud might have also existed in the Abdullah campaign but apparently at levels much less significant than in the Ghani's campaign.

Paul Miller, a political scientist in the National Security Research Division at the RAND Corporation, explained the importance of the 2014 Presidential Election by stating, 'If Afghans can hold elections on time and elect someone relatively honest and competent under a process open and transparent enough to persuade all parties to accept the result – and if they can do so in the face of insecurity, international skepticism, and huge logistical challenges – the election could become a catalyst for Afghans to rally around their government, trigger negotiations with the Taliban, and ensure continued donor support for development. If they cannot, the worst prognostications of Afghanistan's future – political breakdown, fragmentation of the security forces, or even civil war – become far more likely.'<sup>43</sup> Although the elections were executed in a semi-secured environment, widespread fraud and ethnic divisions point to a weak centralized national government that sponsored a questionable election. The bitter stalemate following the runoff election by the Ghani and Abdullah required the international community led by US Secretary of State John Kerry, as suggested above, to arbitrate a power-sharing compromise by creating the National Unity Government that named Ashraf Ghani as the elected president and Abdullah Abdullah as the Chief Executive Officer. Ashraf Ghani was inaugurated as president on 29 September 2014. It is not unreasonable at all to assume that Kerry promoted this compromise because he knew that the election results were probably blatantly illegitimate.

The unity government has proved anything but 'united' as political infighting continues to disrupt day-to-day political decision making in the country. 'The eventual compromise over the candidates' competing claims to the presidency must be considered preferable to the alternative of continued uncertainty and a lack of functioning government. However, the failure of the election process and the ad hoc nature of the agreement between the candidates underlined the continuing deep flaws in Afghanistan's political system and political culture.'<sup>44</sup>

A Report by the European Union based on observations of EU election observers found 'stark' election fraud in the runoff election and that auditing only invalidated a small number of votes:

The report provides the fullest picture yet of the allegations of fraud that plagued the election, suggesting that more than two million votes – or about a quarter of total votes cast – came from polling stations with voting irregularities.

Reports of widespread fraud led to a political crisis pitting the two campaigns, of Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, against each other after the preliminary results tilted sharply in favor of Mr. Ghani... The report from Mr. Berman's election assessment team does not provide a figure for how many votes it believes to be invalid, but it does point to a number of irregular voting patterns that raise doubts about more than two million votes. *It notes*

*that millions of votes came from stations with unexpectedly high turnouts or where the votes were cast almost uniformly in favor of one candidate – both of which are “extremely unlikely and an indication of possible fraud,” Mr. Berman said. In the runoff, 2.06 million of the votes cast, or some 26 percent of the total, came from polling stations in which turnout was reported to have reached or exceeded 99 percent of the predicted turnout of 600 voters per polling station. The report cites another voting irregularity: More than 2.3 million votes during the runoff came from polling sites in which more than 95 percent of the votes went to one candidate. Of those, 378,281 votes, or 5 percent of the total, came from polling stations that reported that 100 percent of the votes went just one way (my emphasis).<sup>45</sup>*

It took over a year and one-half for Afghanistan’s Independent Election Commission to finally confirm the official results of the disputed election.

## **Videos**

The author also received a large number of unsolicited videos that purported to show explicit voting fraud.<sup>46</sup> Most of the videos suggested that fraud was committed in the eastern provinces that Ghani eventually won in the runoff election. Some of these videos (by province) suggest:

### ***Logar province***

Logar is a province where Ghani gained 27.85% of votes in the runoff election compared to the April election (see Table 6). A video shows a bundle of ballots that had been marked for Ashraf Ghani, without them being ripped and folded. This clearly seems to suggest that one individual was marking these bundles of ballots and prepared them to be stuffed in ballot boxes.

### ***Paktia province***

Ghani received 29.78% more votes in the runoff election as compared to the April election (see Table 6). Video 20131112\_055118 shows ANA soldiers closing down a polling center in Paktia province with over 20,000 fraudulent ballots that were all marked for Ashraf Ghani; Video 0018 shows the ANA soldiers counting the fraudulent ballots; Video 10454541\_720470141348700\_1501703985 shows another polling center in Paktia, where poll workers are seen marking ballots for Ashraf Ghani; The ballots were not folded and stamped like they should have been; Video 3gp (1) shows a group of men in Paktia stamping and marking the ballots in favor of Ghani at another polling station; The ballots were still in bundles without them being ripped and folded; Video 3gp (2) shows the same group of men filling the ballot boxes with those ballots that they stamped and marked for Ghani.

### ***Paktika province***

In Paktika Province Ghani received 23.63% more votes in the runoff election versus the April election (see Table 6). Video 0000 shows ballots marked by only one individual in favor of Ghani. Another video shows an individual with ballot boxes in the trunk of his station wagon taking it to an unspecified location to be stuffed; Photo 20140615\_070214, shows ballots that were marked for Abdullah being ripped by poll workers at a polling station in Paktika Province; Video 20140615\_070222.mp4, shows more ballots marked for Abdullah torn apart that the same polling station, the person speaking in this video claims he was a poll worker at the station and that most of the ballots marked for Abdullah were burned inside the polling station and he was unable to film it. He also claims that one poll worker stuffed over 500 ballots in favor of Ghani in the same polling station.

### ***Khost province***

In Khost Province Ghani received 23.40% more votes in the runoff election as compared to the April election (see Table 6). Video 03082011015, shows an individual possessing 14 voter cards without any photos and was able to use them in multiple locations to vote; Video 2012-03-24-946, shows a polling station where poll workers are marking ballots then stamping and marking them; Video 20,140,323, shows polling workers forcing voters to vote for Ghani; Video 2012-03-24-947, shows a ballot box being stuffed by fraudulent ballots; Video 03082011013, shows dozens of voter cards that were in the possession of a poll worker.

These are only a few examples of the apparent fraud that was committed in the eastern provinces. An additional abnormality in the results published by the IEC showed a high turn out for women in these conservative provinces.

Additionally, on November 2017, Rahmatullah Nabil, the former head of the NDS, who is a Pashtun and indirectly supported Ghani in 2014, stated on Tolo TV that the NDS, the Afghan Security Council, and the Interior Ministry headed by Daudzai knew that massive fraud did happen in favor of Ghani but was unable to charge anyone or to prevent it from happening because Karzai would not allow them. He gives a detailed account of how government funds and resources were given to Ghani's campaign.<sup>47</sup>

On Afghan Tolo TV, 20 November 2017, 'BLACK AND WHITE: Government's Electoral Reform Policy Discussed' partly stated:

There is confidential information that I would like to share with all of Afghanistan's people so such acts will not be repeated again. We have experienced crisis after crisis, the whip of the Taliban, and we do not want to return to that era again. Unfortunately the elections that we have had so



far, we had problems with the electoral law and the people who controlled and oversaw it had bad intentions. In 2004, we had a good election, during 2009 we had many problems and in 2014 the election became too problematic. Let me say this candidly, we do not have a good power-sharing deal. We are facing a power crisis, identity crisis, and an ethnic conflict, and we are seeing each one of these crises exacerbated on a daily basis. The results of the 2014 elections have caused legal, legitimacy, and economic crises. When the 2009 election came to an end, the information that I have right now is that an agreement was reached between the former president and one of the candidates of the 2009 election (he means Ghani) that the president will endorse and support him in the next election. Because of this, many national processes such as the Afghan Transition Coordination Commission was formed for him to prepare him for the 2014 presidential elections. About the 2014 elections, many of the problems have been told by the mass media however besides all that has been said and published there are many other evidence and information that hasn't been said. Intelligence agencies of other countries spent money on the presidential campaigns, contracts and government resources and lands were promised for many donors in exchange for donations before election day, and machines to print election cards was put in place in the Wazir Akbar Khan district in the house of a very powerful individual in the National Unity Government (he means Hanif Atmar). I reported all of this to the former president, the former national security adviser, to Mr. Daudzai who is present here and was the Interior Minister in 2014, to the other members of the National Security Council, and to the former head of the IEC. I did not intervene more than this since I didn't have authority to do so. We did arrest many but the intentions of those who controlled the process were wrong and I was unable to do anything to change their intentions. It wasn't my responsibility to have stopped them since the president and all of the members of the National Security Council was aware of what was unfolding in 2014. In the future we have to be aware and we shouldn't allow such elections to be repeated again. The only reason why we accepted the National Unity Government was to save Afghanistan from destruction.<sup>48</sup>

## Conclusion

"The world and the United States stand with [the people of Afghanistan] as partners in their quest for peace and prosperity and stability and democracy."

– President Bush's remarks in a press conference with President Karzai of Afghanistan, The Rose Garden, Washington, D.C., June 15, 2004<sup>49</sup>

"The United States supports a set of universal rights. And these rights include free speech, the freedom of peaceful assembly, the freedom of religion, equality for men and women under the rule of law, and the right to choose your own leaders."

– President Obama, Remarks by the President on the Middle East and North Africa, May 19, 2011<sup>50</sup>

We believe that this analysis has important implications for U.S. and NATO involvement in Afghanistan. As suggested above, the Bonn Accords and process have helped drive U.S. and NATO strategies in Afghanistan. And among other important aspects of the Afghan 'political road map' that the Bonn Accords spelled out includes:

- Acknowledging the right of the people of Afghanistan to freely determine their own political future in accordance with the principles of Islam, democracy, pluralism and social justice;
- [E]stablishment of a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government; and
- Request the United Nations to conduct as soon as possible (i) a registration of voters in advance of the general elections that will be held upon the adoption of the new constitution by the constitutional Loya Jirga and (ii) a census of the population of Afghanistan.

The U.S. Afghan strategy that has clearly sought to develop a democratic system of governance in Afghanistan has resulted in a trillion dollars spent and as of 5 August 2018, 3,458 coalition deaths and of thousands more wounded since the invasion of Operational Enduring Freedom (OEF) started in 2001.<sup>51</sup> Has the United States fought for naught relative to the goal of a democratic Afghanistan? Recognizing that the 2014 Presidential Election was fraught with considerable irregularities raises difficult questions as to what the U.S., ISAF and NATO have fought so hard for over the last 17 years.

Now one can, and have, surely argued that keeping Afghanistan safe from becoming a terrorist haven for actors such as Al Qaeda and defeating the Taliban regime were the true measures of success in Afghanistan. But this ultimately begs the question as to consistent pronouncements coming out of Washington (less during Obama's tenure than Bush's Administration) and other western capitals that this conflict was going to result not only in a stable regime in Kabul but also one based on democratic principles. There is no doubt that the 2014 Afghan Presidential Election was fraught with fraud to such an extent that one can make a very credible argument based on hard evidence that the election results were illegitimate. The sheer number of polling places that gave their entire vote to Ghani defies any kind of democratic practice and clearly points to explicit, systematic fraud. Indeed, a cursory review of supplementary data unequivocally demonstrates a degree of voter fraud that is historically hard to match and explicitly suggests that the large-scale fraud using the code word 'stuffed sheep' that was presented in the Introduction of this article most certainly occurred.

The Taliban presently control more districts than any time since 2001 and increasing attacks on urban environment such as Kunduz (2015, 2018), Farah City (May 2018) and the very recent attacks in Ghazni City (August 2018) and

Sar-e-pul (September 2018). The heightened seriousness of the Taliban insurgency was vividly demonstrated in late October 2017 when the United States military as well as Kabul classified the casualties of Afghan troops, the exact size of the force, and the number of Afghan districts controlled and/or challenged by the Taliban.<sup>52</sup> The classification of these data clearly suggests that the ANDSF is not as large as has traditionally been promoted by Kabul and the U.S. and that the Taliban have significant momentum. Another important indicator is that for years the numerical strength of the Taliban in Afghanistan has usually been suggested to be between 20–25 thousand. 'In 2014, U.S. officials told NBC News that the number of Taliban fighters in Afghanistan was about 20,000. Four years later, one U.S. defense official said the current Taliban strength is at least 60,000. Another senior U.S. official said 60,000 "passes the sniff test," while a third official said 60,000 is "a place to start".<sup>53</sup> Recently this estimate has been increased to 60-70k and history has suggested that the Taliban will put as many insurgents into Afghanistan as they need to accomplish short and long term goals. One must ask what these objectives are?

Will a shrinking ANDSF continue to fight for a regime elected under a shadow is also a very legitimate question that needs to be raised.

This presents Afghanistan with a serious dilemma. The Unity Government that was mustered by Secretary Kerry shortly after the runoff election was certainly based partly on the realization by the United States that the election results were illegitimate or at least highly irregular. Thus, to avoid bloodshed that was threatened by Abdullah supporters was forestalled. In the perfect world, a more adequate, immediate resolution would have been to disregard the results, impose an interim government and conduct a new election at a later date with much greater objective, international oversight.

Such a resolution would have obviously been difficult to implement but considering the facts surrounding the election it was probably the best course of actions that could have been taken.

In addition to the blatant fraud and illegitimacy of the election results, another extremely important consequence of this election suggests that little has really changed in Afghanistan over the last few decades:

Even in the most limited understanding of democracy, what has been seen in 2004, 2009, and now 2014 would not be described as anything remotely resembling a functioning democratic system. The Afghan Presidential Elections of 2014 were not designed to improve the lives of Afghans; they were merely a bureaucratic process through which the Afghan people have been "allowed" to select which member of the two interlinked and fluid competing elites they would best like to run the country, regardless of the fact that their ideologies and policies differ very little. Leaving the future of Afghanistan to the will of existing elites should be challenged and questioned by anyone who believes that Afghans should be supported to fight for something significantly more inclusive, just, and democratic.<sup>54</sup>

An explicit implication of this analysis is that Bonn tried to establish a form of government that had a very low probability of success considering the state of conflict in the country as well as historical, societal and cultural dynamics. Moreover, as suggested above, the continuing fact that ethno-linguistic groups in a large margin vote for a candidate from their clan or in-group, for all practical purposes, make Afghan elections basically a procedural exercise rather than a meaning political substantive event. Each Presidential Election since 2004 clearly suggest that no national candidate has been able to emerge that significantly disregarded his ethnicity.

By 2014, the United States had approximately 2375 military killed in Afghanistan, spent well over \$700 billion; the road map to 'democracy' laid out by the Bonn Accords has not been realized. When you combine the travesty of the 2014 Afghan Presidential Election with the latest Wolsi Jirga (Legislative) Elections based on a Single Nontransferable Voting (SNTV) system in 2009, one should clearly recognize that Afghanistan has a totally dysfunctional electoral system:

664 candidates competed for the 33 Wolesi Jirga seats available for the province of Kabul and a total of 486,111 valid ballots were cast. Muhammad Mohaqiq, Chairman of the People's Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan and former Vice-President and the Minister of Planning in the interim government of Afghanistan was the leading vote getter just as he was during the 2005 election. He received a total of 3.6% of the vote! That a mere 3.6% of the vote could represent the most popular candidate as indicated by total votes received is disturbing, and Have serious implications for Afghan 'representative democracy'. Overall, 21 of the 33 candidates elected to the Wolesi Jirga from Kabul (64%) were elected with less than 1% of the total vote in their district.<sup>55</sup>

The entire Afghan electoral system must be recalibrated, but it is also worth asking the uncomfortable question if representative democracy is a proper political system for Afghanistan? In the Chatham House's excellent analysis of the 2014 Presidential Election Assessment they suggest that: 'Not only has the electoral system therefore failed to meet expectations of a timely and transparent transfer of power, it has also raised wider concerns. An immediate problem is uncertainty about new government structures, personnel and influence in the context of an ill-defined dual leadership system that divides power between the presidency and the chief executive's office. In the longer term, there is a question mark over the future of democracy in Afghanistan.'<sup>56</sup>

Probably the best result of the 2014 Afghan Presidential Election is to draw lessons from it and these lessons should serve as an immediate mandate for changing a badly flawed system. Below we offer a few lessons that need to be considered.

First, the Afghan voter registration process has to be completely revamped. Theoretically, this was suppose to be a major focus of the Ghani-Abdullah “unity government,’ but nothing significantly has happened. As suggested in an recent and excellent article by Scott Warden:

Voter registration has long been a weak point undermining the integrity of Afghan elections. The results of the 2009 and 2014 presidential elections and 2010 parliamentary elections were all highly contested because of mass ballot stuffing – with between 10 and 25 per cent of the ballots thrown out because of fraud by the Afghan electoral authorities. That ballot stuffing was enabled in part by the availability of excess ballot papers which had been sent to areas with no independent election observers – because they were insecure, or sometimes also because they had been politically captured by local strongmen. In the 2014 election, there were an estimated total number of voters of around 12 million and 23 million voter cards in circulation.<sup>57</sup>

Second and related to the voter registration, it’s been decades since the country has had a proper census performed. The United States gave Kabul millions of dollars in both 2008 and 2013 to conduct a proper countrywide survey, but it was never completed. While Kabul blamed security concerns for the lack of conducting a proper census, others believe that Kabul’s failure to conduct a census probably related to ethnic issues. Just as the Sunnis never wanted to see a valid census in Iraq because it would clearly demonstrate that the Sunnis were a minority to the Shia, many believe that Karzai was concerned that a census would reveal that the Pashtuns were not a real majority in Afghanistan.

Having an accurate census could help begin a needed change not only for presidential elections but also legislative elections. There is no question that the SNTV has been a disaster for the construction of a true Afghan legislative body with a true constituency. The census could be the mainstay of creating legislative districts that could result in legislative candidates having a true constituency and would eliminate an electoral process where the vast majority of Afghan electorate votes for losing candidates. In addition, a census would allow at least a first-order defense against inflated voter registration and fraudulent votes coming from certain districts.

Third, if Afghanistan is to become a true representative democracy, the political party system in the country needs to be strengthened. This is especially crucial for the Wolsi Jirga elections but also presidential elections. Political parties, especially if they are not tied exclusive to ethnicity, afford the public an idea of what candidates’ main positions on issues converge upon. This is presently sorely absent in Afghanistan.

While candidates within a party will surely have differing views on many important issues, political parties are usually developed around a range of

political beliefs that can help guide a voters' perspective concerning different candidates.

Noah Coburn argues that '[t]he 2014 process largely broke down because of political pressure before the IEC and ECC had completed the ballot counting and auditing. The ensuing crisis demonstrated the absence of credible and impartial mechanisms for dealing with electoral fraud or political tensions.'<sup>58</sup> Artificial time deadlines should be eliminated in favor of processes that are truly transparent and comprehensive.

Fourth, the government should institute an extensive program of training for election workers and their work needs to be monitored by both internal and international election observers. To the extent possible and feasible, each polling place should have an objective election observer. While this is an onerous process, for sure, it needs to be implemented especially for the next presidential election that is scheduled for April 2019.

While it is also very difficult to institute major political changes during time of conflict, especially with the Taliban insurgency getting stronger in Afghanistan with the Taliban controlling more land than at anytime since 2001, it is critical that mechanisms be put in place that allow for fair voting in restrictive areas. This will require a larger ANDSF presence at polling centers.

In conclusion it would be difficult to find election results in any democratic country that could compare to the results of the 2014 Afghan Presidential Election. The only similar results can be found in certain dictatorial regimes where the winning candidates regularly 'receive' at least 90% of the vote. Afghanistan with the assistance of the international community must take a very serious look at its election procedures at all levels and seriously reform them. In the absence of such reform, the door is wide open for more fraud and illegitimate results in Afghan elections.

## Notes

1. Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post-Taliban Transition,"; Thomas H. Johnson, "The Illusion of Afghanistan's Electoral Representative Democracy." 37. <https://10.1080/09592318.2018.1404771>; for an additional discussion of Afghan Presidential elections and their irregularities see: Coll, *Directorate S*.
2. Mason, "Fraud and Folly In Afghanistan".
3. Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), *Quarterly Report to Congress*.
4. Ibid and email from Jennifer George-Nichol, Public Affairs, Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), July 31, 2018. For other assessments of the present situation in Afghanistan see: a series of excellent analyses of Afghan elections by the Afghan Analysis Network for example, see: van Bijlert, *Afghan Elections Dilemma*; van Bijlert, *Polling Day Fraud in the Afghan Elections*; Qaane and van Bijlert, *Elections in Hibernation*; Ruttig, *Pluralistic within Limits, but Not Democratic*.

5. Rafi, "Afghanistan's Institutional Credibility Crisis And Likelihood Of "Sheepish Elections" – Analysis."
6. Generally see: Mashal, "Afghan President Under Fire as Critics Chafe at Overdue Vote."
7. Ibid.
8. The Constitution of Afghanistan (Ratified, January 26, 2004), Article 61, 16, <http://www.afghanembassy.com.pl/afg/images/pliki/TheConstitution.pdf>
9. Graham Harrison, "Afghan Election Crisis."
10. It should also be noted that people that were apparently aware of me researching the 2014 election data and my plan to write an article concerning it, have unsolicitedly sent me a wide variety of videos that allegedly demonstrate illegitimate behavior in Eastern Afghanistan such as ballot stuffing, filling out multiple ballots, copying voter registration cards, and a variety of other things that would clearly suggest significant election fraud. I did not review these videos until I nearly completed my empirical research on the 2014 Presidential Election. I will be discussing these videos and their possible consequences in later sections of this article.
11. Amani, "The Making of an Election."
12. Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post-Taliban Transition,". And see Rubin, Barfield and DuPee for seminal studies concerning the role of ethnicity in Afghan history and politics: Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*; Barfield, *Afghanistan*.
13. Pearson r correlation coefficients of Afghan presidential candidates by candidate ethno-linguistic standing and at the provincial level voting. See Table Two in Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post-Taliban Transition."
14. See note 12 Above.
15. Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, UNAMA, "Afghanistan," October 21, 2009, <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-aihrc-unama-joint-monitoring-political-rights-presidential-and-1>
16. Johnson, "The Illusion of Afghanistan's Electoral Representative Democracy."
17. Ibid., 6–7.
18. Ibid., 7.
19. Gopal, "Afghan Voter Registration Marred."
20. Coll, *Directorate S*.
21. Coburn, "Afghanistan." Also see: Smith, Afghanistan's Troubled Transition, and Coburn and Larson, *Derailing Democracy in Afghanistan*. For an ongoing series of papers on the subject of elections in Afghanistan, see Martine van Bijlert and Kate Clark at the Afghanistan Analysts Network website: [www.afghanistan-analysts.org](http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org)
22. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 4.
23. Horowitz, "Democracy in Divided Societies," p. 35. Many others have assessed this dynamic. To name just a few see: Noel, *From Power Sharing to Democracy* and Pacheco, "The Role of External Development Actors in the Post-conflict Scenarios – The Case of Angola."
24. As suggested in footnote 8 of Johnson, "The Illusion of Afghanistan's Electoral Representative Democracy,"; "Fifteen thousand Abdullah supporters marched on the Arg to protest the election. Ghani's circle was equally adamant. His campaign coordinator at the time, Hamdullah Mohib, recalls a meeting in which Ghani advisers discussed bringing a hundred thousand people into the streets. Ghani told them, in his didactic way, 'A civil war lasts on average ten or fifteen years, and even then they're very hard to end – ours is still going on. I

can guarantee that tomorrow, if you March on Kabul, the first bullet will be fired. If anyone can guarantee when the last bullet will be fired, then I'll allow the March.' Packer, "Afghanistan's Theorist-in-chief."

25. Prospects for Afghanistan's 2014 Election: Hearing before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, U.S. Senate, 113<sup>th</sup> Cong., (2013) (statement of Andrew Wilder, Director of U.S. Institute of Peace for Afghanistan and Pakistan).
26. Latifi, "Sixteen Afghan Election Hopefuls Disqualified."
27. See: <https://www.ndi.org/>
28. Al Jazeera, "High Turnout in Afghanistan Elections," *Al Jazeera America*, April 5, 2014, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/4/5/afghan-election.html>
29. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan\\_presidential\\_election,\\_2014#/media/File:Afghanistan\\_Praesidentschaftswahl\\_erste\\_Runde\\_Details.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_presidential_election,_2014#/media/File:Afghanistan_Praesidentschaftswahl_erste_Runde_Details.svg)
30. See note 12 Above.
31. For an explanation of data sources see: Johnson, "The Illusion of Afghanistan's Electoral Representative Democracy." The provincial data were updated for this analysis using a variety of Afghan Government sources noted above.
32. Sharan and Bose, "Political Networks and the 2014 Afghan Presidential Election"; and Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post-Taliban Transition.". And see Rubin, Barfield and DuPee for seminal studies concerning the role of ethnicity in Afghan history and politics: Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*; Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*; DuPee, *Afghanistan*.
33. Craig and Sharif, "Abdullah Abdullah, the Front-Runner in the Afghan Presidential Race, Solidifies Support."
34. "Abdullah Receives Another Endorsement For Afghan President," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Accessed October 27, 2017, <https://www.rferl.org/a/abdullah-receives-another-endorsement-for-afghan-president/25408733.html>
35. Table Legend: Bold lettering indicates the leader in the initial April election; Yellow indicates the winner of the runoff election; Red represents a swing province (A significant change in votes between the April and June elections).
36. Afghan Election Data, [https://2014.afghanistanelectiondata.org/#runoff/results\\_runoff](https://2014.afghanistanelectiondata.org/#runoff/results_runoff)
37. Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post-Taliban Transition," 13.
38. See above 24.
39. Reuters Staff, "Commission releases disputed 2014 Afghan election results," Reuters, February 24, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-election/commission-releases-disputed-2014-afghan-election-results-idUSKCN0VX108>
40. Ibid.
41. See note 36 above.
42. Ibid.
43. Miller, *Democracy in Afghanistan*.
44. See: Coburn, *Afghanistan*, 2.
45. Joseph Goldstein, "E.U. Confirms Wide Fraud in Afghan Presidential Runoff Election. Also, see: Gall, "In Afghan Election, Signs of Systemic Fraud Cast Doubt on Many Votes."
46. The author will make these videos available to responsible requesters. Many of these videos can be found at: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/19YIMiNyDT6B8yu6Xd6xOpuoFQ0xqCbOp?usp=sharing>
47. See: <https://ariananews.co/video/%D9%88%DB%8C%D8%AF%DB%8C%D9%88-%D9%86%D8%A7%DA%AF%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%87-%D9%87%D8%>



A7%DB%8C-%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%84%DB%8C-%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D9%86%D8%A8%DB%8C%D9%84.html/

48. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGDAXwInduk&feature=youtu.be>
49. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/afghanistan/20040708.html>
50. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/05/19/moment-opportunity-american-diplomacy-middle-east-north-africa#transcript>
51. "Operation Enduring Freedom". iCasualties.org. May 28, 2010, <http://icasualties.org/oef/>
52. See: Kennedy, "U.S. Military Withholds Key Measures of Afghan War."
53. Kube, "The Taliban is Gaining Strength and Territory in Afghanistan."
54. Atkinson, "Democracy as Theatre."
55. Johnson, "The Illusion of Afghanistan's Electoral Representative Democracy," 14.
56. Coburn, "Afghanistan," 2.
57. Worden, Afghanistan Election Conundrum (12).
58. Noah Coburn, "Afghanistan," 7.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author. The views expressed in this paper are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the views of the Naval Postgraduate School or the Department of Defense or any other institution or person.

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