



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Stability in Afghanistan: Ramifications for Pakistan**

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
<b>Received:</b> March 04 2022 <b>Accepted:</b> June 25, 2022 <b>Online:</b> June 27, 2022	The objective of this study is to investigate the Stability in Afghanistan and its ramifications for Pakistan. The United States departed from Afghanistan territory on the 30 <sup>th</sup> of August 2021 and closed a chapter of the war against terrorism that started in 2001. This study was conducted through the use of a semi-structured interview technique and then thematic analysis to find out the outcomes. The study concludes that stability in Afghanistan has many ramifications for Pakistan. Furthermore, that how the Taliban are acting after taking power in Afghanistan? It highlighted how might economic collapse in Afghanistan affect the security and stability of the country and the potential for mass displacement? With a discussion as to what are the possible measures necessary for the stability of the Taliban government in Afghanistan? This study recommends that Afghan's Government has to improve human rights situation so the international community accept them and maintain peace in Afghanistan as well.
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**Introduction**

As dawn broke over the misty mountains that ring the city on Aug. 15, Kabul had suddenly become an island — the last bastion of a government that the United States had supported at a cost of trillions of dollars and thousands of lives. (Susannah George, 2021) The power gained by the Taliban by defeating the United States in Afghanistan and establishing an Islamic Emirates has many implications for the whole regional stability and peace. The Taliban return was a backdrop of an agreement signed between the Taliban and the United States in Doha in February 2020. After this agreement, it was questioned how the Afghan forces survived and resisted the Taliban but it was surprising how swiftly it happened. It is predicted that the Taliban would take at least two years the recovery of economy and infrastructure if the international community accepted their government. The failure of governance will lead to disastrous results for Afghanistan and the regional states as well. (Hussain, 2021)

The United States spend almost two trillion dollars for the state of Afghanistan since 2001, but the surrender of the Afghan military and law enforcement agencies within no time exposed the United States and its allies' claims regarding the strength of the law and order forces. The reasons for this failure counted a lot and the escape of the former United States supported Ashraf Ghani needed a thorough deep study. Recently, the Taliban government is not accepted by any state in the world and caused a huge problem in

Afghanistan. The international community gave statements as they look the policies of the Taliban regarding human rights protection in Afghanistan and then decided on the future of the Taliban government. (Noor, 2021)

In this paper, a qualitative research method would be used to outline the stability of Afghanistan and the Taliban's government and its ramifications for Pakistan by using a semi-structured interview technique to investigate the views of professionals in Pakistan. This paper will also be highlighted how the Taliban acted since in power and any economic collapse in Afghanistan how affects security and stability in the state beyond the border to Pakistan. It analyzed how the economic collapse lead to another mass displacement issue in the shape of migrants and what steps should be taken by the United States and other world communities to support the Afghanistan government.

## **Literature Review**

Afghanistan has never been a peaceful country; it has for centuries been a conflicted state with warrior groups. That presents a complex situation because of its geopolitical locations, trans-ethnic populations, and rivalry among its neighbors. (Akhtar, 2008) Afghanistan remained unstable throughout its history due to the foreign powers' involvement and interference in state affairs. Some scholars think that its geographical importance caused the foreign force's involvement in state affairs. (Thoma, 2017) The end of the war in Afghanistan mainly depends on the interests of the main stakeholders including the Afghan government, the Taliban, and the United States. These stakeholders are mainly involved in the crisis and responsible for the final way out of this war. The withdrawal of the United States forces and NATO troops eventually raised many questions about the future of Afghanistan and its stability as well as peace for the region (Muzaffar, et. al, 2019) (Muzaffar, et. al, 2021) & (Easterly, 2021)

Throughout its history, Pakistan could not design any solid strategy to deal with the insurgency factor in the Pashtun belt along the border side. The existing strategies could not bring fruitful results and Pakistan paid a huge cost in the shape of military operations in these areas. Some researchers asked the question that why the policy of Pakistan to deal with these types of insurgent groups is not clear and the armed forces have weak equipment and intelligence to deal with these insurgents due to the fact of good and bad Taliban factors. (Leah, 2008) In the Chinese government's planning the BRI project included Pakistan and Afghanistan as important players and may be connected with the both in future through railway lines. This project started from the Gwadar port towards China by road networks and did not allow any power to stop it without the consent of the concerned countries. (Yellinek, 2017)

Geographically both the countries Pakistan and Afghanistan are linked with each other and share common borders, culture, religion, and history. The former Afghan President Hamid Karzai said about the relationship between both the countries as "conjoined and inseparable twins." In the same way, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif stated that "enemies of Afghanistan cannot be friends of Pakistan," showing the strong bilateral ties between both the states and leadership consent. (Mairaj-ul-Hamid, 2017) The economic linkage between Pakistan and Afghanistan covers the exchange of services, goods, ideas, capital, and persons. The other exchanges as natural resources on a commercial basis as coal, fuels, and minerals have great potential. The potential of this exchange may be in the context of official or unofficial and legal or illegal type. (Zingel, 2014) & (Muzaffar, et. al. 2021)

The role of Pashtun-nationalist and Islamist political parties in fostering peace in Afghanistan is important because of their long-term, multilayered ties with political actors in Afghanistan, the similar experience of democratic interruption, and illiberal politics, and

their comparatively higher resilience against non-democratic forces. (Batool, 2021) In South Asia, the dynamics in Afghanistan have been for the most part a reflection of the India-Pakistan proxy war, further exacerbated by Afghanistan's landlocked status and an environment of conflict and political instability. (Bhatnagar, 2021) Looking back at the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Evans said a "noble ambition" to reshape the politics of the region was overambitious in retrospect. (Quinn, 2021)

The economic failure in Afghanistan contributed to many problems for the proper functioning of state affairs. The foreign funding from the United States and other donors counted for more than 95 percent of the GDP of Afghanistan. The Afghanistan government must increase its domestic revenues and sources for the better life of its citizens as well as for government spending. In case of failure, it leads to the collapse of the state and more dependency on opium. In the same way, the population rapid growth caused more stress on the government resources and they need more education for the people and a robust economy. (Harpst, 2014)

In the regional context, the role of South Asian countries is also important when considering any strategy to improve the security situation, as ups and downs during the last 40 years have made Afghanistan an issue that is affecting the whole region at large; terrorism, militancy, extremism, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and border management and migration issues, etc. (Rahman, 2015) The West has frozen aid and Afghanistan's assets and other players have stepped into the gap and provided what the country needed in the present situation. The U.S. Russia, China, and South Asian states needed to step up and do more in Afghanistan for regional peace and stability. (Groot, 2021) The issue of Afghanistan is very alarming and maybe not be resolved by any single state. The input and assistance from all segments of the world community are needed to support Afghanistan's cause. The role of neighboring countries is very crucial and can assist the United States in a safe exit. (Ponzio, 2019)

Regionally, the blame game of cross-border intrusions has ensued, with massive fallout on inter-state relations. The South Asian states have suffered from a lack of cordiality and goodwill in neighborly relations. Political violence and unrest harbored ill-will and negativity, creating a spiral of suspicions and a lack of warmth in Pakistan-Iran, Afghan-Pakistan, and India-Pakistan relations. (Imran, 2019) Islamabad also seeks to fend off Afghan claims on Pakistani territory, which have been a consistent thorn in bilateral relations given that no Afghan regime has ever accepted the legitimacy of the border drawn by the British in 1893, the so-called Durand Line. (Chalk, 2012)

Most of the researchers agreed that in the last fourteen years that the presence of western forces in South Asia promoted extremism and terrorist organizations in the security architecture of South-Central Asian countries. These terrorist organizations created a global threat throughout the world and gain their objectives through terror. (Khan, 2016) The stability in Afghanistan is linked with the security of the Central Asian region and South Asian region as radicalization and drug smugglers have safe places in Afghanistan. During the cold war period, the United States supported the Taliban in Afghanistan through Pakistan by all means of finance and training camps and other terrorist outlets in the Central Asian region as well to expel the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. (Lal, 2006)

The Pakistan policy related to Afghanistan must inculcate the views and ideas from all spheres of society like the economist, security advisors, and academic professionals. The routine dialogue between the countries resulted in a positive direction in the past. The Afghanistan policy as formulated by Pakistan then must follow it in true letter and spirit. This improve the cordial relationship between both the countries and proved a milestone in the way of prosperity and peace. (Shabbir, 2016) The security apparatus in Afghanistan

consider both the part as the Taliban factor and the Afghanistan security forces. The security dialogue about Afghanistan's future cannot be successful without the absence of any stakeholders and resulted in the shape of spillover of terrorism throughout the state. (Dudgeon, 2014)

The state affairs in Afghanistan can only be sound footed if it is based on a realist approach toward the modernism and democratic norms that existed in the society. This will strengthen the state institution and rule of law in the state. The society in Afghanistan only prospered when the citizens had access to fundamental human rights and especially women's rights. (Group, 2009) After the departure of the United States from Afghanistan, some people leave the country due to the fear of poverty and insurgency. However, most of the people stayed in the state with the increasing risk of their survival. As Afghanistan survived for a long time on the aid and assistance of the United States and to some extent, the US tried to build the infrastructure and better governance by fulfilling basic human rights. (Cordesman, 2020)

### **Material and Methods**

This study was conducted through the use of a qualitative research method to find out the outcomes from different professionals regarding the stability in Afghanistan and its ramification for Pakistan. This study was conducted through different library sites and professionals as the population for study, with different qualifications and experience basis. The study was exploratory to gain a depth of understanding through thematic analysis regarding the Stability in Afghanistan ramifications for Pakistan. For this research, a semi-structured interview technique was applied for the required data collection, and the time calculated as average for the interview was confined to almost 30 minutes. The thematic analysis was used to prepare the theme for each question and the identity of the participants remained hidden by their consent.

This study relies on the liberal approach to International Relations, which is based on cooperation, peace, and stability as the core rudiments of the liberal school of thought. Liberalism theory explains the freedom of rights of any individual and believes in the concept that humans are good. Liberalism theory is based on the grounds of human rights, stability of society, peace, freedom of speech, and all deserved rights under the laws. The duty to accept others' rights and gave a space of respect is also an ethical aspect of this theory. (Doyle, 1983) This study through the parameters of liberalism will see the outcomes in the Afghanistan case as to how human rights are linked with the prosperity of the people in the state.

**Table 1**  
**Participant's information**

<b>Participants' generated code</b>	<b>Professional experience (Years)</b>	<b>Qualification</b>
P1	6	Master
P2	8	MPhil
P3	10	P.HD
P4	12	P.HD

### **Results and Discussion**

**Q. What would be the implications of US withdrawal and Taliban takeover in Afghanistan?**

**Thematic analysis**

Most of the participants argued that after the attack of the United States in Afghanistan in 2001, the security issues created for the whole region and especially Pakistan faced terrorism issues in the shape of terrorist attacks. In the same way, a chance of militants' again activities in the state especially the Tehrik-Taliban Pakistan and other terrorist groups. Pakistan's official statements that the Taliban government should protect the fundamental human rights and the rights of women and ensure the territory of Afghanistan would never be used for any terrorist activity against any state. The participants also analyzed that after the departure of the United States from Afghanistan the pro-Indian supported government in Afghanistan ended the Indian influence and interference in the state affairs of Afghanistan.

### **Q. How Taliban are acting after taking power in Afghanistan?**

#### **Thematic analysis**

The majority of the participants debated that the withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan and the Taliban taking over the policies the Taliban shows that they tried to establish a good relationship with neighboring countries and others based on mutual respect. The Taliban representative in his speeches emphasizes on the world community to accept their government as they fulfill the fundamental rights and other needed steps in the state. The Taliban government also offered the states especially the United States and European countries to function their embassies in the Kabil. The Taliban government seemed active to start political diplomacy with the neighboring and regional states including China, Russia, India, Iran, and Pakistan. The Taliban government tried to control the government machinery in Afghanistan and implemented the Sharia laws.

### **Q. How might economic collapse in Afghanistan affect the security and stability of the country and the potential for mass displacement?**

#### **Thematic analysis**

More reviews of the participants revealed that the economic growth cannot be moved in parallel with the insecurity and the political instability in Afghanistan. After the Taliban government in Afghanistan, the state jumped into the economic and financial issues that destabilized the business and leads to extreme poverty, inflation, unemployment, and undermine the writ of the newly established Taliban government in Afghanistan. The economic collapse may be very severe as the hospitals without electricity, shortage of beds, and unpaid medical staff, teachers and civil servants revealed the sorry state of the picture. The people are selling their assets for survival and the middle class the most affected lead to the fight for its survival.

### **Q. What are the possible measures necessary for the stability of the Taliban government in Afghanistan?**

#### **Thematic analysis**

All the participants wondered about the policies of the United States as the US spend trillions of dollars on the war and after departure leave millions of people in the fate of survival. The United States must release the frozen assets of the Afghanistan state on an urgent basis and support the people through several assistance programs for the prosperity of the people. The United Nations should start the appeal for assistance to the Afghanistan people and camp in the Kabil till the situation is normalized and monitor all the assistance programs. Pakistan supported the Afghanistan state throughout history and is a single state in the world that host millions of Afghans in the past. Pakistan should further improve trade and business with the Afghanistan government and enhanced the assistance programs for their Afghan brothers. The General Assembly of the UN unanimously moved a resolution

for the assistance of Afghanistan on humanitarian grounds and to accept the Taliban government by the world community.

### **Q. How is the stability in Afghanistan have many implications for Pakistan?**

#### **Thematic analysis**

Most of the participants argued that Pakistan shares a huge border with Afghanistan and forever remained a security threat in the border areas. Pakistan has a Durand line issue with Afghanistan and Pakistan fences the border with huge amounts to reduce the crossing points on the border from hundreds to under fifty to control the security and smuggling issues. After the 9/11 attack of the United States on Afghanistan the border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan remained the haven for the terrorist groups as Pakistan started military operations but these easily escaped to Afghanistan. Pakistan hosted millions of Afghan refugees which created security issues for the state in the past. In the present situation if any instability due to economic collapse in Afghanistan appeared can be caused another migration of millions of refugees to Pakistan and Afghanistan become again a safe place for terrorist organizations.

### **Q. What are the prospects for continued Pakistan assistance to Afghanistan?**

#### **Thematic analysis**

The majority of the participants suggested that after the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor a huge potential benefit from this corridor opened for Afghanistan. The relationship between both the countries can be further strengthened through the trade and connectivity of this corridor. As the Turkish authorities also showed their interest in this corridor through the Afghanistan route towards Pakistan and then China. In the same way the regional states especially China emphasized changing Afghanistan from a buffer state to an economic corridor linkage state. In this way, both the states can take benefit from this corridor and trade between Central Asia and Europe. These types of initiatives eventually caused economic stability in Afghanistan and lead to peace in Pakistan.

#### **Discussion**

The United States attacked the territory of Afghanistan in 2001 against the war on terrorism. Pakistan become the ally of the United States in this war and offered its support to the US. During the cold war period, Pakistan supported the United States' stance and assisted the Taliban in Afghanistan against Russia. After the 9/11 attack, Pakistan supported the United States against the Taliban government in Afghanistan, which leads to support for the Taliban stance from within the Pakistan territory in the KPK border areas. In all this situation terrorist attacks started against Pakistan from terrorist outlets and caused a great security threat for the Pakistan state. Pakistan started military operations against these terrorist organizations and lost thousands of lives and billions of economic losses. Against this backdrop, after the departure of the United States from Afghanistan, Pakistan authorities did not want to look at Afghanistan again destabilizing or economic collapse as eventually, it caused suffering for Pakistan in the shape of refugee crisis and insecurity in the border areas.

The strategical failure of the United States and the Indian influence in Afghanistan caused a new leadership role for Pakistan to lead this region as a middle power under the support of China. This is why Pakistan hosted the special session of the OIC in Islamabad to highlight the Afghanistan issue in the Muslim block and enforce the world to accept the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Pakistan delegations visited Afghanistan several times and enforced the Afghan authorities to maintain the law and order and safeguard fundamental human rights as the basic condition by the majority of the states to accept the

Taliban government in Afghanistan. The Taliban changed their policies as compared to their previous tenure and strongly believe in a healthy relationship with the other states. The Taliban authorities emphasized the states to reopen their embassies in the Kabil again and they assured the security measures.

The economic condition of Afghanistan after the departure of the United States was paralyzed due to the huge support of the US and its allies in the more than 95 share of the GDP of Afghanistan. The local resources and revenues of the Afghanistan state are not enough to run the state affairs safely even the hospitals faced a shortage of basic medicine and unpaid medical and civil staff. The United States freeze billions of dollars of Afghanistan in their banks without any justification. This type of situation caused many bad effects on the people as the poverty and inflation jumped and people sold and started selling their assets for the sake of survival. The middle class disappeared and the poverty line index increased day by day may lead to the collapse of the economy or civil war in the future.

The United States must review their policies on humanitarian grounds as if they can spend trillions of dollars on the war against Afghanistan and why not in the present situation when it compelled Afghanistan towards civil war. The United States should release the assets of Afghanistan on an urgent basis and start humanitarian basis assistance programs in Afghanistan. In the same way, the other states and world organizations take steps for this cause to support the Afghan people as they needed support. The United Nations plays its role to assist the Afghan government through its assistance program. The neighboring countries should improve trade and business with the Afghan government to engage the state respectfully.

Pakistan and Afghanistan can mutually balance their relationship and resolved the issue of the Durand Line peacefully. The cultural ties between both countries are very strong and provided the opportunity to understand each other issues. Pakistan can save its dollars by trading with Afghanistan in rupees. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor can also improve the trade route from Pakistan toward Central Asia and Europe through Afghanistan. The military training of Afghan forces and scholarships for Afghan students in Pakistan can further strengthen the bilateral relationship. The Afghanistan government should obey the commitments mentioned during the Doha agreement between the United States and the Taliban.

## **Conclusion**

Conclusively, Afghanistan faced multiple issues after the departure of the United States forces especially related to economic and security issues. These issues were created due to factors such as the huge contribution of the United States to the budget of the Afghanistan and very short revenue and resources of the state. The freezing assets of the Afghanistan state in the United States banks contributed another fuel to the fire. The present situation is very crucial for the stability of the whole region as hospitals lack life-saving medicine, unpaid medical and civil staff, people sold assets for their survival, and many more, but all of these lead to a situation of economic collapse or civil war in the state.

The United States, Russia, China, Iran, India, and Pakistan should forward their step to assist the Taliban government to save the lives of people. The United Nations play a crucial role and camped in the Kabil till the situation normalized. Pakistan's response to this critical situation is extraordinary as arranged at the OIC meeting in Islamabad to highlight the issue of Afghanistan in the second greatest forum in the world. Pakistani delegations several times visited Kabil to assist their Afghan brothers through different assistance programs. Pakistan is trying to continuously engage Afghanistan in trade and

move the point of isolation from Afghanistan. Pakistan managed its political and security ties with Afghanistan to gain its strategical objectives in the region. The regional powers like China, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, and Russia planned to change the status of Afghanistan from a buffer state to an economic hub through economic corridor linkage from China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan towards Central Asia and Europe. The Chinese government also assisted the Taliban government in Afghanistan as the BRI project enhanced the world zones through Afghanistan. Turkey also assisted due to the factor of future linkage in the BRI project. The most important role played by Pakistan as it shared a huge border with Afghanistan and focused on stability in Afghanistan as it leads to peace and prosperity throughout the region. Afghan's Government has to improve human rights situation so the international community accept them and maintain peace in Afghanistan as well.



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