

# Transboundary Water Negotiations: A Case Study of Afghanistan

Idrees Malyar  
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# Introduction

## Transboundary Rivers

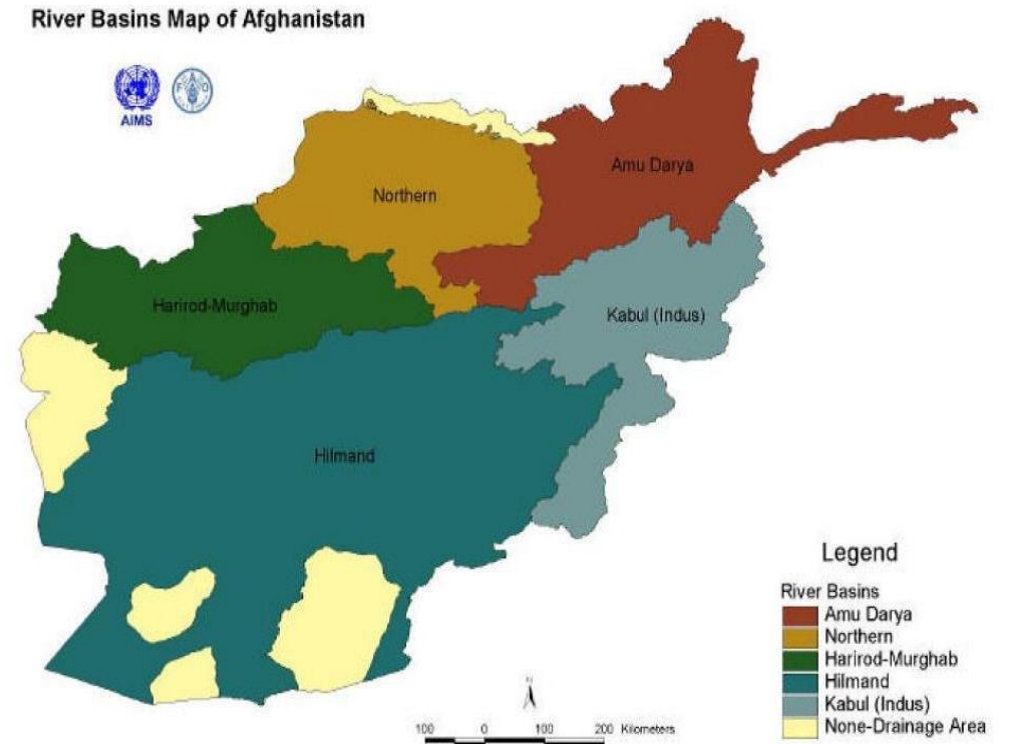
- I. Kabul/Indus River Basin
- II. The Amu River Basin
- III. Harirrud & Murghab Rivers Basin
- IV. Helmand River Basin

**Outflow:** 42.22 BCM/year

**Inflow:** 10 BCM/year

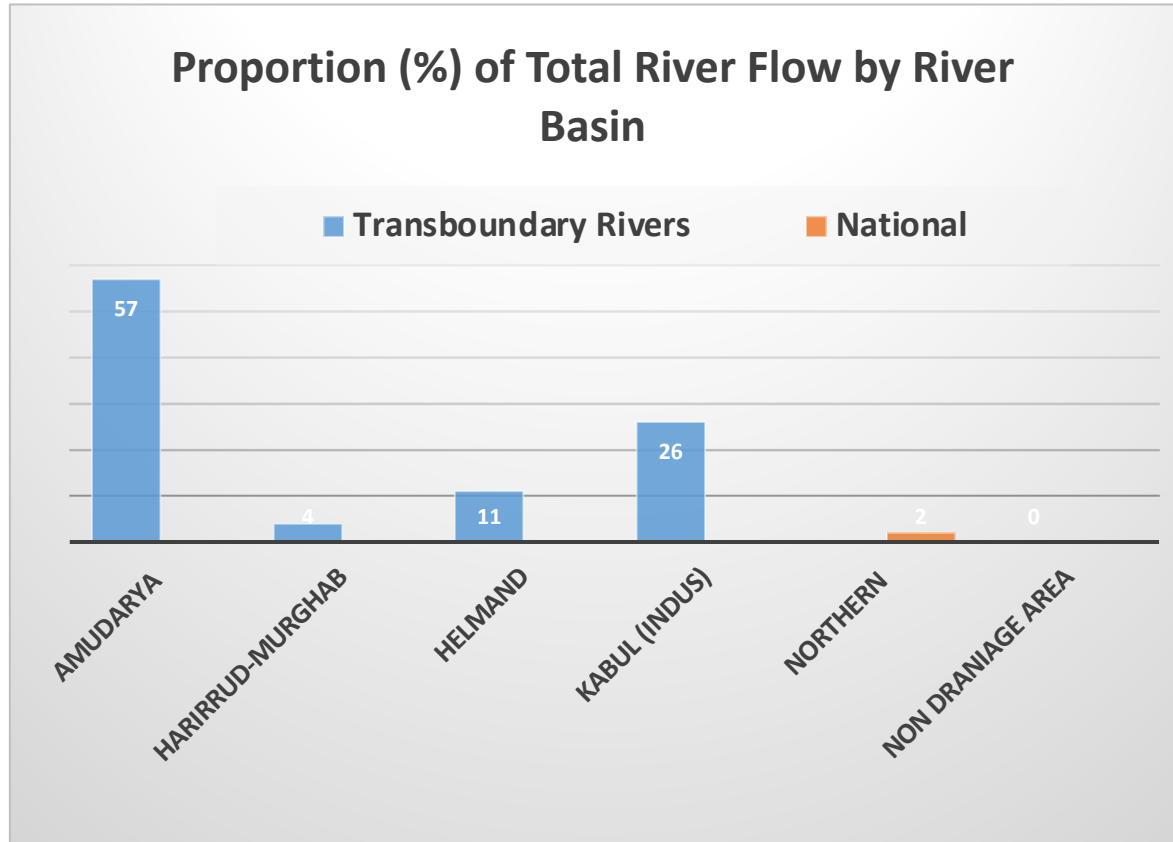
**Land Area:** 84 percent (Watson, 2014)

**People:** 87 percent (Watson, 2014)

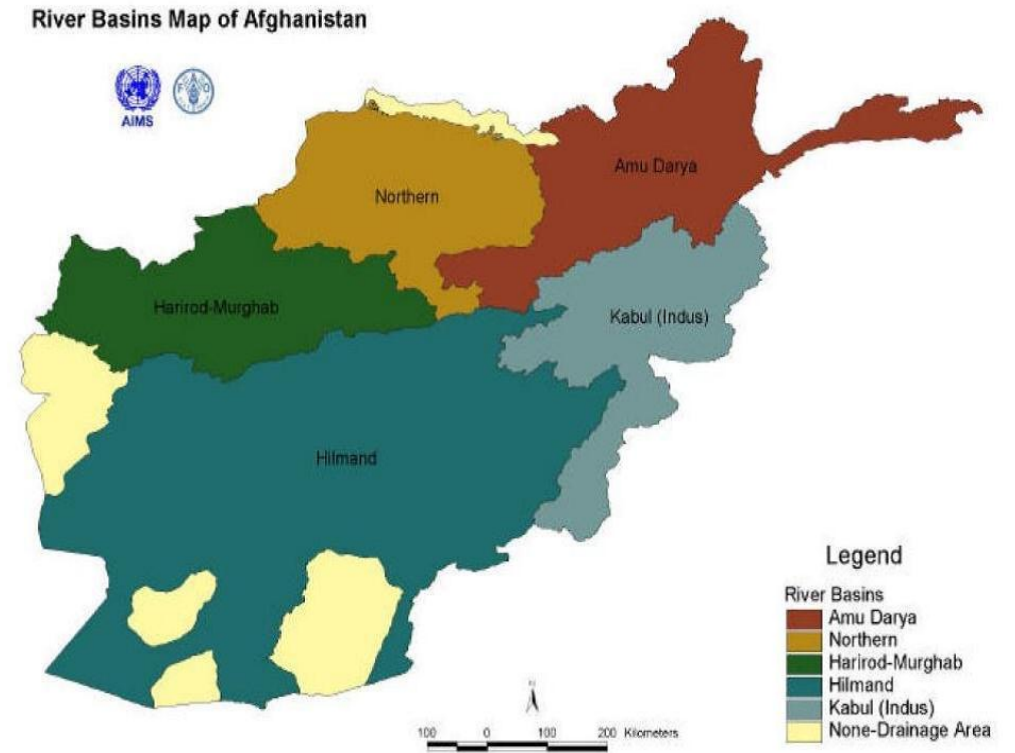


*River Basin Map of Afghanistan (Watershed Atlas, 2007)*

# Introduction



Proportion (%) of Total River Flow by River Basin (Watershed Atlas, 2007)



River Basin Map of Afghanistan (Watershed Atlas, 2007)

# Treaties/Agreements

## Existing Treaties

No	River Basin	Co-riparian States	Treaty
1	Kabul River Basin (Indus River)	Pakistan (India and China)	The 1960 Indus Treaty between India and Pakistan; and
2			The 1921 Treaty between Afghanistan and Great Britain with little Water coverage.
3	<b>Helmand River Basin</b>	<b>Iran</b>	<b>The 1973 Afghan-Iranian Helmand-River Water Treaty</b>
4	Harirud & Murghab Rivers Basin	Iran and Turkmenistan	The 1926 Treaty between Iran and Turkmenistan
5	Amudarya River Basin	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan	The 1873 Frontier Agreement between Afghanistan and Russia;
6			The 1946 Frontier Agreement between Afghanistan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and
7			The 1958 Treaty between the Government of the USSR and the Royal Government of Afghanistan.
8			<b>Recent Agreement on Data and Information Sharing with Tajikistan.</b>

# Hydro-Diplomacy of Afghanistan

## Co-riparian States/Countries:

1. Iran
2. Central Asian Countries (UZK, TJK, TKM)
3. Pakistan (Interest)



# Hydro-Diplomacy of Afghanistan

## **Why was Iran the priority?**

- I. An existing treaty** – The Helmand Treaty 1973
- II. Infrastructure Development:** Kajaki and Kamal Khan Dams (on Helmand) and Salma Dam (on Harirud)
- III. Showing Cooperation** – Taliban Issue
- IV. Creating Balance** – Iran and Pakistan (Economy)

## Agendas with Iran:

- I. **Helmand River Basin – Helmand River Treaty 1973**
  - **Helmand River Commission**
  - Foreign Policy/Agenda instead of Technical Issues:
    - Geographic Pillars (51-52)
    - Wetlands/Hamboons
    - Chah Nemah (Shallow Well)
    - Groundwater

## Agendas with Iran:

### II. Harried River Basin

### III. Strategic Cooperation Agreement

- I. Security
- II. Economic
- III. Cultural
- IV. Migrants
- V. Water**

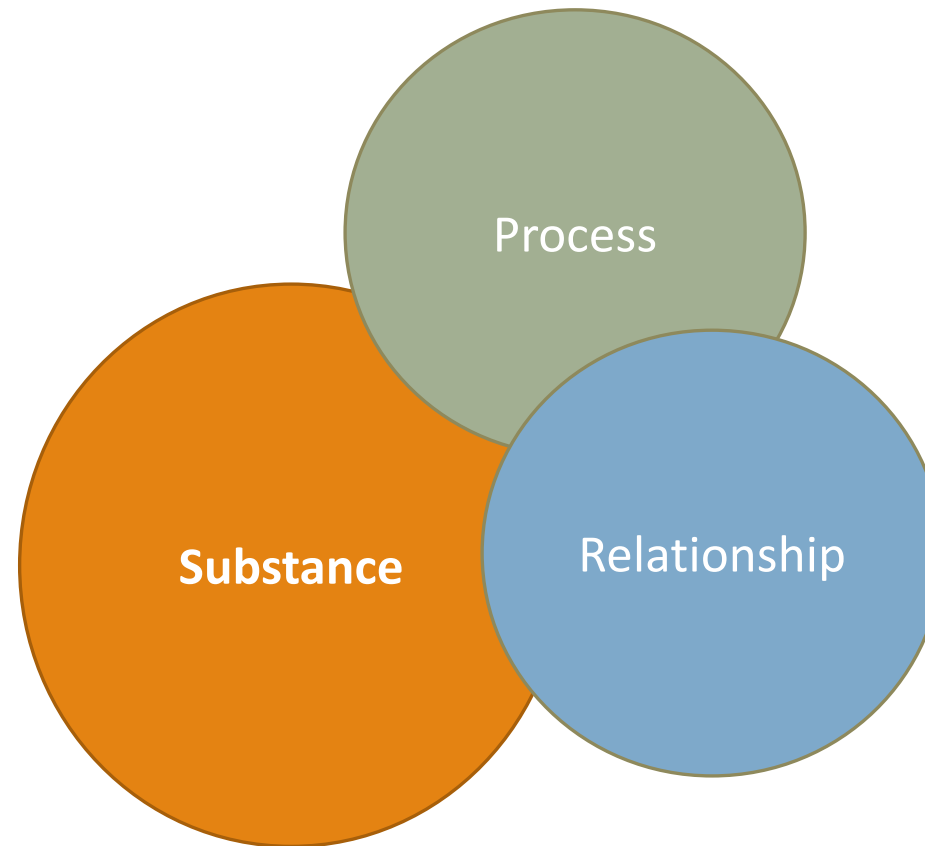


# Approach between Afghanistan and Iran

## **Traditional Bargaining Approach:**

- I. Firm exaggerated position**
- II. Criticizing the other side**
- III. Avoid sharing info, or what is needed (interests)**

# Approach between Afghanistan and Iran



# Negotiations for Afghanistan

## Nature of Negotiations:

1. Political Negotiations - “Entry Point”
2. Technical (Data; International Water Law)

## Concerns for Afghanistan:

1. Knowledge and Capacity
2. Domestic Support/Public Opinion (Government and Water)
3. Iran: A strong negotiator
4. Weak Government and Vulnerable
5. Timing of Negotiations

# Negotiations for Afghanistan

## Issues:

1. Tough initially – No experience/Preparation
2. Trust among the team
3. Lack of clarity of expectations
4. Pressures from the top order

## Strengths:

1. Direct Approach - Leadership
2. Open Hand in Negotiations (Comparing to others)

## Lessons Learned

- 1. Regional cooperation is needed**
- 2. TBW negotiation is a slow /  
time-consuming process**
- 3. Technical studies are of utmost  
importance**

Questions?

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**Thank You**