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**Taliban Taking Over, August 2021: The American Regime Change
in Afghanistan between Failure and Success**

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English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master in Language and Culture**

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Dedication

I express my sincere gratitude and heartfelt appreciation as I dedicate this humble dissertation
work to:

My parents who have always been there for me, and for being my source of emotional
support, and motivation.

My beloved little brother and sister.

My grandmother who is like another mother to me.

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All my classmates for making the university so much fun, and enjoyable.

Finally to all my friends (my other family).

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DEDICATION

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Abstract

The conflict in Afghanistan has lasted for many years, with changes in power, government structures, and society. Afghanistan was under the rule of Taliban, an Islamist militant group that implemented a strict interpretation of Sharia law and enforced oppressive policies, particularly towards women and minority groups. The United States got involved in Afghanistan to fight against the Taliban and prevent terrorism, especially after the 9/11 attacks in 2001. They wanted to establish a stable democratic government, so the United States and its allies launched a military campaign to remove the Taliban from power. They also tried to rebuild the country and improve security and development. However, the Taliban took over Afghanistan again in August 2021, which raised concerns about the effectiveness and long-term success of the international presence in the country. This research aims to evaluate the success of the regime change implemented by the United States in Afghanistan and analyze the historical context leading to the rise of the Taliban, the US-initiated regime change, and its aftermath. This work also explores the tactics employed, and policies implemented to gain a profound understanding of the complex dynamics that shaped Afghanistan's recent history. Ultimately, this dissertation presents an argument that the American regime change in Afghanistan was a failed endeavor.

ملخص

استمر الصراع في أفغانستان لسنوات عديدة ، مع تغييرات في السلطة والهياكل الحكومية والمجتمع. كانت أفغانستان تحت حكم طالبان ، وهي جماعة إسلامية متشددة طبقت تفسيراً صارماً للشريعة وفرضت سياسات قمعية ، لا سيما تجاه النساء والأقليات. انخرطت الولايات المتحدة في أفغانستان لمحاربة طالبان ومنع الإرهاب ، خاصة بعد هجمات الحادي عشر من سبتمبر عام 2001. لقد أرادوا إقامة حكومة ديمقراطية مستقرة ، لذلك شنت الولايات المتحدة وحلفاؤها حملة عسكرية لإزالة طالبان. من السلطة. كما حاولوا إعادة بناء البلاد وتحسين الأمن والتنمية. ومع ذلك ، استولت طالبان على أفغانستان مرة أخرى في أغسطس 2021 ، مما أثار مخاوف بشأن فعالية ونجاح الوجود الدولي في البلاد على المدى الطويل. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تقييم نجاح تغيير النظام الذي نفذته الولايات المتحدة في أفغانستان وتحليل السياق التاريخي الذي أدى إلى صعود حركة طالبان وتغيير النظام الذي بدأت الولايات المتحدة وما تلاه. يستكشف هذا العمل أيضًا التكتيكات المستخدمة والسياسات المطبقة لاكتساب فهم عميق للديناميكيات المعقدة التي شكلت تاريخ أفغانستان الحديث. في النهاية ، تقدم هذه الرسالة حجة مفادها أن تغيير النظام الأمريكي في أفغانستان كان محاولة فاشلة.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAU	Afghanistan Affaires Unit
ANDSF	Afghanistan National Defense and Security Force
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CENTCOM	Central Command
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DRA	Democratic Republic of Afghanistan
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
KGB	Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti. (Soviet) State Security Committee.
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
UAE	United Arab Emirates

USAID	United States Agency for International Development.
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

List of Figures

Fig. 1. Landscape map of Afghanistan.....	10
Fig. 2. Afghanistan: The Graveyard of Empires. The numbers of military deaths in foreign intervention in Afghanistan	42
Fig. 3. Taliban’s Control of Provincial Capitals, August 6 15, 2021	56

Table of contents

Introduction	1
Chapter one: Background of Taliban Regime.....	8
Introduction	8
1. Background of Afghanistan's Landscape and Population	9
2. The Establishment of the Modern State in Afghanistan.....	12
3. The Establishment of the First Republic of Afghanistan	12
4. The Communist Military coup d'état... ..	14
5. The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan.....	15
6. The Emergence of the Civil War and the Fall of Najibulah Regime	16
7. The Rise of the Taliban Movement and the Establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan	18
7.1 Understanding Al Qaeda: A Comprehensive Definition... ..	20
7.2 The Rule of the Taliban	21
8. The Snited States and Taliban Relationship Before the 9/11	25
9. The Relationship between the Taliban and Al Qaeda	28
Conclusion.....	29
Chapter Two: American Regime Change in Afghanistan.....	32
Introduction	32
1. Brief Historical Context	34

2.	US Intervention and Regime Change in Afghanistan	34
2.1	Main Points in United States Regime Change in Afghanistan	35
3.	The United States' Alliance in the War of Afghanistan	36
3.1	International Partnerships	36
3.2	Diplomatic Support	37
3.3	Economic Support	37
4.	Major Challenges and the Endless War	38
4.1	The Taliban's Insurgency	39
4.2	Costs of the War in Afghanistan	40
4.2.1	Economic Costs	41
4.2.2	Human Costs	41
4.2.3	Social Costs	43
5.	The Doha Agreement: Prospects and Challenges for Ending the War in Afghanistan	43
5.1	Key Elements of the Doha Agreement	43
5.2	Expectations for Success	44
5.3	Challenges to Execution	44
6.	The Call for Peace Ended by a Takeover	45
6.1	The United States Troops Withdrawal from Afghanistan	46
7.	The Taliban's Preparations for the Takeover	50

7.1 Exploitation of Societal Grievance.....	50
7.2 Establishment of Strategic Alliances.....	50
7.3 Acquisition of Military Resource	51
7.4 Propaganda and Information Warfare	51
7.5 Recruitment and Training Efforts.....	51
7.6 Exploitation of Local Dynamics.....	51
Conclusion.....	52
Chapter Three: Taliban Taking over 2021: Was American Invasion a Successful or Failed Endeavor?.....	54
Introduction	54
1. August 2021, Taliban Takes over Afghanistan	56
2. International Response	62
2.1. The United States.....	62
2.2. Russia.....	64
2.3. China.....	65
2.4. The Rest of the European Countries.....	65
3. Taliban New Policies: Did Taliban Change?	66
3.1 Media and Communication... ..	68
3.2 Woman’s rights.....	69
3.3 Education.....	69

3.4 Relation with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) 70

4. The American Regime Change: A Failed Endeavor... .. 71

Conclusion..... 75

Conclusion..... 77

Bibliography81

Introduction

The conflict in Afghanistan, spanning several decades, has witnessed significant shifts in power, governance, and socio-political dynamics. The arrival of the United States and its subsequent regime change in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks brought about profound changes in the country's political landscape. The intervention of the United State was for the whole purpose of stopping the Taliban regime, and to put an end to the terrorism threat. Yet, after 20 year of American intervention. Taliban took control of Afghanistan again in August 2021. Since then, Many politicians, researchers, and even citizens all over the world are wondering why there has been a 20-year international presence in Afghanistan and are also questioning whether the American regime change in in Afghanistan has failed to achieve its intended objectives.

This dissertation provides an analysis of the historical context that led to the rise of Taliban in Afghanistan, the subsequent regime change initiated by the United States, and the aftermath of such an endeavor. This research explores the sequence of events, tactics employed, and policies implemented to gain a profound understanding of the complex dynamics that shaped Afghanistan's recent history.

Therefore, this dissertation start by delving into Afghanistan's transition from a traditional society to a modern state, followed by the republic era and the Soviet-Afghan War. It examines the emergence of the Taliban amidst a civil war that broke out in Afghanistan and their subsequent takeover of the country, shedding light on their relationship with the United States and the events that led to the 9/11 attacks, along with a description of the Taliban's regime before the United State intervention. This historical overview sets the foundation for understanding the formation of the Taliban regime and its interactions with external actors.

Subsequently, this dissertation tackles the American intervention in Afghanistan and its outcomes. It critically evaluates the strategies, alliances, and military efforts employed by the United States during the war, as well as the economic, human, and social costs of their regime change. The dissertation analyzes the challenges encountered, such as the insurgency by the Taliban and the effectiveness of support and training initiatives. Furthermore, it examines the Doha Agreement, the withdrawal of the US troops that marked the completion of their regime change mission, and the preparations made by the Taliban for their eventual takeover. By examining these aspects, this study assesses the impact of the American regime change and its alignment with its intended goals.

Finally, it explores the military advances made by the Taliban to their take over on 2021, and the response of the Afghan government. Additionally, the study investigates the reactions of the United States and the international community to this situation, providing insights into the global perspective on this critical development. Furthermore, it assesses the Taliban's new policies regarding media, communication, women's rights, education, and their relationship with NGOs. By evaluating these policies, this study assesses the alignment of the Taliban's actions with the objectives of the American regime change mission in Afghanistan. Lastly, it critically evaluates whether the Taliban's takeover can be regarded as a failure of the American attempt to oust Taliban, considering the key factors, decisions, and actions that contributed to the outcome.

Since the objective of our research is to assess the success or failure of the American regime change in Afghanistan and its ability to accomplish its intended goals, after the Taliban taking over Afghanistan on August 2021, the current research hypothesize that the mission to initiate a regime change in Afghanistan led by the United States was unsuccessful, falling short of achieving its desired objectives.

In order to confirm the previous hypothesis we need to answer the following questions:

- Who are the Taliban?
- How did Taliban emerge?
- What role did the United States play in the Taliban's formation?
- How was the relationship between United State and Taliban?
- Why did the United States attack Taliban in the first place?
- What was the United States plans for Afghanistan?
- What was the aftermath of the American regime change in Afghanistan? What happened after the United State troops left Afghanistan?
- What was the reaction of the United States to Taliban's taking over?
- What are the Taliban's new policies after their return to power in 2021? Did the Taliban change?
- Does this mean that the United State regime in Afghanistan was a failed endeavor?

To answer the aforementioned questions, a deep examination, and a combination of both historical method and the analytical method, is used to produce this work. This dissertation agrees with the above assumptions and aims to investigate more deeply the scenario between the United State and the Taliban. The use of this methodology involves data collection through reading books, articles, websites articles, governmental documents, newspapers and other relevant materials.

The American involvement in Afghanistan has been extensively examined and documented through numerous writings. This complex and multifaceted topic has captivated the attention of scholars, journalists, and experts from various fields. Over the years, a vast body of literature has emerged, offering diverse perspectives on the motivations, strategies, and consequences of America's presence in Afghanistan. From critical analyses to personal

accounts, these writings explore the challenges faced, the lessons learned, and the impact on both Afghanistan and the United States.

In his book *The American War in Afghanistan* (2021), Carter Malkasian provides a thorough timeline that starts with a background history of Afghanistan and its people, the Taliban, to American entry as well as events there between 2001 and 2021. Additionally, a piece written with complete hindsight of the war and an insight into the change brought about by the Trump administration are both included. Malkasian contends that the Afghan government's inability to manage the social situation in the event of an American withdrawal prevented the United States from ending the war following Osama bin Laden's death. He goes on to say that, the idea of how Islam affected Afghan resistance to occupation is widely ignored, and his work aims to close that information gap.

Understanding War in Afghanistan (2011) by Joseph J. Collins is a comprehensive and insightful examination of the conflict in Afghanistan. Collins, a renowned scholar and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations, provides a detailed analysis of the factors that have shaped the war in Afghanistan and offers valuable insights into the complex dynamics at play in the region. He explores the military, political, and socio-cultural dimensions of the conflict, examining counterinsurgency strategies, Afghan culture and society, and international cooperation challenges. While the book is primarily focused on military and political aspects, it provides a balanced perspective supported by a wide range of primary and secondary sources. Collins' expertise and experience lend credibility to his analysis, making this book a significant contribution to the literature on the Afghanistan conflict, and a valuable resource for scholars, policymakers, and anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the war.

In addition, *Ghost Wars* (2005) by Steve Coll is an extraordinary work that delves deep into the complex and intricate history of America's involvement in Afghanistan, specifically

focusing on the period leading up to the September 11 attacks. Coll's meticulous research and engaging narrative offer an enlightening account of the covert operations and shifting alliances that shaped the region's political landscape. The book skillfully navigates the labyrinthine web of intelligence agencies, highlighting the interplay between the CIA, ISI, and other key players. Coll explores the consequences of the United States' policy decisions, illustrating how they inadvertently contributed to the rise of extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda.

Through rich character portrayals and firsthand interviews, the author provides unique insights into the motivations and actions of key individuals, including Osama bin Laden and his associates. Additionally, Coll's analysis of the geopolitical context offers a nuanced understanding of the complexities and challenges faced by policymakers during this turbulent era. *Ghost War* stands as a seminal work that not only offers a gripping narrative but also serves as an invaluable resource for comprehending the origins of the contemporary Afghan conflict and its global implications.

Furthermore, in his book *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (2001), Rashid Ahmed gives a detailed history about the regime of the Taliban. Rashid's analysis of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan, its history and effects there, as well as the wider regional and geopolitical implications of the Taliban's rise to power, is remarkable. He combines his close journalistic field experience with the Taliban with extensive knowledge of Afghanistan. Rashid discusses the Taliban's beginnings and elevation, its interpretation of Islam in regards to issues of female roles and drug use, and the significance of the nation for the growth of energy resources in the region which might perhaps be connected to the United States' interest in Afghanistan in particular.

This research could not be complete without, The 9/11 Commission Report, authored by Thomas H. Kean and Lee Hamilton, which serves as an analysis of the events

leading up to and following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The report offers a meticulous examination of the intelligence failures, policy shortcomings, and institutional breakdowns that allowed the attacks to occur, shedding light on the complex network of threats, missed opportunities, and systemic vulnerabilities. Kean and Hamilton skillfully navigate through the intricate web of government agencies, intelligence organizations, and bureaucratic structures, highlighting the collective failures that hampered effective counterterrorism efforts.

By meticulously documenting the historical context, including the rise of al-Qaeda and the preceding United States counterterrorism efforts, the report provides understanding of the factors that contributed to the attacks. Furthermore, it offers a series of valuable recommendations to enhance national security and prevent future terrorist attacks. The 9/11 Commission Report stands as a seminal work, providing invaluable insights into the events of 9/11, illuminating the need for improved intelligence sharing, interagency coordination, and strategic decision-making to safeguard the nation against future threats.

This work is structured into, an introduction, three chapters, and a conclusion. The first chapter is entitled “Background of Taliban Regime”, it provides an overview of the historical context leading to the emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan. It covers the establishment of the modern state, transition to the first republic, communist coup, Soviet invasion, Civil War, and the establishment of the Islamic State. The chapter also explores the Taliban's relationship with al-Qaeda, the United States-Taliban relations, and the events preceding the 9/11 attacks, aiming to establish an understanding of the factors behind the rise of the Taliban regime.

The second chapter is entitled “American Regime Change in Afghanistan”. This chapter provides an analysis of the United States' efforts to bring political change to Afghanistan after 9/11. It explores the motivations behind the intervention, the military campaign against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, and the challenges faced in establishing stability

and democracy. This chapter draws on scholarly works to offer an understanding of the complexities and outcomes of the American regime change in Afghanistan.

Finally, the third chapter entitled “Taliban Taking over 2021: Was American Intervention a Successful or Failed Endeavor?” examines the American involvement in Afghanistan and assesses whether it can be considered a success or a failure. It begins by discussing the significant event of the Taliban's takeover in August 2021 and then delves into the international response about the Taliban's return to power, including the United States, Russia, China, and other European countries. The chapter also explores whether the Taliban has undergone any notable changes in policies, particularly in the areas of education, women's rights, media and communication, and their relationship with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Chapter One

Background of Taliban Regime

Introduction

Afghanistan has a long and complex history, with various kingdoms, empires, and tribal groups vying for power and influence over the centuries. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Afghanistan was ruled by a series of monarchs who sought to modernize and centralize the country, while also maintaining its traditional Islamic and tribal customs.

In 1978, a communist coup led to the establishment of a Soviet-backed government, which sparked a decade-long war with anti-communist mujahideen groups. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, and the conflict intensified, leading to widespread violence and displacement.

Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, Afghanistan descended into a civil war, with various factions and warlords vying for control. In the mid-1990s, the Taliban emerged as a powerful force, gaining control over much of the country and imposing a strict interpretation of Islamic law.

Before the 9/11 attacks, the United States had supported some of the anti-Soviet mujahideen groups that later formed the Taliban. However, after the Taliban gained power in 1996, the United States criticized their human rights abuses and support for international terrorism. In response to al-Qaeda's bombing of United States embassies in Africa in 1998, the United States launched missile strikes on Afghanistan and imposed economic sanctions, which isolated the Taliban regime.

The Taliban's rule in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 was marked by human rights abuses, including the oppression of women and minorities, and support for international terrorism. The Taliban harbored al-Qaeda, the group responsible for the 9/11 attacks in the United States, which led to a U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. The events leading up to the Taliban's rise to power, including the Soviet invasion, civil war, and the Taliban's

relationship with al-Qaeda, are important factors in understanding the context and impact of the Taliban's regime.

This chapter provides an overview of Afghanistan's landscape, population, and political history leading up to the emergence of the Taliban regime. Starting with a description of Afghanistan's diverse geography and ethnic groups, this chapter will explore the establishment of the modern state of Afghanistan and its initial struggles with internal and external forces. The chapter discusses the establishment of the first republic in Afghanistan and its failure to bring stability and prosperity to the country. Then this chapter delves more into the military coup d'etat in Afghanistan and the subsequent Soviet invasion, which led to a prolonged period of war and instability. In addition to, exploration to the impact of the civil war in Afghanistan, which lasted from 1992 to 1996 and resulted in the rise of the Taliban and their strict Islamic regime.

1. Background of Afghanistan's Landscape and Population

Afghanistan has emerged as a major actor in the world due to its strategic location between the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. In addition to giving Afghan rulers the ability to extend their rule to both the country's eastern and western frontiers, this geopolitical position has turned Afghanistan into a tactical target for regional and global powers as they travel to their strategic objectives (Nojumi 1). These two factors combined to create regimes that disregarded the wishes and preferences of the populace.

Figure 1. . Landscape map of Afghanistan



Source: Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan*

The economic, social, and political development of Afghanistan has been very slow because of the issue of the geographical features and the landscapes, which created an insufficient transportation system, which affected the communication and the transportation of goods. Since 80 percent of the 25 million total population of Afghanistan lives in rural areas, the mountainous features of Afghanistan make it an obligation for many villages to be self-sufficient. Trade was primarily on the regional level, so the regional market was the primary source of commerce and economy (Nojumi 2). Therefore, Afghanistan failed to take its economy to the national level.

Afghanistan's population contains a wide variety of major and minor ethnic groups and tribes including the eight major groups (Pushtons, Tajiks, Hazaras, Aimaqs, Turkmen, Uzbeks, Kirghiz, and Baluchis). Despite having a variety of languages and dialects, the national two languages were Dari and Pushto (Nojumi2).

Ethnic identity and national identity serve as the two fundamental factors that bind together the various tribes, ethnic groups, and linguistic groups. Though each ethnic group and each tribe share a common bloodline, ideologies, leader, and territory positively, they have a negative attitude toward members from different ethnic groups. On the national level, if a person does not belong to any tribe or ethnic group he will have a positive relationship with the other members from the other groups because of his national identity for being an afghan (Nojumi 3). We can say that National identity, devoid of tribal or ethnic affiliations, fosters positive relationships between individuals from different groups on a national level.

Although those different groups lived separately with no interference from each other in terms of the policy, they unite when there is a national crisis. The leaders of each tribe join their forces to fight the invaders. Due to the previous factors and their union when there are crises, the political system in Afghanistan was formed in a unique way. By electing Ahmad Khan of the Abdali tribe through a jirga, or council, the Afghan Khans, or tribal chiefs, were able to create the modern Afghanistan state in 1747. The voluntary association of the tribal chiefs, which received the approval of the people and religious authorities, led directly to the establishment of the Afghan kingdom (Nojumi 3). It's evident that the unique formation of the political system in Afghanistan involved separate tribal groups uniting during national crises, leading to the election of Ahmad Khan of the Abdali tribe through a jirga, resulting in the establishment of the modern Afghan state in 1747 with the voluntary association of tribal chiefs, approved by the people and religious authorities.

2. The Establishment of the Modern State in Afghanistan

According to Malkasiana, a Professor at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and a State Department representative to the district of Gramsir in Hilmand province of Afghanistan, the modern Afghan state was established by the Emir Abdu Rahan Khan, also known as the “Iron Emir”, who successfully brought about several decades of peace after years of civil conflict. The Iron Emir brought the nation back together by putting down uprisings and colonizing tribes and sovereign countries. He developed a powerful army made up of professional troops rather than tribal levies, along with a centralized governmental structure and bureaucracy. The man increased taxes, built roads and schools, dug canals, and more (29). Professor Barfield said “Abdur Rahman is justly credited with laying the foundation for a modern national state through his establishment of a highly centralized government..... Abdur Rahman’s reign is seen as the beginning of Afghanistan as a nation-state” (160).

3. The Establishment of the First Republic of Afghanistan

From 1929 to 1978, Afghanistan experienced its longest period of internal stability and tranquility under the rule of the Musahiban brothers and their sons. This era began in late 1929 when Nadir Khan was declared king by a national Jirga, comprising mostly of Pashtun tribes that had rebelled against Amanullah. Despite Nadir's assassination in 1933, his extended family held absolute control for the next 55 years, ensuring political stability and preventing internal uprisings and outside hostilities. During the reign of Nadir's brothers, who ruled on behalf of his young son, King Zahir Shah, the Afghan state underwent minimal changes, with any reforms moving at a slow pace. However, with the arrival of a new generation, reforms began to accelerate, particularly under Daud Khan, Zahir Shah's cousin, who became prime minister in 1953 and governed the country for the following ten years (Bradfield 169-170). Remarkably, Afghanistan experienced over four decades of internal

stability and tranquility under the Musahiban dynasty, starting from 1929, which saw minimal changes and slow reforms initially, but gained momentum during Daud Khan's prime ministership.

Bradfield also mentioned that thirty years after originally ascending to the throne, Zahir Shah finally established himself in his own right when he removed Daud and started to reign directly in 1963. He implemented a new constitution that established a constrained form of democracy. The 1960s saw Afghanistan open up more to the outside world and broke the harsh isolation that Abdur Rahman had first imposed. This led to the quickest economic and social development Afghanistan had ever experienced. When Daud overthrew Zahir Shah in a coup in 1973, both the monarchy and its attempt at democracy came to an abrupt end. Daud claimed to be the leader of a new Afghan republic, but because he was a member of the royal family, the Musahiban's hold on power was unaffected. In 1973, a military coup led by General Mohammad Daoud Khan overthrew King Zahir Shah, who had been ruling Afghanistan as a constitutional monarch. Daoud Khan established a republic and became the country's first president. Daoud Khan's government pursued a policy of modernization and tried to reduce the influence of traditional religious and tribal leaders. However, his government faced opposition from Islamist groups and faced internal political challenges (169-170).

In 1978, a left-wing military coup led by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) overthrew Daoud Khan's government. The PDPA established a communist government and proclaimed Afghanistan as a socialist republic. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan's (PDPA) leader, Nur Muhammad Taraki, was appointed both prime minister and president of the revolutionary council in 1978/79. He abrogated the constitution, changed the country's name to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA), and outlawed all opposition movements (Mattar et al 57-58). We can conclude that The left-wing military

coup led by the PDPA in 1978 resulted in the establishment of a communist government, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, under the leadership of Nur Muhammad Taraki, who held the positions of both prime minister and president of the revolutionary council, leading to the abrogation of the constitution and the suppression of all opposition movements.

4. The Communist Military coup d'état

On a Thursday afternoon, April 27, 1978, when office workers had the day off, the PDPA coup d'etat occurred (in the Muslim calendar, Friday is the end of the week). The majority of civil and military government employees were off on the weekend, and communication between government ministries was extremely slow. The coup's timing at the start of the weekend holiday had a significant impact since President Dauod's well-equipped armed forces were unable to provide the necessary backing. During the late afternoon of April 27, the PDPA-aligned ground forces had taken control of the Ministry of Defense, the key communication hub for Dauod supporters and Radio Afghanistan (national radio) (Nojumi41). The PDPA coup d'etat on April 27, 1978 resulted in a minimal resistance and swift capture of key institutions.

Following the coup, the PDPA proclaimed Afghanistan a socialist country and appointed Nur Mohammad Taraki, a well-known Marxist, as the state's first Communist leader. Taraki introduced several significant reforms, including the development of a secular judicial system, women's rights, and the redistribution of land. The PDPA's leadership, however, was not broadly embraced and encountered strong opposition from a number of groups, including religious leaders, tribal divisions, and the mujahideen, an anti-Communist guerrilla force. The Soviet Union, which had long-standing relations to the PDPA, started giving the Afghan government military and financial support, but this only made the fight worse because the mujahideen were receiving a lot of support from Western nations, especially the United States (Mattar et al 58).

The mujahideen waged a guerrilla war against the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan for more than ten years. Almost a million Afghans died in the war, and millions more were displaced. In 1989, the mujahideen finally succeeded in getting the Soviet Union to evacuate its soldiers, but the war continued and eventually resulted in the Communist government's fall in 1992 (Coll). Overall the mujahideen's decade-long guerrilla war against the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan led to immense casualties and displacement, culminating in the Soviet Union's withdrawal in 1989 and the subsequent fall of the Communist regime in 1992.

5. The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

In 1979, the newly installed communist administration in Afghanistan requested Moscow to dispatch Red Army troops to suppress civil disorder. However, the Soviet leadership denied the demands for almost a year. After Afghan President Nur Mohammed Taraki was overthrown by his deputy, Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin, in September, public opposition increased significantly. KGB Chairman Andropov defined this development as an unwelcome turn for them and sent a private note to Brezhnev before the December Kremlin conference in 1979 (Feifer 12-13). This was the first step towards the soviet involvement.

At the conference, Defense Minister Ustinov, who was worried about potential American military operations in the area, likely urged for the invasion to stop any resurgence of US power. Suslov, a strong ideologue for the Party, reportedly urged Moscow to defend the socialist government in Afghanistan by eliminating the threat posed by Amin, who was rumored to have connections to the CIA, and that Andropov received information that Amine is doing behind-the-scenes activities with the west, which made the Soviet Union so worried that Afghanistan will change its interest to the United States (Feifer 12-13).

However, the details of the summit and the discussions held among the Politburo members remain a mystery, as none of them recorded or shared their accounts. Nonetheless,

certainly, the Soviet de facto leadership had already decided to invade Afghanistan before the conference concluded. The lack of documentation and the absence of firsthand accounts from the participants make it impossible to know who persuaded whom and with what justifications (Feifer 12-13). This continues to be one of the greatest mysteries of the Cold War.

The war had a profound impact on the country and the region. It caused significant casualties on both sides, with estimates ranging from 1 million to 2 million Afghan civilians and combatants killed, and over 14,000 Soviet troops. The war also led to the displacement of millions of Afghans, who fled to neighboring countries as refugees. The conflict also had a destabilizing effect on the region, with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the proliferation of weapons and drug trafficking. By the late 1980s, the Soviet leadership had come to realize that the war in Afghanistan was unwinnable, and signed a peace agreement with Afghanistan and began to withdraw its troops (Mattar et al 59). To sum up The Soviet-Afghan war resulted in massive casualties, displacement, and regional instability, ultimately leading to the realization of its unwinnable nature and subsequent withdrawal of Soviet troops.

6. The Emergence of the Civil War and the Fall of Najibulah Regime

According to Coll, one of the earliest events that shaped the conflict was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. This invasion led to the rise of the Mujahideen, a group of anti-Soviet rebels who received support from the United States and other Western countries. The Mujahideen eventually succeeded in driving the Soviets out of Afghanistan, but their victory was short-lived, as they soon turned on each other and began fighting for control of the country.

Many believed that the Soviet army's withdrawal in February 1989 would bring an end to the war, but this was not the case. With the help of Soviet security assistance, the Najibullah leadership was clever and formed partnerships all over the nation. The Afghan

government forces were able to repel the mujahideen because to their 65,000-man army, air force of approximately 200 planes and helicopters, and numerous well-paid militia units. This fact was made evident in May 1989 when many mujahideen groups attempted to capture the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad but were unsuccessful (Granville et al 1-2).

In 1992, after months of intense fighting, the Mujahideen captured Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, and the Najibullah regime collapsed. Najibullah sought refuge in the United Nations compound, where he remained until 1996, when the Taliban captured Kabul and executed him. The fall of the Najibullah regime marked a critical turning point in Afghanistan's history, leading to a prolonged and devastating Civil War that lasted for more than two decades. The absence of a functioning government and the lack of a centralized authority led to the emergence of warlordism and various armed groups fighting for control of territory and resources. The consequences of the Civil War in Afghanistan were far-reaching, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people and the displacement of other millions (Mattar et al 59). It is evident to say that the fall of the Najibullah regime in 1992 sparked a destructive two-decade-long Civil War in Afghanistan, characterized by warlordism, multiple armed groups vying for power, immense loss of life, and mass displacement.

According to Collins, A provisional government was established in 1992 with assistance from the UN. The mujahideen's internal conflict was the reason why it failed and didn't work. The struggle was particularly severe between the Tajik fighters of Ahmed Shah Massoud's Jamiat-i-Islami, who eventually took control of Kabul, Hekmatyar, Massoud's competitor, wanted Kabul, which Massoud had already taken control of, but there was heavy fighting there as well as in a few other large cities that had so far been spared the majority of the conflict. From April 1992 and April 1993, Kabul was largely destroyed, 30,000 people died, and another 100,000 were injured (35).

Under the rule of local warlords like Ismail Khan in Herat and Abdul Rashid Dostum in Mazar-i-Sharif, life was frequently more tranquil in other cities, but law and order broke out in many other places where men with guns set the rules. Rape, armed robbery, kidnapping of young boys, and other violent crimes were all too frequent in Kandahar and other places. In order to provide security for the population, groups of religious scholars and students in the Kandahar region and the surrounding Pushtun-populated region of Pakistan started to form (Collins 35-36). The Taliban was the name of the newly formed movement.

7. The Rise of the Taliban Movement and the Establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

Starting from 1994, the Pakistani government began to withdraw its support for the mujahideen groups it had been aiding since 1980. This was due to fears of escalating instability in Afghanistan and disillusionment with these groups. Instead, they began to support the Taliban, a group composed of Afghan and Pakistani madrassa graduates who were committed to implementing sharia law. The Taliban was led by hard line Islamists, many of whom lacked formal education or expertise in fields like engineering or medicine. The group frequently replaced Pashtun tribal chiefs with their own leaders. According to Collins, Taliban was led by Mullah Mohammad Omar Akhund, who was a country cleric from Kandahar and had previously served as an anti-Soviet resistance commander. He had lost one of his eyes in battle. Additionally, many of the group's deputies were wounded veterans from the war against the Soviet Union (Maizland).

Following a few modest local victories in the Kandahar region, a field force of modern Taliban fighters from Pakistan began to operate, first in the immediate area of Kandahar and later across the country. They drew on potential recruits from radical Islamic colleges in Pakistan and southern Afghanistan, from Ghazni to Kandahar. According to a research conducted by Ahmed Rashid, the Taliban captured “some 18,000 Kalashnikovs, dozens of

artillery pieces, large quantities of ammunition, and many vehicles” (27–28) in Spin Boldak, which is adjacent to the Pakistani province of Baluchistan. These weapons belonged to Pakistan's ISI and were being guarded by Hezb-i-Islami fighters (Rashid 27–28). This point highlights the Taliban's acquisition of significant weaponry and support from Pakistan, enabling their expansion and posing a greater threat to Afghanistan.

According to Martin Ewans, a former British ambassador, the Taliban troops that advanced into Afghanistan in the winter of 1994–1995 had tanks, APCs, artillery, and even planes at their disposal. Whatever equipment the Taliban forces may have obtained in Spin Boldak, Kandahar, or elsewhere, they could not have operated without Pakistani training, ammunition, gasoline, and maintenance facilities, despite adamant denials. They were able to mobilize up to 20,000 fighting men in less than six months (255).

The united Taliban, quickly dispatched rival mujahideen organizations and rebellious militants with the help of Pakistani advice and weapons. They seized Kandahar in 1994, followed by other important cities. Kabul was lost to the Taliban in 1996, thanks in part to the defections of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Jalaluddin Haqqani, who joined forces with the Taliban. Najibullah and his brother were kidnapped by the Taliban in September 1996, tortured to death, their bodies dragged behind cars, and then they were hanged on a lamppost close to the Presidential Palace (Ewans 255). The significant military support provided by Pakistan to the Taliban, leading to their rapid rise to power and brutal tactics in capturing key cities and executing political opponents.

Mazar-i-Sharif was pursued and taken by the Taliban before they lost it and retook it. When the Taliban were captured for the second time in 1998, they slaughtered Hazara defenders and killed Iranian diplomats in retaliation for previous atrocities of their own members. This sparked a global crisis and widened the gap between the Sunni Taliban and the Shia government in Tehran. Overall, the territory was never fully conquered by the Tajik,

Uzbek, and Hazara fighters that made up the new Northern Alliance. Till 2001, the Taliban continued to exert pressure on the Northern Alliance with the help of al Qaeda-trained Afghan and foreign cadres (Goodson 86). The shifting control of Mazar-i-Sharif between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance, accompanied by brutal retaliations and geopolitical tensions, marked a turbulent period in Afghan history before the eventual downfall of the Taliban in 2001.

The Taliban established Kabul as its capital and named ministries, while Mullah Omar and the leadership structure remained in Kandahar. It frequently ran counter to Kabul's oppressive and occasionally absurd regime. Mullah Omar used religious symbolism to his advantage by practically wearing the Prophet Mohammad's cloak, which was stored in a shrine in Kandahar, and announcing himself as Amir-ul-Mominin, Commander of the Faithful. This action elevated his standing among even the most radical extremists. Senior members of Al Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban have always treated Mullah Omar with the highest regard and given him the title he gave himself. Only three countries – Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia – acknowledged the legitimacy of the Taliban administration, despite the fact that the latter two had very little diplomatic representation in Kabul. The United States and the UN continued to provide assistance to the populace, but the former government led by Rabbani continued to hold power in Afghanistan's seat at the UN and most of its embassies abroad (Collins 38).

7.1. Understanding Al Qaeda: A Comprehensive Definition

Al Qaeda is a transnational extremist organization that has been involved in numerous terrorist attacks worldwide. According to the book "Al-Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam" by Jason Burke, Al Qaeda was established in 1988 by Osama bin Laden and other Islamist militants with the aim of creating a global Islamic state based on their strict interpretation of the Quran. The group gained notoriety in the 1990's with attacks on US

targets in Africa and the Middle East. According to the to the American writer, journalist, and screenwriter Lawrence Wright, Al Qaeda's ultimate goal was to “draw the United States into a protracted war in the Muslim world, which would bankrupt and weaken America, and create an opening for Al Qaeda to establish its own caliphate” (330).

7.2. The Rule of the Taliban

After seizing power in the nation and imposing sharia-based law and order, the Taliban didn't seem to know how to administer the government or manage the economy, which only got worse when UN sanctions for drug trafficking and droughts were thrown to the mix. Public health significantly worsened, in part as a result of limitations placed by the Taliban on the mobility of female midwives. These failures have a close relationship with the Taliban and the methods they employed (Collins 39). They were mainly against modernism and progress.

Olivier Roy, a French academic, says that the original core of the Taliban was made up of guys who studied and propagated a distinctive interpretation of Islam from other fundamentalists. The Madrassa curriculum spread in Pakistan centered on taking Afghan culture back to a fictitious pre-modern era when a more upright Muslim community practiced a purer version of Islam. As a result of this, the Taliban's approach to administration was somewhat utopian in its struggle against traditionalists and opponents of modernity (qtd.in Wright et al 19).

The Taliban's victory proclamations made sense and were even expected in light of these tendencies. The Taliban's orders following their capture of Kabul were some of the most oppressive laws ever passed. These are their essential components:

prohibition against female exposure [or being outside without Burka and male relative], prohibition against music, prohibition against shaving, mandatory prayer, prohibition against the rearing of pigeons and bird fighting, prohibition against kite flying, prohibition against the reproduction of pictures, prohibition against gambling, prohibition against British and American hairstyles, prohibition on interest on loans, exchange charges, and charges on transactions, prohibition against [women] washing clothes by the river embankments, prohibition against music and dancing at weddings, prohibition against playing drums, prohibition against [male] tailors sewing women's clothes or, taking measurements of women, prohibition against witchcraft . (Collins 40)

The Ministry for the Extermination of Sin and the Promotion of Virtue was quite active. The religious police might beat women who broke the rules. Serious offenders or adulterers were publicly executed, and this was extensively reported. The burka, or chadari as it is more generally known in Afghanistan, was a one-piece body covering that the Taliban required women to wear. Women could see out via a slit or a four by six-inch piece of mesh sewed into the headpiece. Many Afghans were irritated by the Taliban's actions, especially in the cities where living conditions had previously been more liberal (Collins 40-41). This point highlights the oppressive practices enforced by the Ministry for the Extermination of Sin and the Promotion of Virtue in Afghanistan, including physical punishment for women and public executions, causing discontent among many Afghans, particularly in urban areas.

In addition to violating human rights, the Taliban also waged war on art, probably with the support of their ascetic brethren in al Qaeda who shared the same puritanical views. There were thousands of books destroyed. Taliban agents eager to purge Afghanistan of the horrific memories of its past regularly vandalized the national museum in Kabul, which housed numerous pre-Islamic artifacts and relics. It became illegal to possess Western-style fashion

magazines. Books and artwork depicting human faces or female body types were destroyed (Collins 40-41).

According to Lawrence Wright, the worst element of Taliban rule was their virtual embrace of the terrorist group al Qaeda, despite how awful its internal policies were. Just before the Taliban gained control of Kabul in 1996, Osama bin Laden returned to Afghanistan. During the Soviet war, he had briefly engaged in combat there alongside the mujahideen. Following a few years back home, he was expelled from Sudan in 1996 after becoming a threat to the government, and then from Saudi Arabia in 1991 for objecting to the deployment of American forces during the Gulf War (100–102). Both nations would not tolerate his extremist actions and behavior.

According to The 9/11 Commission Report, in the hopes that the Taliban, and Al Qaeda would cooperate, particularly to assist in the training of Kashmiri militants, the ISI arranged the first meeting between the Taliban and bin Laden (64-65). Osama bin Laden saw Afghanistan as the founding nation of a new Islamic caliphate. While he had never met him before, Mullah Omar was highly regarded by bin Laden, and the inner ranks of al Qaeda and the Taliban intermarried (Gutman 92-98). The ISI facilitated the initial meeting between the Taliban and bin Laden, aiming to foster cooperation and support for training Kashmiri militants, as bin Laden envisioned Afghanistan as the birthplace of a new Islamic caliphate and held high regard for Mullah Omar and the intertwined leadership of al Qaeda and the Taliban.

Bin Laden gave the Taliban war machine money, counsel, and—most importantly—trained cadres, whether they were Afghan or not, in exchange for his haven and freedom of movement. Being a solid bulwark against Indian influence, Pakistan was extremely generous in its assistance of its allies in Afghanistan. Pakistan gave the Taliban \$6 million in 1998 alone (Jones).

Bin Laden established or seized control of al Qaeda and Taliban training centers in Afghanistan. The camps may have seen as many as 20,000 Afghan and foreign recruits (9/11 Commission Report 67). The Taliban leadership valued al Qaeda more because many of these cadets had combat experience battling the Northern Alliance. Terrorists from abroad began to travel often to Afghanistan. From his sanctuary in Afghanistan, bin Laden declared war on the United States in February 1998. Bin Laden said that de facto the US had declared war on Islam and its people, accusing them of occupying Arabia (the Arabian Peninsula), stealing its wealth, humiliating its leaders, assaulting Iraq, and more. Bin Laden and his cosigners purportedly issued a binding fatwa, or religious ruling, that mandated a defensive jihad in which (theoretically) all Muslims must take part. The fatwa according to Lewis was:

To kill Americans and their allies, both civil and military, is an individual duty of every Muslim who is able, in any country where this is possible, until the [main mosques in Jerusalem and Mecca] are freed from their grip, and until their armies, shattered and broken-winged, depart from all the lands of Islam, incapable of threatening any Muslim. (15)

In addition, the fatwa urges “every Muslim . . . to kill the Americans and plunder their possessions wherever he finds them and whenever he can.” Soldiers and Muslim leaders were also told to “launch attacks against the armies of the American devils” and their allies (Lewis 15).

Al Qaeda bombed the American embassies in East Africa's Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998. Both embassies sustained significant damage. Almost 220 people were murdered and almost 4,200 were injured, the majority of whom were Africans. In addition to other actions, the US launched ineffective cruise missile attacks in retaliation at al Qaeda bases in Afghanistan. According to the 9/11 Commission report, bin Laden was missed by the attacks by a few hours (116–117).

Several attempts to apprehend or kill bin Laden before and after these strikes failed because of concerns about civilian fatalities. The 9/11 conspirators were screened and given their first training in Afghanistan in 1999. Al Qaeda's leadership in Afghanistan provided them with direction, resources, the overall idea for the operation, and specific plans. Beginning in 1998, both the United State and Saudi Arabia pressed Afghanistan to turn over Osama binLaden so that he may face justice. Even after he had blown up two US embassies and a United State warship off the coast of Yemen in October 2000, the Taliban regime resisted repeated attempts to extradite him (Collins, 43). The Taliban leadership has never renounced Osama bin Laden or al Qaeda.

Al Qaeda had its own state by 2001 and was a terrorist organization. Mullah Omar and the Taliban did not obstruct “the Arabs” efforts for financial, illiterate, hospitable, ideological, or self-interested reasons. the 9/11 Commission report stated that, Bin Laden was able to get around constraints thanks to his friendship with Mullah Omar and the financial and other advantages it gave the Taliban; Mullah Omar would support him even when other Taliban officials objected. Al Qaeda members enjoyed unrestricted access to the nation, including the ability to move in and out without a visa or other immigration formalities, buy and import weapons and cars, and use license plates that were authorized by the Afghan Ministry of Defense. Ariana Airlines, a state-owned airline in Afghanistan, was additionally utilized by Al Qaeda as a money courier (66). The close alliance between Mullah Omar and Al Qaeda allowed the terrorist organization to establish a stronghold within Afghanistan, granting them unfettered access, financial support, and logistical advantages.

8. The U.S Taliban Relationship Before the 9/11

During the Soviet-Afghan War, the United States provided significant support to the Mujahideen, the Afghan resistance fighters who opposed the Soviet invasion of their country. The United State government channeled billions of dollars in military aid, weapons, and

training to the Mujahideen through Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). This support played a crucial role in helping the Mujahideen resist and ultimately drive out the Soviet forces, as the U.S. supplied Stinger missiles proved particularly effective in shooting down Soviet helicopters. However, the unintended consequences of United State involvement in the conflict were significant, as many of the Mujahideen fighters later formed the core of militant Islamic groups like the Taliban, which posed a serious threat to regional and global security in the years that followed (Rubin 179-181). The United State government's extensive support to the Mujahideen during the Soviet-Afghan War, though instrumental in their resistance against the Soviet invasion, inadvertently led to the rise of militant Islamic groups such as the Taliban, posing subsequent security threats at regional and global levels.

Several multinational companies became interested in constructing oil and gas pipelines through Afghanistan, which led to a need for a centralized power to maintain order. The Taliban was initially seen by the United States as a potential means to improve security in Afghanistan and to facilitate the export of oil and gas from Central Asia while continuing sanctions against Iran. Pakistan supported the Taliban's efforts to rebuild a centralized state with the approval of the United States (Rubin XIV). Ultimately the United States and multinational companies viewed the Taliban as a potential stabilizing force in Afghanistan to ensure security for oil and gas pipeline construction while maintaining sanctions against Iran and gaining Pakistan's support.

The Taliban considered the government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani, which came to power after the Soviet occupation, to be weak, corrupt, and opposed to Pashtuns. During the civil war between the different mujahideen factions from 1992 to 1996, the Taliban gained popularity by being perceived as less corrupt and better able to provide stability. Zalmay Khalilzad, who later became the United State Ambassador to Afghanistan and Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, shared this

optimism about the Taliban in his 2016 memoir, along with many others (Thomas 1).

Zalmay Khalilzad and others expressed optimism about the Taliban during the civil war, as they were perceived as less corrupt and more capable of providing stability compared to the weak and corrupt government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

After that, The United States has adopted a variety of strategies towards the Taliban, ranging from attempts to weaken their rule to acceptance of their position. A policy of rejecting and undermining the Taliban could gain support domestically due to the history of conflict and their policies that work against United State interests. However, the United State was uncertain whether the Taliban would respond positively to United State actions, as their priority is maintaining internal unity rather than compromising with foreign actors. A less confrontational approach towards the Taliban may provide the United State with greater access and potential influence over them, but engaging with a Taliban-led government that supports some United State interests while opposing others would require policymakers to prioritize and weigh those interests, which would be a challenging task for them (Thomas).

Nevertheless the relation between them took a sharp turn when The Taliban provided a safe haven for Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda in Afghanistan in 1996. This allowed bin Laden and his supporters to train recruits and plan attacks, including the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. In response, the Federal Bureau of Investigations placed bin Laden on its Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list and indicted him for his role in the attacks. The FBI also created its first Counterterrorism Division in 1999 to consolidate its anti-terrorism efforts and capabilities (FBI).

The relationship between the Taliban and al Qaeda strained after the 9/11 attacks, which were carried out by al Qaeda operatives. The United State demanded that the Taliban hand over bin Laden, but the Taliban refused. As a result, the United State launched a military

campaign in Afghanistan in 2001, which led to the overthrow of the Taliban government and the capture of bin Laden in 2011 (FBI).

9. The Relationship between the Taliban and Al Qaeda

The relationship between Taliban and Al Qaeda has been a subject of much scholarly analysis, particularly in the years leading up to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. While the two groups share a common ideological outlook and have worked together in the past, their relationship has also been marked by periods of tension and disagreement.

The origins of the relationship between the Taliban and Al Qaeda can be traced back to the 1990s, when both groups emerged in Afghanistan. As it is stated above, The Taliban, a Sunni Islamist militant group, seized power in Kabul in 1996, establishing a strict interpretation of Islamic law and imposing their authority over much of the country. Al Qaeda, a global militant organization led by Osama bin Laden, had been operating in Afghanistan since the late 1980s, using the country as a base to plan and carry out attacks against the United States and its allies (Coll).

Despite their ideological differences, the two groups formed a close relationship based on shared interests and mutual support. The Taliban provided Al Qaeda with safe haven, allowing its members to operate freely in Afghanistan and carry out attacks against American targets, while Al Qaeda provided the Taliban with financial and military support in their fight against the Northern Alliance, a coalition of anti-Taliban forces (Coll). Overall The Taliban and Al Qaeda had a mutually beneficial relationship, where the Taliban provided security and political support, while Al Qaeda brought expertise in areas such as funding, recruitment, and public relations. They complemented each other's strengths and worked together towards their goals.

This close relationship was to be tested following the 1998 United State embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, which were carried out by Al Qaeda operatives. The

attacks prompted the United States to launch a missile strike against Al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan, prompting a period of tension between Taliban and Al Qaeda.

However, this tension was short-lived, and the two groups continued to cooperate closely in the years leading up to the 9/11 attacks (Coll).

In addition to the personal connections between their leaders, Taliban and Al Qaeda also had complementary capabilities and resources. As Vahid Brown and Don Rassler note, the Taliban had a strong military presence in Afghanistan and was able to provide security and political support to Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda, on the other hand, had expertise in fundraising, recruitment, and propaganda, which helped to bolster the Taliban's efforts (Brown & Rassler).

Overall, the relationship between the Taliban and Al Qaeda before 9/11 was complex and multifaceted, driven by a combination of ideological, personal, and strategic factors. Despite their differences, the two groups were able to work together to pursue their shared goals, and their cooperation had significant implications for global security.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Afghanistan's history has been marked by a series of tumultuous events that had far-reaching and complex effects on the country and its people. The military coup d'etat in 1978, followed by the Soviet-backed government, sparked a decade-long war with anti-communist mujahideen groups that left the country in ruins. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 only worsened the situation, leading to widespread violence, displacement, and the rise of the Taliban regime.

The impact of the Soviet war on Afghanistan was devastating, leading to the deaths of over one million people and the displacement of millions more. The country's infrastructure was destroyed, and the economy was in shambles. This period also saw the rise of the Taliban regime, which emerged as a powerful force during the civil war that followed the Soviet withdrawal in 1989.

The Taliban's regime in Afghanistan had a profound impact on the country and its people. After coming to power in 1996, the Taliban imposed a strict interpretation of Islamic law, known as Sharia, on the population. Women were banned from working outside the home, attending school, and even leaving their homes without a male chaperone. Music, television, and other forms of entertainment were also prohibited.

The Taliban also committed numerous human rights abuses, including extrajudicial executions, torture, and mass killings. The Taliban's policies led to widespread poverty, hunger, and disease, with millions of Afghans fleeing the country as refugees.

The Taliban's support for international terrorism also had significant consequences. They harbored al-Qaeda, the group responsible for the 9/11 attacks in the United States, and provided them with safe haven and support. This led to the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, which resulted in the removal of the Taliban from power and the establishment of a new government.

The relationship between the Taliban and the United States before the 9/11 attacks was complex. During the 1980s, the United States supported some of the anti-Soviet mujahideen groups that later formed the Taliban, providing them with weapons and training. However, after the Taliban came to power in 1996, the United States government criticized their human rights abuses and support for international terrorism. In 1998, the United State launched missile strikes on Afghanistan in response to al-Qaeda's bombing of United States embassies in Africa, which were believed to have been planned in Afghanistan with the support of the Taliban. The United State also imposed economic sanctions on Afghanistan, which further isolated the Taliban regime.

This was the scope of the first chapter. After that a U.S.-led invasion in 2001 sought to dismantle the Taliban regime and bring stability to the country, but the effects of these events are still being felt today. In the next chapter, we will explore the political, social, and economic implications of these events on Afghanistan and its people. We examines

the role of external actors, including the United States, in shaping Afghanistan's history and the impact of their interventions on the country. By understanding the complex history of Afghanistan, we can gain insights into the challenges facing the country today and the possibilities for a more stable and prosperous future.

Chapter Two

American Regime Change in Afghanistan

Introduction

The United States has attempted to change the regime of Middle Eastern countries with an average of once every ten years since the end of World War II. It has done so in a variety of regions, including Iran, Afghanistan (twice), Iraq, Egypt, Libya, and Syria, to mention just a few, where regime change—the overthrow of a government and reform of its political system—was the objective of United State policy and where an administration made coordinated efforts to achieve it.

The reasons for United States operations in each of these nations have been similarly diverse, ranging from efforts to resist communism to competing with geopolitical competitors, stopping the development of weapons of mass destruction WMD, fighting terrorism, protecting civilian lives, and trying to spread democracy.

Additionally, the means by which the United States has attempted to overthrow governments have been extremely distinct. These include funding military coups, giving covert or explicit military support to opposition groups, invading and occupying, invading but not occupying, giving airpower to opposition forces, and relying only on diplomacy, rhetoric, and sanctions. All of these initiatives, however, had one thing in common: they always fell short of their ultimate objectives, had a number of unintended—and frequently catastrophic—consequences, cost a staggering amount of money and lives, and in many cases left both the target country and the United States in a worse state than when they first started.

The United States' regime change efforts in Afghanistan have been a significant aspect of its foreign policy in the post-9/11 era. The United States' intervention in Afghanistan was motivated by the need to remove the Taliban from power and to prevent the country from becoming a nation of terrorists.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States government launched a military campaign against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, who were harboring terrorists in Afghanistan. When Operation Enduring Freedom was launched in October 2001, the United States began its military intervention in Afghanistan. The operation's main goals were to overthrow the Taliban and shut down Al Qaeda's operations in the nation. The Taliban were swiftly overthrown by the American force, but they remained a serious threat to Afghanistan's stability and security.

The goal of the American regime change in Afghanistan was to establish a democratic government capable of governing the nation with stability and security. Through diplomatic and financial means, the United State government helped President Hamid Karzai's new administration take office. In order to promote security and stability in the nation, the United State also gave the Afghan government significant military assistance.

the aim was to demolish terrorist networks, eliminate Al-Qaeda leadership, and remove the Taliban from power, leading to a change in the political regime in Afghanistan. Significant political and social changes were brought about in Afghanistan as a result of the United States regime change. The new American administration was devoted to advance democracy, human rights, and equality for men and women. To make sure that these values were incorporated into the nation's laws and practices, the United State government closely collaborated with the Afghan government.

There were difficulties with the United States-led regime change in Afghanistan. Establishing peace and security was challenging since the Taliban and other extremist groups posed serious security challenges to the nation. Political unrest and corruption were additional substantial obstacles to the nation's progress.

The following chapter provides details about the Unites States' regime change in Afghanistan, drawing on relevant scholarly works to provide a foundation for understanding

this issue. The chapter deals with the historical background of the United States' relations with Afghanistan, the intervention and regime change. It tackles the United States' alliances, challenges and costs of the war, ending with the peace treaty between the two and the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan.

1. Brief Historical Context

The history of United State regime change efforts in Afghanistan can be traced back to the 1980s when the United State government supported Afghan resistance fighters, known as the Mujahideen, in their struggle against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The United State provided covert military and financial assistance to the Mujahideen, including training and arming them, in an effort to counter Soviet expansion and influence in the region (Coll 29). This covert support was a significant factor in the eventual withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989.

Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the country descended into a period of civil war and instability, with various Afghan factions fighting for power. The Taliban, a militant Islamist group, emerged as a dominant force and eventually seized control of Afghanistan in 1996, establishing an oppressive regime known for its strict interpretation of Islamic law and its support for extremist groups, including Al-Qaeda (Tomsen 63). It is important to note that most extremists of the group misused Islamic instructions for their own benefits and corruption, which resulted in chaos and ethnic conflicts.

2. United State Intervention and Regime Change in Afghanistan

The events of 9/11 marked a turning point in US policy towards Afghanistan. In October 2001, the United State launched a military campaign, known as Operation Enduring Freedom, with the objective of eliminating Al-Qaeda and overthrowing the Taliban regime. The United States, along with its NATO allies, conducted military operations, including air strikes and ground offensives, and supported Afghan opposition forces in their efforts to remove the Taliban

from power (Horton 51). Here, the 20 years war began, with the involvement of various allies, and led by the United States.

The invasion, which was carried out by a U.S.-led coalition, quickly toppled the Taliban regime from power. The Taliban, known for their strict interpretation of Islamic law, had been in control of Afghanistan since 1996 and had provided a safe haven for extremist groups, including Al-Qaeda. The United State and its allies believed that removing the Taliban from power was necessary to eliminate the threat posed by Al-Qaeda and to prevent Afghanistan from being used as a base for international terrorism.

In response to the 9/11 attacks in the United States, the United State and its allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 to overthrow the Taliban and eliminate terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaeda, who were operating in the country. This conflict, known as the War on Terror, is ongoing and has involved various international military forces (Johnson 89).

2.1 Main Points in United States Regime Change in Afghanistan

Afghanistan has experienced several major wars and conflicts, including the Soviet-Afghan War, civil war, Taliban rule, and the ongoing War on Terror. These conflicts have had profound and far-reaching impacts on the country and its people, resulting in significant loss of life, displacement of populations, and ongoing instability.

In response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, which were orchestrated by the Taliban-hosted Al-Qaeda terrorist group, the United State launched a military invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 where the U.S-led coalition forces, along with Afghan anti-Taliban forces, swiftly overthrew the Taliban regime and established a new government in Afghanistan. In 2014, the United States shifted its military mission in Afghanistan from combat to training and advising Afghan security forces, with the aim of gradually transitioning security responsibility to Afghan forces.

Despite efforts to build and strengthen Afghan security forces, the Taliban insurgency persisted, and the situation remained volatile. In 2020, the United States and the Taliban reached an agreement known as the Doha Agreement, which set the stage for the withdrawal of United States troops from Afghanistan by May 2021. Shortly after that, in August 2021, the Taliban rapidly seized control of Afghanistan, leading to the collapse of the Afghan government and the end of the United States-backed regime change efforts in the country (Dobbins 132-134). It is important to note that the situation in Afghanistan has been complex and multifaceted, involving various local, regional, and international actors, the actual events and their interpretation may vary depending on different perspectives and sources.

3. The United States' Alliance in the War of Afghanistan

The United States has been involved in the war in Afghanistan since 2001, and its military efforts have been supported by various international partners. These alliances have been critical in ensuring the effectiveness of the United States military campaign and in providing diplomatic and economic support to the Afghan government.

3.1 International Partnerships

The United States has had various international partners in the war in Afghanistan, including NATO and non-NATO countries. NATO played a crucial role in providing military support to the United States, particularly in the early years of the conflict. The alliance provided troops, logistics, and intelligence support to the United States forces and helped establish security and stability in Afghanistan (NATO 1). Other non-NATO partners, such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, also provided significant military and economic support to the U.S. campaign.

3.2 Diplomatic Support

The United States' alliance in the war in Afghanistan also included diplomatic support from various international partners. The United State government worked closely with its allies to ensure a coordinated diplomatic approach to the conflict. This included engaging with the Afghan government, negotiating with the Taliban, and garnering international support for the United State military campaign. Diplomatic support from international partners was critical in creating a coalition of nations united in the fight against terrorism and extremism (Dobbins 130). This shows to what extent the Afghan case was taken seriously by the United Sates taking into consideration all the negotiations occurring with these different parts.

Phillip Gordon, who served as special assistant to President Barack Obama and White House coordinator for the Middle East from 2013 to 2015, narrates that after the September 11 attacks in 2001, George W. Bush pressed the Taliban, who were in power in Afghanistan, to turn over Osama bin Laden. As a delay tactic, the United States declined to produce evidence, and Taliban refused to release him unless strong proof of his involvement in the attacks was provided. In collaboration with the UK, the United State military began Operation Enduring Freedom on October 7, 2001. The Bush administration used the notion that Afghanistan's sovereignty was just “selective” and that action was required because the Taliban posed a threat to other nations' sovereignty to defend the war. In the invasion phase, United State and Northern Alliance-led forces decimated the Taliban and its partners in al Qaeda (45).

3.3 Economic Support

The United State alliance in the war in Afghanistan also included economic support from various international partners. The United States and its allies provided significant financial aid to the Afghan government, which was critical in stabilizing the country's economy and supporting reconstruction efforts. International aid also helped provide essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development (USAID 1). Economic support from

the United States and its partners helped create a more stable and prosperous Afghanistan, which was critical in ensuring the long-term success of the United States military campaign.

The United States' alliance in the war in Afghanistan was critical in ensuring the effectiveness of the United States military campaign and in providing diplomatic and economic support to the Afghan government. International partnerships, diplomatic support, and economic aid were all critical in creating a coordinated approach to the conflict and in supporting the long-term stability and security of Afghanistan (Dobbins 132). It is crucial that policymakers and scholars continue to analyze the role of international alliances in modern warfare to ensure that future military interventions are pursued with a clear understanding of the potential benefits and limitations of these partnerships.

4. Major Challenges and the Endless War

After the fall of the Taliban, the United States and its allies embarked on a mission of nation-building in Afghanistan. Hamid Karzai, an Afghan leader, was appointed as the interim president, and efforts were made to establish a new government with a constitution that enshrined democratic principles (Dorani 61). However, the process of building a stable and functioning state in Afghanistan faced numerous challenges.

One of the major challenges was the resurgence of the Taliban insurgency. The Taliban, which had regrouped and launched a new insurgency, took advantage of the security vacuum and gained strength. They carried out attacks against Afghan government forces, United States, and NATO troops, and civilian targets, undermining the stability of the country. The insurgency was fueled by factors such as tribal rivalries, ethnic tensions, poverty, and widespread corruption (Gordon 63).

Another challenge was the issue of governance and corruption. The Afghan government, under President Karzai and his successors, struggled with issues of corruption, lack of effective governance, and political instability (Collins 60). This eroded the trust of the

Afghan people in their government and hindered the establishment of a stable and legitimate government. What is also worth mentioning, is the Taliban 'insurgency which resulted in an endless conflict with the United State army and its allies (Collins 58).

4.1. The Taliban's Insurgency

Despite initial successes, the War on Terror has been marked by a prolonged insurgency and ongoing conflict in Afghanistan. Insurgent groups, including the Taliban and other militant groups, have continued to launch attacks against the Afghan government and foreign forces, resulting in significant casualties and instability (Smith 101). This point reassures that the Taliban has been always a terrorist group which causes harm and never recognized as a government.

The Taliban's leader, Mullah Omar, reformed the group after it was routed at the start of the invasion, and in 2003 he started an insurgency against the Afghan government and the International Assistance Forces. They and other organizations engaged in asymmetric warfare with tactics like guerrilla warfare, ambushes in rural areas, suicide bombings of urban targets, assassinations of coalition soldiers, and retaliation against suspected collaborators (Collins 59).

The Taliban has regained control over rural areas in southern and eastern Afghanistan by taking advantage of flaws in the Afghan government. Violence increased between 2007 and 2009. In order to clear and take control of villages, ISAF responded by considerably boosting its counterinsurgency forces. Through 2011, troop numbers increased after starting grow in 2009; when nearly 140,000 foreign troops served under ISAF and United State command in Afghanistan (Jones 3). Here starts the excessive spending of the United State on the ongoing war in Afghanistan.

NATO leaders started implementing their force withdrawal strategy after Osama bin Laden was assassinated in 2011 (for which there is a justification of war). NATO formally

halted ISAF combat operations in Afghanistan on December 28, 2014, and returned security control to the Afghan government. The same day, the NATO-led Resolute Support mission was established to assist in bringing together the recently transferred tasks.

The coalition troops turned to diplomacy to settle the conflict after failing to militarily expel the Taliban (NATO and Afghanistan 1).

The U.S. and its allies implemented various strategies to counter the Taliban insurgency and build a stable government in Afghanistan. This included military operations, training and equipping Afghan security forces, and development projects aimed at improving governance, infrastructure, and the economy. However, progress was slow, and the situation in Afghanistan remained volatile (Collins 63). This state gave hints to the whole world that this war is going the wrong way.

Over the years, there were shifts in United State policy towards Afghanistan. In the mid- 2000s, the United State shifted its focus towards the war in Iraq, diverting resources and attention from Afghanistan. This, coupled with other challenges on the ground, allowed the Taliban to regroup and regain strength. In 2009, the United State implemented a military surge, deploying additional troops to Afghanistan to counter the Taliban insurgency (Collins 65). However, the surge did not achieve the desired results, and the conflict continued.

4.2. Costs of the War in Afghanistan

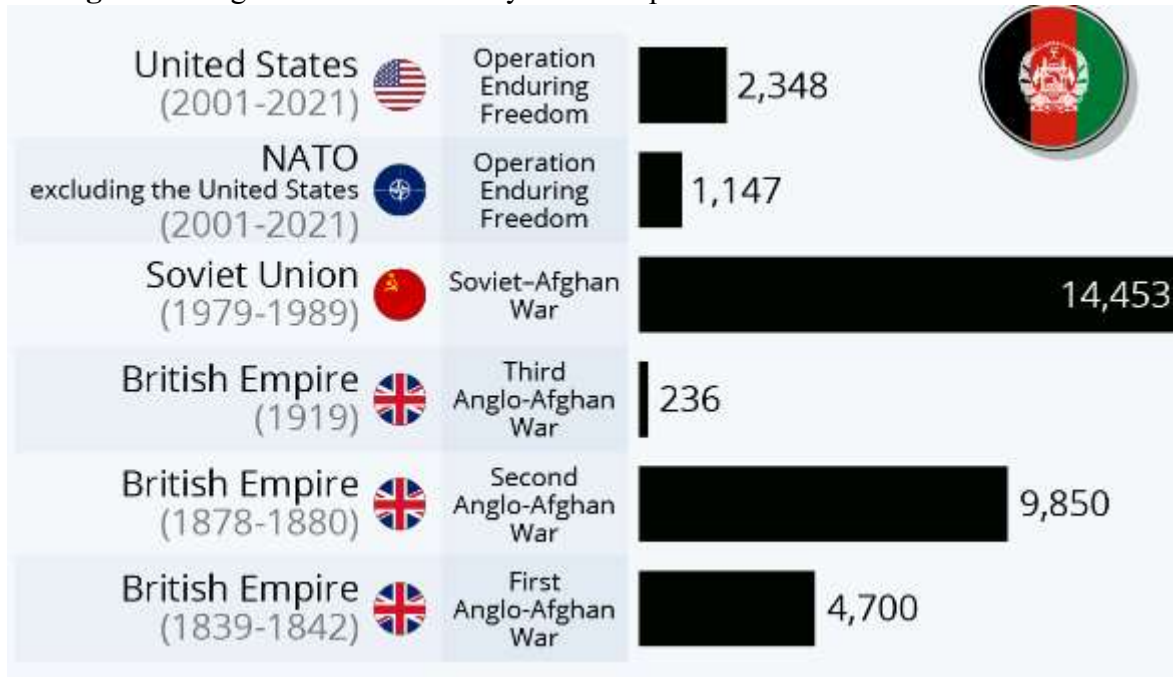
The United States has been involved in the war in Afghanistan since 2001, making it the longest war in American history. While the initial focus was to remove the Taliban government and disrupt Al-Qaeda operations, the war has since evolved into a broader conflict with no clear end in sight. Despite the significant resources and military power dedicated to this effort, the war has come with substantial economic, human, and social costs.

4.2.1 Economic Costs

The war in Afghanistan has come with a significant economic burden for the United States. As of September 2021, the United States had spent over \$2.3 trillion on the war, according to the Brown University Costs of War project (Crawford 1). This cost includes both direct expenses, such as military operations and aid, as well as indirect expenses, such as interest payments on war debt and long-term healthcare for veterans. The cost of the war has been financed primarily through borrowing, which has resulted in a significant increase in the national debt (Dorani 133). The economic costs of the war have had significant consequences for the United State economy, including reduced investment in infrastructure, education, and healthcare.

4.2.2 Human Costs

The war in Afghanistan has also taken a significant toll on human life. As of September 2021, over 47,000 Afghan civilians had been killed, along with over 2,400 United States. service members and over 3,800 contractors (Crawford 2). These figures do not include the tens of thousands of people who have been wounded or traumatized by the conflict. The human costs of the war have been felt by families and communities on both sides of the conflict and have had long-lasting effects on mental health, physical health, and social well-being.

Figure 2:“Afghanistan: The Graveyard of Empires”.

Source: Statista research.

Multiple superpowers – the British Empire, the Soviet Union, and the United States – have successfully occupied the country in the last two hundred years, but they have always been afterwards expelled by the Afghans. The United States’ 20-year-long occupation was the longest of these modern examples, explanations are offered for why Afghanistan defeats great states again and again: its landscape and climate is inhospitable, its people tribal, it is surrounded by countries sympathetic to its people and hostile to foreign invaders. This produces a view of Afghanistan as a place that can never really be conquered. And yet foreign powers try, again and again.

4.2.3 Social Costs

The war in Afghanistan has also had significant social costs, particularly for Afghan society. The conflict has disrupted the economy, social structures, and political institutions in the country, leading to increased poverty, instability, and violence. The war has also resulted in a significant displacement of people, with over 2.7 million Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 2020 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 1). This displacement has put a significant strain on the resources and capacity of neighboring countries, such as Pakistan and Iran, which have hosted large numbers of refugees.

The costs of the war in Afghanistan have been significant and have had far-reaching consequences for the United States, Afghanistan, and the broader international community. The economic, human, and social costs of the war have had a profound impact on the lives of millions of people and have highlighted the complex and multifaceted nature of modern warfare. It is crucial that policymakers and scholars continue to analyze the costs of war to ensure that future military interventions are pursued with a clear understanding of the potential consequences.

5. The Doha Agreement: Prospects and Challenges for Ending the War in Afghanistan

The Doha Agreement, signed in February 2020 between the United States and the Taliban, aimed to provide a framework for ending the long-standing conflict in Afghanistan.

5.1 Key Elements of the Doha Agreement

The Doha Agreement is a complex document with several key elements. First, it calls for the withdrawal of United States and NATO troops from Afghanistan within a specific timeline, with the Taliban committing to prevent the use of Afghan soil by international terrorist groups (Smith 45). It also sets the stage for intra-Afghan negotiations, aiming to achieve a comprehensive peace agreement that includes power-sharing arrangements, a ceasefire, and a roadmap for political transition (Johnson 56). Moreover, the Doha Agreement emphasizes the

need for human rights, particularly women's rights, to be protected and promoted in any future political settlement (Brown 78).

5.2 Expectations for Success

The Doha Agreement offers several prospects for success in ending the war in Afghanistan. The withdrawal of foreign troops could potentially reduce violence and pave the way for a political settlement (Jones 67). In addition, the intra-Afghan negotiations provide an opportunity for Afghans to come to a consensus on key issues, such as power-sharing and governance, which could contribute to a sustainable peace (Smith 54). Also, the inclusion of human rights, particularly women's rights, as a key element of the agreement reflects a commitment to addressing past grievances and ensuring a more inclusive and equitable future for Afghanistan (Brown 85).

5.3 Challenges to Execution

Despite its potential prospects, the Doha Agreement also faces significant challenges to its implementation. One of them is that the persistent violence and attacks by the Taliban and other militant groups continue to undermine the prospects for a sustainable peace (Johnson 67). The levels of violence have remained high even after the signing of the agreement, raising questions about the Taliban's commitment to the ceasefire (Jones 73).

Another problem lays in the complexities of intra-Afghan negotiations, including the diverse interests and grievances of different Afghan factions, which pose challenges to reaching a peace agreement (Brown 91). Definitely the issue of human rights, particularly women's rights, remains a contentious challenge, as there are concerns about the potential erosion of gains made in the past two decades (Smith 63).

The Doha Agreement presents both prospects and challenges for ending the war in Afghanistan. While the withdrawal of foreign troops and the initiation of intra-Afghan negotiations offer opportunities for peace, the persistent violence, complexities of

negotiations, and human rights concerns pose significant challenges. It is essential for all parties to demonstrate genuine commitment and resolve in implementing the Doha Agreement to achieve a sustainable and inclusive peace in Afghanistan.

6. The Call for Peace Ended by a Takeover

In recent years, there were calls for a negotiated settlement with the Taliban to end the conflict in Afghanistan. In 2020, the United State government reached an agreement with the Taliban, which included a timeline for the withdrawal of United State and NATO troops from Afghanistan. In April 2021, the United State announced its intention to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by September 2021, effectively ending its military involvement in the country (State Department).

These efforts culminated on February 29, 2020, with the signing of a conditional peace agreement between the United States and the Taliban in Doha. The agreement called for the withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan within 14 months, provided that the Taliban abided by its terms “by not allowing any of its members, whether individuals or groups, including al-Qaeda, to use territory of Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies” (State Department). However, ISIS-Khorasan Province and al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent-affiliated rebels continued to operate in some areas of the nation. The terms of the Afghan government's prisoner release were rejected because it was not a party to the agreement.

After Joe Biden was elected president, the date set for the withdrawal of United State troops from Afghanistan was changed from May 1, 2021, to September 11, and then it was postponed up to August 31. The Taliban launched an enormous attack that resulted in the majority of Afghanistan being captured when the initial deadline passed and the forces retreated (Malkasian 650). The Taliban were able to seize power in Kabul on August 15.

The Taliban declared victory and the end of the war on the same day that Ashraf Ghani, the president of Afghanistan, left the nation and announced the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will soon return. The last United States military aircraft left Afghanistan on August 30, marking the end of 20 years of Western military engagement there. Biden announced the Taliban control on August 16. A thousand or so Americans and Afghans with American or other visas were left behind in Afghanistan following the American evacuation (Mohamed and Allahoum).

6.1 The United States Troops Withdrawal from Afghanistan

An important turning point in the history of Afghanistan will be created by the United State forces' departure, which will bring both chances and difficulties. Although the choice demonstrates a desire to put an end to America's longest conflict, it also prompts questions about the stability of Afghanistan and the surrounding area (Gopal 72). Policymakers and international actors must address the security and humanitarian effects while pursuing a lasting and inclusive peace in Afghanistan.

The Afghan battle was the longest one that the United States has ever been involved in. Due to the prolonged nature of the conflict, the American public became war exhausted and wanted the military campaign to come to a conclusion. The strategic priorities of the United State government changed. The emphasis moved from maintaining a long-term military presence in Afghanistan to prioritizing counterterrorism initiatives and tackling other global issues like great power rivalry and new security concerns. In order for the Afghan security forces to take the lead in preserving security and stability, the United State invested enormous sums in their training and equipment. The United State had a chance to think about a gradual exit as the Afghan security forces improved in strength (Coll 409). The reason behind the decision according to this, is that Afghan Military Forces were well trained and ready to take the lead and protect the country in the absence of Foreign Forces.

Over time, public support for the war in Afghanistan waned. The perception that the conflict was no longer serving United State national interests and the loss of American lives and resources contributed to decrease public backing for continuous military involvement.

Domestic political concerns influenced the choice. Pressure grew on various administrations to carry out promises made during election campaigns to stop or scale back the United State military engagement in Afghanistan (Coll 527 Directorate S:The C.I.A. and America's Secret Wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan).

According to reports from Tolo News, President Trump initiated formal and direct U.S.-Taliban negotiations without the Afghan government's participation for the first time in mid-2018 after becoming frustrated with the lack of military progress against Taliban. President Trump continued to express dissatisfaction with the American military mission in Afghanistan and a desire to withdraw American forces, saying in August 2019 that he wanted to do so “as quickly as we can” (Baron). As those negotiations progressed under Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad, a six-person United State. delegation to Tajikistan from October 2-4 met with officials including Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, Foreign Minister Sirojiddin Muhridin, Interior Minister Ramazon Rahimzoda, Chairman of the State Committee for National Security Colonel-General Saymumin Yatimov, and Defense Minister Sherali Mirzo (Baron). The withdrawal procedures started from this event and continued gradually.

In his discussions, Special Representative Khalilzad emphasized the importance of the Afghanistan Peace Negotiations, which officially began on September 12 in Doha, and he appreciated Tajikistan's support for the Afghan peace process. He reaffirmed the United States' commitment for a political solution that receives widespread support among Afghans and guarantees that the country will never once more be used as a base for international terrorists (U.S. Embassy Dushanbe). As of October 9, 2019, General Austin S. Miller, the senior American commander in Afghanistan, claimed that the number of American personnel

had progressively decreased by 2,000 over the previous year, to between 12,000 and 14,000 soldiers (Gibbons and Mashal).

In a formal agreement signed in February 2020, the United States and the Taliban agreed that the United States would withdraw all of its personnel from Afghanistan, including troops, contractors, and non-diplomatic civilians. By mid-July 2020, the military force would be reduced to 8,600, and by the end of April 2021, it would be completely gone. The Taliban agreed to refrain from permitting any organizations, including Al Qaeda, to live, train, or raise money in Afghanistan in exchange for the United States or its allies (Atwood and Browne).

The Taliban's reduction of violence against the Afghan government, concessions in intra-Afghan discussions, or other measures were not prerequisites for the United State to commit to its withdrawal. According to United State authorities, the Taliban did not fully abide by the deal throughout 2020. United State troop numbers continued to decline, reaching 8,600 one month before the mid-July 2020 deadline under the U.S.-Taliban agreement (Atwood and Browne). It is shown here that the withdrawal was taking place in a considerable speed in comparison to the long period of invasion.

On November 17, 2020, Christopher Miller, who was serving as Secretary of Defense at the time, declared that “we will implement President Trump's orders to continue our repositioning of forces” from Afghanistan and that 2,500 American troops would stay there until January 15, 2021. Acting Secretary Miller stated the pullback was “consistent with our established plans and strategic objectives” and that it “does not equate to a change in United State policy or objectives.” The drawdown was announced together with a comparable withdrawal of American personnel from Iraq. Acting Secretary Miller acknowledged that there were now 2,500 American soldiers serving in Afghanistan on January 15, 2021 (Department of Defense).

President Biden declared on April 14, 2021, that the United States would start its “final withdrawal” on May 1 and finish it by September 11, 2021. The Taliban responded in writing, accusing the United States of violating the terms of the February 2020 agreement and asserting that the United States. decision to remain in Afghanistan past May 1 “in principle opens the way for [Taliban forces] to take every necessary countermeasure, hence the American side will be held responsible for all future consequences (Taliban Are Back - What Next for Afghanistan?). This makes it clear that the Taliban’s intentions were beyond only making a peace treaty with the United States.

United States’ troops and Afghan nationals were murdered on August 26, 2021, in a murderous attack in Kabul that was alleged by the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan, which had fought the Taliban. The Taliban's compliance with the February 2020 United States.-Taliban agreement, which requires them to “prevent any group or individual... from using the soil of Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States,” may come into doubt in light of the attack, though (Obama).

On May 1, 2021, the last phase of the scheduled American military withdrawal started. By June, United States Central Command (CENTCOM) stated that up to 44% of the “retrograde process” was finished. By July, the majority of NATO countries and other United States allies had withdrawn their troops. The president of the United States, Joe Biden, stated on July 8 that “our military mission in Afghanistan will conclude on August 31st.” A swift Taliban push that culminated in Kabul's capture in August and the urgent exodus of United States. embassy staff and some Afghans from Afghanistan led the United States to send in several thousand more troops to support the evacuation (Update on withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan). With this action, the Taliban confirmed the doubts and threats, it was taking over again.

7. The Taliban's Preparations for the Takeover

The Taliban's preparation for an eventual conquest of Afghanistan shows a blend of military skills, political smartness, and proficient use of social and psychological tactics. The complex dynamics of the conflict must be understood in order to fully appreciate the circumstances that led to the Taliban's rebirth and successful conquest. In order to support stability, human rights, and a lasting peace in Afghanistan, the international community must carefully consider the implications of the Taliban's rise to power.

7.1 Exploitation of Societal Grievances

The Taliban profited from deep-seated social problems in Afghanistan. They seized on differences along racial, religious, and socioeconomic lines to fuel unrest among underrepresented groups and take advantage of complaints about the Afghan government. The Taliban won the support and legitimacy of some sections of the populace by positioning themselves as a remedy for these complaints (UNHCR). So it collected each section that had the slightest opposition to the Afghan rule, and turned them into an army to gain extra support.

7.2 Establishment of Strategic Alliances

The Taliban established alliances with regional rebel entities and received assistance from them. The Taliban were able to improve their military skills, broaden their influence, and get access to resources like financing and weaponry by working together with other terrorist groups that shared their same ideological views. The Taliban also received funding and had operational chances as a result of their connections to international extremist networks (Collins 128). An example is Baitullah Mehsud-led Faction in Pakistan in addition to other terrorist groups around the world.

7.3 Acquisition of Military Resources

The Taliban took advantage of chances to acquire military supplies. They gained access to weapons and intelligence by entering Afghan security personnel and taking advantage of their weaknesses. They also profited from the seizure and re-use of military hardware left behind by withdrawing foreign soldiers (Schroden). The Taliban's operational capabilities were considerably increased by their capacity to grab and use military resources well.

7.4 Propaganda and Information Warfare

The Taliban successfully shaped narratives, managed information flows, and influenced public opinion through the use of propaganda and information warfare methods. To spread their ideas, gather fighters, and publicize their military prowess, they used social media and internet channels. To erode the resolve of the Afghan security forces and the local populace, psychological warfare techniques such as instilling fear and intimidation were also used (Rahimi).

7.5 Recruitment and Training Efforts

The Taliban concentrated on recruitment and training activities to increase the size of their military force. They organized local fighters, recruiting those who were angry with the Afghan government and pulling them in with promises of money and protection (Collins 60). Training facilities and brainwashing campaigns were essential in forming the militants' ideologies, establishing discipline, and insuring their allegiance to the Taliban's cause.

7.6 Exploitation of Local Dynamics

Using communal and tribal networks, the Taliban systematically used local dynamics to take control of and exert influence over particular areas. They made use of the social and tribal systems already in place, cooperating with local authorities and forming partnerships with criminal organizations. The Taliban created rival governments and won the allegiance of

the local populace by portraying themselves as guardians of security and justice (Collins 59). All of these elements contributed to the Taliban's planning to take over Afghanistan.

Conclusion

As a final sum-up, The United State intervention in Afghanistan resulted in the removal of the Taliban regime from power, and a new political order was established with the formation of a transitional government under the auspices of the United Nations. Subsequently, the United State and its allies engaged in efforts to rebuild Afghanistan, promote democracy, and establish a stable government. However, the situation in Afghanistan remained complex and challenging, with ongoing insurgency, corruption, and governance issues posing significant obstacles to stability and progress. All these events led at the end, to a peace treaty signed between the United State and the Taliban, followed by United State troops' withdrawal and a quick takeover; which resulted in all those efforts being gone for nothing and another beginning of the extremist rule of the Taliban all over again.

The decision by the United States to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan marked a turning point in the country's political landscape. The withdrawal had far-reaching implications and set the stage for the Taliban's return to power. By analyzing the motivations and consequences of this decision, we have gained insights into the American regime's involvement in Afghanistan.

The preparations made by the Taliban leading up to their takeover played a crucial role in their success. Their military strategies, alliances, resource management, propaganda, and recruitment efforts showcased their resilience and determination. This analysis has shed light on the challenges faced by America and its allies in countering the Taliban's resurgence.

The Taliban were able to regain control of the nation partially thanks to the exploitation of societal grievances, formation of tactical alliances, acquisition of military resources, successful propaganda and recruitment campaigns, and exploitation of regional

dynamics. Understanding these elements is essential for understanding the dynamics of the war and developing workable solutions to the problems the Taliban's comeback has brought about. The next chapter delves into the Taliban take over and policies implemented by the Taliban after their takeover to assess whether it is a success or a failure .

Chapter Three

Taliban Taking over 2021: Was American Intervention a Successful or Failed Endeavor?

Introduction

The year 2021 marked a significant turning point in the history of Afghanistan, as the Taliban regained control over the nation. This event raised numerous questions and concerns regarding the effectiveness of the American regime change and its military presence in the country. The purpose of this final chapter is to critically examine the circumstances surrounding the Taliban's takeover and evaluate whether the American regime change's efforts in Afghanistan can be deemed a failure.

In order to address this question, this chapter delves into various key aspects. Firstly, it analyzes the decision by the United States to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, a move that signaled the beginning of a new phase in the country's political landscape. The withdrawal had far-reaching implications and set the stage for the Taliban's resurgence. Understanding the motivations and consequences of this decision is crucial to assessing the American regime's involvement.

Subsequently, the chapter explores the Taliban's preparations leading up to their takeover. This includes an examination of their military strategies, alliances, and resource management, shedding light on their resilience and determination to reclaim power. By analyzing the factors that facilitated their successful return, we can better understand the nature of the challenge faced by the American regime and its allies.

The chapter then proceeds to discuss the actual sequence of events that unfolded during the Taliban's takeover. This includes an evaluation of their military advances, the response of the Afghan government, and the eventual fall of major cities and provinces. By examining the specific tactics employed by the Taliban, we gain insights into the

vulnerabilities that existed within the Afghan security apparatus, as well as the effectiveness of the American regime's support and training initiatives.

Furthermore, the reaction of the United States and the international community to the Taliban's takeover is analyzed. The chapter explores the diplomatic, political, and humanitarian responses, providing an overview of the global perspective on this crucial development. Understanding how different actors reacted to the Taliban's resurgence enables us to evaluate the level of support and commitment that existed towards the American regime's goals in Afghanistan.

The subsequent section of this chapter investigates the new policies implemented by the Taliban following their takeover in 2021. In particular, attention is given to the Taliban's stance on media and communication, women's rights, education, and their relationship with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). By examining these policies, we can ascertain whether the Taliban's actions align with the principles and objectives of the American regime's mission in Afghanistan.

Finally, the chapter concludes with a critical assessment of whether the Taliban's takeover can be regarded as a failure of the American regime change attempt. Drawing upon the analysis of the preceding sections, this evaluation considers the key factors, decisions, and actions that contributed to the outcome. By examining the strengths and weaknesses of the American regime's approach, we can offer an assessment of the extent to which its mission in Afghanistan achieved its intended goals.

Through a systematic examination of these essential elements, this final chapter aims to provide an analysis of the Taliban's takeover in 2021 and its implications for the American regime change. By critically evaluating the events, policies, and responses surrounding this significant development, we can draw informed conclusions regarding the success or failure of the American regime change' efforts in Afghanistan.

1. August 2021, Taliban Takes Over Afghanistan

Afghan officials made an effort to minimize any negative effects of the United State troop withdrawal in 2020 and 2021 while highlighting the necessity of United State financial support for Afghan forces. General Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated in a press conference in May 2021 that “bad outcomes” were not “inevitable” considering the skills and abilities of the Afghan military and government. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence stated in its 2021 annual threat assessment that “the Afghan Government will struggle to hold the Taliban at bay if the Coalition withdraws support” (Rahimi). Despite efforts to minimize negative effects, Afghan officials stress the necessity of continued United States financial support for Afghan forces, while General Mark Milley believes that the skills and abilities of the Afghan military and government can prevent inevitable bad outcomes, contrary to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's warning about the struggle to hold the Taliban without Coalition support.

The Taliban had a significant advantage over the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) in cohesion and a slight advantage in force employment, according to an external assessment published in January 2021, and the two forces were essentially equally divided in terms of material resources and outside support. The size was the one ANDSF advantage, was shown to be far narrower than often considered. The Taliban had a little advantage over the government, the author determined in his net assessment (Schroden).

The Taliban had also grown to control a sizable amount of land: in October 2018, the most recent month for which the United State government had such data, the Taliban controlled 40% of Afghanistan, and the group continued to gradually expand in the years that followed (Schroden). The Taliban's superior cohesion, slight advantage in force employment, and growing territorial control presented a formidable challenge to the

Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces, despite the narrower gap in size and material resources, as highlighted in a January 2021 external assessment.

Early in May 2021, the Taliban launched a massive offensive that took large parts of the nation's rural districts, strengthening the group's hold on those regions where it already had a considerable foothold. Other districts' capture by the Taliban was more unexpected because certain northern regions had militarily opposed the group throughout its rule in the 1990s, making their Taliban takeover in 2021 of particular importance. In May and June 2021, according to one account, the Taliban seized over 100 of Afghanistan's 400 districts (Secretary of Defense). It is evident that The Taliban's extensive offensive in May 2021 resulted in the capture of over 100 districts, including unexpected ones in previously resistant northern regions, consolidating their control over rural areas.

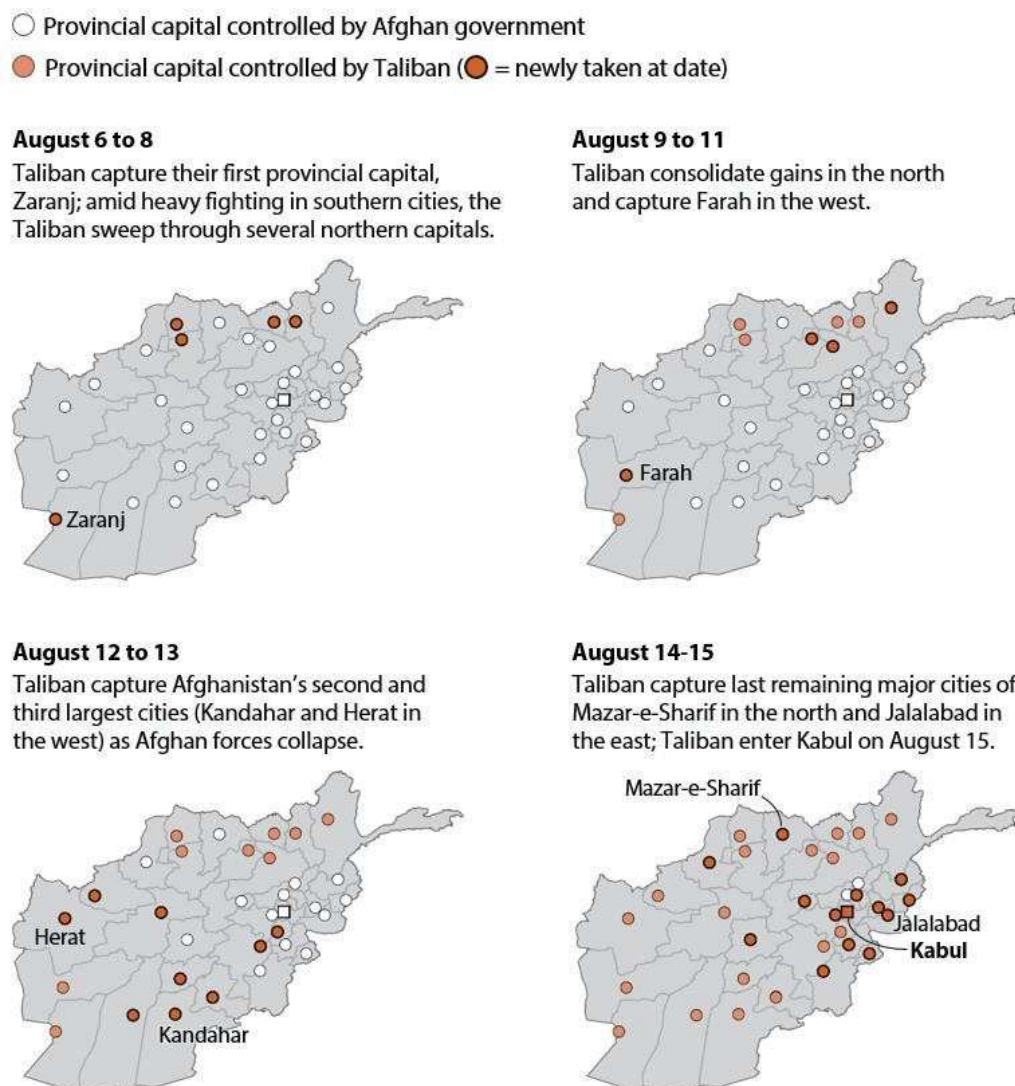
The Taliban started capturing Pakistani, Iranian, and Tajik border crossings in July, depriving the Afghan government of vital customs money. General Milley believed that the Taliban controlled approximately 200 districts on July 21, 2021, but he highlighted that they had not taken over any provincial capitals, where Afghan soldiers had gathered. One leader of the Taliban reportedly claimed that his men were purposefully avoiding seizing provincial capitals before the withdrawal of American soldiers because they were astonished by the Taliban's rapid advance (Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff). We can say that The Taliban's capture of Pakistani, Iranian, and Tajik border crossings in July deprived the Afghan government of customs revenue, while General Milley noted that although the Taliban controlled around 200 districts, they refrained from seizing provincial capitals until the withdrawal of American soldiers, surprising even their own members with their rapid progress.

The Taliban finally took control over a province capital on August 6, 2021, which was a significant victory considering that United State commanders and others had frequently

used the Taliban's inability to do so in recent years as evidence of the Afghan government's superior strength. Many observers, including purportedly United State officials, were surprised when the Taliban took control of half of Afghanistan's provincial capitals the next week. United State officials allegedly began to worry on August 13 that the Taliban may invade Kabul soon (Secretary of Defense).

The Taliban took control of the last significant cities and destroyed the remaining bases of the organized Afghan government opposition with the fall of Jalalabad in the east and Mazar-e-Sharif in the north. The Taliban started moving into Kabul early on August 15, 2021, thus taking over the entire nation. Taliban troops apparently took control of the central, historically significant region of Panjshir in September 2021 amid allegations of Taliban executions of civilians. Panjshir was the location of some previous Afghan officials' attempts to organize an armed resistance to the Taliban (Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff). It's devastating to say that the Taliban successfully seized control of all major cities, including Kabul, annihilating the last bastions of opposition, with even the historically significant region of Panjshir falling to them amidst reports of civilian executions.

Figure 3. Taliban’s Control of Provincial Capitals, August 6 15, 2021



Source: by CRS. Boundaries from U.S. State Department, GADM, and Esri.

https://books.google.dz/books?id=2Ph8EAAAQBAJ&pg=PA199&lpg=PA199&dq=CRS.++Boundaries+from+U.S.+State+Department,+GADM,+and+Esri.+Talibans+control+of+Provincial+Capitals&source=bl&ots=Aq5ruAlrQ8&sig=ACfU3U0qYyXMkR4SZBEy4e7fRk8sQ05m2Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiW64zOscL_AhVkvVeUKHaTpC7cQ6AF6BAgFEAI#v=onepage&q=CRS.%20%20Boundaries%20from%20U.S.%20State%20Department%2C%20GADM%2C%20and%20Esri.%20Talibans%20control%20of%20Provincial%20Capitals&f=false

While government forces put up a strong but ultimately inefficient battle against the Taliban in some regions, some provincial capitals and other regions were seized without much of a fight. The Taliban reportedly used money or the mediation of local elders who wanted to prevent violence to ensure the withdrawal of government forces (and the return of their weapons) in many of these regions (Afghanistan: Taliban continue attacks on three major cities).

On the morning of August 15, 2021, President Ashraf Ghani left the country after seven years marked by electoral crises, intra-faction dispute, and the deterioration of Afghan forces. On August 15, Ghani wrote on Facebook in the evening that he had left Kabul to halt the murdering and that the “Taliban have won the judgment of sword and guns and now they are responsible for protecting the countrymen's honor, wealth, and self-esteem.” Following many days of inquiries over his whereabouts, the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation declared on August 18 that “the UAE has welcomed President Ashraf Ghani and his family into the country on humanitarian grounds.” He does not appear to have publicly resigned his position as of September 17. Chantal Da Silva, Ahmed Mengli and Mushtaq Yusufzai (Chantal et al).

Dostum and Atta Mohammad Noor, another former governor, gathered their forces in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif before making their way to Uzbekistan. Former Herat governor and security forces commander Ismail Khan was captured by the Taliban during fighting in Herat before being permitted to flee to Iran. Abdullah Abdullah, the chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, Hamid Karzai, a former president, and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former leader of the Islamist insurgency, were among the Afghan

political figures who met with Taliban officials following the group's takeover but are not currently involved in the Taliban administration. According to a news report from August 26, Karzai and Abdullah are under United States arrest (Robertson). It's astonishing to see how the coup in Afghanistan has led to the exodus or marginalization of numerous influential government-aligned figures, such as Marshal Abdulrashid Dostum, Atta Mohammad Noor, Ismail Khan, Abdullah Abdullah, Hamid Karzai, and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who either fled the country, sought refuge in neighboring nations, or were detained by the Taliban or the United State.

Amrullah Saleh, a former first vice president, asserted on August 17 that he was the “legitimate caretaker President” and that he was “reaching out to all leaders to secure their support & consensus.” Saleh has earlier sworn to never accept Taliban authority and urged Afghans to stand with him in defiance of the organization. He moved to Panjshir, a province in the center of Afghanistan, because of its strategic position and historic legacy (it was never occupied by the Soviets in the 1980s or the Taliban in the 1990s). The late Northern Alliance commander Ahmad Shah Massoud's son joined him. They claimed to have organized an armed opposition against the Taliban and pleaded for assistance from the United States and other nations. Even though there have been reports of ongoing intermittent fighting and Taliban deaths of civilians, the Taliban assert that they have taken control of the province as of September 6 (Turak).

In contrast to the 1990s, when the prior Northern Alliance constituted major armed opposition and controlled roughly 10% of the country's territory, the Taliban now look to essentially rule the whole nation after capturing Panjshir. Additionally, the Taliban have closer relations to regional nations (some of which earlier backed the Northern Alliance against the Taliban). However, the existence of resistance groups, whether in Panjshir or elsewhere, could operate as a focus or inspire Taliban enemies everywhere, who might then increase their requests for United State. or other international support .

2. International Response

2.1. The United States

According to Kate Bateman, the United States' interests in Afghanistan have remained unchanged since the Taliban takeover on August 15, 2021. These interests include preventing terrorist groups from posing a threat to the United States and its allies, maintaining regional stability, promoting inclusive governance, protecting human rights (especially those of women, girls, and minorities), and addressing the humanitarian crisis and economic recovery in the country. However, the Taliban's ideology and policies pose a challenge to these interests, and the United States has limited leverage over the regime.

The United State also bears some responsibility for the current situation in Afghanistan due to its policies over the past two decades, which created an aid-dependent Afghan state and a failure to pursue peace negotiations early on. To achieve its goals, the United State can use diplomatic recognition, multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, sanctions relief, unfreezing of Afghan Central Bank assets held in New York, development aid, and military action. However, these levers are difficult to use due to logistical and political challenges, and aid is unlikely to induce changes in the Taliban's behavior. Despite this, development aid can help restore livelihoods and support the delivery of health care and education. The United State, along with other donors, is seeking measures to ensure aid is provided while minimizing its reach to the Taliban (Bateman).

Kate Bateman has provided a concise and accurate summary of the challenges that the United States is facing in Afghanistan after the Taliban's takeover. The situation is complex, and the options available to the United State for achieving its goals are limited. She emphasizes the importance of aid and diplomacy in promoting stability and resolving the country's humanitarian crisis. However, she also recognizes the difficulties in implementing

these strategies and the need for mechanisms to ensure that aid reaches the Afghan people while avoiding providing support to the Taliban.

According to the United State Department of State, The United State has adopted a pragmatic approach to its engagement with Afghanistan since the Taliban's takeover in August 2021, which led to the collapse of Kabul. While the United State has not formally recognized the Taliban or any other organization as the Afghan government, it has worked closely with the international community to provide assistance to the Afghan people during a period of humanitarian and economic crisis. Significant efforts have been made to coordinate this assistance. The United States, along with other countries, has made significant efforts to prevent the Afghan economy from collapsing and ensure that the Taliban does not benefit from it. These efforts have included measures to boost the availability of funds in the financial sector and help Afghan banks maintain their connections to the global financial system ("U.S. Relations With Afghanistan"). It's evident The United State has taken a pragmatic approach towards Afghanistan since the Taliban's takeover, collaborating with the international community to aid the Afghan people amidst a humanitarian and economic crisis, while actively working to prevent the Taliban from profiting and supporting the Afghan economy to prevent collapse.

The Doha Agreement outlined promises made by the Taliban, including preventing any individual or group, including Al Qaeda, from using Afghanistan to threaten the safety of the United State and its allies. Additionally, the United State agreed to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, while the Taliban committed to holding talks with other Afghan groups to form a new government after the conflict ends. To ensure the Taliban follows through with these commitments, the United State maintains communication and interaction with them. The United States interacts with Taliban representatives to advocate the creation of an inclusive political process that fully reflects Afghanistan's rich variety, including significant representation for women and marginalized groups. The Doha Agreement gave the Taliban a

way to take part in negotiations within Afghanistan to establish a post-settlement administration (“U.S. Relations With Afghanistan”). The United State continues to back such initiatives.

Starting from August 31, 2021, the American Embassy in Kabul ceased its operations, and the Afghanistan Affairs Unit (AAU) in Doha, Qatar took over as the country's diplomatic representation in Afghanistan. The AAU is responsible for managing all aspects of the United States' diplomatic relations with Afghanistan, such as consular matters, humanitarian aid distribution, and coordination of the country's engagement with the Taliban along with its allies, partners, and stakeholders around the world. As of December 2021, Qatar is responsible for providing protection to the United States in Afghanistan and offering consular and other services to American residents residing in Afghanistan. Additionally, on March 23, 2022, the Afghan Embassy and two consulates located in the United States also closed down (“US Relations With Afghanistan”). The United State has demonstrated its commitment to stabilizing the Afghan economy, aiding the Afghan people, holding the Taliban accountable, promoting inclusivity, and adapting its diplomatic presence in response to the situation in Afghanistan since the Taliban's takeover in August 2021.

2.2 Russia

According to Muraviev, Moscow adopted a “watch and act” strategy in response to the Taliban's success in Afghanistan. Military engagement was not considered, and emphasis was placed on political and diplomatic efforts. Russia prioritized establishing communication with the Taliban and engaged in extensive consultations with the new administration. Recognizing the Taliban's dominance, Russia remained open to supporting the anti-Taliban Afghan opposition. The fact that Russia was invited to the new regime's inauguration highlights the importance of their dialogue with the Taliban (6). Generally we can say that Russia prioritised political and diplomatic effort in Afghanistan and the establishment of

communication with the Taliban, which has proven to be important for the new regime instead of military opposition, or engagement.

2.3 China

According to Prakash, China's growing economic presence in Afghanistan has made it a key player in shaping the future of the country, given its significant investments in various sectors such as mining. The Chinese government aims to expand its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to include automobiles via Afghanistan, which could have a positive impact on the Afghan economy by creating new opportunities for growth and reducing the level of violence and terrorism in the region. China has also engaged with the Taliban and secured their commitment to refraining from interfering with its Uyghur population . These developments suggest that China is emerging as a significant rival to the United States' longstanding leadership in global affairs, particularly in the energy sector where China has become a major player (12). China's growing economic presence in Afghanistan has made it a key player in shaping the country's future. Their investments and plans to expand the Belt and Road Initiative through Afghanistan could boost the economy and reduce violence. China's engagement with the Taliban and their commitment to Uyghur population suggest their emergence as a rival to the United State in global affairs.

2.4. Other European Countries

According to Thomas, NATO's recent announcement of its decision to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan by May 1, 2021, and complete the process within a few months, has left some European allies unsettled. For them, the mission represented a symbol of European solidarity with the United States following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. They felt that the terms of the withdrawal were predominantly determined by the United States, with limited involvement from Europe. This was further exacerbated by the Taliban's recent

takeover, which put the lives of Europeans and their Afghan partners at an increased risk due to actions taken by the United States (43-45).

Concerns have been raised by European allies regarding the potential threats posed by refugees and terrorists, and they have also questioned their dependence on the United States and its reliability as an ally. NATO's 20-year engagement in Afghanistan was the largest military operation undertaken by the alliance, with non-United States NATO member and partner countries accounting for almost one-third of the fatalities suffered by coalition forces. However, despite their significant contribution, European allies criticized the Trump administration's lack of consultation before its agreement with the Taliban in February 2020. Many allies claimed that they were not adequately consulted during the planning process, which has led to a sense of discontentment among them (Thomas 43-45). The varied responses of European countries to NATO's withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban's takeover, along with discontentment over the lack of consultation and coordination, underscore the necessity of cooperation in military operations and highlight the limitations of military power in achieving enduring political resolutions, emphasizing the significance of political and diplomatic endeavors in conflict prevention.

3. Taliban New Policies : Did The Taliban Change ?

According to Yousaf and Jabarkhail, since taking control, the Taliban have presented a new facet of their political ideology and message. The group has demonstrated a higher degree of political acumen and proactivity, which represents a significant shift from their previous stance. The establishment of their political office in Doha, Qatar, in 2013 may have provided the Taliban with exposure to political diplomacy and negotiation skills. The United State's recognition of the group during the Doha peace talks has given them the legitimacy and strengthened their position as they desired (1). The Taliban's establishment of a political

office and recognition during the Doha peace talks has allowed them to showcase a newfound political acumen and gain legitimacy, bolstering their position.

According to Thomas Rutting, the current state of the Taliban, and the extent to which they have evolved since their rule over Afghanistan prior to 2001, holds significant implications for the potential success of any peace settlement that may emerge in the region. While the Taliban have exhibited some signs of policy change and softened their stance on select issues, such as women's rights and education, these alterations are perceived as being primarily driven by political expediency rather than any underlying ideological transformation. Consequently, there is a noticeable level of concern among many observers that, given the opportunity, the Taliban would revert to their previous form of intolerant, oppressive behavior towards girls and women, and a lack of political dissent (Yousaf and Jabarkhail 1). When it comes to the question of whether the Taliban have changed or not it is not obvious yet. The current state of the Taliban and their limited policy changes raise concerns about the potential for a lasting peace settlement and the possibility of reverting to their previous oppressive behavior.

The Taliban's evolving political positions and language offer insight into the type of political order they may consider in a post-settlement Afghanistan. However, their religiously motivated and conservative nature makes compromise on fundamental values unlikely. The future constitution and policies will depend on negotiations among Afghan factions, power distribution, and sustained pressure from communities and political groups. International attention and support will be crucial in post-settlement and troop withdrawal (Rutting 1). Achieving lasting peace in Afghanistan necessitates assessing the Taliban's changes, distinguishing between superficial and substantive shifts, and emphasizing the vital roles of Afghan communities, political groups, and the international community in holding the Taliban

accountable, while implementing a, long-term approach to address social, political, and economic challenges for a stable and sustainable society.

To comprehend the level of political involvement that the Taliban has exhibited, it is beneficial to take a brief glance at their decision-making methodology and structure. As observed by Ashley Jackson and Rahmatullah Amiri, “the Taliban's policymaking is primarily influenced by military and political necessity” (Rutting 4). This implies that the Taliban's policies are not rigidly fixed, despite being based on an immutable set of beliefs. Thus, the Taliban possesses the capability to adapt and alter its approach to governance. It is crucial to remember that the Taliban is a military organization rather than a traditional political party. By regularly referencing Islamic law and exposing how allegedly anti-Islamic the current government is, the group seeks to build legitimacy. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the name the Taliban gave to their governmental entity and themselves, reflects this viewpoint (Rutting 4). We can note here that Taliban's policymaking is influenced by military and political necessities, their adaptation to governance, and their pursuit of legitimacy through references to Islamic law is now flexible not so strict as they once were.

To examine the new Taliban policies and to determine whether and to what degree Taliban policies have changed, it is very important to look into these four key areas: media and communication, women's rights, education, relationships with NGOs.

3.1. Media and Communication

From 2001 to 2021, Afghanistan made significant progress in expanding freedom of expression and establishing a free press. However, since the Taliban's takeover in August 2021, media freedom and expression have drastically deteriorated. The Taliban has shut down and limited media outlets, arrested journalists, and imposed stricter constraints on female reporters. This has resulted in a 40% decline in media outlets and a 60% decline in journalists, with women journalists being particularly affected. Despite these challenges, media

organizations are employing innovative techniques to disseminate accurate information. (“Protecting Independent Media in Taliban's Afghanistan”). Since the Taliban's takeover in August 2021, media freedom in Afghanistan has sharply declined, with closures of outlets, journalist arrests, and increased constraints on female reporters; however, media organizations are adapting and utilizing innovative techniques to continue spreading accurate information.

3.2. Woman's Rights

Gender rights in Afghanistan are a major concern due to the Taliban's previous treatment of women in the 1990s. The Taliban imposed bans on women's education, restricted their employment and mobility, setting back gender equality. Despite progress made since 2001, there are still significant disparities in literacy rates (29.8% for women, 59% for men) and enrollment in schools (39% for girls). While Afghan women's labor force participation has increased to 22%, the Taliban's ambiguous stance on women's rights and the disbanding of the Ministry for Women's Affairs suggest limited change in their view of women's role. The absence of women in Taliban leadership and recent incidents of violence against women further underline the risks they face (Yousaf and Jabarkhalil). Although the Taliban seeks global recognition and economic concessions, it remains uncertain if their patriarchal worldview will allow for full rights for women.

3.3. Education

During the Taliban's reign in Afghanistan from 1994 to 2001, they implemented strict limitations on education, especially for girls. This included the closure of schools, the transformation of girls' schools into boys' schools, and the restriction of education for girls up to puberty. Female teachers were sent home, and male teachers were not allowed to teach girls, resulting in a significant impact on boys' education as well, as around 70 percent of all public school teachers were women. The Taliban viewed schools as a potential means for the spread of Western values, and therefore, implemented measures to assert control over the

education system (Rutting 7-9). The Taliban's reign in Afghanistan (1994-2001) severely restricted education, especially for girls, with school closures, gender-based restrictions, and teacher exclusions, aiming to control the spread of Western values.

However, despite the Taliban's measures, many girls' and mixed-gender schools continued to operate, often clandestinely and with the support of foreign NGOs. Some NGOs were even able to run school programs with the Taliban's approval. By 2001, an estimated 500,000 boys and girls were attending schools supported by NGOs, although the gender proportion was not reported (Rutting 7-9).

It is important to note that the Taliban did not oppose education, including for girls, in principle. They claimed that the lack of security and funds hindered girls' education, and promised that schools would reopen when the situation improved. However, the Taliban's restrictive approach towards education reflected the conservative attitudes of the rural population from which they emerged. Nevertheless, there were indications of broader attitudes towards education changing even before the Taliban came to power. Many Afghan refugees who fled to Pakistan during the 1979-1989 war appreciated the schooling provided there, including education for girls (Rutting 7-9). Taliban's stance on education and girls' schooling reflected conservative roots, citing security and funding challenges, while prior indications of changing attitudes were seen among Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

3.4. Relation with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Initially, the Taliban displayed aversion towards NGOs, characterizing them as agents of non-Muslim forces. The first Taliban layha (a code or set of guidelines established by the Taliban, in this case, referring to their 2006 document outlining their policies and regulations) in 2006 outlawed all NGO activities, and while it did not explicitly sanction violent action against NGO personnel, it tacitly endorsed such measures. Subsequently, the Taliban's stance towards NGOs underwent a transformation towards pragmatism, where they established

alliances with them based on mutual interests, and conditioned any such arrangement on the authorization of the Leadership Council, coupled with financial or material exchange (Dziedzic and Seidl).

The Taliban required NGOs to register with local Taliban authorities and implemented a system of taxation on NGO worker's salaries. The creation of a commission for dealing with NGOs signifies the acknowledgment of the Taliban that NGOs and companies have commercial aspects that are taxable. Nonetheless, the Taliban exhibited hostility towards certain NGOs that were linked to the US military, and reportedly investigated NGOs' funding sources. Later, the Taliban demonstrated an ameliorated approach towards NGOs, accepting their role in building schools and providing services to the populace, as long as it aligns with the Taliban's interests (Dziedzic and Seidl).

4. The American Regime Change in Afghanistan : A Failed Endeavor

The United States' involvement in Afghanistan has faced many challenges and shortcomings. One significant issue has been the lack of a strong political framework alongside military operations. The focus on military strategy often overshadowed the importance of having a solid political plan in place. The commanders leading the United States forces primarily approached Afghanistan as a military problem rather than a political one. This led to a neglect of establishing a political framework. Now, there is a shift in American priorities towards seeking a political settlement in Afghanistan. However, it's important to assess how likely it is to achieve this objective (Ehsan and Mouhammad 1).

Initially, the United States focused on winning the Afghan conflict through military means, employing Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's "light footprint" strategy. This involved precise operations using advanced technologies, while downplaying the need for a large troop presence. However, General Stanley McChrystal, when he took control in 2009, later realized the insufficient troop levels for countering the Taliban and securing the border.

Vice President

Joe Biden proposed a different approach, prioritizing targeting al-Qaeda leaders. These perspectives reflected a mix of military calculations, political considerations, and evolving strategies. General David Petraeus, upon taking the United State forces' command in July 2010, later implemented a new tactical plan to prevent strategic setbacks, emphasizing the importance of success and transitioning rather than a slow withdrawal (Ehsan and Mouhammad 3-4). It's evident that the United States' initial military-focused approach in Afghanistan gradually evolved as they recognized the need for adjustments, such as increasing troop levels and targeting specific threats like al-Qaeda leaders, resulting in the implementation of a new tactical plan under General Petraeus to prevent setbacks and prioritize successful transitions

General Petraeus strongly supported an approach called the “AnacondaStrategy”, which emphasized the important role of both local and international civilians. Thisstrategy included various activities such as military operations, intelligence work, handling detainees, spreading information, collaborating with other countries, and non-military actionslike creating jobs, education, enforcing laws, and promoting development. It's worth noting that military action was considered the main focus in only one of the seven categories. This differed from the view of former United States Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes, who believed that while the military has its strengths, it cannot bring about political and societal changes by itself (Ehsan and Mouhammad3-4).

At a Kabul airstrip, the United States. departure from Afghanistan after 20 years of conflict ended in chaos. Nearly 76,000 Afghans who aided American soldiers as interpreters, translators, and partners boarded American military aircraft, but many more were left behind. They are currently living covertly from the Taliban. Following its 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, the United States' government lacked a clear plan for how to put an end to the conflict. They said that the military and political officials whose goals were limited to

securing a “zero-sum victory” and force the Taliban out of power were to blame for the failure to engage with the Taliban early on (Preble). The chaotic United State departure from Afghanistan after two decades left behind thousands of Afghans who risk their lives to aid American soldiers, highlighting the lack of a clear plan and failure to engage with the Taliban early on.

Despite spending trillions of dollars on the Afghan war and reconstruction effort, no inclusive and lasting political settlement to the conflict has been reached. Despite about \$89 billion budgeted for training the Afghan army, it took the Taliban little more than a month to brush it aside. Although there are already many signs that the Taliban may be forced to speak out by the cities' growing anti-Taliban sentiment, aid officials don't think it will happen during the bombing. They caution that thousands more Afghans may already be sentenced to death in Afghanistan's more remote central and western regions (Byrd).

Dealing with good and bad, or black and white, is not a way to bring peace to the area. Additionally, it does not include installing the Northern Alliance as a new government. Even though the coalition has grown more varied and has attracted more Pashtun commanders—many of whom have just left the Taliban—it still does not constitute an all-encompassing combination of ethnic and tribal groups (Byrd). Despite massive financial investment and training efforts, the Afghan war and reconstruction have failed to achieve a lasting political settlement, leaving the country vulnerable to the Taliban's rapid advancement and risking the lives of many Afghan citizens.

Additionally, internal and inherent weaknesses within the Afghan government impeded efforts to bring the situation in the nation under control. Former Islamic Republic of Afghanistan intelligence and defense minister Masoom Stanekzai asserted that regional and global conflicts exacerbated the country's current predicament. According to him, Afghan society has always been conservative and has never been radical. This changed after the

Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in the 1980s and the United States supported the Mujahedeen, which encouraged the emergence of extremist organizations there. According to Stanekzai, the United State waged its war on terror by ignoring regional players like Pakistan, who were significant role players but frequently “played a double game during the years of the United State presence in Afghanistan.” Pakistan frequently “played a double game.” (Younes and Hanania). It is evident that the internal weaknesses of the Afghan government, combined with the impact of regional and global conflicts, have contributed to the current predicament in Afghanistan, as highlighted by former intelligence and defense minister Masoom Stanekzai, who emphasizes the transformative effect of past interventions and the double game played by certain regional players like Pakistan during the United State presence.

A critical question arises about why it took so long to change the direction of the United State military actions in Afghanistan. Despite the clear weaknesses of the strategies that focused on winning the war instead of dealing with the political aspects, senior leaders from both civilian and military sectors persisted in following those approaches. It was only after eighteen years that pursuing a negotiated political agreement with the Taliban became a viable option. As Stephen M. Walt suggests, a series of military commanders kept promising success instead of honestly conveying to the commander-in-chief that the mission was unnecessary and excessively costly.

A response to that, is that the United States of America had some plans to benefit from its intervention in the country; such as starting a war against terror to gain power and control over larger territories in the middle east, and most importantly show-off its power in front of the world as the leading superior country which always has an enemy and still defeats that. The case of Afghanistan went really wrong and the United State had lost more than it gained, so withdrawal under the name of “maintaining peace and ending the war” was necessary as its last option.

Conclusion

The events surrounding the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 have raised significant questions and concerns regarding the American regime's efforts in the country. This final chapter aimed to critically examine the circumstances surrounding the Taliban's resurgence and evaluate whether the American regime's involvement can be deemed a failure.

The decision by the United States to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan marked a turning point in the country's political landscape. The withdrawal had far-reaching implications and set the stage for the Taliban's return to power. By analyzing the motivations and consequences of this decision, we have gained insights into the American regime's involvement in Afghanistan.

The preparations made by the Taliban leading up to their takeover played a crucial role in their success. Their military strategies, alliances, resource management, propaganda, and recruitment efforts showcased their resilience and determination. This analysis has shed light on the challenges faced by the American regime and its allies in countering the Taliban's resurgence.

The actual sequence of events during the Taliban's takeover revealed vulnerabilities within the Afghan security apparatus and raised questions about the effectiveness of the American regime's support and training initiatives. Understanding the specific tactics employed by the Taliban provides valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the American regime's approach.

The international response to the Taliban's takeover has demonstrated varied reactions from different actors. Analyzing the diplomatic, political, and humanitarian responses has allowed us to evaluate the level of support and commitment towards the American regime's goals in Afghanistan.

Examining the new policies implemented by the Taliban following their takeover has revealed the extent to which their actions align with the principles and objectives of the American regime's mission. The examination of their stance on media and communication, women's rights, education, and their relationship with NGOs has provided an understanding of the Taliban's governance.

Based on the analysis of these essential elements, it is clear that the American regime's mission in Afghanistan faced numerous challenges and obstacles. While there were significant achievements in certain areas, the ultimate outcome of the Taliban's takeover raises questions about the overall success of the American regime's efforts.

However, it is important to note that assessing the success or failure of the American regime's involvement in Afghanistan is a complex task. It requires considering multiple factors, decisions, and actions that contributed to the outcome.

In conclusion, the events surrounding the Taliban's takeover in 2021 and the subsequent implications for the American regime have highlighted the need for a critical assessment. This final chapter has provided an analysis of the key elements surrounding the Taliban's resurgence and evaluated the extent to which the American regime's mission in Afghanistan achieved its intended goals. Through a systematic examination of these elements, we have gained valuable insights into the complexities and challenges faced by the American regime change in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Based on the scope of this research, the topic of discussion it addresses, and the outcomes gained, there are certain interesting conclusions that can be drawn regarding the United State regime change in Afghanistan; and whether it was successful or a failure.

The study's hypothesis, around which the entire investigation is based, contends that the United States attempt to change the regime of Afghanistan failed after nearly 20 years of conflict. After conducting the case study on the Taliban's taking over Afghanistan in August 2021 throughout the third chapter and taking into consideration the arguments in the previous three chapters, the acquired data validated the hypothesis presented.

This study began with Afghanistan's history, which is marked by turbulent events with extensive consequences. A military coup in 1978 and subsequent Soviet-backed government led to a decade-long war with anti-communist mujahideen groups. The Soviet invasion in 1979 worsened the situation, resulting in violence, displacement, and the rise of the Taliban regime. This regime imposed strict Islamic law, restricting women's rights, education, and entertainment, and committing numerous human rights abuses. The Taliban's support for international terrorism, including providing a safe haven for al-Qaeda, led to the United States.-led invasion in 2001. These events continue to affect Afghanistan today. This historicaloverview sets the foundation for understanding the formation of the Taliban regime and its interactions with external actors. As well as, to better understand the Taliban's regime and why the United States tried to get rid of it. In order to asses better whether the American regime change was successful or not when the Taliban took over again in 2021.

The second chapter of the analysis examined the United State intervention in Afghanistan, which initially resulted in the removal of the Taliban regime and the establishment of a transitional government. Despite efforts to rebuild the country, promote democracy, and ensure stability, ongoing challenges such as insurgency, corruption, and governance issues impeded progress.

Eventually, the decision to withdraw United State troops led to the Taliban's return to power and the collapse of previous efforts. The analysis highlightd how the Taliban's successful takeover was facilitated by their strategic military tactics, alliances, resource management, propaganda,and recruitment efforts. By exploiting societal grievances, forming alliances, acquiring military resources, conducting effective propaganda and recruitment campaigns, and leveraging regional dynamics, the Taliban posed significant challenges for the United States and its allies in countering their resurgence. Understanding these factors is crucial for comprehendingthe conflict's dynamics and finding viable solutions.

The recent events of the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan in 2021 have sparked significant inquiries and concerns about the effectiveness of the American regime's efforts in the country. This concluding chapter aimed to critically analyze the circumstances surrounding the resurgence of the Taliban and assess whether the American regime's involvement can be considered a failure.

The decision by the United States to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan marked a pivotal moment in the country's political landscape, setting the stage for the Taliban's return to power. By examining the motivations and consequences of this decision, we have gained valuable insights into the American regime's engagement in Afghanistan. The preparations made by the Taliban leading up to their takeover played a decisive role in their success. Their military strategies, alliances, resource management, propaganda, and recruitment efforts showcased their resilience and determination. This analysis has illuminated the challenges faced by the United State and its allies in countering the resurgence of the Taliban.

Through the third chapter of this study, it was highlighted that the sequence of events during the Taliban's takeover revealed vulnerabilities within the Afghan security apparatus, raising questions about the effectiveness of the United State support and training initiatives. Understanding the specific tactics employed by the Taliban provides important insights into

the strengths and weaknesses of the American approach. The international response to the Taliban's takeover has varied among different actors. Analyzing diplomatic, political, and humanitarian reactions has allowed us to evaluate the level of support and commitment toward the American objectives in Afghanistan.

Examining the new policies implemented by the Taliban after their takeover has shed light on the extent to which their actions align with the principles and objectives of the American regime's mission. Assessing their stance on media and communication, women's rights, education, and their relationship with NGOs has provided an understanding of the Taliban's governance.

Based on the analysis of these crucial elements, it is evident that the American regime change's mission in Afghanistan encountered numerous challenges and obstacles. While there were notable achievements in certain areas, the ultimate outcome of the Taliban's takeover raises doubts about the overall success of the American regime's efforts. However, it is important to admit that evaluating the success or failure of the American regime change's involvement in Afghanistan was a complex undertaking. It requires considering multiple factors, decisions, and actions that contributed to the outcome. An assessment of strengths and weaknesses was necessary to draw well-informed conclusions.

To confirm our hypothesis. This study began with the assumption that the United States' attempt to overthrow the Taliban by militarily and politically invading Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks, despite spending a fortune and the loss of thousands of lives for 20 years straight, has completely failed to accomplish its intended goals; the Taliban is back with their extroverted uncontrollable rule over the Afghan people.

In conclusion, the events surrounding the Taliban's takeover in 2021 and the subsequent implications for the United Stat have emphasized the importance of conducting a critical evaluation. The final chapter has provided an analysis of the key elements surrounding the resurgence of the Taliban and assessed the degree to which the American

regime's mission in Afghanistan failed in achieving its intended goals. Through a systematic examination of these elements, we came to the conclusion that the hypothesis of this thesis is correct, and that United States intervention in Afghanistan was a total failure with almost none of its purposes being reached; except that it removed Al Qaida which was the basic terrorist group threatening World Security according to the United State Despite this fact, the Taliban is not different from Al Qaida, it is actually replacing the existence of Al Qaida in Afghanistan, this is shown in its extremist policies and the chaos and unstable state that Afghanistan has reached recently. It is also worth mentioning that up to this day, there were no significant news about any terrorist attacks launched by the Taliban against any other country including the United States, however, this gives no guarantee that it will not take place any time soon in the future.

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