
Afghanistan: Portrayal of Taliban War, Victory and Assuming Power in media and Perspectives of West, China, Russia, Central Asia, India and Pakistan**Authors**

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Abstract

This article is an examination of the history of war in Afghanistan during different eras. The history of Afghanistan indicates that the country had been in war for long time. Afghanistan had been in war since historic times, from Ghaznavis in 10th century till 2021. The country was also invaded by foreigners multiple times. Taliban war in Afghanistan after Soviet withdrawal increased and after few events U.S. invaded to control terrorism in the region. The research articles gives insight view of the emergence of Taliban group and the way they took over the country in the end of 20th century. The portrayal of Taliban in media during and after their war with U.S. troops has been discussed. Latest developments in Afghanistan and Taliban takeover Afghan government is viewed differently by countries across the world. Additionally, this article explores perspectives of the Western countries including United States of America, United Kingdom and European Union countries, few of the neighboring countries, Pakistan, Russia, Central Asian countries and India on Taliban taking over Afghanistan and assuming power.

Keywords: Taliban, Afghanistan, war, U.S. invasion, Taliban takeover, assuming power, perspectives

Introduction

Afghanistan is a country with an area of 652,860 square miles with 38.93 million population. It has remained the war trodden country since the historic times. The Islamic armies in the middle of 6th century defeated the Sassanians in Iran and advanced to the Afghan areas. But, they were unable to capture, thus gave rise to chaos and revolt in these areas (Dupree, 2021). Through the 7th century, the land of Afghanistan has been in war and conquest. Despite surrounded by the mountains and having people of fierce attitude, the county has been invaded number of times in its history (Szczepanski, 2019).

Afghanistan under Mehmood Ghaznavi, Nadir Shah Afshar, Ahmed Shah Abdali, Khurasani wars

Sabuktagin

The 10th century saw the rise of a Turkish slave Alptagin, who captured the city of Ghazna, now Ghazni. Few years later, a slave in Ghazna named Sabuktagin freed from the

governor in the Afghan mountains, extended the conquest to Kabul and Sindh. Sabuktigin ruled from 977 to 997. He took control of Ghazni in 977 and later conquered main cities of Afghanistan including Kandhar (Dupree, 2021).

Mahmud Ghaznavi

In 998, when Mahmud heard of his brother Ismail taking over the rule, he challenged him. He took control of Ghazni and took the power of Ghaznavid empire. Mahmud expanded the Ghaznavid rule to the north western India. He used brilliant techniques in building his military force relied on high horses armed with bows. The target of Mahmud forces was the ferocious Hindu Rajputs who refused to coordinate in a threat from Afghanistan (Szczepanski, 2019). During his last years, the Turkic tribes challenged the Ghaznavid rule along with Seljuk Turks. These rebellion forces had taken away few parts of Mahmud's empire till his death in 1030. Mahmud and his successors called themselves the Arabic word, Sultan (Dupree, 2021).

Genghis Khan

Genghis Khan violently defeated and occupied the cities of surrounding empires by 1209. He extended the Mongol Empire from the Caspian Sea to Persian Gulf. To unite his power with adjoining empires and he sent a message to Khwarizm Empire accompanied with treasures including gold, silver and camels. But the convoy was killed by the greedy border officer. When Genghis Khan got to know about this assassination through a survivor, he sent message to Shah to accept their terms and bow down to the Mongol army and demand the punishment of the assassinator officer. Khwarizm Shah refused the terms, killed the only Muslim messenger and insult Genghis Khan by shaving off the beards of other Mongol messengers back to him. The ruthless Mongol ruler on this offensive behavior sent around 200,000 soldiers to attack on Afghanistan (Williamson, 2016). The Mongol army did mass killing and captured the cities of Herat, Balkh, Ghazni and Bamiyan. From 1219 to 1221, Genghis Khan captured and destroyed the Khwarizm Empire. As a punishment for insulting attitude of Shah, Genghis Khan moved his army towards the other areas of Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (Dupree, 2021).

Timur Lenk

The end of 14th century marked the victory of Timur over large part of the region (Dupree, 2021). Timur was appointed as Minister of Samarkand with Governor Ilyas Khoja. Later accompanied with his allies he defeated the governor in 1364. In 1370 Timur betrayed one of his allies and took control of Balkh and announced himself as the new ruler of Samarkand, restoring the Mongol empire. Timur remained in war against the khans of Jatah and Khwarizm and occupied Kashgar in 1380. Timur got control of Herat as a part of his wars in Persia in 1383. He occupied the areas of Khurasan and eastern Persia, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Mesopotamia and Georgia till the end of 14th century. In the beginning of 15th century, due to Timur's fierce actions towards Egypt and Ottoman Sultan, Aleppo, Damascus was occupied and Baghdad was

completely destroyed and about 20,000 citizens were murdered. Timur was master of the military techniques established by Genghis Khan (Britannica, 2021).

Nadir Shah Afshar

The Iranian ruler Nadir Shah belong to the Turkic Afshar tribe. This tribe was loyal to the Iranian Safavid Shah. Nadir Shah formed the group of robbers. In 1726, he along with his group and supporters of Safavid Shah Tahmasp II formed military forces and defeated Ghilzay Afghan ruler Mahmud. Afghan ruler Mahmud forcefully took the throne in 1722. Due to his tremendous victories Tahmasp regained his throne (Dupree, 2021). After that he occupied the areas of Azerbaijan, Iraq and made the Turks leave the Persia; Iran, who attacked Persia when he was in Khurasan. In 1732, Nadir took control of Herat and recruited many Heratis in his army. In 1736 Nadir Afshar take over the Iranian throne, become Nadir Shah. He freed Persia from Afghans and Russians and then attacked few parts of Afghanistan including Kandhar, Ghazna and Kabul and conquer it. He made the most powerful army of his time but still have greed to conquer and only interested in war, conquest and brutality (Britannica, 2021). While he was busy in crushing an uprising in Khurasan, his own men assassinated him in 1747.

Ahmed Shah Abdali

Ahmed Shah was the chief of command of Abdali armed group under leadership of Nadir Shah. The afghan tribe leaders selected him as Shah after Nadir Shah's death in 1747. Ahmed Shah Abdali was the Durrani ruler to whom Afghans give a lot of respect. Ahmed Shah Durrani was the founder of the state of Afghanistan (Rattray, 2000). He expanded the kingdom from Oxus River to Indian Ocean and from Khurasan to Kashmir, Sindh and Punjab. Ahmed Shah selected the member of his council from the main Afghan tribes (Britannica, 2014).

Khurasani wars

Khurasan has been the historical area. It is comprised of territory lying around the northwestern Iran, southern Turkmenistan and northern Afghanistan. The land of Khurasan has an ancient history. The Sassanians named it in 3rd century. The literal meaning of Khurasan is the land of the Sun. Khurasan regained its independence under the Tahirid, Saffarid and Samanid rule, from 821 to 999. Later became part of the Ghaznavid, Seljuk and Khwarizm Empire. Genghis Khan and then Timur also controlled it. Afghans then occupied it from 1722 to 1730. The Iranian frontiers of Khurasan were demarcated in 1881. The province of Khurasan in 2004 was divided into three provinces (Britannica, 2021). Khurasan had a troubled history as the people of various ethnicities and areas ruled it.

I- Afghan war with Britishers

A series of wars fought by the Afghan rulers with British India. The Britishers want to extend their rule over Afghanistan. These wars were known as Anglo-Afghan wars.

First Afghan-British war

In 1838, George Eden, the British governor-general of India, declared war on Afghanistan in Simla Manifesto. War was declared in an attempt to safeguard their empire in India as the Russian influence is increasing in Afghan region. Britishers want to bring exiled Shah Shuja Durrani in place of Dost Muhammad Khan. First Anglo-Afghan war considered as a turning point in Afghanistan's history. At that time Afghanistan was a war torn country as the power of Dost Muhammad was limited to Kabul, Ghazni and Jalalabad. In north, Oxus River was ruled by local leaders while Herat in the west, was ruled by Yar Muhammad Khan Alokozai. In the south, Kandhar was under the rule of half-brother of Dost Muhammad. On the eastern side, Peshawar was rule by Sikhs (Britannica, 2020).

British did not face much resistance by Afghan tribes due to no central authority. They easily entered Kandhar and transferred the Kabul power to Shah Shuja Durrani in 1939. Despite the fact that British did not face any confrontation but they were not prepared for that Afghan war. They have no understanding of Afghanistan and did not make any effort to understand the Afghanis (Rahi, 2020).

In 1841, Afghans confronted Britishers. They tried to control the situation through military intervention but did not succeeded. Britishers did a lot of effort to maintain their domination over Afghans by mercilessly killing their leaders and conspiracies. At last, in 1842 the British decided to leave Afghanistan. Shah Shuja was also killed as British leave Afghanistan. Dost Muhammad returned and again gain control of Kabul in 1843 (Britannica, 2020).

Second Afghan-British war

It was believed in 1870s that the competing powers of Britain and Communist USSR had to have a clash in the Central Asian region. The Great Game of Britain was to keep Russia away from the British Empire in India and reduce Russian influence in Afghanistan while Russia had a goal to invade and held control of British India (McNamara, 2019).

In 1875 Lord Lytton was appointed as governor general of British India. At that time Russian influence was getting stronger in Afghanistan and Lord Lytton want to secure the front by force. Lytton noticed that Russian envoy sent to Kabul was accepted but diplomatic message by British was refused by Afghans. Upon refusal British intervened again in Afghanistan in 1878. Unlike first intervention, British forces of 40,000 faced confrontation by Afghan tribes but were able to get control of larger part of Afghanistan till 1879. As British hold control Major Louis Cavagnari met the new ruler Yakub Khan at Gandmak. The Treaty of Gandmak marked the end of war. Due to poor governance of Yakub Khan British faced few uprisings by Afghan tribesmen in Kabul, resulted in killing of Major Louis and his soldiers. General Roberts moved towards Kabul to take the revenge. He became a sign of terror as he hanged number of Afghans who were a part of rebellion (Britannica, 2020). Abdul Rehman, new leader of Afghanistan,

assured British that they will not have any ties with any country other than British while British agreed to not to intervene in Afghans internal matters.

Third afghan-British

The support of Ottoman Empire raised in Afghanistan against British during World War I. The third Afghan British war happened in 1919, when Amir Amanullah of Afghanistan attacked British India but did not succeeded. Already exhausted British were not able to fight with Afghans and after a month long war, Afghanistan regained their independence from British through Treaty of Rawalpindi (Britannica, 2020). Afghanistan in the coming 100 years faced Western interventions by Russians in 1979 and Americans in 2001 (McNamara, 2019).

II- War with Communist USSR 1979-1989

In 1979, the Soviet Union invade Afghanistan under the Soviet-Afghan Friendship Treaty of 1978. Soviet forces entered into Kabul through air with 280 aircrafts and 26,000 soldiers in three groups to support the communist government in Afghanistan. They face little resistance from afghan army loyal to Hafizullah Amin. Babrak Karmal, exiled leader of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, form new government and more Soviet forces entered from the north. They face fierce resistance when they entered into the major parts of country (Editors, 2009).

The roots of Taliban group started in 1979, when Afghanistan was invaded by Soviet Union in 1979. The Soviets want to form Communist government in Afghanistan and also got support from minority of urban residents. But the majority of Afghans considered it against their values and they used to follow conservative practices ruled by the tribal and ethnic groups. These rural Afghans jointly formed a group known as mujahideen. They fought vigorously with support of America and made the Soviet forces to leave Afghanistan (Ellis, 2021).

Mujahideen, called as resistance fighters by America, do not want the Communist soviets control Afghanistan as they were violation Islamic and traditional values. They announced Jihad against the Soviets and it was highly supported by the Islamic world. United States support them with help of Pakistan thus increased their power over Soviets. They used guerilla tactics against Soviet forces. They attack the Soviets and then disappear into the mountains, causing great destruction. They used weapons that they got from U.S. or snatched from the Soviets (Editors, 2009). U.S. President Reagan called them as freedom fighters. CIA's secret Operation Cyclone provide weapons and money for war through Pakistan General Zia-ul-Haq, Pakistani dictator at that time, urged the Muslim countries to send volunteers to fight against Soviet and Osama bin Laden was among these volunteers (AP, 2021). The war took a turning point when in 1987 U.S. launched anti-aircraft missiles. Through Stinger missiles Mujahideen shoot down Soviet planes and helicopters to erode them from space control (Woody, 2018). After nine years long war new Soviet leader decided to withdraw their forces in 1988. In these nine years of war around one million civilians were killed along with 90,000 Mujahideen, 18,000 Afghan forces and 15,000 Soviet soldiers (Taylor, 2014).

III- Post-Communist wars with Mujahideen/war lords with USA, 1991

The nine years long Soviet war created a ground for terrorism and gave rise to Osama bin Laden. Civil war started as Soviets leave the country. All this chaos gave rise to a group of Islamic teachers and students. They sprang up from ultra conservative religious groups in the refugee camps in Pakistan. These camps were established by the United States for the guerilla groups when the Soviet forces occupied Afghanistan. In the initial years, the emergence of Taliban in mid-1990, is welcomed by the majority of Afghans. Taliban promised the masses to unite the war trodden country by creating peace and ending the era of war (Anderson, 2021).

The Soviet war created a ground for terrorism and gave rise to Osama bin Laden. In 1992 Mujahideen groups entered Kabul, home arrest Najibullah and hang him along with his brother in 1996. Civil war started as Soviets leave the country. The sharing of powers among Mujahideen groups fall apart and they for the next four years they fight with each other to gain power. Major part of Kabul was destroyed, 50,000 people were killed (AP, 2021). Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Mujadadi, Haqqani were among the four big war lords who did peace agreement in Kaaba in 1993 that they will not fight anymore, work together in restructuration. The peace agreement was mediated by Saudi Arabia, King Fahd and Pakistan, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (Ibrahim, 1993). But they continue to fight for almost 10 years. Taliban also captured Kandhar and took over the country in 1996, setting up strict Islamic rules (AP, 2021). Taliban use name of Islam as a justification of their brutal laws, activities (ICRC, 1999). That is why Afghans hate Taliban. Taliban ruled country under Mullah Umar, imposed restrictions, gave public punishments and executions, women were not allowed to work and denied girls' right to education. Only primary schools for girls kept on working in numerous regions of the country under Taliban control. They got control over most of Afghanistan till 1999 but did not accepted internationally due to their strict public policies (Britannica, 2020). They dynamite the largest statues of Buddha in 2001 in Bamiyan province.

IV- Invasion of USA in Afghanistan in 2001 to 2021

Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda leader, provide personal, financial and logistics support to Sheikh Muhammad, who had a plan to attack U.S. by hijacking planes. They attacked World Trade Center, Pentagon, Pennsylvania and Shanks Ville on 11 September 2001 (Bergen, 2021). After 9/11 attacks, Washington demand Mullah Omar to hand over Osama bin Laden as Afghanistan was the base of Al-Qaeda but Mullah refused. U.S. President George Bush declared the global War on Terror and invade Afghanistan. In October 2001, U.S. led coalition drops bombs in Afghanistan, launching Operation Enduring Freedom. They did air strikes on Al-Qaeda and Taliban forces. The Northern Alliance and Pashtun anti-Taliban forces backed U.S. Taliban's hold loosen as they lost Mazar-e-Sharif, later they lost Taleqan, Bamiyan, Herat, Kabul and Jalalabad. Interim government was formed with Hamid Karzai as head, after Bonn agreement by UNSC (cfr, 2021).

Taliban rule ended in December 2001 with Mullah Omar leaving Kandhar. In 2003, Pentagon stated that major fight is over in Afghanistan, President George Bush announced mission accomplished. He announced the reconstruction of Afghanistan, spent \$38 billion from 2001 to 2009. The command of PRTs, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, was given to NATO states (cfr, 2021).

V- Taliban war

Following is the portrayal which deliberates that Afghanis have to do only one thing in this world; WAR. The war lords of Afghanistan did agreement in 1993 in Kaaba that they will stop fighting but they breach the agreement. Taliban are Political and religious armed group. They got power in Afghanistan in 1994 when Soviet military forces left Afghanistan after nine years of war (NYT, 2021). Taliban were actually the religious students who formed a group and arose in Afghanistan when country was in a situation of chaos and disorder. Taliban under leadership of Mullah Omar extend their occupation from one city to nearly half of country.

VI- Taliban resistance war with USA from 1991-2021

People hate Taliban due their brutality and wrong use of Islam so after invasion U.S. solidify them against Taliban in Afghanistan. So Taliban came against US forces. In 2004, a videotaped message surfaced in which Osama bin Laden took the responsibility for 9/11 attacks. In 2006 U.S. attacked Iraq resulting in Taliban again gaining power with intense attacks. They started occupying rural areas in south. The situation intensified as suicide attacks of Taliban increased from 27 in 2005 to 139 in 2006. Since 2009, casualties rose to 111,000 (cfr, 2021). A decade of U.S. war marked in 2011 with spending \$444 billion. Collateral killings increased when U.S. forces firings killed dozens of civilians in Shindand.

In 2014, divided government of Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah was formed by U.S. intervention. American and NATO forces ended their combined operations. President Obama ordered U.S. army to continue their attacks on Taliban and Al-Qaeda targets. Taliban's power gradually increased, they attacked Afghan and U.S. forces on daily basis and got more than half country's control. Terror attacks in Kabul were the reaction of Trump administration orders to install army in rural Afghanistan and air strikes on opium labs to cut Taliban's finances. U.S. President Trump appointed former US-Afghan diplomat Khalilzad in 2018 for negotiations. Talks between U.S. and Taliban continued through Afghan government but in 2019 Taliban demanded direct talks and increased their attacks. Again in September 2019, controversial elections were held with Ghani in power and Abdullah was made head of peace negotiations. Islamic State group emerged in the east attacked a wedding in Hazara and killed 60 people (AP, 2021).

VII- Capturing of Afghanistan by Taliban in Sep 2021

In Feb 2020, deal was signed between U.S. and Taliban in Doha, Qatar. The deal stated the duration of American forces withdrawal and halt attacks on Americans in Afghanistan. During the peace conference hosted by Moscow in 2021, draft peace plan proposed by U.S. but gone in vain. President Joe Biden announced that they will continue their assistance to Afghan forces and support the peace process and remaining troops will leave Afghanistan till 11 September. Taliban control increased when they also occupied districts in north. This year in July, Bagram air base was handed over to Afghan army. However, Afghan government did few airstrikes in Lashkar Gah, destructing school and hospital. An attack by Islamic State of Khorasan at Kabul check post killed thirteen U.S. service members. Airstrike by U.S. targeting IS-K killed ten civilians, later Pentagon claimed it as a mistake (cfr, 2021).

In august 2021, Taliban faced little resistance and captured Kabul and take over presidential palace. Later, Taliban taking over provincial capitals, Sar-e-Pul, Zaranj, Sheberghan, Taleqan, Lashkar Gah and Kunduz. Taliban took control of around 34 provincial capitals (Associated Press, 2021). Figure 1 shows areas where Taliban are predominantly in control.

Taliban gains in Afghanistan

Map shows districts where the Taliban are predominantly in control of security and public services. The data is compiled by the Long War Journal of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a Washington-based research institute focusing on national security. The data cannot be verified independently in all cases, but is largely in line with reporting by The Associated Press.

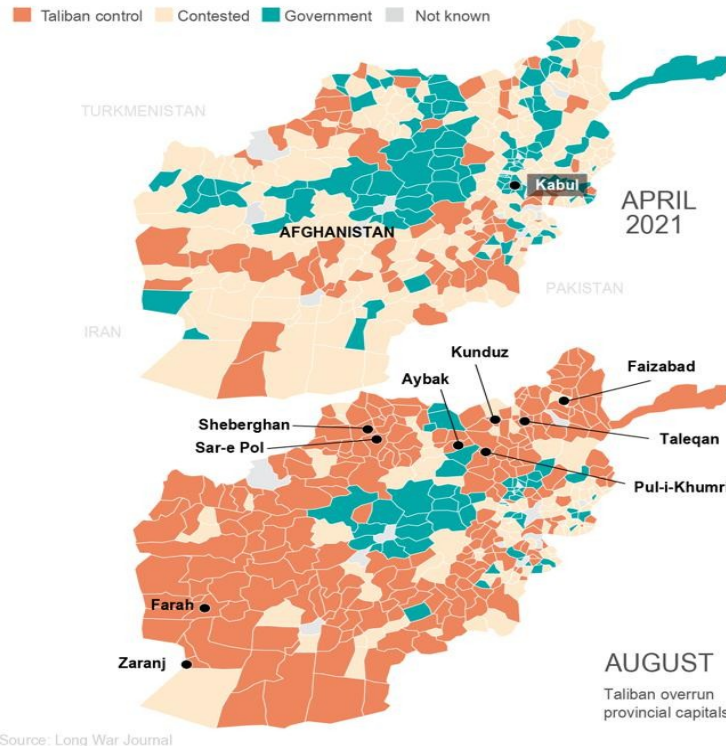


Figure 1 Source: Long War Journal, The Associated Press

Violence increased in last few years in Afghanistan as it was a war trodden country. Brutal bomb attacks of IS-K increased on random places, hospitals, maternity centers and schools, killing newborns, women and school going girls (2021). These attacks had created an environment of fear among Afghans.

Media on Taliban assuming power

Afghanistan issues went under the hot spotlight of worldwide news after U.S. forces enter the country. Including U.S. based news outlets broadly covered the occasions connected with Afghanistan. Numerous worldwide news associations, like the New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today, Wall Street Journal and other U.S. media sources started covering issues connected with Afghanistan. As per Pew Research Center, Afghanistan issues, including war, got 25% of news attention in the end of June 2012 in the U.S. media. Despite the fact that peace talks in Afghanistan have been deliberated by the Afghan government, the international community and especially by the U.S. government, the media did not give that much coverage to them.

Nevertheless, the Qatar political office for the Taliban could be another beam of desire to facilitate the peace negotiations in Afghanistan. In fact, media reporting regarding this matter is of critical importance to Afghanistan. The more constructive edge and continuous coverage would help in creating the better impact it will have on the issues (Jawad, 2013).

Despite the fact that there are many arguments and truth to be afraid of Taliban in Afghanistan, how the media distorts Afghanistan puts any advancement against these dangers as neglected. Like, Peter Bergen expressed that the Taliban are eliminated from power. While various other news portals focused on the Taliban's constant threat instead (Shipman, 2018). The press in Afghanistan that gave Americas news channels with context for a quite long time is rapidly being disentangled. That makes it harder to cover the country as now the Taliban dominates. The World Association of News Publishers have requested the worldwide publishers. They have requested for helping in securing the significant work for the thousands of the journalists and media people, forcefully exiled due to resurgence of Taliban in Afghanistan. According to the historian Benjamin Hopkins, this is an age long conflict and it is hard to uphold attention for that long (Fischer, 2021).

During the 1990s, Taliban restricted the internet. Presently they use it to undermine and coax the Afghan public, in an indication of how they may utilize innovation to assemble power. The Taliban had prohibited the internet when they initially controlled Afghanistan. Now they have transformed online media into a useful asset to tame resistance and transmit their messages. Now solidly in charge of the country, they are utilizing many Twitter accounts including some authority and others unknown, to pacify Afghanistan's frightened however progressively technically advanced municipal base. The Taliban rushed to see the internet as another tool of publicity, an expansion of composed messages and guerrilla radio broadcasts. They became used to reestablishing sites in the wake of facilitating administrations dropped them and they regularly tested, utilizing procedures like instant message impacts. One report showed how they utilized moving hashtags to scare electors during a 2019 political decision. To acquire foreign acknowledgment lately, Taliban pioneers put out messages in English and livestreamed press occasions. Their official site, Al-Emarah, issues news in English, Pashto, Dari, Urdu and Arabic (Mozur & Rehman, 2021).

According to the New York Times (2021), the Taliban are expanding on illustrations got the hang of throughout the mid-year hostile that cleared the gathering into power, said one individual from the Taliban web-based media board of trustees, who requested secrecy since he was not approved to talk. Quick and astute informing was a vital part of the hostile, the Taliban official said, calling attention to that the Taliban prepared and outfitted warriors with amplifiers and cell phones to report from the cutting edges as their powers cleared into a new area. The informing, a blend of amnesty offers and terrorizing that was intended to make the feeling of an unavoidable triumph, may have hurried a course of intimidation and influence that prompted large numbers of the best shielded urban cities falling without aggressiveness.

Perspectives on the Afghan fall and the new Taliban government

The 20-year war in the war-mongering state of Afghanistan ended. The U.S. operation in Afghanistan started from the backdrop of the 9/11 attacks. United States had support from across the world on their efforts for a war against terror (Collins, 2011). All the countries saw this operation as an imperative for national as well as international security.

This initiative of the war on terror was a compulsion for the United States to curb the devastation of Al-Qaeda and its supporters in Afghanistan (Rogers, 2004). European Union also faced serious terror threats from the terrorists and they went on to support the American initiative using their collective security doctrine of NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Marsh, 2011). Russians were aware of the situation and they also tried to support the northern alliance of Ahmed Shah Massoud, an anti-Taliban leader (Stent, 2021).

Russians showed their sympathy to the U.S. after 9/11 attacks and supported the collective cause of security. Chinese followed a secular policy that made their progress easier with time and they were also against the radical Islamic movements (Huasheng, 2016). So, they also supported the cause. Pakistan being a close ally of the United States favored the U.S. invasion in Afghanistan and provided all the logistical support that was needed at that time (Khan, 2013). The drum beaters of the non-aligned movement, India aligned itself to the western bloc (Ashraf, 2007). Following is an in-depth discussion on the perspectives of the aforementioned states in response to the fall of Afghanistan and the Taliban assuming power in the state.

Western perspectives

Taliban came into power in Afghanistan is quite emphasized event among Western media. United States often criticized for their strategic faults in Afghanistan. Their latest foreign policy fiasco was an accurate indication of failure of U.S. in Afghanistan. U.S. is justifying their failure in Afghanistan by the claiming that it was a war against terrorism. And America cannot win war on terror as terrorism is a tactic which means to end but itself will not be ended. They have now redefined the vision of win and lose to manage and accept such conflicting situation. In this way U.S. is neither winning nor losing Afghanistan control (Ware, 2021). America's aims are at stake as in conflicts U.S. lean towards high goals in order to achieve a specific goal and return with dignity. On the other hand Tierney believed that United States did not lose the war as they were overpowered by Taliban. Rather they lost in a way that the costs of war had been astonishing, from losing troops to trillions of dollars spent in Afghanistan (Elliot, 2021).

The chaotic evacuation of U.S. troops marked the failure of strategic planning. The chairmen of Joint Chiefs of Staff of U.S. stated that U.S. were not able to end the 20 year long war in Afghanistan as they want it to be as Taliban came in power. General Milley in an interview also emphasized that though America did not win Afghanistan war but they accomplished their deliberate task of reducing Al-Qaeda's control and protecting America from

Al-Qaeda's attacks (AFP, 2021). Earlier Trump's secretary praised reduction of troops from Afghanistan claimed it for freeing up time, money and workforce. The logic of United States over Afghanistan withdrawal was clear so that U.S. have more resources to counter new cold war with China. But America is critically underprepared which has showed though the evident Taliban takeover in Afghanistan.

Few scholars believe that it is unlikely for Taliban to lead to U.S. failure, like the collapse of the Soviet union that followed their withdrawal from Afghanistan in late 1980s. It should be taken into consideration that despite the failures of America in Afghanistan, the threatening phase can be low as no group managed to repeat the dreadful events of September 2001. However, Taliban's victory cannot turn the time back to the year 2001 (Pantucci & Basit, 2021).

United States' perspective

The former American President Donald trouble announced to withdrawal from the mess created in Afghanistan as the country was paying a huge price in terms of massive economic and human loss. According to a report issued by Brown University on the cost calculations of the war on terror U.S. spent \$2 trillion in Afghanistan (Sabga, 2021). This report was a reflection of what kind of economic tremulous the U.S. had to face because of the war in Afghanistan. Reiterating the call for withdrawal from the U.S. citizens President Donald Trump announced a complete withdrawal from the country, after a successful negotiation with the Taliban representatives and the Afghan Government (Eric Schmitt, 2021) After the victory of Joe Biden in the Presidential elections of 2021, he announced a complete withdrawal of forces by the end of August 2021. The aim was to establish a consensual democratic government in the country (Macias, 2021a). But these efforts went in vain and the Taliban took over the whole country in a blink of an eye - while the U.S. was withdrawing the last of their troops.

Joe Biden in a press briefing explained the process of evacuation in Afghanistan and identified the miscalculations of the previous government in the issue. He called the withdrawal an unprecedented event of history. Commenting about the new government of the Taliban in war trodden state of Afghanistan he announced a victory. He further added that the fate of Afghanistan is now in the hands of the Afghani people themselves, as they have to fight their war. Biden on the question of the new Taliban government assured that the new government will not be accepted until they assure a complete accord with the international code of conduct on human rights (NYT, 2021). He said in case of any violation or rise in terrorism, the U.S. can take strict actions against the interim government.

The ease for Biden in this decision was that most of the Republicans were also in the favor of a complete withdrawal from Afghanistan. Hitherto, all those U.S. citizens who wanted to leave the country have successfully been evacuated. The last government of the Taliban in the country barred women from their basic rights and a notion of barbarity prevailed across the country. As compared to the previous government the Taliban leaders have assured that they will provide equal status to women, but it's obscure to date. The Biden government is under huge

pressure owing to the uncertain circumstances in Afghanistan (Crowley, 2021). This withdrawal has caused a huge embarrassment for the United States and analysts compared it with the Vietnam withdrawal of 1975. The U.S. after ending the two-decade war is now planning to focus more on its rivals like Russia and China (Macias, 2021b). They have no future aim for any on-ground war but are committed to counter the threats of terrorism.

Perspective of UK on Taliban takeover

UK parliamentarians were on holiday when the Afghan Taliban took over the government. The session was called where they bashed the leadership of the United States on such a hasty withdrawal from the state. They had a point of view that the U.S. had thrown themselves and many others in a fire. Most of them expressed helplessness and humiliation in the face of defeat and the fear of potential human rights violations in Afghanistan. Britain has always been a staunch supporter of the war on terror due to the dark clouds of terrorism that were gathered across the world. The Prime Minister of the UK at that time Tony Blair stood shoulder to shoulder with then-President George Bush. They headed a strong Western alliance to pursue the war on terror. The subsequent strategic maneuvers were not in a cord with each other that eventually resulted in such hasty withdrawal (Clarke, 2021).

The UK government has clearly stated they do not consider the Taliban as Afghans and therefore, UK will not recognize the Taliban government (Pitas, 2021) Boris Johnson urged the western bloc to work together on the issue through the resources of the United Nations and NATO. He asserted that a coordinated effort is necessary to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a ground for terror again. There is a chance that the British may support those tribal leaders who are willing to fight against the Taliban regime to destabilize it. However, such developments are obscure as the current focus of every western state is to closely observe the new developments and the initiatives of the Afghan Taliban.

European Union's perspective on Taliban takeover

European Union under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization worked equally against the terror wave in Afghanistan. They worked for establishing peace in the war-trodden country and provide women equal rights to live (Danishyar, 2021). The fall of Afghanistan was a shock for European countries, as it would have serious consequences for the EU, considering the history of terror attacks on European soil.

The European Union has shown serious concerns over the Taliban government in Afghanistan. They call it an inclusive and not recognizable government. According to the EU spokesperson, the recent government has not fulfilled the criteria of including all the ethnicities and diversities from Afghanistan. He further added that the Taliban did not stay committed to what they promise in the peace talks.

The new government of the Taliban is not new at all as it contains mostly the same leadership that was part of the hardliner government, between 1996 and 2001. EU has stopped development funds to Afghanistan worth €1 billion, which were planned to be granted in the tenure of the next seven years (AFP, 2021). Germany's Foreign Minister said that the interim government in Afghanistan without any formal elections and the protests of Afghan Journalists and women have identified the absence of any optimistic efforts. In another appearance of the Foreign Minister with the US Secretary, he warned the Taliban that they would have to earn their legitimacy.

Russia and CARs outlooks on Taliban takeover

The Russian government was among the first who welcomed the Taliban takeover and expressed its support for the new rulers. The Russian ambassador to Afghanistan, Dmitry Zhirnov held meetings with the Taliban leadership just after 48 hours of the takeover of Kabul and said he has not witnessed any violence or reprisal (Rynda & Kozlov, 2021). Moscow's representative to the United Nations Vassily Nebenzia affirmed that the Russian Federation is seeking national reconciliation and a bright future with established law and order to vanquish the bloody war. In contrast to the softening narrative, the Russians have no hurry to recognize the Taliban government. The Taliban leaders were on the Russian terrorist list since 2003, but still, they were invited on and off to Moscow for talks since 2018.

U.S. accused Russia several times on accounts of a possible trade of arms to Taliban that the later declared as perplexing. But the involvement of Russian intelligence in the Afghan war is not hidden. Despite all the support and hidden commitments, the Russians are playing the role of observers on the current phenomenon in Afghanistan. Russians are skeptical of the terrorist activities looming in the region after the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. President Putin expressed his views on the developments in Afghanistan and said that he hope the Taliban leaders will fulfill their promises. The head of Russian International affairs Andrei Kortuno asserted that the new Taliban government will not be able to establish firm control over the northern region and this can have serious consequences for Russia and its Central Asian alliance. Western military analysts see this inclination of Russia towards Afghanistan as an effort to fill the vacuum created by the U.S. withdrawal (Rynda & Kozlov, 2021).

A conference was held between the leaders of the Central Asian Republics on increasing connectivity between the Central Asian Region. The Taliban surge however temporarily dismantled such efforts. The states in the Central Asian region such as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan share a long 1500 km border with the conflict-loving country of Afghanistan (Helf & Pazhwak, 2021). The Central Asian republics are preparing themselves to accept the new reality in Afghanistan because of the geostrategic consequences looming on the states.

CARs, mainly Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan have shown their military muscle in response to the Taliban surge in Afghanistan by shoring up their borders. They have

asked for support from the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization, CSTO, to manage the border security issues (Ворисов, 2020). They are extremely cautious over opening their borders for the refugees and even returned the Afghan military personnel who escaped to Uzbekistan.

Chinese views

China is another important player in the Afghan saga is the fastest growing economy of the world. One of the strongest states in terms of military and social cohesion. The only issue they face at the moment is an Islamic ideology, which they feel is a threat to their country. They have in Xinjiang Uyghur Muslims in the detention camps for re-educating them. The Chinese on the recent surge of Taliban in Afghanistan has welcomed the new development and they are ready to help the new Taliban government. But they are critical of the Islamic ideology that the Taliban carry (Weinbaum, 2006).

Chinese aspire to become the world power. They want their flagship project of BRI to be completed so that they become the greatest power of the world surpassing the United States. To accomplish this aim they need trade routes from different countries and in return, they are providing them with huge economic benefits. Afghanistan has crucial importance for CPEC as it is a part of BRI, Belt and Road Initiative. The country has always remained a war zone that is against the peace and stability of the region (Sun, 2020).

An unstable region is a massive hurdle in the way of a successful economic corridor. US presence in Afghanistan was unfavorable for China in terms of their national strategy. The new Taliban government has all the vacuum that could be filled by China for their national development. The only issue they have with the Taliban is their Islamic ideology and they have conveyed this to the Taliban leaders (cfr, 2021).

Indian take on Taliban assuming power

India sees the new government of the Taliban as a war-mongering neighbor. They perceive a dark future of the country and the Afghani people at the helm. The reason behind such perception is the fear of a rise in terrorist activities in the country (Macias, 2021a).

According to Indian authorities, they invested a lot in Afghanistan for developing infrastructure so that the Afghans can make themselves strong. They have declared the statements of the Pakistani government flawed, which claim that the Indian investments in Afghanistan are centered to deteriorate the stability of Pakistan and supporting the proxies. The new developments are not what India planned for and that is why they are not accepting this new Taliban government at all. They have already portrayed a very bad picture of Islamism declaring it a radical ideology against peace in their media and film industry. They have serious reservations in accounts of the women's rights violations in Afghanistan (Shende, 2021). India has announced that it will not accept the new government at any cost.

Pakistan point of view

The country that is being considered as the main player in the fall of Afghanistan is Pakistan. Pakistan has always been a staunch supporter of the end of the war in Afghanistan. The current Pakistani Prime Minister was given the title of “Taliban Khan” owing to his soft corner for the Taliban leadership. He introduced the concept of good and bad Taliban (Landale, 2021b).

The military establishment and the civilian leadership are both on the same page for supporting the current Taliban government in Afghanistan. They have a view that a war-trodden Afghanistan has always been used for strengthening proxies against their country. India has a huge stake in supporting terrorist activities in Pakistan via Afghan soil (Threlkeld, 2021). The new Taliban government if supported can ensure the dismantling of such terrorist networks operating against Pakistan.

Conclusion

Considering the vandalized history of Afghanistan and the war-fighting nature of the Afghan people one thing is clear this piece of earth cannot afford to live in peace. A separate vision of the local leaders that often comes as a clear discord to the progressive countries of the world makes it a state to deal with an iron hand for the western countries.

The recent development is skeptical of another peace-breaching event looming for Pakistan and other neighboring countries. Our policymakers should work in portraying a better picture of Pakistan in the world and not as the friend of any radical Islamic group.

The history of Afghanistan is filled with wars and reading that one can analyze the prospects of the country. The only thing required for them to learn is flexibility in their staunch anti-western ideology. The way they deal with every situation shows that they are fewer followers of the Islamic ideology and more of the anti-western school of thought.

The conventional doctrines of the Taliban require a paradigm shift for making themselves a progressive nation. They have promised this time to come with a better version of their previous government. The world powers are closely observing the developments every second and new world order is at the doorstep.

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Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CARs	Central Asian Regions
CPEC	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
IS-K	Islamic State in Khorasan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PRTs	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
UK	United Kingdom
U.S.	United States
UNSC	United Nations Security Council