

Afghanistan morass: An analysis of Pakistan's security after NATO withdrawal

Iqra Jathol

*Ph.D. Scholar: Department of Political Science,
GCWU, Sialkot.*

Correspondence: iqrajathol.csas@pu.edu.pk

Dr. Zahid Yaseen

*Associate Professor & Chairperson Department of Political Science
Government College Women University Sialkot Punjab, Pakistan*

Email: zahid.yaseen@gcwus.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

The study discusses about the emerging security challenges to Pakistan after NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan and Re-emergence of Taliban. After 19 years US signs an agreement and leaves Afghanistan in 2021. After withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan, country faces alarming security concerns due to extreme hunger and poverty. To understand Pakistan's security dilemma, it is essential to analyze the Afghanistan's current security scenario under the Taliban government, foreign intervention in Afghanistan, Humanitarian crises, Pak-afghan relation, boarder issue, the movements in Pakistan and refugee crises, and then assess the security concerns of Pakistan due to Afghanistan crises after US withdrawal. Certainly, the Indian factor cannot be discounted during the study of Pakistan's security dilemma or south Asian security environment. The study is in qualitative mode and tries to find some security solutions through the lens current condition of Afghanistan.

Received:
June 30, 2023

Revised: July
08, 2023

Published:
July 15, 2023

Keywords: *Afghanistan, Pakistan, Taliban, Security, NATO withdrawal*

Introduction

Long after the Cold War and Russia war the United States has become the world's mediator to remain the sole superpower. The United States desired a strategic and permanent presence in South Asia/ Afghanistan to defeat its opponents China, counter Iran and Pakistan, and to establish regional hegemony. Because, the geopolitical situation in Afghanistan is like a corner plot in which the US can monitor everything: like Central Asia, the Middle East, Iran, nuclear power plants, Pakistan, Chinese influence and Russia (Sangar, 2016).

The US and her allies had launched war on terror in Afghanistan in October, 2001. The NATO forces had entered in Afghanistan to change the dimensions of the regional security. The United States attacked Afghan territory and during the War on Terrorism, Pakistan was an ally of the United States in that war and assistance

US. In History during the Cold War, Pakistan also had supported the US position and supported the Afghan Taliban against Russia. In all those circumstances, the terrorist attacks against Pakistan had posed a major threat to Pakistan's national security, with the lives and billions and economic losses. Now, the following withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan in 2021 has again destabilized or collapses Afghanistan economically and socially. Ultimately brought suffering to Pakistan in the form of a refugee crisis and border region instability.

After spending more 13 years in Afghanistan, the US expressed about the withdrawal in 2011 and the departure of NATO had been remained and discussed by media, academic circles and further connected to that departure. The US President Obama specified in January 2013 that the said withdrawal that was going to be stayed till the achievement of the major objectives / aims of the war on terror. The power gained by the Taliban after defeating the United States in Afghanistan and establishing an Islamic Emirates has many implications for the whole regional stability and peace especially for Pakistan. An agreement signed between the Taliban and the United States in Doha in February 2020. After that agreement, it was questioned how the Afghan forces survived and resisted the Taliban but it was surprising how swiftly it was happened. It is predicted that the Taliban would take at least two years the recovery of economy and infrastructure if the international community accepted their government. The failure of governance will lead to disastrous results for Afghanistan and the regional states as well (Hussain, 2021)

The current situation and instability in Afghanistan are cause to disturb regional peace, security threats in South Asia especially for Pakistan. Though, US supportable peace and stability in Afghanistan are and considers after long time that now armed power isn't the main solution for country Afghanistan and its crisis. So, US tried to satisfy Taliban for power and influence in Afghanistan. So, the Peace negotiations had been started at the time Obama's Administration due to the security concerns and future (Muzaffar, et. al, 2017). Taliban returned in power after 20 years, they controlled the country named Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA).

Literature Review

Taliban retitled the country titled: "the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" in 1997 and Mullah Omar accepted the title amir-ul-momineen (commandant of the dedicated). In regions underneath their influence, Taliban authorities implemented their version of Islamic regulation, ordering strategies restricting females from jobs and schools also females prohibited to out from home except in exercises other than thirteen medical facilities, and beating for individuals sentenced for specific harms. They disallowed females from going to schools, colleges and they shut girls school and colleges in Kabul except few rural areas, for young women kept on employed in many different areas of the country under the control of Taliban (Johnson, DuPee & Shaaker, 2017). The Taliban additionally implemented a specific standard for cloth and hijab, and expected men to have moustaches and to avoid Western hair styles or dress. (Centlivres & Centlivres-Demont, 2000) Whereas, Since Taliban takeover in 2021 and it was said by media personals that the new Taliban have demonstrated their new philosophy of politics and they were updated now. An important change was expected that the present Taliban of are having politically awareness and active from the old

Afghanistan morass: An analysis of Pakistan's security after NATO withdrawal Taliban. The gathering's political office in Doha (Qatar), laid out in 2013, may have furnished the gathering with the openness, preparing and the potential chance to take part in political arrangements and strategies (Muzaffar, Shah, & Karamat, 2020)

Aim of study

Aim of this paper to highlight the security situation of Pakistan after NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan. Today, Afghanistan is facing humanitarian crises and weak government that have created the complex regional security situation especially for Pakistan. Although, Pakistan is facing a multiple security threats an internal threat as well as external threats, an Indian threats additional from Afghanistan after NATO withdrawal.

Hypotheses

This paper has modeled the hypotheses namely unstructured policy from US as a political gambit that refers deficiency of scheduling invasion plan and after that withdrawal plan, and those indications to more unbalanced condition for Pakistan's security. It was assumed that at the time of conducting war or at the time of planning wars, focused was on the actions and towards the win of the new great game anyway and very less importance was given to conclusion and losses and future remedies after the war or after the withdrawal, That planning might be a central problems for the regional security especially for Pakistan's security.

Research methodology

This research is conducted on the behalf of qualitative mood. It covers all major aspects of the research and include a brief overview of Afghanistan and South Asian scenario .The researcher attempts to comprehend the current issues as well as possible solutions or methods to obtain the goals and objectives of project. Due to the qualitative research method study tries to find out the outcomes from different type data) books journals magazines) regarding Afghanistan and security implications for Pakistan. This project has been completed through primary sources and secondary sources like different sites, books, articles and interviews. The study is analytical study through qualitative content analysis to gain in-depth of understanding of Afghanistan's current scenario through the lens of Pakistan security concerns.

Violation of Human rights

The United States spend almost two trillion dollars for the state of Afghanistan since 2001, but the surrender of the Afghan military and law enforcement agencies within no time exposed the US and its supporters claim regarding the strengthen law and order forces. The reasons for this failure counted a lot and the escape of the former United States supported Ashraf Ghani needed a thorough deep study. Recently, the Taliban government is not accepted by any state in the world and caused a huge problem in Afghanistan. The international community gave statements as they look the policies of the Taliban regarding human rights protection in Afghanistan and then decided on the future of the Taliban government (Noor, 2021)

Health system in Afghanistan had been dysfunctional and under-resourced for years. People are denied to admission for basic or precautionary health aids, in resulting in health problems weakening in Afghanistan day by day. In that situation the food prices are raised across the country and People who are employed, now supporting more and more family members, and many people do not have enough to eat. (MSFDWB, 2022) health is a basic essential requirement of any country or community where South Asia also effected by Covid-19 crises. Afghanistan has also remained victim of covid-19. (Yaseen, Jathol & Muzaffar, 2020).

Brazen Assault on Afghan Women

Taliban regime has banned all type of higher education for female students and locked all the schools for girls excluding Medical Faculty in Kabul (Johnson, 2017). It was opened due to the medical faculty for female patients and that females only allowed checking by female doctors in case of emergency. Due to the reason “Taliban not banned women from working as doctors and nurses but they also banned women working in all other areas” (Khawajamir, 2016)

The Taliban turned back in Afghanistan in August 2021 after 20 years and girls are being effectively detached from the Afghani public and social life. Whereas Taliban has promised after gaining govt. in Afghanistan that they would be exercise all rights for afghan women and also would be able to support to work and education in the whole country (Afghanistan). But now, More than 30 percent of modern education centers have been replaced by jihadi seminaries in Afghanistan. After some negotiations, peace agreement was “signed between US and Taliban in February, 2020 that was resulted the US withdrawal and no military violence in Afghanistan” (David & others, 2020).

The TTP movement (described as Pakistani Taliban, that group was responsible for killing the thousands of Pakistani people from 2007 to 2014. They have been encouraged surely by the Taliban-ruling in Afghanistan and now they posed a serious threat for Pakistan’s security. The said terrorist group was engaged in 150 attacks in Pakistan in history, generally in the northwest frontier post. Because the TTP have reservation in Afghanistan, “the Pakistani state increasingly finds itself out of options when it comes to dealing effectively with the group. The state’s negotiations with the TTP have failed repeatedly, as they are bound to, because the group is fundamentally opposed to the notion of the Pakistani state and constitution as it exists today”.

Border issue between Pakistan and Afghanistan

Geographically Pakistan is situated on the eastern and southern side of Afghanistan. Afghanistan and Pakistan shares a longest border of 2600 Km titled Durand line (Barfield, 2012). Afghanistan, Pakistan facing deep security concerns due to the long border line and Pakistan is facing from 1979 because of instability in Afghanistan. “US presence in Afghanistan was also a set of implications for Pakistan as Pakistan was grabbed in the war on terror from 2001. Now, US withdrawal from Afghanistan created dozens of implications for Pakistan and its security. Internal, and external, good, or bad, both the US withdrawal from Afghanistan had brought the serious security challenges as well as refugee crises for Pakistan. Those implications could be divided into four sections: at first

Afghanistan morass: An analysis of Pakistan's security after NATO withdrawal security implications second strategic implications, political and economic implications" (Muzaffar, Yaseen & Afzal, 2021).

Refugee crisis and security concerns to Pakistan

Due to the control of the Taliban over Afghanistan, there is no imminent risk of a previously estimated 2 to 3 million Afghan refugee crossing over into Pakistan. According to Pakistani officials on the crossing on Chaman border, that more than twenty thousand people are crossing daily to Pakistan which is the doubled from the normal traffic. This sudden influx needs to be monitored as some Pakistani and Afghan nationals may be released from Afghan prisons and may include some members of the TTP. Furthermore, if financial aid to Afghanistan is not quickly restored, food shortages and economic collapse are likely to be imminent. Worsening Afghanistan's economic woes could lead to a refugee crisis and could have dire consequences for economically weak Pakistan and Pakistan's security (Akhtar, 2021).

Alarming security situation (Pakistan)

In terms of Alarming security situation and implications for Pakistan, US withdrawal is seemed some escalation in Afghanistan that is cause of Pakistan's security at different levels because already seen some security challenges and suicide attacks in Pakistan that Pakistan had faced much (Rasmussen, 2017). In past, Pakistan had already prescribed military operations and different assignments in FATA and Baluchistan for the eradication of terrorism and regarding security improvement. In those Assignments, Pakistan had already killed thousands of extremists for the sake of Pakistan's security and regional stability. After US withdrawal, "Pakistan had a number of security challenges from militant groups, like burning sectarian groups in Baluchistan, and Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan" (Kurtzleben, 2016). The trends of radicalization have been increased at alarmingly level in Pakistan due to the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan. Pakistan had tried to talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan many times. They confirmed the Indian involvement and influence in Afghanistan and India used a variety of financial strategies and tackles like private venture, growth support, and trade advancement. By the way of financial implements India becomes a base of regional stability. Besides this, Afghanistan and India had continuous its investments and army teaching in history (Muzaffar, Yaseen & Afzal, 2021). On 20th December, 2022 twenty eight militants had seized the Counter Terrorism Department police station in Bannu, they demanded a safe passage to Afghanistan. That had been refused by Pakistan army and army had launched an operation against the terrorists. In resulted, Police had killed the twenty five terrorists and three were arrested.

Regional connectivity and Trade (South Asia)

South Asia has seen the long standing disputes of serious nature among the states, particularly between Pakistan and India. This has resulted in hesitant all kind of links between the two countries. Trade, however suffered the most as a result of these hostilities, that goes against the trends in international relations of the twenty first century where states have developed the economic linkages in order to develop stakes in each other that ultimately help them in solving disputes of political nature Pakistan is trying to continuously engage Afghanistan in trade and move the point of isolation from Afghanistan. Pakistan tries to manage its political

and security ties with Afghanistan to gain its strategically objectives in the region. The regional powers like China, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, and Russia plan to change the status of Afghanistan from a buffer state to an economic hub through economic corridor linkage from China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan towards Central Asia and Europe. There are also regional challenges in south Asia, because of the borders of six countries: Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China and Turkmenistan. So, they have different interests regarding the conflict in the country and pursue very different strategies of politics. Afghanistan conflict is significant in its internal concerns for all the neighboring states, even if the consequences for Pakistan are the most serious. (Harpviken & Strand, 2001).

India Pakistan and South Asian Security (As major players of South Asia)

The conflict between Pakistan and India in South Asia has led critical situation that Barry Buzan defines it as security complex, where the primary security concerns between India and Pakistan are links to their national security issues that could not be managed (Buzan & Rizvi 1986). Both countries of South Asia; India and Pakistan are over populated and poverty stricken. Most of their population is living below the poverty line and a huge number is unemployed (Jathol & Rehman, 2019). Lately, there is a strong feeling that has emerged not only at the government level but also at the people's level that there is need to eradicate or lessen the poverty with mutual efforts. There is a growing realization on both sides that the tense relations and conflicts between India and Pakistan are a major cause of hindering prosperity in the whole region. This thinking will definitely pressurize the decision makers on both the sides to take steps towards peace building between the two adversaries. Especially, India has focused her attention to the economic growth and is successfully advancing towards her destination.

Pakistan and India, the most significant states of South Asian region are now equipped with nuclear weapons and the threat of the intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons has increased that has made the region the most explosive flash point. It is a dangerous situation not only for the thickly populated region but also a threat for the peace and security for the whole world. It is said about South Asia that South Asia is frequently labeled as the most dangerous place in the world, where probably the two nuclear rivals might be clashed in the future (Weinbaum, 2006). Such fears center on India and Pakistan's persistent rivalry over Kashmir issue and the continuing low-intensity, or sub conventional and war in south Asia amid proliferating nuclear abilities (Hagerty, 2006).

Security challenges to Pakistan

The strategically failure of the US and Indian influence in Afghanistan caused a new leadership role for Pakistan to lead this region as a middle power under the support of China. This is why Pakistan hosted the special session of the OIC in Islamabad to highlight the Afghanistan issue in the Muslim block and enforce the world to accept the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Pakistan delegations visited Afghanistan several times and enforced the Afghan authorities to maintain the law and order and safeguard fundamental human rights as the basic condition by the majority of the states to accept the Taliban government in Afghanistan and it is said that Taliban has changed their policies as related to their past tenure in Afghanistan and now they strongly consider in a well relations with the other states in world. The Taliban authorities emphasized the states to reopen their

Afghanistan morass: An analysis of Pakistan's security after NATO withdrawal embassies in the Kabul again and they assured the security measures (Rashid, Bilal & Abbas, 2022)

Taliban had, predictably, also not proved to be of help in dealing with the TTP and Pakistan's relations with Taliban have been weakened over other issues, including security and the border issue between two countries. So, Pakistan's first preference is to manage issues with TTP aims within its borders safe but TTP movement across the border into Afghanistan not supportive. The TTP movement is with the difficult to resolve issue.

Conclusion

Security issues related to Pakistan which links with the unresolved border issue that has been hanging since 1947. The competitive security environment in Afghanistan is main cause of upsetting regional peace and constancy. Pakistan's geo-economic image and regional connectivity is correspondingly reliant on a peaceful Afghanistan.

There has been the theoretical debate among economists about the impacts of economic interaction and the peace and stability and vice versa (Javaid, 2012) According to them, positive relationship exists between the increased economic interaction and peace and stability, something missing in South Asia. Both (India and Pakistan) the countries should address and resolve these bilateral issues. India, a rapidly developing country has much future planning as to become more than a regional power and to be a permanent member of the Security Council with veto power. But these objectives cannot be achieved without resolving their bilateral issues because "durable peace" is a pre-requisite for the development of the people of the region (Javaid & Jathol 2015).

Finally, it is clear that if Afghanistan is stable it will be prove best for all states, but starting the good relationship confidence is essential to break the bitter reality. Basically, a resolution for the Afghanistan must be shaped by the neighboring states. It can only be achieved through the friendly foreign policy agendas. Now it is time to deliberate more formal way the regional security issues for the neighboring states of Afghanistan because the Stable Afghanistan can only flourish the regional connectivity.

Recommendations

1. To Taliban, They should obey the promises during the Doha agreement with USA (Dr. Thomas J. Barfield, Interviewed: 17 October, 2022)
2. Pakistan's security is being threatened by local and foreign Taliban fighters Taliban should adopt the policy against TTP (Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan)
3. Pakistan and Afghanistan can mutually balance their relationship and resolved the issue of the Durand Line peacefully.
4. The United States, which is partly to blame for these developments, must act quickly to shape its policy towards Afghanistan and its relationship with the new administration.
5. Toward a regional security major players in South Asia that can help secure some gains in reducing conflict levels (Dr. Marvin G. Weinbaum Interviewed 13 October, 2022)

6. Higher education is such an imperative and sensitive affair in any society female students should allow to get education (Dr. Johnson, Thomas, 13 October, 2022)
7. Policymakers need to remember that other regions of the world, like Europe and Southeast Asia, developed regional architectures out of the crucible of conflict.
8. People to people contacts are necessary to improve and strengthen relations with each other.
9. many common cultural and social aspects which need to be promoted
10. Commerce and trade have always been the indisputable signs of healthy bond between civilizations and cultures, so, it should be promote
11. India and Pakistan should try to evolve mechanism to counter the evil of terrorism.
12. The Isolation policy may be cause of risks, attacks on the US or its allies attached by Afghanistan.
13. Humanitarian crisis are increasing day by day United States should expand its aid humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan.
14. US should also funds allocate to Pakistan for assistance and support to Afghan refugees.
15. Both countries should check activities on both sides Pakistan and Afghanistan. In this way, the rapid resurgence of Taliban should be prevented.

Acknowledgements

This paper would not have been possible without the exceptional support and interview by Dr. Thomas j. Barfield, Professor, Department of Anthropology at Boston University USA and President of the American Institute for Afghanistan Studies, and also supported by Dr. Marvin G. Weinbaum (Director, Afghanistan and Pakistan Studies, USA) and I would like to thankful to Dr. Thomas Johnson writer of the renowned book “Taliban Narratives: The Uses and Power of Stories in the Afghanistan Conflict” Professor of the National Security Affairs Department at the Naval Postgraduate School (Monterey, California) as well the Director of the Program for Culture & Conflict Studies through interview. Finally, I extremely grateful to my Supervisor, Dr. Zahid yaseen, chairperson, department of Political Science, G.C.W.U.S. for unconditional support.

References

- [1] Akhtar, N. (2008). Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Taliban. *International Journal on World Peace*, 49-73.
- [2] Barfield, T. J. (2012). *The War for Afghanistan: A Very Brief History: From Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Vol. 9). Princeton University Press.
- [3] Buzan, B. & Rizvi, G. (1986). *South Asian Insecurity and the Great Powers*. Macmillan Press, Houndsmill and London.
- [4] Centlivres, P., & Centlivres Demont, M. (2000). State, national awareness and levels of identity in Afghanistan from monarchy to Islamic state. *Central Asian Survey*, 19(3-4), 416-425.
- [5] Hagerty, Devin T. (2006). *South Asia in World Politics*. Oxford University Press, Pakistan.
- [6] Harpviken, K. B., & Strand, A. (2001). Afghanistan and the international community: What now?. *Security Dialogue*, 32(4), 507-509.
- [7] <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2023/01/13/pakistan-five-major-issues-to-watch-in-2023/> retrieved at 16-02-2023
- [8] Hussain, Z. (2021, August 29). *The Fall And Rise Of The Taliban*. Dawn
- [9] Jathol, I., & Rehman, S. U. (2019). From state to human security in South Asia. *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, 5(2), 173.
- [10] Javaid, Umbreen. (2012). *Peace Building in South Asia: Limitations and Prospects*. Centre for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore.
- [11] Javaid, U., & Jathol, I. (2015). Security Challenges to South Asia: Pakistan's Perspective. *South Asian Studies* (1026-678X), 30(2).
- [12] Johnson, T. H., DuPee, M., & Shaaker, W. (2017). *Taliban narratives: The use and power of stories in the Afghanistan conflict*. Oxford University Press.
- [13] Khwajamir, M. (2016). History and problems of education in Afghanistan. In *SHS Web of Conferences* (Vol. 26, p. 01124). EDP Sciences.
- [14] Muzaffar, M., Shah, S. T. A., & Karamat, S. (2020). US Taliban Dhoha Accord: A Compromise, *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 1(2), 32-42
- [15] Muzaffar, M., Yaseen, Z., & Afzal, N. (2021). US Exit from Afghanistan: Impacts on Pakistan and India. *Journal of Political Studies*, 28(2), 55-68.
- [16] Noor, S. (2021). The Taliban's Ascendance in Afghanistan: Implications for Pakistan. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, 13 (4),14-18
- [17] Rashid, M. A., Bilal, F. E., & Abbas, R. (2022). Stability in Afghanistan: Ramifications for Pakistan. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 1092-1101.

- [18] Rasmussen, S. E. (2017, June 6). Afghanistan Holds Peace Conference Amid Violence and Protest, *The Guardian*
- [19] Sangar, K. (2016). Afghanistan's significance for Russia in the 21 Century: Interests, Perceptions and Perspectives. *Politics in Central Europe*, 12(1), 59-82.
- [20] Weinbaum, M. G. (2006). Afghanistan and its neighbors: An ever dangerous neighborhood (Vol. 31). United States Institute of Peace.
- [21] Yaseen, Z., Jathol, I., & Muzaffar, M. (2020). Covid-19 and its Impact on South Asia: A Case Study of Pakistan. *Global International Relations Review*, III.