

## **Afghanistan after US Withdrawal: How the Regional powers will shape the future of Taliban's heartland?**

Dr. Asma Iqbal<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract:**

September 2022 marks the one-year departure of the American army from Afghanistan, followed shortly by the downfall of the Afghan government, and taken over of the country by the Taliban. Just a year since US Troops withdrew, Afghanistan under the Taliban faced a severe humanitarian crisis, a malformed economy, and a Taliban regime not different from that of 1996-2001. No more than a few governments have recognized the Taliban's Islamic Emirate. This situation has created an influence vacuity that can pave the way for the most influential nations in the region to show their muscles. The influx of international extremist group into Afghan land the major apprehension of the regional powers, as the tapered and flimsy government structure, deteriorating strategies, socioeconomic and sociopolitical crisis along with human dilemma has emerged just because of US sanctions, freezing of assets, and the government's incompetence or reluctance to resolve these emerging defies. Neighboring countries and regional power aimed for the departure of NATO forces as part of a peaceful transition as the result of political settlement. In the absence of any top-level subtle to reach a deal that would have amalgamated the Taliban into a greater agenda, the United States compelled the Taliban to take over Kabul without considerable resistance. In an emerging geopolitical scenario, the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan has deepened antagonism among its neighbors and regional

---

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Prof. Political Science, Govt. Graduate College for Women Samanabad Lahore.  
Email: asma.iqbal79@hotmail.com

powers to outline the future dynamics of the Taliban heartland. Now once again Afghan land is at a cross-roads fronting an indeterminate future as the US withdrawal has fast-tracked current drifts in relations of the regional players, Top of the list are Russia, Iran, and India, countries that played an imported role in the 1990s to counter the Taliban it is very clear that the Taliban of today is much dissimilar as of 20 years ago. Currently, unlike in the 1990s, China has been involved significantly in Post- US withdrawal of Afghanistan and it ponders the future of the Afghan heartland as part of its long-lasting interests. The trends of India's relations with the US, China, and Russia have changed. Conversely Pakistan's changing relations with the United States, China, and Russia. In the emerging political scenario, Afghanistan is witnessing a transition from one crisis to another as it can be turned into a new battleground for regional power. This research paper tried to unveil what objectives these regional powers have regarding Afghanistan and Central Asia and how might they contribute, for better or worse, in the future course of the region. It also examines competition among regional players to strengthen their foothold in the region after the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan. The research in hand also discussed the factors that would shape future endeavors and the nature of the relationship of Taliban-led Afghanistan with other nations.

**Keywords:** Regional Security, Afghanistan, Regional Powers, US Withdrawal, Battlefield

**Introduction:**

The withdrawal of US forces after 20 years and the Taliban's homecoming in Afghanistan can be witnessed as the most substantial events of 2021 and its consequences will be observed in the future. The departure of American troops has left an authority vacuity in the country, triggering a paradigm shift in the geopolitical scenario (Ameyaw-Brobbe, 2022). In an emerging situation, Afghanistan is ready for the new great game that would have repercussions for regional peace and security patterns. The future of Afghan land is worryingly reliant on how its neighbors retune their ties with it. The looming fiscal and altruistic crisis in Post US-Afghanistan can be vetoed if all nations in the region step forward to help the war-torn country to overwhelm its socioeconomic discrepancies (Pradhan, 2022). The strategic policies of adjacent nations will have a major impact on the progress patterns of Afghanistan. Post US geopolitical scenario has created an opportunity for the great power politics in the region known as 'the graveyard of empires' and now a fresh chapter of regional collaboration or skirmish is in bloom (Bailey & Immerman, 2015).

Tariq, Amir & Bano (2021) said that it seems very difficult to find any unremitting solution to the Afghan crisis but a political settlement only. However, regional determinations are analogous and vital for the peace process since crises in the region are multi-dimensional. The nations in the region have definite interests that affect their commitment to regional peace, and mutual relations of regional powers validate the realpolitik at play. Especially, Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran would be beneficiaries of the peace process as they have developed more preemptive regional players in Afghan affairs since the start of the Afghan peace process in 2018.

**Historical Background:**

In the Cold War era, Afghanistan had been a battleground for both the blocks US and the USSR, both sides left no stone unturned to grab afghan land by any means, either through infrastructural development or military involvement. In the winter of 1979, the USSR attacks Afghanistan, for the alleged reason of safeguarding the Soviet-Afghan Friendship Treaty of 1978 (Thomas, 2018). The USSR, conversely, had to face ferocious confrontation when they attempted for a strong footing in the country. Pakistan had been considering Afghanistan as a strategic depth and has been providing political and military support for its neighbor for decades. Pakistan backed the Afghan Mujahedeen against Soviet aggression and welcomed millions of Afghan migrants escaping the war Zone. Even Pakistani armed forces provided training to the mujahidin and even to Taliban forces to fight against their foes. The defeat of the Soviet Union in the Afghan war and disbanding of the USSR efficiently ended the Cold War and the US emerged as the sole World power (Fischer & Stanzel, 2021). In the 1990s, the U.S. progressed its interests to encourage autonomous and democratic governance and capitalism. The Afghan Taliban, which emerged after the end of the post-Soviet civil war, delivers al-Qaeda reservation for maneuvers. The Northern Alliance leader Ahmad Shah Massoud an anti-Taliban alliance was murdered by al-Qaeda. The assassination of Massoud, also known as the Lion of the Panjshir, affected badly the anti-Taliban confrontation. The US then-President George W. Bush signs into law a joint tenacity allowing the use of power against the guilty of the offensive of September 9 in the United States. Though, after the incident of 9/11, the foreign policy focus of the United States shifted to fighting terrorism, mainly in the Middle East and Africa. These peacekeeping missions

cost \$5.4 trillion and roughly 15,000 deaths of American people (Zaidi & Nirmal, 2022).

Unluckily, the imperfection of the U.S. war on terror policies over the last two decades has frequently barred the U.S. from achieving its intended results of combatting terrorism and redesigning crumbly areas in its image. President Trump brusquely quit peace talks just a week after the top U.S. mediator Khalilzad proclaimed that a peace deal had been agreed upon with the Taliban. Khalilzad and the leadership of the Taliban finalized a settlement that paved the way for a noteworthy withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan and also guaranteed the Taliban that the Afghan land will not be used for terrorist activities anymore. Agents of the Taliban and the Afghan government and civil society met impersonate in Doha, Qatar, after nearly two decades of war. The peace process deferred for months due to the prisoner exchange anticipated in the earlier U.S.-Taliban deal resumed following the discharge of 5000 jailbirds (Verma, 2022).

### **Post-American Afghanistan:**

Just a couple of days ahead President-Elect Joe Biden has to be inaugurated, Christopher C. Miller announced the reduction of forces in the country to 2,500 by the first quarter of 2021. Thousands of troops had already been drawn perusing a settlement with the Taliban in February to finish the purported war on terror. Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary-General Jens cautions that hastily moving back troops could let Afghan land turn out to be a shelter for terrorists. Biden administration announced the withdrawal of all troops by September 11, 2021 (Amiri & Jackson, 2022).

Fronting a slight confrontation, Taliban battalions swarmed the capital, Kabul, and took over the presidential palace hours after President Ghani fled from the state. The Taliban announced that they will hold talks with Afghan executives to form an “open, comprehensive Islamic government.” The seizure of Kabul followed the quick progress of the Taliban, who apprehended all in the following days, Afghan security forces in some areas allegedly surrendered (Branco, 2021). The last U.S. troops move off Afghanistan, handing over it to the Taliban rule, more than a hundred thousand people had exiled in a fortnightly withdrawal process. Thousands of Afghans who aided America and its partners, as well as up to 200 Americans, remained in Afghanistan on the clemency of the Taliban.

#### **Power vacuum in Afghanistan:**

The United States muddled withdrawal from Afghanistan resulted in intensifying security problems and ambiguous groupings as the major players in the region took a thoughtful standpoint toward the new Taliban government. Expressively, at least, the withdrawal of US forces from Afghan land signifies a new paradigm hasn't developed to take its place so far. The Biden government's management of the rapid US withdrawal did not look virtuous; it left behind the regional security vacuum. Any Chinese, Russian or Indian encouragement in Afghanistan will have insinuations for the entire region (Yousaf & Jabarkhail, 2022).

The uncertainty in a war-torn country elevated major anxieties among its neighbors, predominantly as extortions of belligerency and smuggling grasp their boundaries which would be the biggest challenge to security and permanency. It comprises the intensification of an armed skirmish on the Tajik-Afghan border, which made Russia step in and bid its support to Tajikistan. In

the name of their security, these nation-states do not want an undeviating armed encounter or high-level uprising in Afghanistan (Loft, 2021). The affiliation of Central Asian republicans and Afghanistan remains to be friendly, with the former uttering their desires for collaboration through two-sided arrangements to magnify trade, progress, and subtle dealings. Pakistan is the most significant player in Afghan war and peace, which has confidence that the Taliban are set for conquest. After almost two decades of support, the Pakistanis see this as their win.

There is also a school of thought that believes that America will finally farm out the war-dragged country to Pakistan, which can be an opportunity for political dialogue and economic incentives between America and Pakistan. Nevertheless, these developments will anxiety India, concerned about the possible strategic threats that a Pakistan-supported Taliban would pose. Pakistan and India go all-out to hinder each other's political influence in Afghanistan, and their policy of arrangement will take into deliberation this shared objective. (Crawford & Lutz, 2021). Moreover, as the Taliban triumphs on the battleground nurture, all other groups will ramp up their exertions to build militias and create a divergent force to overthrow them. Presume major regional players support their favored factions that will further deteriorate the Afghan government. America had involved regional players for stability and anti-terrorism pledges and paid the cost to get fulfilled its demands. Currently, Moscow is supposed to have a central role in shaping the power structure in war wrapped country through a lingering "troika" together with Washington, Beijing, and Islamabad.

### **Realignment of geopolitics after the Taliban takeover**

The entombment of one more giant in the graveyard of empires rearranges the security patterns in the region (Jones, 2010). There was no idea

that the surprising pace of Afghanistan's succession into chaos, as the Afghan Taliban trooped throughout the entire country, in a matter of days. Reminiscences of the Taliban's ruthless subjugation, particularly of womenfolk and religious subgroups 20 years ago, have triggered qualms about the future for thousands of natives struggling for the last two decades to transform their nation. A fresh chapter of excessive power enmity between the America and China could be emerged as the Chinese try to find assurances from the Taliban Leaders to keep its adjacent areas out of the conflict (Zaidi & Nirmal 2022).

As a part of the Moscow, Beijing, and Washington Troika on Afghanistan, China keenly announced to support of "friendly relations" with the 'new' Taliban. Moscow taking its time to see "how the regime will behave", Zamir Kabulov Russian special envoy for Afghanistan, before obliging to the formal acknowledgment of the Afghanistan government under the Taliban. The Premier of Pakistan—has greeted the Taliban's takeover of Kabul as the end of US "slavery" in Afghanistan (Ahmed, 2022). Biden government is convinced that it is time for Major players of the region to take charge rather than to look at America to maintain peace in the region, and Beijing prepares itself to move into the great game with all its powers that can be resulted in the establishment of new blocks in the region.

### **How did Russia see Taliban-led Afghanistan?**

Moscow saw the Taliban's takeover as a sign of the decline of US supremacy in the region. War-torn Afghanistan also shows the disaster of American policy and the mounting confusion in the policies of the Western Powers. For Russia, this turmoil is emblematic of the new world order, which is multipolar. The decline of American hegemony can be credited to its impending stress from insistent China in the Indo-Pacific. (Kaura, 2018).



Russian policy toward Afghanistan is guided by many aspects, the most significant uncertainty in Afghanistan having catalyst implications for the regional nations. Another important element is the non-conventional security threat climbing from drug trafficking since opium agronomy is the chief financial source of band outfits of the region. Russian policy regarding Afghanistan is also guided by its relished part as a net security supplier in the region. (Khan, 2022).

Russia has still not aloof the Taliban from its list of banned terrorist groups. In the emerging scenario, the highest priority for Moscow is to fill the security gap after the withdrawal of US troops. Moscow is eager to play the role of an arbitrator on issues connected to Afghanistan and beyond. The Current geopolitical scenario has given Russia a strategic upper hand to reconstitute its power in the Eurasian region (Klyszcz, 2021).

### **China's Romance with Afghanistan:**

China considered Afghanistan perilous for its strategic interests for 2 reasons. Firstly, The religious minorities of Xinjiang province have bonds with religious groups of the adjacent regions of Afghanistan. Beijing is predominantly anxious about its Uighur minority aligning with the Taliban. Secondly, China is worried, as uncertainty in the region will badly upset its gigantic project of CPEC a chief constituent of its granitic project BRI. Beijing has been vigorously fetching Pakistan to cover this part. Islamabad has a strong strategic benefit in Taliban led-Afghanistan. Along with the Sino-Pak alliance for suitability to influence the benefits from this prearrangement. China has also common strategic interests with Russia on the issues regarding Afghanistan. That was witnessed at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit held in September 2021, When Beijing and Moscow took a synchronized stand where Afghanistan was at the top of the agenda

(Zhongming et al, 2021). Though both powers are distrustful of the Taliban government, the US troop's exit from Afghanistan is a reason for them to exult in this strategic conquest. In the Emerging political scenario, it is obvious that China is willing to recognize the Taliban Rule in Afghanistan by proclaiming \$31 million packages at a summit of foreign ministers of bordering states of Afghanistan in September 2021. Beijing just wants assurance in return that the Taliban will not be backing the rebellious Uighur minority of the Xinjiang region.

Kabul labeled Beijing its “most important partner” and made it clear in its statement that it looks to China to reconstruct and develop a war-torn country and explore its mineral resources. The Chinese Leadership is keen to establish its strategic foothold in Afghanistan under Taliban rule (Kavalski, 2021).

### **US Post-Withdrawal Policy**

Post withdrawal policy of the United States designates that American policies are varying to address the fluctuating security dynamics of the region. The essential strategic goal of the United States now lies in encompassing China in the Indo-Pacific region. President Biden recognized the shift from Afghanistan to the Indo-Pacific in his address to the nation and said that the “terror threat has metastasized across the world, well beyond Afghanistan.” US connection with Afghanistan will be founded on regional diplomacy, global influence, and humanitarian aid (Munshi, 2022).

The formation of a western Quad, which includes America, Israel, India, and the United Arab Emirates is another important development after withdrawal. The establishment of this Quad is meant at contesting excavating of the Sino-Russian alliance in the region (Miller, 2022).

### **India and developments in Afghanistan**

Undeniably, the post-US withdrawal development in Afghanistan is not good news for India because it will put pressure on the security dynamics of the region. India will have to see the situation in the context of indo-Pak and Sino-Indian relations. India also has a policy of “wait and watch” regarding the Taliban regime, as the two major powers Russia and China have already expressed their readiness to have ties with Afghanistan under Taliban Rule (Ahlawat & Izarali,2022).

New Delhi has a noteworthy investment of more than three billion USD, and their two-sided trade volumes to around \$1.5 billion. Furthermore, a large volume of trade between India and Central Asian countries passes through Afghanistan, and India is also one of the top donors of foreign aid grants to Afghanistan. On the other hand, New Delhi’s defense, trade, and people-to-people contact with America are strong and increasing. While India had vigorous ties with Russia during the Soviet era, this bond has enfeebled over the years to become primarily a ‘buyer-seller’ relation on the monetary front and a deteriorating defense liaison (Ganaie & Ganaie, 2022).

### **Pakistan can’t afford to engage**

Islamabad and Kabul have a long history of anxious ties demarcated by 5 cyclical drivers: cross-border ties, autonomy concerns, geopolitical dynamics, security interests, connectivity, and trade. Collectively, these dynamics will define future patterns of permanency in Afghanistan and the region. After the withdrawal of US troops and the Taliban takeover in mid-August 2021, Pakistan has recommended the outside world to work with the

new regime in Afghanistan in the interest of stabilizing the war-torn country (Shahab, 2022).

In the past, as now, Pakistan has found itself at odds with world powers chiefly the U.S., for backing the Taliban. During the Taliban's takeover in 1996, Pakistan was one of only 3 countries after Saudi Arabia and the UAE, to officially acknowledge the Taliban's Islamic Emirate. Pakistan had unwillingly detached official ties with the Taliban rule after the 9/11 attacks in the U.S. Pakistan set about trying to bring the Taliban into the mainstream political realm, an exertion that would be fruitful when the U.S. opted to pull off its troop from Afghanistan. Ending United States' longest war in Afghanistan also might help stabilize Pakistan's conflict-prone north-western border. Pakistan consequently facilitated U.S.-Taliban talks and greeted the peace deal, which set a firm date for the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in return for the Taliban initiates to break up with extremist groups and to contribute in dialog over a political settlement with other Afghan political forces. Currently, the US wants to guarantee that Pakistan will not formally recognize the Taliban rule and that it uses its leverage over the Taliban to make relaxation for women's rights and girls' education and to form a comprehensive government. (Maqbool, 2022).

### **Changed Taliban:**

Presuming that the Taliban's regime would be globally lonely and dispossessed of vital funding, Islamabad hurled a diplomatic offensive aimed mainly at the West, principally the U.S. and EU states. Highlighting Taliban collaboration in enabling Western departure flights of external citizens and Western-aligned and at-risk Afghans, Pakistan also stressed the Taliban's outward readiness to follow through on global commitments concerning basic

rights and counter-terrorism (Ruttig, 2021). Instead, ecstatic about their victory, on 7 September the Taliban proclaimed the formation of a so-called acting government that was comprised of key movement leaders. Islamabad's diplomatic efforts now focus on resounding Western nations that enticements rather than compression will more efficiently change Taliban conduct.

### **New Great Game:**

For the newly established Taliban rule in Afghanistan, China is not the only or even the most important substitute for America, but also other states notably Pakistan and Iran, are also key players. These all nations have substantial influence in the Afghan heartland. Whereas China is having constructive and lasting relations with Pakistan and Iran. Moreover, the US has not entirely out of the scene (Pradhan, 2022). Despite Facing a momentous setback with the speedy breakdown of the U.S.-backed national government and a hurried and embarrassing airlift from Afghanistan, America remains entangled in Afghanistan in multiple ways and it has openly committed to ongoing to offer humanitarian aid to the Afghan Citizens (Wani, 2022). As a result, Beijing is neither the big "winner" in the Afghan catastrophe nor seamlessly dignified to emerge as the leading actor in a war-rugged country. Conflicting to orthodox insight, the consequences are not a clear victory for Beijing. Like Moscow, Tehran is also a significant regional actor and has always understood Afghanistan as a risk to its safety but also as an occasion to enlarge trade and approachability to Afghanistan and Central Asian markets (Yousaf & Jabarkhail, 2022).

### **Conclusion**

From this analysis, it can be concluded that the Afghan heartland leftovers a zone of confusion, uncertainty, and disorder, where the South Asia

RSC, the Indo-Pakistan conflict, is predictable. Whereas the felonious and extremist transnational networks patenting in Afghanistan loom over the security of the region (Akbari & True, 2022). Neither Pakistan nor India is certainly proficient – even if concerned, at least in the case of Pakistan’s aspiration for a welcoming government in Kabul – in spreading influence and upholding it in its neighboring country. In the post-Withdrawl scenario, Pakistan’s establishment will likely have little or no influence on the Taliban, as the latter have progressively taken a more self-governing role from their previous partners and have condemned Pakistani immersion in uncertainty in Afghan land, even during the previous Taliban rule of the 1990s. If both Islamabad and New Delhi want power there, it is principally because they seek resolutions to their anxieties, as well as assurances from the United States against each other. This means that as long as the key uncertainties within the South Asia RSC are not addressed, undesirable stimuli may endure and hinder stabilization determinations in Afghanistan .

In the context of a great game, Moscow has steadily prolonged its inspiration in the region. The departure of American troops and the potential authority vacuity that fallouts in south Asia will let Moscow advance a geopolitical and geo-strategic interest in Afghanistan. Moscow still sees itself as a regional hegemon and views the American withdrawal as a chance to invigorate its role and expand its influence by establishing associations in the region, predominantly with Beijing. Russian involvement in the Afghan peace process and its engagements in regional bodies—principally through the Troika-plus alliance of Washington, Moscow, Beijing, and Islamabad—has more to do with the intimidations it faces from Afghanistan’s uncertainty, ethnic extremism, and drug trafficking.

Major Chinese interest in fortifying economic advantages would be attained using the strategic position of Afghanistan as a regional connector in either the BRI or CPEC. Moreover, since 2007 Beijing has been looking for ways to mine vast mineral resources of the war-torn country, which need safety and carriage structure. It is only likely to happen with a stable Afghanistan, so Beijing is still evaluating the current scenario in Afghanistan and what it can gain from a peace deal (Hussain et al, 2021).

Iran, another major player in the region has considerable sanctuary concerns in Afghanistan and has battled Islamic State Khorasan Province thereby sending its Fatemiyoun Brigade. Tehran will leave no stone unturned to uphold its admittance to the Afghan market and encourage Shia philosophy there. It inclines to operate silently in the region, using tools of soft and hard power.

Despite their common views about US troops, Russia doesn't want an influential Iran contradicting its regional influence. Another anxiety for Moscow is the US-Iran reconciliation, which could demoralize and relegate Russian influence in the region.

In the current geopolitical landscape, a sustained Washington conglomerate with Taliban-led Kabul through progress and mediation, shared information, and all types of collaboration would avert the Afghan heartland from turning into heaven for extremists and let the US maintain a healthy balance of power in the region. Moreover, the peace process should include Tehran, Moscow, Beijing, Islamabad, and New Delhi so that they can negotiate their benefits with afghan stakeholders and offer means to develop Afghanistan's harmony and permanency. Eventually, it will secure the economic and sanctuary safety of everyone.

**Recommendations:**

- The new great game in the region can be evaded if there is collaboration on battling apostasy in the region. Nevertheless, it necessitates the revival of the Indo-Pak negotiation and changing Pakistan's attitude toward the Taliban as they face internal insurrection.
- Collaboration among the Indo-Pak private sectors in present corporations in the region shows the way to opportunities. Combined efforts by the countries in battling insurgence and extremism could have the additional advantage of dropping suspicion and fustian about state-sponsored violence as a proxy to direct hostility between Pakistan and India.
- If the ongoing pipeline projects and building of alternative roads through seaport in Gwadar (Pakistan-China) and Chabahar (Iran-India) are presently nurturing exclusive antagonism, other smaller-scale monetary schemes could overtly try to build bonds between the major givers and receivers of this region
- Impartiality in Afghanistan would be the resolution to keep an already war-torn country from overruling, but beyond grandiloquence, an impersonal Afghanistan does not seem to be an option shortly because the state establishments are too weak to handle outside compressions.
- Eventually, as revealed above, positive changes in the global order could influence the ties within the RSC. Even though for now, the rivalry within draws on and uses the dormant competition between the US and China outwardly, the opportunity for collaboration and alliance between China and the US would change dynamics.



- The desires of the regional powers and Sino-US enmity will be vital in remodeling the rendezvous of regional powers with Afghanistan under Taliban rule.
- Challenges faced by Afghanistan cannot be determined through unilateral deals; rather, an all-inclusive and synchronized attitude is obligatory from the global community. Important Regional actors must prudently devise their foreign policies as an unbalanced Afghanistan can have disastrous undulation effects for the region.
- It is the best time for regional actors to prioritize regional peace and solidity over ethical dissimilarities and cunning policies so as not to become overwhelmed by the intensification of the catastrophe in the Afghan heartland.

### References

- Abawe, Z., Daud, B., Daudzai, H., Jabarkhail, M., & Yousaf, F. (2022). Afghanistan and the way forward: Incorporating indigenous knowledge into policymaking. *Global Policy*.
- Ahlawat, D., & Izarali, M. R. (2022). Security Implications for India and Pakistan from the Taliban Regime since the US Withdrawal from Afghanistan. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 16(5), 20-33.
- Ahmad, P. T. (2022). An Analysis of India's Soft Power Policy in Afghanistan. *India Quarterly*, 09749284221127787.
- Ahmed, Z. S. (2022). Global Geo-political Changes, International Political System and Pakistan. *Global Pakistan: Pakistan's Role in the International System*, 43.
- Akbari, F., & True, J. (2022). One year on from the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan: re-instituting gender apartheid. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 76(6), 624-633.
- Ameyaw-Brobby, T. (2022). THE US WITHDRAWAL, TALIBAN TAKEOVER, AND ONTOLOGICAL (IN) SECURITY IN AFGHANISTAN. *World Affairs*, 00438200221125800.
- Amiri, R., & Jackson, A. (2022). Taliban Taxation in Afghanistan:(2006-2021).
- Bailey, B., & Immerman, R. H. (Eds.). (2015). *Understanding the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan*. NYU Press.
- Branco, C. (2021). Iran's National Security and Afghanistan Politics. In *The Geopolitics of Iran* (pp. 443-483). Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore.

- Crawford, N. C., & Lutz, C. (2021). Human and Budgetary Costs to Date of the US War in Afghanistan. *Brown University Watsons Institute for International & Public Affairs*.
- Fischer, S., & Stanzel, A. (2021). Afghanistan: The West Fails—a Win for China and Russia?. *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)*.
- Fischer, S., & Stanzel, A. (2021). Afghanistan: The West Fails—a Win for China and Russia?. *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)*.
- Ganaie, R. A., & Ganaie, M. A. (2022). India's Afghanistan policy: a quest for strategic space post the US withdrawal. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 9(1), 1-8.
- Gokay, B. (2002). Oil, war and geopolitics from Kosovo to Afghanistan. *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, 4(1), 5-13.
- Hussain, F., Shahid, R., Rafiq, S., & Nawaz, S. (2021). New Great Game and China's Energy Interests in Central Asia. *Elementary Education Online*, 20(4), 2894-2894.
- Jones, S. G. (2010). *In the graveyard of empires: America's war in Afghanistan*. WW Norton & Company.
- Kaura, V. (2018). Russia's changing relations with Pakistan and Taliban: Implications for India. *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations*, 22(1), 58-79.
- Kavalski, E. (2021). The end of China's romance with Central and Eastern Europe. *Global Media and China*, 6(1), 77-99.
- Kemal, L. (2021). *Turkey's Role in Afghanistan: A Major Risk*. Al Jazeera Centre for Studies.

- Khalid, I. (2020). The New Great Game in Afghanistan: Role of India (A Pakistani Perspective). *South Asian Studies*, 26(2).
- Khan, M. N. (2022). Pakistan and Russia's Convergence of Interests in the Emerging Geopolitical Environment. *Journal of Security & Strategic Analyses*, 8(2), 27-52.
- Klyszcz, I. U. (2021). Reframing Russia's Afghanistan Policy.
- Lansford, T. (2017). *A bitter harvest: US Foreign Policy and Afghanistan*. Routledge.
- Loft, P. (2021). Afghanistan: Refugees and displaced people in 2021. *House of Commons Library Research Briefing*, 16.
- Maqbool, T. (2022). US WAR IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN'S POST WITHDRAWAL FOREIGN POLICY FOR AFGHANISTAN. *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs*, 5(2).
- Miller, L. (2022). Protecting US Interests in Afghanistan. *Survival*, 64(2), 25-34.
- Mohapatra, N. K. (2020). Afghanistan's 'Political Insecurity' and the Emerging Geopolitical Calculus in Eurasia. *International Studies*, 57(3), 259-278.
- Munshi, U. (2022). Redefining Pakistan-US Relations in Post-Afghanistan Withdrawal Phase. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, 6(3), 139-151.
- Pradhan, R. (2022). Energy geopolitics and the new great game in Central Asia. *Millennial Asia*, 13(2), 265-288.

- Ruttig, T. (2021). Have the Taliban Changed?. *CTC Sentinel*, 14(3), 1-15.
- Shahab Ahmed, Z. (2022). The Taliban's Takeover of Afghanistan and Pakistan's Non-traditional Security Challenges. *Global Policy*, 13(1), 125-131.
- Stabile, C. A., & Kumar, D. (2005). Unveiling imperialism: Media, gender and the war on Afghanistan. *Media, Culture & Society*, 27(5), 765-782.
- Tariq, M., Amir, M., & Bano, S. (2021). Future Threats and Opportunities in Afghanistan in the Post-US Withdrawal Scenario. *Future*, 15(7).
- Thomas, C. (2018). Afghanistan: background and US Policy. *Congressional research service*, 10.
- Verma, R. (2022). US–Taliban peace deal and regional powers as potential spoilers: Iran as a case study. *International Politics*, 59(2), 260-279.
- Wani, Z. A. (2022). Geopolitical Dynamics in the Afghanistan–India–Pakistan Triangle. *India Quarterly*, 09749284221127807.
- Yousaf, F., & Jabarkhail, M. (2022). Afghanistan's future under the Taliban regime: engagement or isolation?. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 17(1), 117-134.
- Yousaf, F., & Jabarkhail, M. (2022). Afghanistan's future under the Taliban regime: engagement or isolation?. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 17(1), 117-134.
- Zaidi, S. M. S., & Nirmal. (2022). Regional political paradigm shift: Challenges and opportunities for Pakistan. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, 7(4), 772-789.

Zhongming, Z., Linong, L., Xiaona, Y., Wangqiang, Z., & Wei, L. (2021).  
China and the Taliban Begin Their Romance.