



US WAR IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN'S POST WITHDRAWAL FOREIGN POLICY FOR AFGHANISTAN

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Abstract

After the evacuation of US from Afghanistan a lot of questions have been raised from all over the world. The US War in Afghanistan has come to the end but a lot of new challenges will be faced by the Afghan people and the neighboring states. Understanding the depth of the war is very essential with its history on what provoked the war. Pakistan is one of the most effected country after Afghanistan with a huge number of Afghan refugee. The most important question that rises on Pakistan is its position in the last few months of US in Afghanistan that was Pakistan in support of the Taliban or the US surely Pakistan's position wasn't so sure as cross border media and international experts blamed Pakistan for its immense support to Afghan Taliban. As we know that President Joe Biden was trying to extend the War because President Joe Biden had a tilt towards Establishment which wanted to extend the war for some more time. Some even pour the blame of US loss in Afghanistan on Pakistan. So, it is very essential to understand Pakistan's role and position in the US war in Afghanistan. Another very important question which rises is that what post withdrawal Foreign Policy will Pakistan adapt as there will be another wave of refugee seeking shelter in Pakistan, there can be separatist or revolutionary movements to enforce Shahirah law in Pakistan which can emerge from tribal areas like Baluchistan and FATA and how Pakistan will coup with its internal and external security threats via Afghanistan. As a neighboring country what means will Pakistan take in humanitarian crises in Afghanistan and will Pakistan further help US to have over the horizon access to Afghanistan and is it after all a win or lose for US all are the major questions that are discussed.

Keywords: Afghanistan, US War, Taliban, Pak Afghan



Introduction

Soon after 9/11 US President George W Bush launched “Operation Enduring Freedom” in Afghanistan. This happened because Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was not handed over to them. US war in Afghanistan was a loss for some but a victory for others. Both countries have been fighting for over two decades but after Donald Trump being elected as the president of United States things changed. Donald Trump wanted to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan which got fulfilled when President Joe Biden held the office. This long fight has also affected Pakistan in many ways from using air spaces to having a military base in Pakistan. US has used Pakistan throughout the War but after the evacuation questions started to rise on Pakistan's position during and after the US war in Afghanistan. This war has cost Pakistan 80,000 lives by drone attacks that were supposed to be used in Afghanistan. Although the Pakistani Government has denied that it provides any military support to Taliban. (Bhatty & Hoffman, 2021) There were a lot of reports circulating that US has asked Pakistan for a military base but US diplomats denied this news. (Jawad, 2021). Although US wanted Pakistan to allow them to use their air space in order to keep an eye on Afghanistan. But it was difficult for Pakistan to allow them airspace because of internal threats as well as China would never want that.

During the US evacuation from Afghanistan Pakistan's main aim was a peaceful pull out without provoking a civil war because any tension in Afghanistan would result in internal and external threat in Pakistan. Increase in tensions in Afghanistan would have cost Pakistan a lot. Pakistan shares a 2670 km long border with Afghanistan and around 1.4 million refugees. Prime Minister Imran Khan has quoted it many times that they will send the refugee back to Afghanistan once things are better in Afghanistan. But also, Prime Minister Imran Khan has announced more than \$28m medical, food and other humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan. (Hashmi, Pakistan pledges \$28m in Afghanistan humanitarian support, 2021) Pakistan will also reduce tariffs and taxes on exports to Afghanistan. (Hashmi, Pakistan pledges \$28m in Afghanistan humantarain support, 2021) With Taliban control in Afghanistan TTP was another big issue for Pakistan as Afghan Taliban has freed many prisoners. Negotiations with TTP were a success and singed a month-long ceasefire which could be extended if agreed by both sides. (Jamal, 2021) But the visit of ISI Chief of Pakistan General Faiz Hameed flared up the blame game (Yousaf K. , 2021). Soon after Taliban take over Pakistan's intelligence chief went to Afghanistan for talk which should have been a civilian visit or FM Shah Mahmood Qureshi's.

Somehow either directly or indirectly Pakistan has been very supportive and lenient towards Afghan Taliban. National Security Advisor Moeed Yousef has mentioned it several times in his interviews that Pakistan has no choice sharing a border and refugee and



still having disrupted relations with Taliban wouldn't be healthy. (Yousaf D. M., 2021) On 11 November 2021 Pakistan hosted a meeting of the extended Troika, comprising Pakistan, China, Russia, and the United States to discuss the latest situation in Afghanistan. The representatives of Taliban were also in the meeting (U.S. Department of State, 2021). During the meeting humanitarian aid and UN help towards the Afghan people was majorly discussed. It has been seen that Pakistan has always been on front when it comes to help Afghan nation.

Pakistan's Foreign Policy towards Afghanistan during the war was completely different than what it is now and in future. Having an immense number of refugee Pakistan has to be very careful when it comes to Pak Afghan foreign policy. Around 28,000 Afghan refugee have entered Pakistan during this year and last three months has spiked the numbers to an unbelievable rate. All due to the fear of Afghan Taliban takeover. But Pakistan has denied setting up any refugee camp this time for Afghan refugee but has also given them short term visas. There have been a lot of Afghan refugee that sneaked into Pakistan by other means which has been tough for Pakistan to give humanitarian assistance to them. Critique on Pakistan's Foreign Policy towards Afghanistan has begun. Whenever Pakistan helps the Afghan people Pakistan is blamed to be supportive to Taliban but if Pakistan denies any help to Afghanistan people critique said National Security Advisor Moeed Yousef in an interview. The friendly Taliban Government and its relation with Pakistan has raised some serious questions by US. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Miley said that "we need to fully examine the role of Pakistan sanctuary" in understanding how the Taliban prevailed. (Afzal, 2021) There is no doubt that over these two-decade war US has used Pakistan for its own benefits but now having good and diplomatic relations with Afghan Taliban US will step back from supporting Pakistan at any point in other words either you are with us or against us has been repeated. US wants that Pakistan shall not formally recognize the Taliban government. Over the Horizon access was the need of US. Some says that US do not need Pakistan's permission to use its airspace as in past many agreements have been signed.

The future Foreign Policy of Pakistan towards Afghanistan is very essential as Pakistan is indulged with initiatives like CPEC and One belt road for that peace and stability in Afghanistan is must. Peace and stability in Afghanistan also mean peace and stability in Central Asia. Pakistan is treating Afghanistan and Taliban completely differently. The humanitarian support that Pakistan will be providing to Afghan people is just so that Afghanistan doesn't collapse. Collision of Afghanistan will not only effect Pakistan it will affect the central Asian region as well.

Theoretical Framework



Theory of Realism

To understand the two-decade war of US in Afghanistan the theory of Realism comes handy. This theory being applied on this war tells us that how state interest can lead to a war and a colonial rule in a weak country where there are war crimes done exploitation of resources and using land for self-interests. In between all these the common national interests were kept in view of both of the countries both fought for personal and state interests. National interest is very important and nothing goes prior than this. State is mother and to protect it one should do everything it can. The research focuses on these basics according to the theories

- US dominates Afghanistan
- Afghan Taliban fought for their land
- US tried to expand its colonial rule to South Asia

Methodology

Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) has been used to conduct the following research. Descriptive and exploratory research approaches have been used to find out the answer of research question. As per the nature of research suggests, primary and secondary sources have been used for data collection. For data analysis, theory testing approach of QCA, Directed Content Analysis (DCA) is used. Furthermore, within DCA, manifest approach has been used.

Background

The War in Afghanistan

Soon after 9/11 attack US launched operation enduring freedom in Afghanistan and deployed its forces in it. Osama Bin Ladin chief of Al Qaeda was accused to be behind the attack. However, one of Pakistan's veteran journalist Hamid Mir claimed that moments before 9/11 attack one of Osama Bin Ladin men came to visit him and soon after the attack, he told Hamid Mir that they had no connection with it. Later in 2011 Osama Bin Ladin was killed in Pakistan. Soon after the operation started US started bombing on Taliban. Canada, Australia, Germany, and France pledge future support. More than 1000 US forces were involved with the Northern Alliance, and ethnic Pashtun anti-Taliban forces. (CFR, 2021) Soon after US forces attacked Taliban they retreated and an interim Government was imposed after the fall of Kabul in 2001. Hamid Karzai was the interim



administration head. Taliban leader Mullah Umar fled the country and it marked the fall of Taliban.

Operation “Anaconda” was the biggest on ground operation against the Al Qaeda. It was launched to kill 800 Al Qaeda and other Taliban fighters in Shah-I-Kot valley. Two thousand US and one thousand Afghan military troops were involved in this operation. But with all the attacks in Afghanistan President George Bush calls for reconstruction of Afghanistan and make it peaceful for everyone to live in. The US congress approves over 38\$ Billion in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan from 2001 to 2009. (CFR, 2021) In 2002 Hamid Karzai the chairman of Afghanistan interim administration was appointed as the country’s traditional government head. The U.S. military makes a common undertakings structure to facilitate redevelopment with UN and nongovernmental associations and to extend the power of the Kabul government. But the support of US in humanitarian assistance faced a lot of criticism even from within the members. In 2003 The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) assumes control of international security forces (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The original task of NATO was to secure Kabul and its surrounding areas. The quantity of ISAF troops grew from an underlying 5,000 to around 65 thousand soldiers of 42 nations, including every one of the 28 NATO part states. In 2004 502 Afghan delegates agrees on a constitution for Afghanistan. The main aim was to have a democratic system and have all ethnic groups united. The first demarcated elected President of Afghanistan was Hamid Karzai.

Pak-Afghan Relations and Policies

On the other hand, Pakistan and Afghanistan had tensions on the border as well both blamed each other for interfering in domestic affairs. President Hamid Karzai also blamed Pakistan for training and supporting militants vice versa Pakistan blamed Afghanistan for all the tensions in Waziristan and the Bloach Guerillas. (Grare, 2006) In spite of the help given by Pakistan during the jihad against the Soviet Union, doubt runs somewhere down in the heads of both nations. Afghanistan. Afghanistan was the only country to vote against Pakistan’s accession to the United Nations after its independence. Kabul still didn’t recognize Durand Line as their border with Pakistan. In 2006 situation in Afghanistan got worsen. The number of suicide attacks spiked. Tensions on the Pakistani side also increased the number of Afghan refugee increased and many were those who entered the country by illegal means. Terrorist attacks in Pakistan also increased TTP was one of the terrorist organizations which was behind most of the attacks. Afghanistan was a safe home for TTP later on. Due to Afghanis many anti Pakistan and separatist movement started in Pakistan with the support and funds of India like BLA and PTM. Pakistan gave humanitarian assistance to the Afghan refugee and also set up refugee camps for those who



came to Pakistan by legal means. Pakistan's government officially expressed its "deep" concerns about the Indian government's activities along the Pakistan-Afghan border. (Grare, 2006). Years passed US continued the war and deployed more and more forces. Other countries like Australia and German forces were also deployed into Afghanistan. Australian Forces were also charged with War Crimes in Afghanistan. Pakistan was being used as a US base camp. US used Pakistan for its drone bases and a way to supply assistance and weapons to its soldiers in Afghanistan. In 2011 Osama Bin Ladin was killed by the US forces in Abbottabad Pakistan which also marked the 10-year war of US in Afghanistan. In Pakistan tribal tensions were also increasing the refugees from different tribes of Afghanistan were having serious conflicts with the Pakistani tribe so the security threats in FATA and Baluchistan were another big issue for Pakistan. In 2014 President Obama announced the timetable for withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan which took seven years to be withdrawn. (CFR, 2021) The 20-year War in Afghanistan caused US \$5.8 Trillion and more than 176 thousand lives.

Current Situation

The Withdrawal

A two-decade war ended and US troops started to withdraw from Afghanistan as President Joe Biden held the office. A peaceful transfer of power turned into a nightmare for some as the Afghan Taliban took over the capital sooner than expected. Over the years the Taliban had grown anger and frustration inside them living under the war. But the real victory for the Afghan Taliban was when the Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani left the country. Panic on the civilian side and celebrations on the Taliban side started to begin. The civilian wanted to flee the country some got successful while many didn't. Meanwhile with US the NATO forces also started to withdraw from Afghanistan. Special immigrant Visa SIV was issued to Afghan civilians so that they can bring their families to United States. After the Taliban captured Kabul airport many incidents happened even cross fire by British forces. One suicide bomb attack also took place at Kabul Airport by TTP. President Biden promised all the American that were stuck in Afghanistan for help. Although even after the Withdrawal US wanted to keep an eye on Afghanistan on which they asked military base and over the Horizon access from Pakistan.

Human Rights

While Taliban's were busy celebrating their victory a big question raised on the Human rights issue. The western media had always criticized the Afghan Taliban's lacking for women rights. A 2021 report showed that Afghanistan ranked 170th out of the total 170



on Women Peace and security index. (UNWOMEN , 2021) Since the Taliban took over the LGBTQ community has been targeted a lot. Killing, torturing and forcing their families and friends is a routine work for Taliban. Most LGBTQ followers have left their homes to a safer place.

Taliban seeks for international recognition but the conditions of human rights is being a barrier to that even at Oslo talk the West presses the Afghan Taliban on women rights and education. However, there have been major debates in Afghanistan about women attire even all the female mannequins were destroyed. Afghanistan is in dire need of foreign investment and humanitarian aid from the world but the west has its conditions rigid the more the rights the more the humanitarian access to Afghanistan. Protests are still being carried out in Afghanistan by women due to their distressed economic and social conditions. (Feminist Majority Foundation)

Most of the articles and interviews on social media are tilted towards the negative side of Taliban and each one of them are against the Taliban government. If we talk about the women rights in Taliban government then we can see that a lot of researches show that Taliban's are violating the fundamental rights of women and that the women are suppressed a lot after the Taliban take over. On 15 August 2021, they came to power again and a lot of people criticized them especially women There is a scary image of Taliban's because they don't have a fool proof history. When they came to power in 1996 to 2001, they banned education for women.

Some of the famous personalities like Samira Hamidi (Amnesty International's South Asia Campaigner), a Businesswoman Sediqa Mushtaq, Fawzia Amini (Senior Judge in Afghan's Supreme Court), Zala Zazai (Former Police officer) criticized the Taliban's government a lot since the day they came to power. According to them, the public life of women is destroyed a lot. Women have no freedom. Education is important for everyone nowadays and Taliban's are restraining women from this basic right too. Due to financial crises, the women in Afghanistan have to work to support their family. But now that Taliban's has stopped them from work, they are facing economic crises. Women are prisoners in their own homes said the senior judge Fawzia Amini. The women in Afghanistan never felt so much restricted but after the new law and order they feel suffocated. They want their life as it was before the Taliban's regime.

Women protested a lot against Taliban and said they want back their freedom and independence. Taliban's are implementing strict rules on women. Some rights are according to Islam and some are against (ban on education) but still people are bound to follow. Not just this, the nurses aren't allowed to work anymore and that the women are



prohibited to be examined by male doctor. Taliban's claim to follow Islam and Islamic values as mentioned in the Quran but they aren't following it in a right way. Some of the laws imposed by them are against Islam but they are stick to it. Islam has allowed women to control their money and to participate in public life (under certain limitation) but the Taliban's aren't allowing them to do so. The oppression they carrying out against women has no basis and meaning in Islam. Taliban's don't allow anyone to go against them. Women paid huge price by not obeying their rules A woman was brutally killed in front of their friends and families by running a public school for girls. Moreover, women died of not being treated on time because the male doctors were not allowed to treat them. The countries forced them to respect the rights of women and girls as a condition of receiving aid. Taliban's are portraying such an image of Islam which is not true that's why they must not implement such rules. West already thinks that Islam restrains a lot and is an orthodox religion. Taliban's are proving it right by violating the basic women rights. (Amnesty, 2021)

Pakistan's Position

If any country has been affected due to the US war in Afghanistan, its Pakistan but still till the withdrawal the position of Pakistan is not clear. Pakistan has always played a double agent role in this war. At times supported Afghan Taliban even trained them for militancy and also helped US to have access to Afghanistan through Pakistan. This has caused a lot of hatred inside the Afghan Civilian for Pakistan. Afghan National has been criticizing Pakistan on social media apps like Twitter and even made trends against Pakistan. However, Pakistan has always worked to bring peace and prosperity in the neighboring country because Pakistan could not afford any tensions of the Afghan Border. Pakistan has worked to help and assist Afghanistan either coming up as a Humanitarian or speaking up in the UN. Pakistan has widely supported Afghanistan in OIC. Pakistan not only want peace and stability in Afghanistan but also want the United Nations to recognize Afghanistan.

But the Post Withdrawal Foreign Policy of Pakistan is quite strict with no refugee camps and strict border and visa policy because Pakistan has already taken much damage due to Afghanistan that it cannot more. Pakistan has openly denied to give any military base and over the horizon access to US.

Durand Line

Pressure Escalate Between Pakistan and Taliban as Durand Line Issue Resurfaces. A 2670 Km International Pak Afghan border again become disputed as the Taliban took over



Afghanistan. Durand line is still unrecognized by Afghanistan. Many videos of Afghan Taliban are circulating on the internet where Afghan Taliban could be seen destroying the Durand Line Border. However, Pakistan's NSA Dr Moeed Yousef says it's just a local level issue. Pakistan's National Security Advisor Dr Moeed Yousef reached Kabul to discuss the Durand Line issue with acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi. (ANI NEWS, 2022) Durand Line being a disputed border also has a lot of significance it closes the way of many illegal immigrants as well as any terrorist activities in the country.

Tahreek e Taliban Pakistan TTP

Afghanistan has been a safe home for Tahreek e Taliban Pakistan. TTP was behind one of the biggest terrorist attacks in Pakistan, the Peshawar Army Public School attack. After the Taliban Government came into power, the position of TTP got stronger, making Pakistan in a position of serious concern. Soon after Taliban came into power, the spokesperson of TTP said that the ceasefire between TTP and Pakistan can no longer continue. (Hashmi, Pakistani Taliban ends ceasefire, future of peace talks uncertain, 2021) Although the Afghan Taliban has ensured the Pakistani Government that Afghanistan's soil will never be used against Pakistan. Many TTP masterminds are being killed in Afghanistan. But Afghan Taliban, after coming into power, released all the prisoners, which included TTP men as well, which caused a doubt on Taliban support to TTP. TTP ending the ceasefire was due to some military operation and the arrest of more than 100 TTP men. TTP is fully supported by India and financed as well, and in the future, Pakistan can expect attacks from TTP. India has tried to establish good ties with Afghan Taliban and turn them against Pakistan, but Taliban were busy handling their newly gained power.

Post Withdrawal Foreign Policy

Taking Afghan refugees in decades ago looked a generous step of Pakistan, but Pakistan had to pay a big price for it. Terrorists' attacks, gun culture, smuggling, weaponization, and many cases of human trafficking occurred due to Afghan refugees. With no fencing of borders, it was a child's play to enter Pakistan from Afghanistan. After the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan and Taliban takeover, Pakistan has tightened its foreign policy. No refugee camps, this time strict border and visa policy, and strict orders for TTP came up as Taliban took over. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, has mentioned it several times that once there is peace in Afghanistan, we will send the refugees back.

Afghanistan still a threat



Afghanistan has been a threat to Pakistan since the day international forces entered in Afghanistan either NATO or the Soviet Union. But after the peace in Afghanistan there still is a threat to Pakistan. Pakistan has mainly focused on its external threats but in case of Afghanistan Pakistan has to face a lot of issues as internal threats. With having the most number of Afghan refugees, Pakistan's tribal areas like FATA and Baluchistan have a strong Afghan Influence. Tribes like Pashtuns, Hazaras, Afradi and many more share different culture but after the Afghan refugees were taken in they become unfit in the preexisting tribes of Pakistan. Incidents happened where many tribal people were killed including Hazaras and if we trace them they are also illegal migrated Afghans.

Many separatist movements in Pakistan either Baluchistan Liberation Associations or Pashtun Tahfuz Movement PTM were all heavily funded by India with the involvement of Afghan people. India has overtime invested in Afghan people by giving them scholarship, opportunities and discounts on Visas and tickets. India has used its soft power tactics to make an average Afghan against Pakistan. Many terrorist activities conducted in Pakistan were done from Afghanistan and which was funded and supported by India in simple words India wanted a proxy war in Pakistan using Afghanistan. So the threat is still there for Pakistan as the new Taliban has showed a neutral side of theirs yet. Although Afghanistan is a land lock country with no sea so it has to go through Pakistan to reach sea and once CPEC is fully functional Pakistan will become Afghanistan only way to trade internationally. Afghanistan can emerge as a future problem for Pakistan but also a future asset as well because Afghanistan is seeking for foreign investment in which Pakistan can help and give access to many routes that Afghanistan don't have.

Conclusion

A 20-year war with no end results which not only made many countries suffered but left a question on US winning or losing. This war might be the war for terrorism for US but for Taliban it was for their motherland. Despite all NATO forces attacking the Afghan Taliban they stood still and never retreated. US faced a huge financial and human loss in this war but has been exploiting Afghanistan's natural resources such as oils and minerals for their own interests. Afghanistan is a buffer zone so US has to go through other countries to enter Afghanistan and it chooses Pakistan. Pakistan had to a big price for that as well. Not only Pakistan had to allow them everything US wants but also get himself into many sanctions such as IMfs and FATFs. IMF and FATF are all US biased organizations doing what US commands so Pakistan stood no option except obeying the US. Many drones attack that were supposed to be conducted in Afghanistan were used in Pakistan which result in a lot of civilian killings. By seeing Pakistan help and access to US many Taliban forces got against Pakistan and carried terrorist attacks in Pakistan. This war



costed 71,344 Civilian lives 3586 US NATO Allies died 78,314 Afghan Military and Policemen died 84,191 Opposite fighters dies in which 33000 died in Pakistan 136 Journalists died and 2 Trillion US Dollar lost. Many innocent people lost their lives many forces did war crimes specially the Australian forces. After fully evacuating from Afghanistan US still looked for over the horizon access from Pakistan which Pakistan denied to give. They also asked for a military base in Pakistan which was refused as well.

US wants to have strong position in the South Asian region which Afghanistan was giving him. US biggest rival china would be on the CCTV sight of US if Pakistan had allowed them a military base but giving the base to US not only cause internal threat to Pakistan but will also damage ties with China. But refusing to give base will also cause Pakistan to be in many more future economic sanctions of IMF and FATF. Taliban's victory was a victory of Afghanistan for some but a loss to others. For some it was a victory of Islam but for some it wasn't. However, Taliban will enforce Shahriah Law in Afghanistan but over the past years Taliban has merged their religion with their culture which gives a distorted image of Islam. The dust has yet to settle down in Afghanistan and once Taliban will be in their prime situation in the region will be very different. Wars are started to bring peace to one country but cause a lot of damage on the other country. War fought between US and Afghanistan was nothing less than a war of self-interest and to expand colonial rule over the South Asia. As John F Kennedy have said

It is an unfortunate fact that we can secure Peace by only preparing for War



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