



The Impact of the Construction of the Kamal Khan Dam on Relations Between Iran and Afghanistan Since 2022

by

Sara Elsayed Mahdi Ahmed

Supervision of

Dr. Nibal Ezz El-Din Gameel

Professor of political science

Faculty of Politics and Economics - Suez University

Dr. Mohammed Shaker

Assistant professor political science

Faculty of Politics and Economics - Suez University

Suez University

Abstract:

This study aimed to the dispute over transboundary waters between Afghanistan and Iran is expected to escalate to dangerously serious levels. A predicted future, though, is not the same as empirical proof. The impact of the construction of the Kamal Khan Dam is the main topic of this research. Kamal Khan dam main objective was attempts to investigate how the hydro political ties between Iran and Afghanistan have changed over the course of the last century, and also, to regulate seasonal floods, The Afghani government is frequently asked by the Iranian administration to deliver additional water towards Iran. The ancient dam was destroyed, and Iran has since attacked this dam numerous times in contemporary times.

Even though there is a clear divide between the two parties when it comes to water management, the historical analysis in the paper demonstrates that the alarming assertions are unfounded and distort the hydro political relations as they function within a larger geopolitical landscape. The research comes to the conclusion that shift in the geopolitical dynamics between Afghanistan and Iran and the development of a shared identity over the Helmand River Basin are consequently prerequisites for increased water cooperation.

Key words: Kamal Khan Dam, Helmand River basin, Iran, Afghanistan

خلاصة:

وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توقع تصاعد النزاع حول المياه العابرة للحدود بين أفغانستان وإيران إلى مستويات خطيرة . ومع ذلك، فإن المستقبل المتوقع ليس بلدليل التجريبي فإن تأثير بناء سد كمال خان هو الموضوع الرئيسي لهذا البحث. كان الهدف الرئيسي لسد كمال خان هو محاولات التحقيق في كيفية تغير العلاقات السياسية المائية بين إيران وأفغانستان على مدار القرن الماضي، وأيضاً لتنظيم الفيضانات الموسمية، وكثيراً ما تطلب الإدارة الإيرانية من الحكومة الأفغانية توفير مياه إضافية تجاه إيران. تم تدمير السد القديم، ومنذ ذلك الحين هاجمت إيران هذا السد عدة مرات في العصر الحديث.

على الرغم من وجود انقسام واضح بين الطرفين عندما يتعلق الأمر بإدارة المياه، فإن التحليل التاريخي في الورقة يوضح أن التأكيدات المثيرة للقلق لا أساس لها من الصحة وتشوه العلاقات السياسية المائية لأنها تعمل ضمن مشهد جيوسياسي أكبر. ويخلص البحث إلى نتيجة مفادها أن التحول في الديناميكيات الجيوسياسية بين أفغانستان وإيران وتطوير هوية مشتركة على حوض نهر هلمند هما بالتالي شرطان أساسيان لزيادة التعاون في مجال المياه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سد كمال خان، حوض نهر هلمند، إيران، أفغانستان

Introduction:

Afghanistan has a comparatively large supply of water resources. The surface water availability, at around 2,700 m³/capita/year, is sixty percent over the level required for a nation to theoretically have enough water to meet its needs for household, agricultural, energy, industrial, and environmental purposes. However, Afghanistan barely utilizes about 33% of the 57 billion m³ of surface water that is available annually. Only around half of the irrigable area is under intensive cultivation, with the other portion receiving only sporadic irrigation. Afghanistan produced about 670 MW and imported about 623 MW of power in 2012, yet this amount was only enough to meet 40% of the 3,571 MW of electricity that the country's population required. However, estimates place its hydropower potential at 23,000 MW. Along with other considerations, the nation's estimated 80 m³ per capita per year storage capacity is one of the lowest in the world, making it very sensitive to the periodic floods and droughts that define arid and semi-arid regions. (Nilab Saeddi ,2022)

Afghanistan is therefore in a position of great potential and great demand for: (a) resolving food hunger and growing irrigated agriculture; (b) meeting the rising energy demand; and (c) strengthening technological control over the extreme variability in water supply. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) has prioritized the construction of large-scale irrigation and hydroelectric projects as a means of addressing the aforementioned challenges since the early years of the post-Taliban Afghanistan. This interest in continuing Afghanistan's "hydraulic mission," which was put on hold in the late 1970s, has already been brought up in the preliminary versions of the 2008 water sector strategy.

In this location, where 90% of the surface water resources passing through Afghanistan are transboundary, is where this hydraulic mission is being conducted. Furthermore, Afghanistan is typically the nation upstream. The ability of downstream nations like Iran, Pakistan, or Turkmenistan to mobilize additional water resources to fulfil the rising demand for water inside their own borders is already limited. The majority of the resources in these nations have likewise already been utilized. (Nilab Saeddi ,2022)

Senior GIROA staff members are not ignorant of this idea. President Karzai recognized the significance of transboundary water in Afghanistan and emphasized the need for creating and upholding water rights in his speech to the 3rd National Water Conference in January 2013. In this context, he also emphasized the significance of encouraging and strengthening discussions on the problem with bordering nations. In light of this, it is critical to

comprehend the provisions of the 1997 UN Convention, which codifies the fundamentals of customary international law pertaining to transboundary watercourses.

1) Research problem:

Iran and Afghanistan have been at odds over access to water resources for many years. The primary water source for both Afghanistan and Southeast Iran is the Helmand River, which rises in the Hindu Kush mountains and runs through both countries. It has been essential to millions of people on both sides of the border's agricultural, fishing, and human consumption. Droughts have affected both countries, which initially caused tensions. Since 1945, various Afghan governments have constructed, renovated, or improved the dams on the Helmand, including the Kamal Khan dam, which restricted the flow of water to Iran. These governments have included the monarchy until 1979, the Soviet-backed government in the 1980s, the Taliban in the 1990s, the democratic government supported by the United States from 2004 to 2021, and the Taliban once more after 2021. During a drought that struck the common border region between 1998 and 2001, the Taliban blocked Iran's access to water by closing the Kajaki Dam's sluices. President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan declared that after the dam was finished in March 2021, his country would no longer give Iran unfettered access to excess water and would instead exchange water for other resources for oil. So the following question:

What is the impact of building the Kamal Khan Dam on relations between Iran and Afghanistan?

2) Study importance

This study is to monitor and analyze the most important international situations with regard to building dams on rivers, because it is considered a source of threat to the stability of the political system inside and outside the country in international relations. Its main importance lies in identifying how countries deal with other countries' construction of dams that harm the interests of other countries participating in the international river, whether in water or their national security, and analyzing international positions related to some countries.

The importance of the study that the problem of Kamal khan dam that could be proved in any dam in other countries and with the threats that Iran decisions against Afghanistan that will destroy the dam. That made a problem international and made all countries protect their water security from any harms that not clashed with their constructions with other countries that face the same problem.

3) Objectives of the study

- Statement of international positions between Iran and Afghanistan on the construction of dam.
- Clarify the most important challenges and obstacles facing the countries of the halmend river.
- Analyzing the pros and cons of the Kamal khan Dam.

4) Time and spatial framework:

Timeframe:

The period since 2022 was discussed, and the focus was on that period, because it was the beginning of the problem has escalated this year. And the beginning of military clashes between the two countries on the river in 2023

Spatial framework:

The Halmend River Basin is one of the fullest of water security problems in Asia especially between Iran and Afghanistan.

5) Methodology

In dealing with the issue of international reactions to building dams on international rivers, using the Kamal khan a case study, the study relies on the use of a number of research methods:

- Case study approach:

The case study approach will be used, which is a method that relies on a particular case study with the aim of collecting in-depth information about it, as it studies the specific aspects of the case and provides a comprehensive description. ; In this study, the international situation of the Kamal khan Dam will be addressed, which at the beginning there was agreement between the halmend Basin countries to build the dam, leading to what it has now ended up suffering from drought , and perhaps destroy the dam .

- the inductive approach:

The inductive approach aims to collect data and interrelated relationships in an accurate manner in order to link them to a set of general public relations. By applying to international positions for building dams on international rivers through the Kamal khan as a case study, to know the nature of international positions and the extent of the bias and impartiality of allied countries about building dams.

6) Literature review:

6.1.On the relationship between water and the conflict in South Asia

- 1) Study by Joy K. J. et al (ed.). 2007. Water Conflicts in India: A Million Revolts in the Making

<https://bit.ly/3bMvVmJ>

The study aimed to analyze conflict based on the replacement of the Ruhini River with any of our rivers in South Asia, the Sakia and Kulayas tribes with States, States, groups and users around this river. The study's main objectives were: to understand the nature of water disputes in South Asia and to discuss the cultural and historical context of water and agriculture in South Asia. The study also described the state of water resources in many South Asian countries that highlight tensions between increased demand and reduced availability.

- 2) Study by Jacob D. Petersen-Perlman, Jennifer C. Veilleux & Aaron T. Wolf, International water conflict and cooperation: challenges and opportunities, Water International, 2017

<file:///C:/Users/Dell/Downloads/Petersen-Perlmanetal.-2017-Internationalwaterconflictandcooperationchal.pdf>

The general idea is that the likelihood of water conflicts can increase as population growth continues and climate change continues to emerge. The main point is the nature of the water conflict and water cooperation. The study has found how water disputes can be resolved and how water can be seen as a means of changing relations between States.

6.2.the position of international river law on the construction of water dams.

- 1) A study by John Waterbury, Dale Whittington and Mark Goland, entitled (The Grand Renaissance Dam and Prospects for Cooperation) in 2014

John Waterbury, Dale Whittington and Mark Gowland, The Grand Renaissance Dam and Prospects for Cooperation, University of Northern California at Chapel Hill, USA, 2014

The study aimed to point out the Egyptian controversy over Ethiopia because of the risks posed by the construction of the dam to Egypt, and the study stresses the need to reach an agreement between Egypt and Ethiopia. Regarding the period of filling the reservoir, in addition to agreeing on what will happen in periods of drought, the study concluded that the construction of the dam reduces the share of Egypt and Sudan, if the rules egulating filling are agreed upon with Ethiopia. And that the downstream countries change their policy in dealing with water and take advantage of desalinating sea water and purifying wastewater.

- 2) Michael Hammond's study entitled (The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and the Blue Nile: Implications for Transboundary Water Management), 2013

Michael Hammond, Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and Blue Nile: Implications for Transboundary Water Management, 2013

The study dealt with the management of the Nile waters in the basin countries. It affirms that the pressures of development and population increase in the Nile Basin countries put pressure on the available water resources, which makes it difficult to manage water in this region.

7. Conceptual frame work:

7.1. Crisis:

- According to Roberts, 2005, from Intervention Brief Treatment and Crisis," we live in an era in which crisis-inducing events and acute crisis episodes are prevalent. Each year, millions of people are confronted with crisis-inducing events that they cannot resolve on their own, and they often turn for help to crisis units of community mental health centers, psychiatric screening units, outpatient clinics, hospital emergency rooms, college counseling centers, family counseling agencies, and domestic violence programs "(p326)

-According to Roberts, from Intervention Brief Treatment and Crisis ,2005 , "A crisis is personal and is dependent on the individual's perception of the potentially crisis-inducing event, their personality and temperament, life experiences, and varying degrees of coping skills "(p330)

-According to Roberts & Dziegielewski, from Intervention Brief Treatment and Crisis ,1995,"A crisis event can provide an opportunity, a challenge to life goals, a rapid deterioration of functioning, or a positive turning point in the quality of one's life" (p330)

7.2. International position:

The international position is the structure of relations between States actors on the international scene, and, with many States operating on the international stage, their active States are few depending on their strength. Since each State's bottom is subject to change and change, it is strength and weakness, and relations between these States are influenced by change and change accordingly. This change and change may occur because of a war that overthrows a State, weakens its influence on the international scene, and others rush to replace it. This change and change in States' circumstances and forces change the international situation, both in the structure of relations and in the change in their parties. Since a change in the circumstances and powers of States actors on the international scene is not rapid, a change in the international situation requires long periods. (Ismail Sabri Maklat, International Political Relations: A Study in Origins and Theories, Academic Library, 1991 https://books4arabs.com/B8/books4arab.com_SP0335.pdf)

8. Plan:

1. Historical back ground:
2. Afghanistan's stance on water with Iran:
3. Helmand basin conflict between Afghanistan and Iran:
4. The impact of Afghanistan and Iran:
5. Possibilities and constraints for discussion and benefit distribution:
6. Conclusion:

1. Historical back ground:

Water crises have always existed in nations like Afghanistan and Iran. Iran has 70% of its population with access to drinking water, whereas Afghanistan has 63%, indicating that both nations are experiencing a severe water crisis. Since the 19th-century "Great Game," tensions between Afghanistan and Iran over the Helmand River's shared use have been building. At the time, the issue of border demarcation and the different territorial claims of the two nations in the Helmand Sea was seen as dual. Currently, the issue of transboundary water management is more pressing than the generally friendly ties between Iran and Afghanistan.¹

The Harirod-Murghab basin, the other shared water resource, is now included in the points of contention. The livelihood of the people living in both basins, the region's natural integrity particularly with regard to the unstable Sistan wetlands and the growth of hydroelectric generation from these shared rivers are all at risk. Following the Treaty of Paris (1857), which stipulated that Afghanistan and Persia would submit any disputes to Britain for arbitration Britain at the time controlling large portions of India, including what is now Pakistan, the border between Persia (Iran) and Afghanistan was formalized between 1872 and 1935 through a series of third-party arbitrations.²

The Afghan-Persian boundary was formalized by the British at the request of Persian King Naser al-Din Shah Qajar in the 1860s after a series of battles between Afghanistan and Persia. A committee led by Sir Frederic John Goldsmith recommended a rough boundary in 1872 that followed the Helmand River from Banda to Kuh-i-Malik Siah, a peak in the present-day

¹ Alintr: SAEEDI, N. (2022). "The Silent War 'Afghanistan and Iran Water Crisis". AHBVÜ Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, (7), 49-56.

² Nagheeby, M.; Piri, M. and Faure, M. 2019. The legitimacy of dam development in international watercourses: A case study of the harirud river basin. Transnational Environmental Law 8(2): 247-278.

tripoint of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. This suggestion was ultimately agreed by both parties, however at that time it was not carried out further ¹.

A more exact boundary was created in three parts during the ensuing decades after the Goldsmith boundary proved to be insufficient, particularly in light of the Helmand's changing course. General C.S. MacLean, the British consul general for Khorasan and Istanbul, handled the northern sector from 1888 to 1891; Colonel Sir Henry McMahon handled the southern section from 1893 to 1895; and General Fahrettin Altay of Turkey handled the central section from 1934 to 1935. In the non-riverine portions of the border, 172 pillars were built in total after each demarcation boundary was established. Iran was the country that kept Afghanistan from gaining independence in 1919 because it was afraid of losing the Helmand Water, which Iran understood to be vital from the start. After 1935, there was no debate over the boundary itself.²

But when Afghanistan chose to construct the Kamal Khan dam on the river in 1936, everything changed. One of Afghanistan's largest water management projects, Kamal Khan Dam is situated in the Nimroz province above the Helmand River. The dam project was initiated, but it was put on hold due to the 1973 coup in Afghanistan that overthrew the monarchy. Iran has always opposed the construction of any dams on the Helmand River, arguing that Afghanistan should allow enough water to enter Iran. This opposition stems from the fact that eastern parts of Iran, which receive water from Afghanistan, also experience water shortages.³

A treaty on the sharing of the river's waters was signed in 1939 by the governments of Iran under Reza Shah Pahlavi and Afghanistan under Mohammad Zahir Shah, but the Afghans did not ratify it. A second attempt to settle the disagreement started in Washington in 1948. Iran and Afghanistan appointed a three-person group to look into the matter and provide a resolution, at the request of the United States. The Helmand River Delta Commission submitted its report on February 28, 1951, with a

¹ Alıntı: SAEEDI, N. (2022). "The Silent War 'Afghanistan and Iran Water Crisis". AHBVÜ Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, (7), 49-56.

² HITOSHI, S. "The Nature of the State in Afghanistan and Its Relations with Neighboring Countries" Institute of Development Economics, 2006.

³ IRNA. 2002. The re-cutting of the Helmand River is a breach of obligations.
<https://www.irna.ir/news/6825671>

recommendation that Iran be granted a share of twenty-two cubic metres per second of the Helmand waters. Iran, however, disregarded this finding and demanded a higher proportion of water.¹

The Helmand River basin is home to more than seven million people. At 1150 kilometers, this river is the longest in Afghanistan. It rises in the Hindu Kush mountains around 80 km west of Kabul, runs west to Daykundi and Uruzgan, passes north of the Unai Pass, and is located in the eastern suburbs of Hazarajat, Behsud, and Maidan Wardak. Along the Afghan-Iranian border, it travels southwest through the Dashti Margo desert, the Seistan marshes, and the Hamun-i-Helmand lake basin near Zabol. It is also the main of western portion of the delta is in Iranian territory, and supply of water that sustains the agricultural economy of the reasonably fertile area in southwest Afghanistan and eastern Iran. Although the Helmand River basin makes up around 45% of Afghanistan's land area, the river only provides 10% of the nation's overall water resources, according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2008.²

About 97% of that contribution is utilized in the Afghani agricultural sector, while about 80% is used in the Iranian sector. However, the Helmand River Basin's irrigated land area is constrained by an inadequate number of dams and reservoirs to regulate the water flow in both rainy and dry years. According to some farmers, planting poppies, a hardy crop, is encouraged by a lack of water.³

A protracted phase of negotiations followed Iran's 1951 rejection of the report. In 1969, Afghanistan proposed to supply more water if Iran granted it better access to the Iranian ports at Chabahar and Bandar Abbas, along with development support, according to Asadullah Allam, the shah's minister of court. A deal allowing water to enter Iran at a rate of twenty-two cubic

¹ Nagheeby, M. and Rieu-Clarke, A. 2020. Water diplomacy in the Helmand River Basin: Exploring the obstacles to cooperation within the shadow of anarchy. In Kittikhoun, A. and Schmeier, S. (Eds), River basin organizations in water diplomacy, pp. 201-221.

² UNEP. 2009. From conflict to peacebuilding: the role of natural resources and the environment.

³ Khalid Behzad, V. T. M. A. A. (2016, May). Developing transboundary water resources: What perspectives for cooperation between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan?. ISBN: 978-9936-628-07-6 (ebook). Pp35-46

metres per second was signed by Afghan Prime Minister Mohammad Shafiq and Iranian Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveida four years later in 1973 .¹

In exchange, Iran consented to give Afghanistan unconditional access to the ports of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar. However, because of political developments in both countries including an Afghan coup in 1973, the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan that same year, and the first Taliban uprising in 1995, this agreement was never signed or fully executed.

The Afghan government has built dams and irrigation canals in the Helmand valley in an effort to support agriculture. In the 1930s, Germany and Japan both sought to rebuild historic canals for Afghanistan; however, their efforts came to an end when they were defeated in World War II. In 1946, the Afghan government hired Morrison-Knudsen, a US-based company, to construct roads and irrigation systems in the southern Helmand-Arghandab valleys. US funding was used to finance the project. Morrison-Knudsen proposed building a storage dam and reservoir in order to optimize water use while renovating ageing canals.

The Helmand Valley Project in Afghanistan was the subject of a subsequent study by the US Agency for International Development which found that the project's failure to conduct surveys beforehand was a "fatal weakness." Located 18 miles northeast of Kandahar, the 44.2-meter Arghandab Dam was finished in 1952 and can hold 388,000 acre-feet of water. The Kajaki Dam, which is located 72 miles upstream from Lashkar Gah, was completed a few months later in April 1953. It was constructed with the intention of supplying power, water for irrigation, and flood control. It also established the largest significant water reservoir in Afghanistan. Similar to the Arghandab Dam, no proper topographical and soil studies were carried out, despite a 1950 United Nations report that questioned the project's viability economically and predicted adverse environmental effects in the lower valley, including salinization and water logging downstream from the dam. The Kajaki Dam has had a mixed effect because it has reduced the flood waters that

¹ IRNA. 2022. Iran ready to invest in Afghanistan's electricity sector.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84642176/Iran-readyto-invest-in-Afghanistan-s-electricity-sector>

pastoralists rely on for fertilization while increasing Iran's water supply during the dry season.¹

Due to the redevelopment of the Chabahar port on the Oman Sea as a base for the delivery of products to Afghanistan via Iran's Zabol province, the issue between the two nations has garnered significant international attention in recent years.

2. Afghanistan's stance on water with Iran:

Although Goldsmith's verdict said that the bounds of the Hirmand delta were on the main branch of the river, political leaders in Afghanistan have viewed the usage of Hirmand water as the "exclusive right" of Afghanistan since the beginning of the 20th century. In addition, Smith's choice is deemed harsh because Colonel McMahon gave the Iranian side only a third of the Hirmand River. Afghanistan has declined to use the same abbreviation for "political stability" periods in spite of this.

According to Colonel McMahon's memo dated September 25, 1904, the Afghan government maintains that they are the exclusive proprietors of "All of Hirmand" due to their geographic location, and they do not acknowledge that there is a disagreement about water sharing. This strategy eliminates the possibility of water sharing negotiations of any type. The remarks made by former president Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai in Tehran represent a portion of Afghanistan's new geopolitical approach to Iran through a number of blue levers. to allow it to be referred to as a "water against immigrants" strategy. He stated at the Afghan embassy in 2015 that Kabul was not in a vulnerable position when it came to its neighbors. Afghanistan is also necessary for its neighbors. That hadn't pleaded with Tehran to address the immigration issue. There is no need to beg.²

Ashraf Ghani has summarized much of Afghanistan's geopolitical goals with regard to Iran in these few phrases. Put more simply, it appears like Afghanistan is attempting to construct a number of dams in order to cause several problems in various water locations. Although Hirmand's claim is the primary source of Iran's ire, Ghani has really exploited a crucial geopolitical code and threatened Iran directly by contesting Hirmand's claim to the

¹ Nagheeby, M.; Piri, M. and Faure, M. 2019. The legitimacy of dam development in international watercourses: A case study of the harirud river basin. Transnational Environmental Law 8(2): 247-278.

² IRNA. 2019. Tehran-Kabul Agreement on the delivery of Iran's water right. <https://www.irna.ir/news/83562735>

Harirud Water Basin, which provides water to Khorasan. There are two ways to understand this code. First things first: in the perspective of the Afghans, Hirmand's fate is sealed. Now the negation will over Harirud, and if they do not make any compromises, that will go through what happened to Hirmand in Khorasan again. Additionally, secondly, in addition to Hirmand, a new front has opened in Harirud.¹

Ghani made reference to the "Harirud" and stated: "Kabul does not see the need to give effect to Iran's demands regarding Iran's "Haqaba" if the Iranian government does not take action to solve the problem of immigrants." Afghanistan would sever all business ties with Iran if Tehran keeps deporting immigrants from Afghanistan. According to the information of the Iranian Statistics Center, 1.98% of Iran's population consists of Afghan immigrants, which has been increasing since 2005. But this amount only represents foreigners who are allowed to stay in Iran. According to the statements of the Minister of Interior in 2015, the number of Afghans living in Iran is 2.5 million, of which only 1 million have temporary residence permits. This amount is more than 4.5% of the total population of the country. In addition, Iran has returned 5 million illegal immigrants to Afghanistan in the last ten years .²

Afghan immigrants make up 1.98% of Iran's population, according to data from the Iranian Statistics Centre, and this percentage has been rising since 2005. However, this figure only accounts for visitors who are permitted to remain in Iran. Out of the 2.5 million Afghans residing in Iran, only 1 million hold temporary residency cards, as per the Minister of Interior's 2015 remarks. This sum represents more than 4.5% of the nation's entire population. Furthermore, for the past ten years, Iran has repatriated five million illegal immigrants to Afghanistan .³

Afghanistan's geopolitics affects its water policy despite its erratic dominance over its political domain. All Afghan rulers, regardless of their political views, are aware that they may use water control to exert control over their neighbors. One nation that finds itself in a geographical bind is Afghanistan.

¹ IRNA. 2020. Joint geological survey from the Helmand river begins after a bout half a century. www.irna.ir/news/83661941/)

² IRNA. 2022. Iran ready to invest in Afghanistan's electricity sector.
<https://en.irna.ir/news/84642176/Iran-readyto-invest-in-Afghanistan-s-electricity-sector>

³ HITOSHI, S. "The Nature of the State in Afghanistan and Its Relations with Neighboring Countries" Institute of Development Economies, 2006.

Due to its landlocked status and lack of access to open waters, this nation has seen a disruption in trade relations and has become geographically dependent on Iran and Pakistan. Conversely, the Pashtuns' control over this nation's political system has strengthened its ability to combat Iran.

3. Helmand basin conflict between Afghanistan and Iran:

The Potential for Afghanistan's upstream water resource development A medium degree of surface water exploitation and some room for expansion in irrigation are characteristics of the Afghan portion of the Helmand River basin. It is projected that 9,552 MCM of surface water are available on average throughout the basin. Nearly 60% of the basin's total surface water availability is found in the Helmand River at the Kajaki dam. According to various estimates, Afghanistan uses between 38 and 57 percent of the water that is available within its borders. The percentage of groundwater used, or 2,480–3,650 MCM, falls between 41 and 60 percent of the total available supply.¹

Even with two sizable dams, Afghanistan's ability to control river flow is not optimal because the storage accounts for only 15% of the country's average annual water availability. The huge flow that occurs in the spring cannot be stored in the current storage capacity to support irrigation in the summer. Consequently, the entire 250,219 acres on the Afghan side cannot be fully irrigated.

The GIROA is now developing the Bakhshabad and Kamal Khan projects under GIROA finance in order to close this gap. By combining the two, it would be possible to completely utilize the current irrigation areas and add 101,154 ha of extra irrigated land, which would represent a 40% increase over the current irrigated area. The yearly surface water availability would be increased from 15% to 35% of the storage capacity. But take note that the Farah River, not the Helmand River, would get the most of this additional storage capacity. Hydrological Yearbooks of the MWRE (1961–1980). Favre and Kamal's (2004) Watershed Atlas places the total availability at 9,300 MCM. The information for each river is often imprecise, though; for example, Farahrod and Khasrod are significantly overstated when compared to the official hydrological yearbook statistics.²

¹ IRNA. 2022. Iran ready to invest in Afghanistan's electricity sector.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84642176/Iran-readyto-invest-in-Afghanistan-s-electricity-sector>

² IRNA. 2022. Iran ready to invest in Afghanistan's electricity sector.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84642176/Iran-readyto-invest-in-Afghanistan-s-electricity-sector>

In Iran the Sistan delta's condition The availability of groundwater in the Sistan delta is negligible, while Afghanistan provides over 96% of the surface water resources in the region. The Sistan delta's current agro-ecological system is thought to be feasible, if far from ideal, given the typical levels of surface water availability. The entire estimated 5,935 MCM of surface water that enter the Sistan delta is utilized, whether for irrigation, DMI (domestic, municipal, and industrial) purposes, or to keep the wetlands as freshwater due to the system's closed and integrated structure.

Not only would a large decrease in the amount of water cover on the Hamuns negatively impact the lake's biological processes, but it would also jeopardize the livelihoods of those who depend on the goods and services this system provides. In the early 2000s, an extended drought and ecological collapse led to the abandonment of 124 settlements and a significant increase in unemployment. In this unstable region that borders both Afghanistan and Pakistan, protecting the wetlands has also turned into a domestic political issue for the GIRI. Sistan and Baluchestan Province is, in fact, one of Iran's most disadvantaged regions. The GIRI worries that if the country's economic structure were to collapse, this mostly Sunni populace in a Shi'a majority may feel more and more marginalized by Tehran.¹

Iran began building reservoirs in the early 1980s to meet its need for DMI, which was previously threatened by drought. In order to meet DMI demand and increase irrigation water supply reliability, a fourth reservoir with a storage capacity of 819 MCM was built in 2006. This increased the overall capacity to 1,400 MCM. It is anticipated that the utilization of the Chahnimeh-4 reservoir will enhance the dependability of the demand/supply ratio for current irrigated agriculture from 63 to 79 percent, with very minimal effects on the wetlands when compared to the base scenario from 2006.

Afghanistan and Iran's water-sharing agreement: the 1973 deal A pact guaranteeing an average of 820 MCM (or 26 m³ /s) annually from the Helmand River for usage by Iran was signed by the governments of Afghanistan and Iran in 1973. Iran has no right for water consumption over that specified in the treaty. Iran's 820 MCM water supply makes up a negligible percentage (less than 14%) of the Sistan delta's current total water demand and use. In actuality, the treaty's assessment of 820 MCM was explicitly intended to account for Iranian domestic use and irrigation

¹ DEHGAN, A. PALMER-MOLONEY, J. and MIRZAEI, M. "Water Security: Potential Destabilization in Western Afghanistan", 2009.

In summary, even if the Helmand Treaty permits it, there is a chance that a certain amount of increased water withdrawal in Afghanistan could seriously compromise the integrity of the delta. Therefore, the treaty offers little protection for maintaining the socio-economic and ecological integrity of the wetlands because it only guarantees 820 MCM annually, most of which is used for irrigation in Iran. But its article five makes that evident. estimate that there would be "disastrous effects for the agricultural activities in the Sistan delta and for the Hamuns," with a "nearly complete collapse of the ecology of the Hamuns," if the average water availability reaching the Sistan delta dropped to a level below 3,250 MCM. This means that the Sistan delta would still experience the same effects as shown in the research even in the unlikely event that the Farah and Khash rivers remained unaltered and Iran obtained nearly 160% of the amount stipulated in the treaty from the Helmand river.¹

a "nearly complete collapse of the ecology of the Hamuns" and "disastrous effects for the agricultural activities in the Sistan delta and for the Hamuns" if the average water availability reaching the Sistan delta dropped to a level below 3,250 MCM. Thus, even in a fictitious situation where Iran obtained over 160 percent of the treaty's stipulated amount from the Helmand River and the Farah and Khash rivers remained unaltered, the Sistan delta would still experience the same effects as reported in the studies.

Future improvements in Afghanistan's water resources and potential effects in the framework of Afghanistan's development of its water resources, the question of how much the Sistan delta can withstand a more persistent decline in inflow is raised. In the near to mid-term, it seems doubtful that the severe case projected by Beek in 2008 will materialize, which entails a fall in water flow from 5,875 MCM to around 3,250 MCM per year. Therefore, insofar as future events in Afghanistan are concerned, the term "disaster in the making" that Mojtaheh-Zadeh used to characterize the situation in the delta may not be the most accurate one.

This does not, however, imply that the Sistan delta will not suffer grave consequences from the MEW's more limited ongoing and future initiatives. According to a study by Mott McDonald, the Kamal Khan project would result in a 380 MCM decrease in Iran's water flow. The impact could range from 493 MCM to 580 MCM. for example, In the event of a sizable storage

¹ ALIKHANI, A. The Shah and I (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1991). Al-Monitor.

2022. Iran's water woes worsen despite warmer Taliban ties.

<https://www.almonitor.com/originals/2022/02/irans-water-woes-worsen-despite-warmer-taliban-ties#ixzz7KOz3B1H1>

facility, the Bakhshabad project's impact may exceed 710 MCM. An estimate of 350 MCM is provided by the Mott-McDonald study. Although that predict that a 2,685 MCM¹⁵⁶ decline in the delta would constitute a “ecological disaster,” the plans for Afghanistan that are currently in the works are probably going to involve a fall in water availability of roughly 730 MCM, and potentially as much as 1,290 MCM. based on presumptions made in light of the projects' existing state of knowledge. To offset the evaporation of the wetlands, this would account for between 17 and 29 percent of the normal water consumption. Additionally, this would account for anywhere from 63% to 100% of the Sistan delta's current average water demand for agriculture. These figures do not account for floodwater that might be redirected from the Sistan wetlands to the saltmarsh of Gaud-e-Zireh at Kamal Khan level, protecting the Afghan side from potential flood damage right bank downstream Kamal Khan. .¹

The magnitude of the upcoming development in Afghanistan's transboundary socio-economic and environmental effects has not yet been assessed. Clearly, more research in this area is needed. It's also critical to understand that Afghan initiatives have had an impact on the Helmand basin. Furthermore, Iran's mishandling of its wetlands has been contributing to its vulnerability and may continue to do so depending on its decisions regarding the allocation of water from Chahnimeh-4 and the management of the wetlands. As a result, the vulnerability of the wetlands cannot be entirely attributed to the development of transboundary water resources in Afghanistan.

In regards to projects on the Helmand River, the GIROA must determine whether or not to participate in discussions with Iran. As said, the Farah River does not have a water sharing agreement. As a result, in order to cooperate over the resources, the Bakhshabad project would probably need to be notified under the 1997 UN Convention.

The primary players in the international community, like the UN and NATO, have been hoping that talks and negotiations can find the proper balance. For example, the Deputy Secretary General of NATO reported to the UN Secretary General in December 2011 that, "as the dam will have an impact on the flow of water from the Helmand River into Iran, transnational water agreements to facilitate its implementation as well as potential international investments in other dam constructions in Afghanistan will be required" in

¹ Alcis. 2022. Holding Water to Ransom: Kamal Khan Dam in Southwest Afghanistan

response to the August 2011 tender for the first phase of construction of the Kamal Khan dam on the Helmand River.¹

Concurrently, Iran and Afghanistan have been formally involved in the Helmand Commission since September 2005. This commission is tasked with evaluating and guaranteeing the implementation of the pact. The talks have not eased tensions, according to accounts from Afghan sources, and have mainly consisted of back-and-forth over whether the pact is being correctly implemented. The Helmand Commission was established by both Afghanistan and Iran in September of 2005. The 1973 treaty's Protocol Number One, which calls for the creation of a commission, was never implemented because of the political unrest and conflicts in both Afghanistan and the United States after the treaty was ratified in 1977. Such a strategy would seem to align with a cooperative strategy that aims to resolve differences through institutional platforms.

The Commission meets "when required," which usually translates to once a quarter, in order to evaluate and guarantee the treaty's application. It appears that each side measures the flow independently on their own side. It is significant to note that, at now, there are no operational measuring stations along the common Parian, therefore estimating the flow solely on the Afghan side will not provide a reasonable estimate of the flow actually entering Iran. On the other hand, measurement gauges would likely be present in the intake structures that the Iranians operate. Although it is stated in the Treaty that Afghan and Iranian commissioners must work together to assess the amount of water supplied to Iran, there is no proof that this is done consistently.

However, it is challenging to obtain data and measurements in Afghanistan. A Western expert who held a prominent position expressed doubts, adding, "The Afghans maintain that they have 6,000 MCM in Helmand. I am aware that for the past five to ten years, Helmand has had roughly 3,500 MCM rather than 6,000 MCM. I'm not sure how they could arrive at such a conclusion. It believes it is predicated on conjecture. It is challenging to determine the precise amount of water rights that Iran should have in the lack of a working station at Dehradun on the Afghan side, especially during drought years. It might be challenging to advance the Treaty's implementation in the absence of any cooperative fact-finding expeditions. Iranian sources were unable to confirm the conversations taking place in the

¹ UNSC. 2001. The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security Environment and sustainable development: water supply and sanitation. UNSC. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/436057?ln=en>

Helmand Commission. As such, care should be taken when evaluating the material.

4. The impact of Afghanistan and Iran:

The entire region has seen a significant shift in the political environment following 150 years of volatility brought about by Western operations. There is a reductionist perspective that claims that Iran's political ties with the Taliban and their shared objective of pulling out US troops will resolve the Helmand River water dispute; however, the Taliban's recent dubious and unfavorable response to Iran's request to open the Kamal Khan Dam gates following a protracted drought has refuted this theory

Unverified reports claim that the Taliban has asked Iran to cover the cost of whatever water they use, including the water that they were granted as part of the 1973 pact. As of the time of writing this study, satellite photographs reveal that Afghanistan is diverting water directly to the Goad-eZereh from its natural route, halting water flows towards Iran and the Hamoun Wetlands, seemingly in accordance with a strategy devised during earlier administrations of the Taliban's opponents.

The people living downstream of the Kamal Khan Dam on both sides of the border do not manifestly profit economically or agriculturally from this diversion, which entirely circumvents the water supply to Iran with this distraction, history seems to be repeating itself in that there is a clear revisitation of the tensions surrounding the gate closure in 2001–2002; the only difference is that Iran is now adopting a more conservative stance about Afghanistan's illegal behavior.¹

One may argue that Afghanistan has achieved the objective of complete control over the water of the Helmand River, which was set for it in the 1870s for British interests. However, the Taliban currently control the water, primarily due to the Kamal Khan Dam. They can utilize it to further their own objectives, particularly against their adversaries in Afghanistan who constructed the dam. The Taliban will probably use their control over tap water to exert pressure on Iran on other matters, such as granting them political legitimacy and preventing Iran from supporting their opponents. Iran has not yet agreed to grant the Taliban political legitimacy; instead, they are making it conditional on the formation of a government Afghanistan that includes the country's different political parties and economic support of Afghanistan under the Taliban's current ruling.

21.UNEP. 2003. Post-conflict environmental Assessment-Afghanistan.

Analyzing how they might get past the obstacles arising from the recent waves of chaos in Afghanistan, such as the Taliban's resurgence and the emergence of Daesh (ISIS), as well as evaluating the effects of the unfinished talks between Iran and the former Afghan rulers, is premature. In reality, the disagreements have persisted since both parties keep blaming the other of breaking their treaty commitments while their demands continue to be a "paper tiger." Regarding the HRB, no single objective, vision, or norm has been established to meet the interests and identities of Iran and Afghanistan.

The 1997 UN Convention describes what factors should be taken into account when determining what is "equitable and reasonable" in any given circumstance, rather than prescribing what is "equitable and reasonable." When assessing whether the use of water is equitable and reasonable, all pertinent factors should be taken into account, including geography, hydrology, socioeconomic needs, dependent populations, impacts of use, current and potential uses, conservation, efficiency of use, and availability of other sources. The idea of equitable and reasonable use is applicable to both upstream and downstream states, as will be covered later. Thus, when building their projects, downstream states must also take into account upstream uses, both possible and present, just as upstream states must take into account downstream uses, both potential and existing. Whether or not Afghanistan's development could have reasonable and equitable downstream effects is the central question. But conversations on water don't happen in a vacuum. There are high power imbalances between Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and, to a lesser extent, Turkmenistan. In particular, mistrust and animosity have typified bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Iran.¹

There are only official water-sharing agreements like the Helmand River Treaty from 1973. The treaty's presence hasn't made the suspicion surrounding the river's water sharing disappear. There are no legal or informal water-sharing agreements in place for other significant rivers in the research area, including the Harirod, Farahrud, and Kabul rivers. The GIROA has started a number of projects in the last ten or so years, such as Kamal Khan in the Helmand Basin and Salma and Pashdan in the Harirod basin. It has been aggressively seeking funding while also working on finishing drawings and feasibility studies for a number of other projects.

Concerns have been expressed by the UN, several important donor agencies, and neighboring communities over these actions. In the hopes that this will result in amicable water-sharing arrangements or other forms of benefit-

¹ UNEP. 2009. From conflict to peacebuilding: the role of natural resources and the environment. UNEP/Earthprint.

sharing or compensation, these organizations have started or supported a number of programmers to encourage and facilitate a cooperative process over the development of transboundary water resources. They have also supported "opening up water dialogues" and "widening Afghanistan's views on solutions to cross-border water questions." For example, according to the US State Department, "any major hydrologic project will require Afghanistan to launch negotiations with its neighbors," and the Afghanistan government will then need to "strengthen its capacity in transboundary water rights diplomacy and improve upon existing water rights treaties with its neighbors."

The 1997 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses contains important ideas that represent a reasonable and compromise approach, which the international community has been eager to promote. Except for the recent bilateral agreement with Pakistan in August 2013 on developing a joint hydropower project on the Kunar river, the GIROA has been pursuing project construction while rejecting dialogue and negotiations over the past ten years, despite requests from its neighbors.¹

The long-term effects of transboundary interactions between Afghanistan and its riparian neighbors are yet unknown at the time of the post-2014 transition in Afghanistan. In a complicated environment of both domestic and foreign politics, the opinions, convictions, and attitudes of Afghan decision-makers as well as those of other regional actors will determine whether the process moves towards more conflicts or appeased agreements.

In the period from 2022 to 2023, clashes occurred between Iran and Afghanistan, resulting in deaths and injuries as a result of border clashes against the backdrop of water disputes. The border tension that broke out in a border area between Iran and Afghanistan, which resulted in the killing of two people, has ended, according to what the Taliban authorities announced in the context of tensions between Tehran and Kabul over the distribution of water from the Helmand Dam. Officials of the border guard forces of both sides met to study and discuss the reasons for the clash, and a truce was declared between the two sides, according to Iranian media.

The spokesman for the Ministry of the Interior of the Government of Afghanistan, Abdul Nafi Takur, wrote on Twitter about the incident that occurred in Nimruz Province in the southwest of the country, "In the clash,

¹ Nagheeby, m. and Warner, J. 2018. The geopolitical overlay of the hydropolitics of the Harirud River Basin.

one person was killed on each side and many were injured.” Iranian media said that clashes occurred along the southeastern border with Afghanistan following a dispute over water resources. The Afghan Ministry of Defense accused the Iranian soldiers of being the ones who initiated the shooting, and the ministry added in a statement, “Negative measures and the search for excuses to ignite war are not in the interest of either party.”¹

5. Possibilities and constraints for discussion and benefit distribution:

- Regarding Kamal Khan and Bakhshabad, there is little room for direct benefit sharing from water development in the Helmand Basin.
- Iran doesn't require electricity because it already exports some to Afghanistan.
- Flood management with the Kamal Khan initiative: Iran has reservoirs, dykes, and floodways that help it be reasonably prepared for most years. Furthermore, when they are not harmful, floods help maintain wetlands as freshwater ecosystems by clearing them out. Therefore, during typical years, flood control would not always make sense. On the other hand, it might be helpful in cases of severe flooding. Thus, in theory, there is some space for collaboration on flood control.

Although there aren't many benefits to direct integration, the hydrology and development statistics indicate that there is potential to strike a balance such that Afghanistan and Iran can gain from the growth of water resources while the effects on the Iranian delta are manageable.

Furthermore, it is possible to carry out the Helmand Commission's duties completely in terms of compliance and monitoring. While it is possible that Afghanistan won't provide the amount of water necessary under the Treaty in certain very unusual instances—perhaps even in some months or years—this is unlikely to occur frequently. Moreover, there is insufficient data to determine if the treaty's non-compliance during some dry years is the result of Afghan mismanagement or unusual conditions. In the latter scenario, Afghanistan cannot be held accountable, as stated in article XI of the treaty, although particular actions must still be performed. Furthermore, it cannot be said that treaty noncompliance is the primary cause of the drying up of the wetlands.

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/world-65734444>

Therefore, one question in the Helmand Basin will be how much Iran and Afghanistan can use their water resources and preserve the integrity of wetlands while upholding the legality of the Helmand Treaty. As long as there is improved cooperative measurement and monitoring of water flows and use, this understanding should improve. Transboundary effect studies and thorough environmental assessments are still absent from the feasibility studies of the Afghan projects and basin planning. It is obvious that there is potential for better communication and ties with Iran in the Helmand basin, especially when it comes to environmental issues and specifically the protection of the Sistan wetlands.¹

6. Conclusion:

The water cannot be easily isolated from the larger geopolitical context. Extending the 'shadow of the future' is predicted by game theory to encourage cooperation among states, contrary to the (neo-)Malthusian literature, which asserts that scarcity will drive them to violent resource war. The description of the situation in the Helmand River as either a "frozen conflict" or a "frozen peace," as there isn't enough data to support either theory. There is a state quo that alternates between them rather than stasis, conflict, or peace.

In addition to public narratives and discourses that are essential to regional peace-building mechanisms and mutual water cooperation in the basin, this article suggests pathways for additional investigation into the multilayered political structure of the Helmand River. This paper demonstrates the minuscule amount of mobility that has occurred during a century of significant political fluctuations impacted by external actions.

Notably, the historical relations between the two states and the current condition of affairs simply do not support the worsening of ties between Afghanistan and Iran, much less the scenario of "water wars." It is true that there hasn't been much progress in ties over water resources, and that these issues are very political for both Afghanistan and Iran. But in the end, both states have chosen to "cooperate" in the handling of their water disputes; this is because other concerns, such security, the economy, and stability in Afghanistan, have taken precedence.

In this instance, Iran must make concessions and largely set aside its disagreement with Afghanistan over water in order to address the more serious and persistent threat of instability in that country. Afghanistan, on the

¹ UNDP. 2005. Restoration and sustainable use of the Shared Sistan Basin: A Baseline Situation Analysis. Tehran.

other hand, may profit somewhat from Iran's stance in order to preserve its own status quo and hasten its growth, despite its own struggles with instability. Both governments, but especially Iran, seem to have no alternative but to swallow the bitter pill and regulate their water-related disputes with very little collaboration given the highly contested character of the geopolitical backdrop under Western interventions.

It is therefore extremely improbable that the water-related disputes between Afghanistan and Iran will spiral out of control based on previous data. But because of its very nature, this kind of frozen atmosphere is hotly debated, leading to a great deal of miscommunication, accusations, and counter-accusations between two sides that both see themselves as victims of circumstance. If they keep up this destructive zero-sum blame game, the biosphere as a whole will suffer serious, irreversible harm. Is this still a viable solution in the 150 years since the Helmand River Basin debate began.

Iran has been seeking a containment strategy outside of the legal arena, realizing that the 1973 Helmand Treaty provides only restricted guarantees for conserving the wetlands. The GIRI has not made a formal request to amend the 1973 pact in the last ten years. Rather of relying solely on coercive compliance measures and incentives, Iran has employed a dual strategy to contain perceived threats. The overall incentive plan, which involves investment and development in Afghanistan, is comparable to the one covered in the Harirod case study.

Regarding coercion, there is substantial suspicion that Iran carried out stealthy assaults, or attempted to attack, the Bakhshabad and Kamal Khan dams, notably in March 2012 and April 2009. Similar to Harirod, these clandestine measures caused the projects to stall, allowing Iran time to adjust to the anticipated decline in surface water supplies. Legally speaking, the GIRI has raised concerns about the purported non-application of the 1973 Treaty through its senior local and national officials ever since the region experienced the severe drought of 1999–2001.¹

For example, in the dry years 2000–2001, Iran formally brought up concerns about a claimed blocking of the Helmand waters at the Kajaki dam, which, in the words of Iranian authorities, resulted in a failure to observe the Treaty, with the Islamic State of Afghanistan's Embassy. Later, on September 21,

¹ Bearce, D.H.; Floros, K.M. and McKibben, H.E. 2009. The shadow of the future and international bargaining: The occurrence of bargaining in a three-phase cooperation framework. The Journal of Politics 71(2): 719-732.

2001, the complaint letter was distributed as part of a General Assembly Security Council agenda item.

Rivers that are in motion are one of the many sources of water that each nation has. These rivers don't usually come from domestic territory. These life-giving sources occasionally traverse thousands of kilometers and cross multiple nations. Water conflicts between nations have existed for a long time as a result. Water signifies wealth in a region like the Middle East that is naturally arid and has gotten drier owing to climate change, and no country is eager to freely provide water to another.

Due to its geographic location, 26 minor and big rivers make up 22% of Iran's borders; nonetheless, the country depends heavily on the five large rivers, the Hirmand, Hari, Arvand, Etrak, and Aras. Meanwhile, foreign experts have focused more on the conflicts around the Harirud and Hirmand rivers than any other. These two rivers flow near Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, as well as in the east of Iran. These two rivers are extremely valuable to all three of these countries, which likewise have dry climates. Afghanistan currently produces 70 billion cubic metres of fresh water a year, of which more than 80 percent is exported to neighbouring nations. Conversely, water disputes have resulted from colonial agreements, dry weather, and political difficulties within Afghanistan and between our country and Iran.¹

This is the reason these arguments still exist today. International accords mandate that countries split the water from common rivers evenly, however this division isn't always feasible. Accordingly, one of the factors that have impacted the two nations' relationship is the water battle between Afghanistan and Iran. England arbitrated disputes between Iran and Afghanistan in the 19th and early 20th centuries to resolve this issue, and the United States attempted to get involved for geopolitical reasons in the 1950s. But no deal was made in this area, and the issue remained technical.

Water did not seem to be a major issue for either country for the next twenty years, but in 1972 the dispute grew more intense and in 1973 the Hirmand River Treaty was signed, where Iran committed to prioritizing international relations over water and thus entered the path of reconciliation. However, at that same time, the Afghan coup took place, and despite this, Kabul officials

¹ W. WHITNEY, J. "Geology, Water, and Wind in the Lower Helmand Basin, Southern Afghanistan, Scientific Investigations Report". US Geological Survey, US Department of the interior, 2006. http://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2006/5182/pdf/SIR06-5182_508.pdf.

believe that Iran has utilized its allotted 26 cubic metres per second from the Hirmand water contract.

But this contract's legality has also run out, so Iran will have to sign a new agreement with the Afghan government and pay the water bill if it wants the Hirmand River to continue flowing. The water flow from Hirmand to Hamon Lake has been stopped because of this. In a 2010 assessment on Afghanistan's water resources, the "East-West" research institution emphasised that collaboration among neighbors on water resources is the only viable option—rather than a choice. This paper claims that the absence of bilateral or regional agreements in this area seriously jeopardizes the region's security and capacity for sustainable development.

As this paper, that can argue that Afghanistan has more rivers and water reservoirs than Iran, but this is because of political issues between the two nations. Iran contends that the Helmand and Harirod rivers should be recognized as shared rivers, but Afghanistan maintains that these rivers are inland waterways. Afghanistan is less capable of controlling and utilizing the water flows from these rivers, though. This suggests that if political will and bilateral coordination are lacking to solve these fundamental concerns, Afghanistan should anticipate ongoing difficulties, such as drought, to arise on a regular basis.

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