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## US WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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### **ABSTRACT**

The departure of the United States from Afghanistan in the 21st century signifies a substantial shift in the geopolitical environment and in U.S. foreign policy. The withdrawal of U.S. forces came after 20 years' initiation by the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 which ended the United States longest war in August 2021. This article investigates the main contributing factors that arrived at the decision to withdraw that included domestic political pressure, political and security recalibrations, and changes to the security environment. This article will also examine and analyze the ramifications from the withdrawal relating to the rapid collapse of the Afghan government and the resulting humanitarian crisis. This research examines the impacts of US withdrawal from Afghanistan on south Asian countries. The Methodology of this research will be mostly qualitative based on secondary data which will help to examine the withdrawal impacts on Afghanistan.

**Key Words:** Taliban, Afghanistan, Withdrawal, Al-Qaida

### **Introduction**

Afghanistan brags a tall history of misfortune of awareness of vitality and quality in standing up to remote attack. It is for this reason that it has been alluded to as the burial ground of realms. due to the cold war, the US of a of Afghanistan has ceaselessly been a locale of control for outside nations just like the past Soviet Union and the US of America, and due to the ones inner wars with the Afghan inner strengths, as well as inner ethnic and devout contrasts and as a result, uncertainty. Murders and assaults had happened, which have been remunerated as compensations for wounds and harms for decades. He has put the outlandish within the society of Afghanistan. These sorts of variables in conjunction with the nonappearance of instructive offices, devout resources and as a result the absence of awareness and edification most of the Afghan individuals give a reasonable period for intercession of outside powers beside the rise of radical Islamic endeavors. The activities of Sept. 11 and the Taliban's refusal to hand over Container loaded to America driven to their removal from power in 2001. The Taliban's



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strategy tried with the help of this institution is to at the same time upgrade the development of have an impact on and development dangers within the shape of armed force operations, challenging the government of Afghanistan and remote strengths, essentially the us, to show their vitality. The Taliban battled to reestablish control in Afghanistan utilizing strategies exceptionally comparable to sporadic wars that are item of various shifted imaginative and agitators developments (Yawar, 2024)

Following the terrorist assaults that passed off on Sep 11, 2001, the US began its military undertaking in Afghanistan as an immediate response to the threats. whilst the George W Bush management judged that there has been an instantaneous want to lessen the threats posed by al Qaeda, they moved quickly to release Operation Enduring Freedom in October of 2001, as outlined by Mark R. Folsie, who defined the project to “do away with the Taliban from power wreck al-Qaeda, find bin weighted down and forestall terrorists from the use of Afghanistan as a shelter” those were the primary targets. In the course of the early levels of the operation, it changed into characterized by way of achievement, as U.S. forces, with the help of allied troops and local Afghan combatants, hastily displaced the Taliban from their positions. Within the path of the task, the Taliban and al-Qaeda management withdrew to the mountainous areas of Pakistan, which resulted in the venture becoming an extended war. Nearly right now, the initial counterterrorism operation transformed right into a comprehensive initiative with the goals of stabilizing Afghanistan, ensuring the safety of its government, and preventing the resurgence of extremist corporations. Over the course of the primary few years following the invasion, the us navy operations had been mainly targeted on removing the remnants of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. However, as time went on, the battle developed right into a complicated counterinsurgency warfare. No matter their preliminary defeat, the Taliban resumed their efforts to regroup and adapt, and by means of the middle of the 2000s, they'd begun a non-stop and adverse insur (Jamshidi, 2024)

### **Statement of Problem**

The withdrawal of United States military forces from Afghanistan in August 2021 signified the end of a two-decade long conflict, but sparked a multitude of political, humanitarian, and security new dilemmas to face. Despite massive spending on military operations, institution-building, and development aid, the rapid collapse of the Afghan government, and the breakneck re-engagement of the Taliban, raises fundamental issues about the effectiveness and sustainability of U.S. foreign interventions. This sequence of events not only represented a seismic shift in U.S. foreign policy, but also had implications for regional stability, counter-terrorism, and the legitimacy of Western alliances. Accordingly, this article is concerned with examining the factors and ramifications surrounding the U.S. withdrawal, including, issues of the mismatch between military objectives and political reality, the fragility of the Afghan state, and ultimately the long-term consequences that resulted for international relations and the impact on global perceptions of U.S. leadership in the 21st Century. This study will explore those problems comprehensively, imparting insights to aid policymakers in addressing the evolving demanding situations posed through the U.S.-Taliban peace deal.

### **Research Questions**

1-How did the withdrawal affect the security situation in Afghanistan, particularly regarding the Taliban's resurgence?



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### Research Methodology

The Methodology of this research report will be mostly qualitative, which will help to examine the impacts of withdrawing on Afghanistan, with a focus on Taliban insurgency. It will also examine how this peace agreement will affect Afghanistan politically, socially, and economically after it is signed. This research will be performed with the help of secondary data, which will be collected by academic journal, articles, and books.

### Research Objectives

- 1-Analyze the impact of withdrawal on U.S. counterterrorism capabilities and policies in South Asia.
- 2-Analyze how the withdrawal supports long-term goals of reducing defense expenditures.

### Literature Review

In this article “US Hegemonic Power and Future Prospects in Global Politics: A Study of the US Withdrawal from Afghanistan” by Anosha Iqbal Butt. This explains that Global War on Terrorism does not eliminate the threat from terrorism, but it has reduced the risk of future attacks on US territory. However, in his apartment, extremism is on the rise. The United States is experiencing the threat of white supremacists and right-wing extremists. The US has bombed \$1 trillion in the GWOT ignoring all other threats to US hegemony. It is very ironic that the US reduced the chances of home terrorism while creating a volatile Middle East, Afghanistan, and Pakistan (Butt, 2024).

In the article “US Taliban Doha Accord: A Compromise” by Muhammad Muzaffar, Syed Tanveer Ali Shah, Sidra Karamat. It aims to explore how the rapid peace agreement has weakened the Afghan government and reflects the detrimental zero-sum game between the U.S. and the Taliban. This accord signifies a major advancement in a conflict that has spanned nearly a decade with many desiring a peaceful Afghanistan free from terrorism. The current situation in Afghanistan raises critical questions among strategists regarding the nature of the agreement. Although all parties involved expressed optimism about the prospect of peace returning to Afghanistan various officials could not mask their concerns about the durability of the agreement and the likelihood of achieving lasting peace (Mazaffar, Shah, & Karamat, 2020).

In an article “US-Taliban Talks for Afghan Peace: Complexities Galore” by Ashok Behuria, Yaqoob UL Hassan and Sanya sroha. It clarifies that Strategic analysts in the region and abroad are highly keen on the ongoing debate between the United States and the Taliban. US appears to be keen to find a middle ground that there are indications the Taliban are firming up their position. In an effort to avoid the all-against-all scenario that happened after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union threatening future peace and stability. It is important to engage various ethnic groups, regions, and armed groups of all persuasions including opposition groups within the Taliban due to the extremely fractious nature of Afghan politics and the widespread culture of miss governance, corruption, anarchy, and violence. (Behuria, Hassan, & Saroha, 2019).

In an article “The US Taliban Deal and Expected US Exist from Afghanistan: Impacts on South Asian Militant Landscape” by Abdul Basit. It clarifies that the progressing peace handle in Afghanistan and the anticipated US withdrawal from the nation are most likely to diminish worldwide jihadism but reestablish neighborhood and territorial activist designs in South Asia. It is hence less plausible that a post-US Afghanistan will once more be the center of worldwide jihadism, indeed because it is anticipated to be chaotic



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and unsteady. It can be said that, barring many AQ survivors and a few warriors and sympathizers of the Islamic State of Khorasan (ISK), the nonappearance of a huge enemy within the frame of Russia and the US will debilitate remote jihadists from aiming to the Afghan theater (Basit, 2020).

This article "Afghan Peace Process: Prospects and Challenges" by Amir Junaid, Yeldaiz Fatima Shah, Dr. Ghulam Mustafa. Afghan Peace Process: Prospects and Challenges" by Amir Junaid, Yeldaiz Fatima Shah, Dr. Ghulam Mustafa. It explains the involvement of major regional organizations such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and China, the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban appears to contain many uncertainties and inconsistencies that need to be resolved. Challenges that Afghanistan and Pakistan have faced since signing the agreement, while examining the impact of various terrorist activities, including the insurgents and Indian interests resulting from the conflict. It Examine the current political climate surrounding the peace process and the decision to withdraw US troops and make a deal with the Taliban. This peace plan is a desire that could have a major impact on Afghanistan or an overall strategy to achieve peace (Junaid, Shah, & Mustafa, 2021).

### **Historical Background**

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in the 21st century was the culmination of two decades of military, political, and diplomatic engagement that began in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. In retaliation for these raids, the United States, led by President George W. Bush, initiated Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001 with its chief aim as the eradication of al-Qaeda and overthrowing the Taliban regime that had given refuge to its leadership. The early invasion was quick and successful in overthrowing the Taliban regime, but it later grew into an extended operation to rebuild Afghanistan's political structure, economy, and military forces a process widely decried as "nation-building." As the war continued through the administrations of Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden, it had become the longest war in American history, claiming thousands of American and Afghan casualties and more than \$2 trillion. President Barack Obama tried to surge troops in 2009 to stabilize the nation, but eventually started to reduce American involvement. Donald Trump's administration tried direct talks with the Taliban, which led to the Doha Agreement of February 2020, which specified a conditional American withdrawal in return for Taliban counterterrorism guarantees. As President Joe Biden assumed office in 2021, he declared complete and unconditional U.S. troop withdrawal by September 11, 2021. The sudden fall of the Afghan government and military in August 2021 and the Taliban regaining power resulted in chaotic scenes at the airport in Kabul during the U.S. personnel and Afghan allies' evacuation. The withdrawal was a contentious conclusion to a 20-year war and set off international debate regarding the success of U.S. foreign policy and military involvement in the region.

### **Joint Declaration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States**

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) engaged the United States and NATO-backed coalition allies after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the US, starting in October of that year. The operation was one of counter-terrorism and sometimes counter-insurgency, aimed at both the killing and capture of Al Qaeda and other important Taliban members. It later became a nation-building mission, with coalition, UN, and NGO assistance to the Hamid Karzai government. The Taliban were ousted from



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governmental authority in 2002. The US redirected focus and redeployed forces to the Persian Gulf in anticipation of, and during, Operation Iraqi Freedom. Taliban militants participated in an ever more persistent insurgency during the 2000s and 2010s. The May 2011 targeted assassination of Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden resulted in a drawdown of OEF, NATO, and US troop presence, and the training for and subsequent transition of security operations to Afghan national forces.

While official US military operations closed in 2014 with the transition to Afghan national forces and the conclusion of OEF, Operation Freedom's Sentinel continued to include the US and a small contingent of coalition troops training and supporting national forces, and the US continued utilizing drones and missile attacks, with minimal troop deployment. This was succeeded in the late 2010s by a further Taliban revival of initiatives and attacks, and by a growing presence of the Islamic State. In 2018 and later, the Trump government negotiated peace negotiations with the Taliban to withdraw from the US from Iraq. The Doha Agreement, whose full name is the Joint Declaration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan, was signed on 29 February 2020.

It concerned primarily the United States and the Taliban, as signatories to four conditions. First, that Afghanistan would not be a safe haven for future international terrorist organizations that might endanger the United States, enabling continued assistance to Afghan national troops and US force use against such a threat. Second, that US troop levels would be reduced to 8,600 within 135 days of the agreement, with complete withdrawal by May of 2021. Third, the Taliban would participate in the intra-Afghan dialogue for a political settlement. Fourth, a 'permanent and comprehensive ceasefire' to be implemented by both the Taliban and the US. The scenario was already precarious, with the Taliban controlling the majority of Afghanistan's rural regions and political power across the nation. The Afghan national government, which is headed by President Ashraf Ghani, also disapproved of certain conditions the US and Taliban had agreed upon thereunder, including, particularly, the initial release of 5k Taliban prisoners. Taliban attacks resumed soon after the agreement, but the US offered during 2020 only token air strike support for Afghan national forces, according to the agreement's further terms.

On 1 May 2020, a year ahead of the US timeline for the withdrawal of its presence from the nation, one of the analysts summed up the position of the Taliban as one of slowly encircling all of Afghanistan's major cities. Under the backdrop of the attacks against Afghan national troops and the security situation worsening, in July 2020, the Republican-dominated US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee voted 45–11 to pass an amendment to slow down the Trump administration's pace of withdrawal of US troops. The amendment was an unusual bipartisan political declaration, but had very little effect on the withdrawal rate. The 5k Taliban inmates were released in September 2020, and in contrast, by January 2021, when President Biden took office, only 2500 US troops were left in the country, though the number of security contractors in-country was probably twice that figure at the time.

The Biden administration in Spring 2021 re-examined the Doha deal, but made only one main alteration to its terms a postponement of the withdrawal from May to 1 September 2021. A Taliban offensive during the period took control of most of Afghanistan's cities and regions. The Afghan national security forces lost territory with only sporadic US air support, and had little local political backing across the country. The security situation worsened quickly, such that by mid-August 2021, images of Afghan civilians flocking into Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, trying to flee. The evacuation included



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more than 124k US citizens, Afghan allies, and diplomats in the final days of the US presence in Afghanistan. By September 1, there were no longer any US troops in the country (Heinze & Steele, 2025).

### **Nation-Building in Afghanistan**

Nation-building in Afghanistan has been an strenuous and complex prepare, characterized by authentic, ethnic, and social nuances. The outside powers' top-down methodology, such as the US and NATO, were decided to build state educate from the exterior, within the primary past the scattered and divided state of Afghan society. The topography of the nation, with its inaccessible towns and sloping landscape, moreover complicated endeavors at nation-building. The coexistence of distinctive ethnic bunches, tribes, and social conventions presented the greatest challenge within the arrangement of a bound together national personality, since such personalities were implanted and not responsive to centralized control. The joining of Islamic fundamentalism and tribalism, and a disappointment to receive a common national personality, avoided great administration and the run the show of law.

Religious contrasts were too to fault for social clashes and pressures, anticipating the building of a joined together country. The collapse of past nation-building ventures underscores the require for a bottom-up and comprehensive approach that puts neighborhood support and traditions. To overcome such troubles and accomplish soundness, Afghanistan must esteem and keep up its differing social legacy and keep up an environment of shared national desires and standards. Building an coordinates Afghanistan will take maintained endeavors to work through the complexities of its history, topography, ethnic differences, and social flow. Afghanistan as we know it nowadays is made up of a few ethnic bunches, i.e., the Afghans being the as it were occupants of the same (Zazai, 2025).

The first step of referring to the whole country by its proper name, Afghanistan, refers to a type of monopoly of power that rejects the reality of fellow inhabitants of this region and subjects non-Afghans to Afghan identity. This is the reason why other ethnic communities have never been accepted by them. Something more universally recognized in Afghanistan than outside of it. Within the ethnic groups residing in this nation, this issue has given rise to division, divergence, and non-dependence. The Afghan right to leadership is an inalienable right of the Pashtuns, as claimed by Anwar Haq Ahadi, the former head of the ethnic party Afghan Mellat, who emphatically asserts that Pashtuns are the big brother of the country and will never accept anything.

### **New Interim Government of Taliban**

Afghanistan has a long history of lacking a concentration of power and resisting foreign aggression. For this reason, it has often been called the graveyard of empires. Since the bloodless battle, Afghanistan has consistently been a battleground for foreign powers, including the former Soviet Union and the United States. As a result of internal conflicts with Afghan forces, combined with ethnic and sectarian divisions, insecurity has become a persistent issue. For decades, there have been murders and rapes that remain unaddressed, with little compensation for victims. These circumstances have imposed severe challenges on Afghan society. Factors such as a lack of educational facilities and secular schools, coupled with a general lack of awareness among some segments of the Afghan population, have created an environment conducive to foreign intervention and the rise of extremist Islamic groups.

The events of September 11 and the Taliban's refusal to surrender Osama Bin Laden led



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to their ousting from power in 2001. The Taliban's strategy, supported by this organization, is to simultaneously expand their influence and present a growing threat through military operations, demanding that the Afghan government and foreign forces, particularly the US, demonstrate their strength. The Taliban has sought to regain power in Afghanistan using tactics typical of many other revolutionary and insurgent movements. The United States continually adjusts its foreign policy toward Afghanistan based on its geopolitical interests, the domestic agenda, the prevailing global structure, and the influence of rival nations in the region. Following the September 11 attacks, the relationship between Afghanistan and the US became comprehensive and strategic, covering all aspects of the relationship between the two countries.

The key issue in analyzing the war in Afghanistan is not whether the United States could have been more powerful in this conflict, but the reality that the US has strategic interests in its mission in Afghanistan. Therefore, the Taliban's re-establishment in 2021, coinciding with the withdrawal of US military forces from Afghanistan, can be considered a historical turning point in US foreign policy, given the developments in the West Asian, South Asian, and Central Asian regions under its influence. The US had adopted a policy of supporting the Afghan government and combating the Taliban militarily. This policy change provided the Taliban with the opportunity to reclaim authority.

Several reasons have been cited for the United States' decision to withdraw, according to realism theory, with the most significant being the need to curb China's growing influence in East Asia, failures in the fight against terrorism, the presence of regional powers, the high costs of military deployment, and negotiations with the Taliban, revealing differing opinions regarding the Afghan government. The United States can learn a lot about the responsibility for Afghanistan's failure, but many of them were primarily out of control of the United States (Yawar, 2024).

Numerous components incorporate political culture and posteriority at all levels of government, generally improvement, need of successful military and security strengths related with the government, and need of compelling government and legal frameworks at the neighborhood level. Nation. Both the Liberals and the traditionalists criticized the war in Afghanistan, depicting an unsavory future for America. Preservationists see the need of commitments that mispreserved the open and the US's worldwide obligation as the premise for the extreme disappointment of Barack Obama's arrangement in Afghanistan and the Magnanimous Party. Kabul's government arrangement needed a central government between the warriors and the military. In expansion to undesignated outside monetary assets and financial help to the Taliban, such as Pakistan, other sources of pay, counting the deal of drugs, may be suitable for mines and exchange get to. The American occupation contradicted the Taliban. The Joined together States envisioned that Afghanistan may become the source of fear based oppression through military viciousness, which triumph in Afghanistan would cruel overcome in fear mongering.

The only factor that gave Afghanistan the US presence was the fight against terrorism which demonstrated global legitimacy, and offensive realism formed the basis for American foreign policy, particularly in Afghanistan's Middle East. Qatar's Taliban agreed to develop a relationship with the group. The United States has much to learn about accountability for the situation in Afghanistan, though numerous aspects were largely outside its control. Various factors contributed to this, such as Afghanistan's fragmented political landscape, the underdevelopment in its government structures and national progress, inadequate military and security forces tied to the administration, the absence of effective local governance and judicial systems, internal ethnic and tribal



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conflicts, as well as the lack of a judicial framework for Afghanistan's reconstruction.

### **USA Support for Hamid Karzai**

The USA did not point to stay in Afghanistan for nation-building, however it still locked in within the country's inside things. At one point, the USA completely backed Hamid Karzai by giving backing for him as the pioneer of the between times government taking after the Taliban's evacuation from Kabul in 2001. Unexpectedly, amid the Bonn conference held in December 2001, about 80 percent of the participants favored Abdul Sattar Sirat, who had a place to the Uzbek ethnic minority. Western media highlighted his title as the plausible head of the between times government. The basis for the USA's back for Karzai was his association with the larger part ethnic bunch of Pashtuns. Basically, the USA was profoundly included in Afghanistan's inner flow, which included supporting the country's endeavors at nation-building. From 2001 forward, the USA kept up its nearness in Afghanistan under various legitimizations and proceeded to bolster the Afghan government and military. Its withdrawal in 2021 was not unexpected but or maybe a calculated methodology.

Furthermore, the USA fizzled to predict the chaos that its exit would trigger in Afghanistan. Obviously, the pictures of people frantically attempting to elude Afghanistan captured worldwide consideration. Such visuals, portraying conventional Afghans surging to the Kabul airplane terminal and gambling their lives to escape, stay striking in our recollections. The USA's choice to withdraw from Afghanistan took put in February 2020 after marking a peace understanding with the Taliban in Doha. Be that as it may, the arrangement prepare was not one or the other truly intra-Afghan nor comprehensive. Inquisitively, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's administration was prohibited from the dialogs, as the Taliban did not recognize it as a true blue substance. Eventually, the Taliban ousted the Ghani government in Kabul on Eminent 15, 2021, seized control of the city, and took over the government without earlier legal courses of action for control exchange with the Ghani-led Organization. Regularly, the nearness of outside troops in a country regularly prompts open discontent, however Afghanistan has experienced such mediations due to its diligent political insecurity.

The Soviet military mediation in Afghanistan in 1979 started the moment Cold War in worldwide legislative issues. The Soviet troops were sent in Afghanistan at the ask of the Afghan government to supply ideological bolster. In reaction, the USA chosen to arm the Afghan Mujahedeen against the Soviet powers. Also, Pakistan, as a cutting edge state, facilitated the Mujahedeen on its domain, whereas Saudi Arabia advertised money related backing amid the strife, and the USA clandestinely provided weapons to the anti-Soviet warriors in a collaborative exertion against the Ruddy Armed force. A few have contended that the USA's restriction to the Soviets was propelled by a crave for exact retribution taking after its vanquish in Vietnam. Taking after the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989, the USA surrendered its persuasive role in Afghanistan. This driven to a control vacuum that come about in gracious conflict and political clutter within the nation. Amid this riotous period, the Taliban risen, promising soundness and peace to the masses. Be that as it may, the Taliban before long found that it was challenging to apply control over all of Afghanistan due to its ethnic divisions and the capable warlords' refusal to follow to the manages of a single organization.

In reaction, the Joined together States decided to evacuate the Taliban from Kabul and dispense with Osama container Loaded, accomplishing both objectives. The Taliban administration was toppled in 2001, and Osama container Loaded was murdered in a exceptional military operation in Abbottabad, Pakistan, in May 2011. Be that as it may,



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the by and large taken a toll of two decades of military and financial inclusion within the Afghanistan strife for the USA measured to around \$2.3 trillion. In spite of this noteworthy consumption, the Taliban was not absolutely crushed. Nearby the fabric costs, the USA misplaced over 700 work force in Iraq and Afghanistan due to the post-9/11 struggle with the Taliban, and numerous veterans capitulated to suicid. In any case, the misfortune of Kabul in 2001 and canister Laden's passing did not decrease the assurance of the Taliban. They continued in their battle against remote strengths, seeing what they seen as puppet regimes as ill-conceived, instead of a genuine Afghan government. As within the past, the Taliban proceeded to appreciate clear bolster from Pakistan. Depleted from the delayed struggle in Afghanistan, the USA started mulling over withdrawal amid the Obama organization. After the possible exit, Afghanistan once once more fell beneath the control of the Taliban (Harshé & Tripathi, 2024).

### **US Withdrawal from Afghanistan**

With the victory in the presidency, Obama had the US withdraw from Iraq and create a more targeted policy towards Afghanistan. In this regard, the US sent more troops into Afghan land. With the death of Osama Bin Laden, Obama transitioned to transfer Afghanistan to its people under the Clear, Hold, Build, and Transfer policy. On 1st January 2015, the Resolute Support Mission began to concentrate on Afghan nation-building. Donald Trump changed his strategy towards South Asia and Afghanistan from a political settlement to a military one. Thus, on 19th September 2017, 3,000 additional US troops were deployed to Afghanistan with a total deployment of 14,000 troops present in the nation. In July 2018, the Trump Administration changed its policy with the wish to negotiate with the Taliban. The main demand of the Taliban was the withdrawal of foreign troops. The US also asked to keep Afghanistan out of International terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida and ISIS.

Tarrying on the talks for two years and nine rounds of negotiations, a joint statement was signed on 29th February 2020, in Qatar. Another agreement was signed between the US and the Afghan government in Doha, where both sides have agreed to attain peace in Afghanistan. Intra-Afghan negotiations were conducted officially on September 2020 in Doha. The talks were disrupted by the outbreak of violence by the Taliban against Afghan forces and civilians. Negotiations resumed in January but were halted because of the US election. In March 2021, new US President Joe Biden attempted to hold a conference in Turkey on interim government but the Taliban was not fazed. During the second part of the Global War on Terror in Afghanistan, the United States was taking a to-and-fro policy. President Obama intended to bring an end to the Afghanistan war but was unable to reach an agreement. Donald Trump closed the Agreement, an unsecured agreement whereas Joe Biden turned the withdrawal into a reality.

The Obama administration decided in 2014 to withdraw from Afghanistan but instead initiated the Resolute Support Mission in 2015 to enhance the state framework of Afghanistan. The Trump administration went for peace talks with the Taliban in 2018. With President Biden entering office, the Intra-Afghan talks had yet to agree. Intra-Afghan talks were kept intact to the previous peace deal, which occurred between the Trump administration and the Taliban. All the forces left Afghanistan on 30th August 2021, along with the fall of the Afghan Security Forces and the democratic system. Following withdrawal, controversy began regarding whether US power was diminishing or unmatched.

Daniel Kurtz argued in Foreign Affairs that the Global War on Terror has failed to eradicate the specter of terrorism. However, it has managed to lower the threat of terrorist



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attacks on American soil in the future. Still, at home, extremism has heightened. The US is facing threats from white supremacists and far-right extremists. The US has showered trillions of dollars on its GWOT while neglecting all other emerging threats to the US hegemony. The issues that the world is currently confronting have evolved while the US remains 20 years behind the world. On the other hand, the US has managed to undermine the terror groups so that they are not able to resurge with the same intensity. The technological revolution has enabled companies to monitor data and block extremist websites. It is rather ironic that the US has diminished the chance of terrorism at its doorstep while creating an unstable Middle East, Afghanistan, and Pakistan (Butt, 2024). The objectives of the Global War on Terror contradicted each other over the years. When President Bush declared to broaden the scope of GWOT by invading Iraq in 2003, even its supporters were shocked. They did not desire to be in wars at the same time in two countries. The occupation of Iraq gave a chance to Al-Qaeda and the Taliban to reorganize themselves. When Obama withdrew American troops from Iraq, the power vacant was filled by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The withdrawal from Afghanistan left the Taliban as the winners of the nation. Bush initially defined war as putting an end to terrorism and, afterward, asserted that the spread of democracy and American values in Afghanistan. Joe Biden, who contributed to a premature withdrawal from Afghanistan, stated that the US never had any plans of nation-building in Afghanistan. Hence, the withdrawal from Afghanistan is a significant incident in world history and US history.

### **Return of Taliban in Afghanistan**

With the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the country's official name is the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, where the nation was once again in control in August 2021 was a landmark year in the history of the country and ushered in a new era in its international relations. The complexity, problems, and potential defining Afghanistan's interaction with the international community under the Taliban are at the forefront of international discourse and diplomacy. It had been over two decades since Afghanistan had been an issue of focus in the international sphere, largely due to its participation in the U.S.-led Global War on Terror. The series of events that culminated in the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan has had far-reaching effects, both on Afghanistan and on global actors who would decide its destiny. The Taliban, having been isolated and an outcast in the international community during their last stint of rule in the late 1990s, now find themselves at the helm of a nation that requires international engagement for survival and stability.

The global community is trying to navigate the intricacies of having to confront a Taliban-held government, crucial matters come up: international recognition and legitimacy, girls' education, human rights concerns in and of themselves, economic and humanitarian assistance, counterterrorism regional dynamics, and geopolitical alignments. Lowering Afghanistan's fraught regional relations to a stable, cooperative relationship is a guiding principle and ideological inclination: how to extend power outside its borders while maintaining its domestic priorities. Interests and modern geopolitical realities. Security concerns, especially counter-transnational militancy, settlement of water disputes, economic instability, and border conflicts, are common interest issues that create tensions with neighbors. Making significant progress in such areas will be hard. Afghanistan's neighbors are the Eurasian continents.

This region stretches from China in the east to Turkey in the west, and from Russia to the north to India and the Gulf monarchies in the South are Central Asian countries, Iran and



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Pakistan. Political policies of these countries toward the Taliban vary, but all concur that they have to react to the regime. Regional diplomacy with Afghanistan is uncertain but inevitable due to Afghanistan's instability has implications for the entire region, and the security of Afghanistan is important and closely connected with the neighboring countries' interests, regional geopolitics, and governance effectiveness.

Gaining regional legitimacy could be a key pivot for the Taliban, said Graeme Smith, a senior analyst for Afghanistan with the Brussels-based International Crisis Group. Smith charged that because they were concerned over commerce, migration, security, and drug trafficking, the neighbors of Afghanistan have become more ready to align with the Taliban. The surrounding nations have been negotiating with Kabul, both officially and diplomatically. Despite the Isolation of the Taliban by Western countries due to the way they treated women and girls, countries close to Afghanistan perceive the need to enter into dialogue with the regime on security and economic issues. It has limited participation, although Western sanctions, efforts towards diversifying trade, management of common resources, and resisting transnational militancy are at the heart of stability for the broader South and Central Asia region. The reason why certain countries in the region are talking to the Taliban seems to partially reflect their wish to shift away from an American-dominated unipolar structure that sets out what regimes are and are not permissible.

It should be mentioned that the region's diplomatic stance is short of full recognition rather, calling it normalization may be too harsh. Conquering such challenges calls for a complex and subtle strategy involving confidence-building measures, regional cooperation mechanisms, and ongoing dialogue to accommodate rival interests and promote stability in the region. The Taliban's capacity to tackle internal governance issues and move towards more centrist directions will also become the focal point in strengthening regional diplomatic relations (Ahmed M. S., 2024).

### **Assessment of Internal and External Factors**

Afghanistan possesses an unforgiving record of domestic and foreign conflict and has some ethnic groups, most notably the Pashtuns and Tajiks. Pashtuns are the driving force behind Afghanistan's domestic and foreign stability. Post-Soviet-invasion Afghanistan was entangled in conflict potential, invasion, militancy, and civil war for over a decade. Consequently, one and a half million lives were lost, and the six million population was forced to emigrate. During the final decade of the 20th century, we saw the emergence of religious insurgents known as the Taliban, which was a spin-off of the Mujahedeen's corruption and wrongs that followed the Russian invasion. Following the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden, the architect of Al-Qaeda, was killed during a US operation in northwestern Pakistan.

On the other hand, resistance worsened in the Pashtun-dominated north-southern region after the declaration of President Barack Obama's statement that justice had been consummated. He pledged to withdraw troops steadily due to budget deficit and financial constraints, but the troops exterminated investment. The United States withdrew its troops from Afghanistan on February 29, 2020, after two decades. Taliban are brethren of the Pashtun ethnic group living in Afghanistan. High-ranking Taliban leaders, including Mollah Muhammad Omar Akhund and top leaders, are of the Hotak tribe of the Ghilzai. The origins of the Taliban lie in anti-Soviet militancy, and their thought is shaped by the Deobandi school of thought. In Pakistan, the Pashtun group in the south-west part of the country opposed the presence of Western troops.

The US domination in Afghanistan was bifurcated into two predominant poles: North



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and south. Another strong resistance movement in the North is also referred to as the Northern Alliance. North always backed United States soldiers and NATO troops as a protective bulwark against the Taliban. The United States policymakers have used the term Af-Pak for Pakistan and Afghanistan, which shows that one nation, one state, is engaged against terror. Comrades of the Taliban, such as the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRFA) and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), are receiving incentives to instill instability, drug and weapon scaling up weapons, nuclear security threads, and atomic weapons potency finding its way to the hand of the terrorist group have a direct impact on Central Asia, Caucasus and Pakistan (Madni, Ali, & Bakht, 2024).

The World Bank and United Nations organizations, such as the United Nations Development Program, implement aid programs to deliver health services. The enrolment rates for girls and boys at the primary level have been increasing. Higher Education Minister Nida Muhammad Nadim stated that the Taliban government supports providing education to girls, but gender inclusivity contradicts the teachings of Islam. Without gender inclusivity, particularly in education, the Taliban government cannot gain the support and recognition it needs from the world. The Taliban earns public revenue from taxes collected from the drug trade, usury, zakat from agricultural producers, and the mining sector, which does not meet its spending requirements, while two-thirds of the populace rely on monetary aid.

### **Geopolitical consideration**

The US arrangement towards Afghanistan is impacted by a blend of vital, geopolitical, and helpful interface. These interface illuminate its long-term destinations, discretionary relations, military mediations, and helpful help programs in Afghanistan. The US must walk a tightrope between these interface to guarantee its impact, anticipate the return of psychological warfare, and cultivate steadiness and advancement in Afghanistan. The Joined together States can effectively adjust its key interface and geopolitical interface in Afghanistan by embracing a advanced and multi-faceted approach that coordinating discretionary interaction, financial help, and centered bolster to gracious society teach. Two decades afterward, China and Russia are expanding their influence and pushing aside US authority within the Center East, and India is the sole country compelled to travel with the US.

The US has targets in Afghanistan, such as avoiding its arrive from being utilized against it, reducing Pakistan's atomic risk, and giving a steady, ceaseless Afghan government that does not see the US as a vital equal, in spite of the fact that the Taliban has an imperative part. The objectives of territorial states and US goals in Afghanistan go hand-in-hand, and the nations see steadiness as their intrigued. The US sees territorial nations taking an dynamic part in peace and steadiness. Pakistan points at solidness, financial development, and get to to Central Asian markets after the conclusion of the US military, defending interface, disregarding dangers, and profiting themselves of vitality assets Pakistan looks for Afghan soundness, anticipating Taliban severance, as China wants China-Pakistan Financial Hallway network, as Russia is perplexed of Afghanistan turning into a sedate generation center.

The key esteem of Afghanistan to the Joined together States has changed since the attack in 2001, from the collapse of the Taliban administration to cultivating solidness and majority rule government. The permeable borders and precipitous landscape of the nation may render it a psychological militant haven, debilitating the US and its allies. The part of Afghanistan in territorial soundness is critical, because it is deliberately situated at the



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junction between Central Asia, South Asia, and the Center East.

A steady Afghanistan would halt the spread of savagery and precariousness to other countries. Its untouched characteristic assets might moreover render it a incredible put for remote venture and exchange, to the advantage of both the Afghan economy and US companies. It might moreover stem from medicate trafficking since it is the globe's greatest maker of opium poppy. An efficient Afghanistan may moreover progress human rights and vote based system, which are portion of US remote arrangement destinations. The US must reach out to Afghanistan in terms of discretion, military help, and financial engagement to support these targets (Akhtar & Manzanay, 2024).

By negotiating with the Taliban directly, without involving the Afghan government in the initial agreement, the United States was in danger of minimizing the legitimacy of the democratic institutions in Kabul. Aggravating the situation was the sheer lack of an actionable, enforceable mechanism to hold the Taliban accountable for any violence perpetrated after the deal, or to protect hitherto 'protected' persons waiting for Kabul to assume responsibility for them, such as, Americans in Afghanistan, and also normal citizens in outlying towns, and women and girls in general, to the global concern.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, U.S. exit from Afghanistan at the start of the 21st century is a tangled and controversial segment of modern international relations. While it ended a twenty-year military involvement, the way it occurred and the consequences, raises fundamental questions about the efficacy of extended foreign interventions, states-building initiatives, and U.S strategic planning. The rapid downfall of the Afghan government over time and alternative regimes in Afghanistan demonstrates serious failure in the theories which were the basis of U.S. policy and has shown how fragile externally supported state institutions can be. Also, the humanitarian aftermath that continues to unearth itself and regional instability which displaced millions of Afghans, continues to cause crises, challenges, and reactions globally. In the end, the withdrawal from Afghanistan stresses the need for long-term/global political solutions instead of military solutions and inspires major powers to reconsider how they engage with conflict-affected states in the future.

### **Recommendations**

All future military engagements should start with clear exit strategies that remain flexible as the engagement progresses. These should be re-evaluated based upon ground conditions and circumstances, rather than political obligations to leave on a certain date. The focus of nation-building should be to foster fully representative, culturally-relevant, and sustainable institutions. Foreign support can support local actors taking ownership of and leading political and administrative initiatives instead of imposing foreign-oriented alternatives.

Create the means to track goals, effects, and costs of foreign interventions. It is necessary to have transparency in reporting and oversight keep the public's trust and to be able to redirect interventions or approaches when necessary.

Collaborate with international allies, regional partners, and global institutions in a coordinated and planned approach to combat peacekeeping and reconstruction. Multilateral engagement typically holds greater legitimacy and greater weight.

Conduct a full evaluation and assessment of the conflict and withdrawal from Afghanistan.



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