

Committee: Security Council

Issue: Assessing Taliban Intervention in States Bordering Afghanistan

Student Officer: Dimitrios Angelos Gkimpiritis

Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates of the Security Council,

My name is Dimitrios Angelos Gkimpiritis and it is a great honour to welcome you to this year's 5th DSTMUN conference. I am currently in the 10th grade at the German School of Thessaloniki and I will be serving as one of your chairs. This will be my first chairing experience so I am very excited to meet you all.

Despite the difficulties the past years of the COVID-19 pandemic have presented us with, you will all finally have the chance to participate in a live MUN conference. I would also like to congratulate each and every one of you for choosing to participate in our school's MUN conference. Even though MUN can be challenging from time to time, it is important for all of us to appreciate what each of us will eventually gain, both in terms of skills and experiences. I believe that conferences like these can also be an opportunity to learn about the fascinating world of politics and diplomacy. You will get to immerse yourself in current affairs and issues that will define our generation, improve your public speaking and your negotiating tactics. Not to mention you will improve your English skills and have the chance to meet students from around the world!

The three topics of our agenda are in my opinion of utmost importance, especially the third one "Assessing Taliban Intervention in States Bordering Afghanistan". This study guide will focus on the third topic of our agenda and will help guide your research on the topic.

Seeing that you will be in the Security Council ensuring peace is one of our primary responsibilities. In the study guide, you'll find a lot of useful information on the third topic on our agenda "Assessing Taliban Intervention in States Bordering Afghanistan". This study guide is just a way of showing the key points of the issue; however, to be able to participate in the debate, it is required that you conduct your own research.

I am aware that it will be a challenge to understand what is currently happening with the Taliban or how to combat the issue. If you have any questions regarding this topic do not hesitate to contact me. You will be able to get all the help you need, just send me an email at gkimps2007@gmail.com.

I am looking forward to meeting all of you in November.

Dimitrios Angelos Gkimpiritis

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

After almost two decades of peace and security in Afghanistan with the conservative militants known as the Taliban away from power, the extremist organisation seized again the capital Kabul, after foreign forces, mostly from the United States of America (USA) withdrew from the country in July 2021. Since the Taliban seized control, the country has experienced a dramatic shift to an all-male governing system with huge violations of human and especially women's rights, suppressing all political freedoms and the rights of minorities. Since the Taliban has taken over, there has been a severe backlash from the Afghan people including efforts to flee the country. The collapsing economy has led the country to become a breeding ground for illegal markets as well as a base for many terrorist organisations. In other words, the country is now dependent solely on humanitarian aid and illicit opium trade to fund its form of government and gain political power.

The newly established regime in Afghanistan shows what would happen if the Taliban fulfilled their ultimate goal which is to expand their rule to neighbouring countries. Neighbouring countries have experienced a surge of Taliban presence, such as Pakistan, where the group has managed to establish its presence and form various actions that imposed sharia law in the region. This has also been the cause of clashes between the Pakistani government and the Taliban, even though the Taliban have control of certain government assets. Their spread has been the cause of many tensions making the situation very unstable, which may cause more bloodshed.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Taliban

Ṭālebān ("Students") is an ultraconservative political and religious faction that emerged in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s following the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the collapse of Afghanistan's communist regime, and the subsequent breakdown in civil order. They have implemented a strict interpretation of Sharia Islamic law by using militant Islamism.¹

Al- Qaida

A militant Islamist organisation founded by Osama bin Laden in 1986. Although it started as a resistance force against the Soviet Union during the Afghan War, the organisation possesses any means of Western influence and foreign.²

¹ "Taliban." Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/topic/Taliban.

² "Al-Qaeda." Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/topic/al-Qaeda.

Global War on Terror or War on Terrorism

“The American-led global counterterrorism campaign launched in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.”³

Sharia Law

“Sharia is Islam's legal system. It is derived from the Quran, Islam's holy book, as well as the Sunnah and Hadith. When an answer cannot be derived directly from these religious books, scholars may give rulings as guidance on a particular topic or question.. Sharia acts as a code for living that all Muslims should adhere to, including prayers, fasting, and donations to the poor. It aims to help Muslims understand how they should lead every aspect of their lives according to God's wishes.” However, the interpretation of Sharia can vary, meaning that the Taliban can interpret it any way they wish, even if that means violating women's rights.⁴

Shia and Sunni Islam

The main branch of Islam is Shia, followed by about a tenth of Muslims, especially in Iran, that reject the first three Sunni caliphs and regards Ali, the fourth caliph, as Muhammad's first true successor.⁵ The word "Sunni," which means "orthodox," is applied to Muslims who belong to one of the four schools of jurisprudence, Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki, and Shafi. Although Ali is highly regarded by Sunni Muslims, they reject the Shiite conception of the succession to Muhammad.⁶

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Background

Afghanistan first became an independent country in 1921 as a result of the third British-Afghan war (1919-1921). In 1926 Amir Amanullah Khan rewrote the country's constitution, making him a monarch, beginning a rigorous campaign to reform the country and modernise it

³ “War on Terrorism.” Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/topic/war-on-terrorism.

⁴ “What Is Sharia Law? What Does It Mean for Women in Afghanistan?” BBC News, BBC, 19 Aug. 2021, www.bbc.com/news/world-27307249.

⁵ “Oxford Languages and Google - English.” *Oxford Languages*, languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/.

⁶ “Islam: Sunnis and Shiites.” *Islam: Sunnis and Shiites*, www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/publications/se/5806/580602.html#:~:text=The%20word%20%22Sunni%2C%22%20which,of%20the%20succession%20to%20Muhammad.

In 1973 Amir Amanullah Khan overthrew the last king Mohammed Zahir Shah in a military coup, leading to the formation of the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan. Khan abolished the monarchy and declared himself president, crushed all those who opposed his ideology, and proposed a new constitution making his government all the more authoritarian. During the 1970s the Republic of Afghanistan was also firmly established with the USSR to protect and strengthen their own communist republic.

In 1978 Khan the former monarch of Afghanistan was killed by a communist coup, leading Nur Mohammad Taraki, another founding member of the Afghan Communist Party, to become president and have control of the entire country. The same year Babrak Karmal was named deputy prime minister. Both Taraki, as well as Karmal, wanted to minimise the influence the Soviet Union had on the country. They both firmly believed in Islamic principles and Afghan nationalism

In 1979 American Ambassador Adolph Dubs was killed, which led to the US cutting all aid to the Republic. Furthermore, this was also the year that a power struggle between Taraki and Deputy Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin broke out until Taraki was killed by Amin's supporters. This consequently led to the USSR invading Afghanistan to restore the crippled communist regime in the country, executing a lot of Amin's supporters and appointing Babrak Karmal as Afghanistan's new Prime Minister. All this in turn caused widespread opposition to Karmal and the Soviets and even violent public demonstrations.

Consequently, the Afghan people rebelled and united against the Soviet invaders and the USSR-backed Afghan Army in 1980. The war caused millions of Afghans to flee to neighbouring Pakistan and to Iran. Despite the efforts to cripple the Soviet influence in the country the guerilla army only managed to gain control of rural areas. In contrast, the Soviet troops still controlled most of the urban areas.

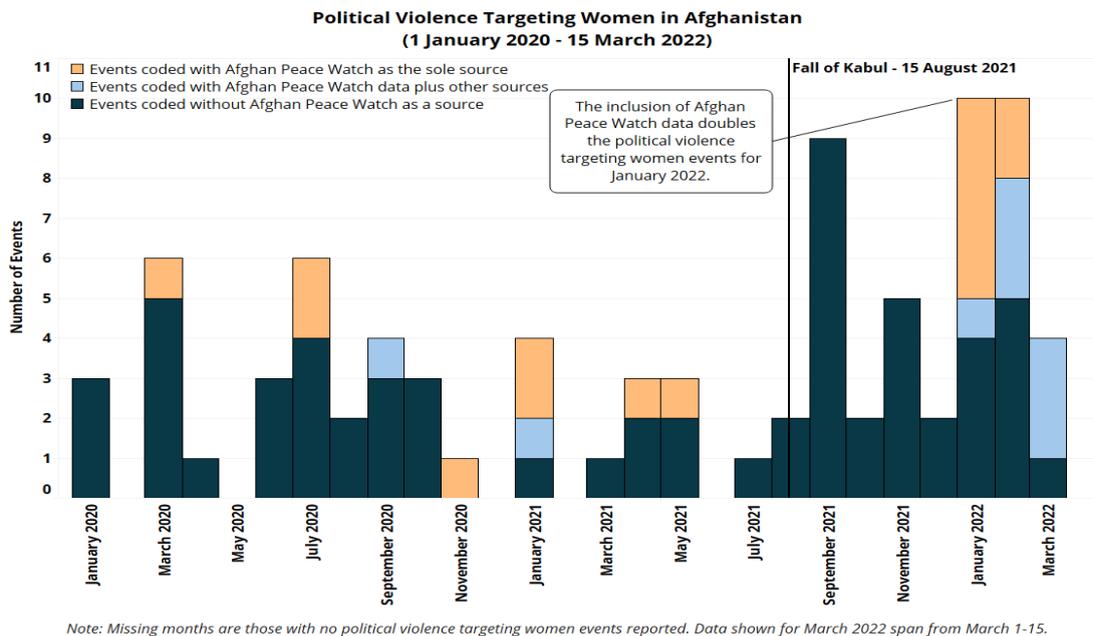
In 1986 the United States, the United Kingdom, and the PRC tried to supply the Mujahideen with arms to try and end the war, until towards the end of the 1980s the US, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union signed peace accords, which would also allow Afghanistan to remain an independent country. Despite the withdrawal of 100,000 Soviet troops, the Mujahideen rebels continued their fight against the Soviet-backed regime of communist president Dr. Mohammad Najibullah.

In 1992 Afghanistans' rebel groups, with the help of turncoat government troops overtook the capital, Kabul, and destroyed the Najibullah regime. Although the Mujahideen managed to cripple the previous regime, they struggled to maintain peace and stability in the country. This was mainly caused by warlords fighting for the future of Afghanistan. Other groups formed a largely Islamic state with professor Burhannudin Rabbani as president.

The Afghan Taliban

The Taliban was founded in the 1990s. After the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989, warlords who had been supported by the United States took control of many urban and rural areas. This resulted in infighting between the various warlords and massive widespread corruption, causing the country to descend into civil war. This in turn also served as a window of opportunity for the Taliban. These were and still remain the same group of religious fanatics, which at the time were led by Mullah Omar and who promised the Afghan people to end the anarchy and impose Islamic values.

In 1996 the group achieved its goal to enter Kabul and take control of the country. After the Taliban successfully controlled the capital, they proclaimed Afghanistan an Islamic Emirate. This was one of the most extreme religious dictatorships in history. Punishments were inhumanely ranging from public amputations to public executions, other minorities were massacred and women were effectively no longer considered human beings. For example, they were required to appear fully veiled everywhere they went and had to have a man assist them, making them the biggest victim of the Taliban regime.



Graph depicting the violence against women in Afghanistan over the past two years⁷

⁷ Karacalti, Asena. "Tracking Disorder During Taliban Rule in Afghanistan: A Joint ACLED and APW Report." ACLED, 6 May 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/14/tracking-disorder-during-taliban-rule-in-afghanistan-a-joint-aced-and-apw-report/>.

Taliban: Key leaders



Images: Getty Images, Taliban, US government handout



The Taliban regime also harbored terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda, which is why the United States invaded the country in 2001 in response to the 9/11 attack. The Taliban still remains a radical religious military group and organisation led by fanatics who have not hesitated to use any weapons at their disposal including cruel attacks to achieve their goal. Later in 2014 the Taliban's leader, Mullah Mansour decided that the group should also develop a political strategy with the goal being to win popular support. Compared to the group's previous methods this was not done through fear, instead, it was done by managing and controlling corruption. This also prompted the ⁸Taliban to open an office in Doha

in order to facilitate international negotiations. They also included Tajiks and Uzbeks in the Taliban leadership council to extend their influence beyond the Pashtun areas (a region near Pakistan).

After almost 20 years since the 2001 attack on the Twin Towers, and after more than 7,000 casualties of soldiers and contractors from the United States and other NATO countries, 70,000 casualties suffered by the Afghan army as well as police; and after an expenditure of more than \$2 trillion dollars, the war came to an end.

The Taliban regained power in July 2021 (during the US withdrawal from Afghanistan) by seizing the capital Kabul and establishing a new order in Afghanistan. This new order has caused women to lose their rights to work and get educated, proving similarities to the previous Taliban regime. In addition, since the Taliban took over, the country's economy has entered a "freefall" phase, which has made the Taliban reliant on other sources of income to maintain their regime. For example, there has been a massive surge in the drug trade both abroad and internally. With fifty percent of the population not working anymore the other half is struggling.

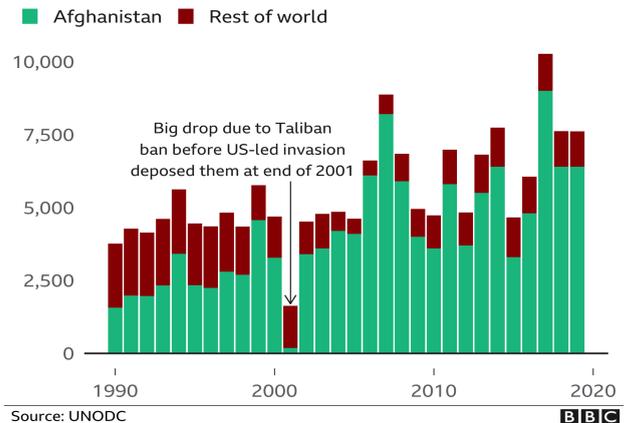
⁸ BBC News. "Afghanistan: Who's Who in the Taliban Leadership." BBC News, 7 Sept. 2021, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58235639.

Afghanistan has always been the world's producer of opium, however, now other illicit substances such as methamphetamine and heroin are not only being sold overseas but are being consumed by many afghans. As a result of the bruised Afghan economy, many are trying to cope with the widespread poverty and unemployment, causing a major drug crisis in the country.⁹

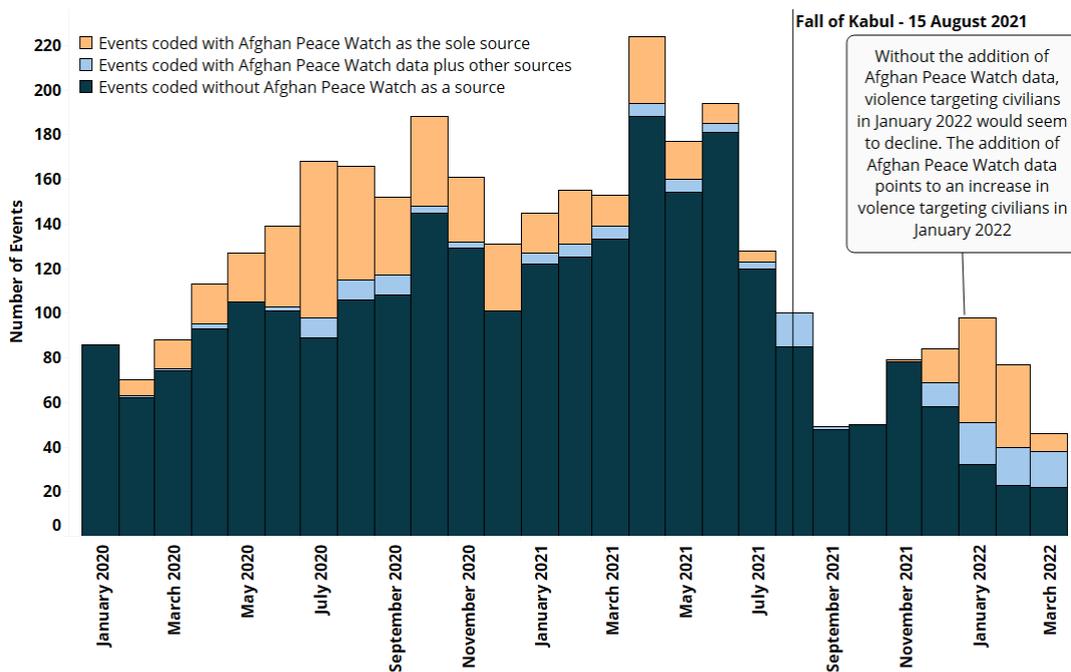
The US withdrawal has also allowed China and Russia, which have strong mutual interests, to establish a strong presence in Central Asia. The recent victory in Kabul might seem as though the Taliban have reached their final goal. Unfortunately, the evidence shows that the Taliban will spread beyond Afghanistan's borders as we have seen in Pakistan.

Afghanistan is responsible for more than 80% of global opium production

Opium production in tonnes, 1990-2019



Violence Targeting Civilians in Afghanistan (1 January 2020 - 15 March 2022)



Note: Data shown for March 2022 span from March 1-15.

Graph depicting the levels of violence against civilians¹⁰

⁹ Team, By Reality Check. "Afghanistan: How Much Opium Is Produced and What's the Taliban's Record?" BBC News, 25 Aug. 2021, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58308494.

¹⁰ Karacalti, Asena. "Tracking Disorder During Taliban Rule in Afghanistan: A Joint ACLED and APW Report." ACLED, 6 May 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/14/tracking-disorder-during-taliban-rule-in-afghanistan-a-joint-acleddata-and-apw-report/>.

Effects on Neighbouring Countries

Effects on Pakistan

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is one of the few countries that has accepted the new Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The country even has its own Taliban, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) which controls all of the areas on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Although the two groups are quite similar and both want to accomplish a sharia-based state there are some differences. The obvious is nationality. Historically the Pakistani government has allowed the Afghan Taliban to retreat to Pakistan. However because the TTP is responsible for numerous attacks against civilians, the Pakistani government has been trying to contain the group's expansion. Although the two groups work closely together, the TTP is known for having various disputes regarding when attacks on infrastructure and the civilian population are needed. In both the Taliban-controlled areas as well as in neighbouring Afghanistan there have been clear signs of human rights violations, from women not being allowed an education or the right to work, to the use of child soldiers and the persecution of reporters and journalists.

The Taliban have been trying to control more and more parts of the country. This is also why religious extremism and corruption are prevalent and extend to every sector of the government. The Pakistani government has repeatedly denied that it provides military support to the Afghan Taliban, however, there have been some recorded incidents where this has happened. For example, Pakistan has repeatedly funded the Taliban and they have been accused of bankrolling several Taliban operations.

Furthermore, the country is known for training Afghan Taliban fighters as well as providing and facilitating shipments of ammunition, and fuel and on several occasions apparently directly providing combat support for the Taliban troops. Pakistan is also known for violating UN sanctions by bringing various weapons to the Taliban in Afghanistan.

In addition, the new territorial gain in Afghanistan has empowered many terrorist organisations to enforce brutal sharia law. However, the ISI (Pakistan's military) still retains considerable advantages over the Taliban in Pakistan. Some believe that the country could be a mediator between western forces and the Taliban. A good example of this, was when the Pakistani Taliban agreed to an indefinite ceasefire with Pakistan's government, these talks were brokered by the Afghan Taliban government. However, the Taliban are known to violate contracts as was seen with the US withdrawal.

Moreover, there have been conflicts between the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban after an alleged bombing in a rural city in Pakistan, which led to tensions between the two groups.

Effects on Iran

The Islamic Republic of Iran does not recognise the newly established Taliban regime, however, the country has repeatedly said that they are of the opinion that the Taliban takeover is actually an opportunity to restore security and lasting peace in Afghanistan. Historically Iranian leaders have been known for adopting more practical and flexible policies with neighbouring countries, to avoid instability and the buildup of tensions i.e by enabling trade between Iran and Afghanistan.

Iran and Afghanistan share common goals, however, there are also considerable differences between the two, such as religion. For example, the Taliban believe in Sunni Islam whereas Iran is known for Shia Islam. The two branches of Islam have been the cause of conflict and many disputes (i.e the war between Iran and Iraq). Although there have been some clashes between Iranian forces and the Taliban, incidents like these tend to be rare.

This has not stopped the country from having many interests in Afghanistan ever since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, These included retaining dominance in the region, maintaining a balance of Pakistani, Western, and Taliban influence, and controlling the flow of immigrants and narcotics and stopping anti-Shia sentiment. Moreover, Afghanistan's western rivers are also one of Iran's water sources making the country reliant on the Taliban.

However, Afghanistan is also dependent on Iran, because it is one of the few countries that supports Afghan stakeholders. Iran manages to accomplish these objectives through the spread of its political influence as well as with the use of donations and through the use of military alliances with minorities, such as the Shiite Hazaras and Sunni Tajiks. These goals will be hard to achieve with Afghanistan's bruised economy which has also been the cause of conflict between the different Taliban factions. This has presented Iran with a complex dilemma: mainly how to maintain their Alliance with minorities, who have an anti-Taliban mindset and how to have balanced relations with the different Taliban factions. In conclusion, it will be challenging for the Iranian government to forge a cooperative alliance with the Taliban.

Effects on Turkmenistan

The authoritarian government of Turkmenistan was one of the first central-asian countries to accept the new Taliban regime, in neighbouring Afghanistan. One could even say that they were positive about this change regardless of the violation of international law, seeing as the new regime took power by force. The Turkmen Foreign Ministry has even expressed that the Turkmen-Taliban relations have been “positive and constructive”. The two sides have met repeatedly after the Taliban takeover and regard the alliance as fraternal.

Afghanistan is very important for Turkmenistan especially when it comes to the country's natural gas pipeline TAPI (The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline), which both governments are eager to see completed. The country is interested in keeping tensions between the two sides at a minimum and by achieving connectivity with the TAPI pipeline, it is trying to ensure that both sides will continue advancing. The fact that the previous government in Afghanistan was violently overthrown does not make any difference for the Turkmen government, which is willing not only to accept the new Taliban regime (as mentioned before) but also agree to cooperate with the Taliban on an entrepreneurial level. The Turkmen-afghan partnership has not changed over the past years, compared to other neighbouring countries it has improved relations with the Taliban.

Despite all this, there have been incidents where Turkmen border soldiers engaged in an open fire with Taliban fighters such as on the 5th of January 2022. Cases like these have been known to cause tensions to rise between the two nations. However, seeing as they share common interests and have religious as well as cultural similarities, the two countries are known to support each other regardless of who is in power in Kabul.

Effects on Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan has not accepted the new Taliban regime as Afghanistan's official government. The two sides have been keen on meeting and negotiating the issue. Uzbekistan has emerged as a key mediator, which has engaged with the Taliban on a wide range of issues i.e trade. The country is seeking to cooperate with the Taliban on an economical level to ensure trade routes through Afghanistan from Uzbekistan to Pakistan. At the same time, they do not want to alienate the relations with the West, especially with the United States.

Even Though the Uzbek government does not recognise the Taliban regime, they do believe that it is a reality that must be accepted in order to achieve peace and stability with Afghanistan. Furthermore, the two countries besides sharing a border have a deep history and culture and the government has on numerous occasions stated that they see a common future and interests, regardless of who is in power in Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan, compared to other countries such as Turkmenistan, has also been sending humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. The country has repeatedly tried to persuade the US and the EU to assist Afghanistan by sending diplomats to Kabul. In addition, the Uzbek president has tried to urge greater engagement with the Taliban in order to try and find more efficient ways so that the Taliban can be recognised by the international community. Uzbekistan and many other countries are worried that Afghanistan might yet again become a base for terrorist organisations. Terrorist groups are currently operating there and there have been growing numbers of recruits. Combined with the change of government last summer this has become much easier for other Islamic militias to operate in the region. Uzbekistan is also very willing to collaborate and communicate with other countries about its Afghanistan policy.

All in all the Uzbek government believes that a more balanced approach is the key to solving the Taliban issue. They have on numerous accounts stated that the Taliban need to develop a better relationship with the West. Afghanistan is undoubtedly very important for the neighbouring countries, linking all of south Asia together. Thus Uzbekistan's leaders want to establish a better relationship with the Taliban to ensure that peace and stability can be preserved.

Effects on Tajikistan

Compared to its neighbours Tajikistan has developed a very rigid policy on the Afghanistan issue. The Tajik government has not engaged in talks with the Taliban, even months after the group's takeover of the country. This has caused tensions to rise between the two sides. Seeing as the two countries share a large-scale mountainous border which is very difficult to control and with the Tajik army being one of the weakest in Central Asia, this shows how vulnerable Tajikistan is. This has also allowed the Taliban forces to launch terrorist attacks on other Islamic brotherhoods in Tajikistan.

Despite all of this Tajikistan has not prioritised establishing peace talks between the two sides, compared to other countries such as Russia and China. Tajikistan, like many western countries, does recognise the new

government in Kabul, and this is not only because the Taliban regime is a breach of international law, but the Taliban take over also poses a threat to many Tajik minorities (which make up 20% of the population). This was also seen by their policy to help 10,000 Afghan refugees flee oppression during the summer takeover. This bold statement is unlikely to be fulfilled in the near future because the reality is, that the country does not possess the infrastructure to house so many asylum seekers. As a result, many are being returned to Afghanistan, to the Taliban.

Moreover, Tajikistan also helped anti-Taliban forces (the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan) to defend the Panjshir province, where 98 per cent of the population are ethnic Tajiks. This was the only territory that the Taliban had not conquered completely.

However, this caused the Taliban to respond by deploying fighters to the Tajik border and the Tajik military to show its military preparedness. This is the first time in history that Tajikistan has put thousands of troops on high alert to test their combat skills and to place twenty thousand troops on the Tajik-Afghan border. In addition, Tajikistan has been trying to ease the tensions between the two countries. For example by avoiding direct references to the Taliban and by trying to limit criticism of Afghanistan's new government.

At the same time, Tajikistan has also refrained from discussing trade relations with Afghanistan, despite the fact that Afghanistan essentially makes up for 1.5 percent of the country's trade, something that is crucial for the country's dire economy. Tajikistan has also been the cause of \$11 million in debt by supplying their neighbour with electricity even though the country can hardly maintain a well-functioning economy.

Some Taliban factions are willing to improve their relations with Tajikistan. Nonetheless, this is unlikely to happen because the Tajik president is trying to maintain power as they have done for the past 30 years. The reality is that this ethnic-nationalist campaign, which aims to "protect" all Tajiks at all costs, is nothing but propaganda to distract the Tajik population from the failing state.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

United States of America

The US has long been involved in Afghanistan. It first started after a US ambassador was killed in 1979 which led to the US government cutting supplies to Afghanistan. The US also helped the Mujahideen rebels by sending them arms in their fight against the Communist regime in Afghanistan, in 1986. However, the main reason the US had been running a 20-year operation in Afghanistan, was due to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, which is why the US invaded Afghanistan.

The aim of the invasion was to prevent major terrorist attacks on the US and its allies. The US military managed to successfully topple the Taliban regime which harbored the terrorist group Al-Qaeda, which was responsible for the 9/11 attack. Al-Qaeda was pushed to the outskirts of the country. After the group was weakened it also lost its prominent leader Osama Bin Laden who the US executed. After the Islamic militias were toppled the US began a mission together with NATO and the UN, to help Afghanistan rebuild into a functioning democratic nation (similar to the Marshall plan in western Europe after WW2). The theory behind this campaign of rebuilding Afghanistan was it would, in turn, prevent the country from becoming a base for terrorist organisation and also ensured close ties with Afghanistan and the US. This dramatically increased the spending in Afghanistan, reaching \$2 trillion dollars in 2021 when the US withdrew from Afghanistan. This resulted in the US hiring dozens of contractors to strengthen the US military.

Compared to other countries the US does not manufacture its own weapons, instead, they hire private companies which are paid for by the US government. These companies will propose various prices for their weapons and equipment, which allows the US government to choose the most suitable one. The reason this is so important is to understand how the US mission to Afghanistan ultimately failed. There were of course multiple factors that led to the US campaign in Afghanistan being unsuccessful one of them was corruption and mismanagement of government spending. This included efforts from the US to continuously try to build infrastructure in Afghanistan, which was usually destroyed by the Taliban or controlled by them and then sold back to afghans.

Moreover, because the US was at war, the whole process of deciding which contractor would assist the US in Afghanistan was redundant. Put simply there was no time for the government to decide which contractor to hire. As a result, the US government would allow any contractors who applied first to be chosen. This allowed many individuals to profit from the war in Afghanistan by proposing very high prices for weapons, ammunition, and food supplies, which the US government funded. This

wasteful and irresponsible mindset as it is regarded by many experts caused the US government to lose hundreds of billions of dollars.

Furthermore many members of congress also managed to profit from the war in Afghanistan and invested in companies they knew the government would choose. All of this internal corruption and mismanagement led to an inability to actually make Afghanistan a safer country, which would be able to defend itself from the Taliban. On the other hand, the US managed to create a fully functioning democratic system that respected indigenous groups, improved healthcare in Afghanistan, and strengthened the Afghan military.

All of these efforts, regardless of how successful they truly were, did not prevent the Taliban from regaining power in the country and spreading to neighbouring countries. Unfortunately, Afghanistan is an example where the efforts of the United States and the UN did not lead to any significant change in the region, seeing as the country has returned to a Taliban-led regime after 20 years to prevent that.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO assisted the United States in its fight against the Taliban in 2003 to ensure that Afghanistan would not become a safe haven for international terrorist groups. This happened because the 9/11 attacks were essentially an attack on a member of the alliance, meaning the rest of the NATO alliance members had to support the US in its fight against the war on terrorism. In 2015 there was a dramatic increase in the amount of NATO troops deployed in the region after the completion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which provided support to the Afghan government and strengthened the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan police forces (ANP). This was due to the Resolute Support Mission or RSM which continued a similar mission as the ISAF. In addition, the RSM had the purpose of supporting the country's federal budget and ensuring transparency and accountability in the government itself.

Over the 20-year mission in Afghanistan NATO also partnered with the UN security council to ensure that the country can defend its people from terrorist organisations and to prevent future terrorist attacks on the alliance. However, after the Taliban took over the country NATO suspended all of its aid to Afghanistan. The alliance has also similar to the majority of the international community, condemned the new government in Afghanistan. If a country wishes to receive aid from NATO they need to respect human rights, in this case particularly, the rights of women, children, and minorities something that the Taliban have so far failed to do. NATO also concluded that the reason for the collapse of the Afghan government mainly had

to do with the internal corruption in the Afghan military which received bribes from the Taliban and a surging number of recruits.

BLOCS EXPECTED (OPTIONAL)

Bloc 1:

Countries that have been directly invaded by Taliban forces, which has caused political tensions and security issues, as well as countries that have been affected indirectly by the Taliban.

Bloc 2:

Countries that have been involved with the Taliban historically and want to minimise the effect on neighbouring countries

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1995	First appearance of the Taliban, create islamic regime
October 7 2001	US invades Afghanistan in response to 9/11 attacks, topple taliban regime
2004	First democratic election in Afghanistan
2014	NATO peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan is established
2019	Donald J Trump signs peace accord on withdrawal of US troops with Taliban
July 2021	Last US troops leave Afghanistan
August 24 2021	Turkmenistan refuses to get involved in humanitarian crisis
15.08.2021	Taliban takeover Kabul and establish new regime
December 1 2021	Afghan economy goes into "free fall"
December 13 2021	Iran and Taliban clash on border
January 3 2022	Pakistani Taliban sign ceasefire with

	Islamabad
January 5 2022	Clash with Taliban forces and Turkemn border troops
January 22 2022	Turkmenistan becomes first country to recognise Taliban government
February 15 2022	Afghan-Iran dispute over Helmand river
March 9 2022	Iran announces they will not recognise Taliban
April 4 2022	Uzbek and Taliban talks
April 26 2022	Tajikistan takes a stand against Taliban
May 2 2022	Tensions rise, due to refugee flow from Afghanistan into Iran
May 4 2022	Tensions rise between Pakistan and the Taliban after attack
May 5 2022	Uzbekistan announces it will not recognise Taliban government
May 7 2022	Taliban launch missile on border city Uzbekistan
May 19 2022	Tensions grow between Taliban and Tajikistan due to border closing

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

UN Resolution 1267

This was the creation of the al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions committee, which labeled the two groups as terrorist organisations, which need sanctions in order to minimize their control on the region. The resolution allowed for the funding of various operations in the county and the supply of arms. This led the leader of Al Qaeda Osama bin Laden to withdraw from Afghanistan and move into the region known as Peshawar in Pakistan. The post-Soviet civil war gave the Taliban a window of opportunity to seize the capital Kabul, which also provided al-Qaeda sanctuary for operations.

Joint Declaration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America for bringing Peace to Afghanistan (February 29 2020)

This was a joint declaration that recognised that terrorist groups such as al-Qa'ida, ISIS-K, and other international terrorist groups continued on using afghan soil to recruit members, gather funds, train new recruits and planned attacks against the United States and its allies, including Afghanistan and aimed to stop their further advances. The United States wanted to support the Afghan military through training and by supplying them with better equipment, in order to prevent further attacks in Afghanistan and also abroad.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Security Council Resolution 2626 (2022), S/RES/2626(2022)¹¹

This resolution extended the mission of the Security Council to assess the situation in Afghanistan. This showed an increase in commitment to defend women's rights in the region after the Taliban takeover. The resolution was adopted with a majority of 14 votes in favour and with one abstention by the Russian Federation, it aimed to extend the mission to assist Afghanistan up until the 17th of March 2023. The resolution included tasks to promote human rights, support gender equality and monitor and report the conditions civilians were in. Furthermore, the text stressed the critical importance of a continued UNAMA presence to provide humanitarian aid, as well as that of other United Nations agencies, funds and programs in Afghanistan to improve the country's bruised economy. The resolution also required relevant Afghan political figures and stakeholders including any relevant authorities as needed, in the implementation of its mandate and to ensure that the United Nations personnel are safe and will have the freedom to accomplish the Mission.

UNAMA: Reestablishing the Afghan government

This aimed to create a new Afghan government in 2001, this was when US troops invaded Afghanistan and eliminated the Taliban government, which caused them to withdraw from Kabul. The resolution also highlighted that in order to restore a new government in the region other means were needed besides the UNPFM. This led to the formation of UNAMA which sought to solve the crisis by allowing afghans to control the process of establishing peace in the area. This mandate was extended even after the Taliban takeover.

¹¹ "Adopting Resolution 2626 (2022), Security Council Extends United Nations Mission in Afghanistan for One Year | UN Press." *United Nations*, United Nations, press.un.org/en/2022/sc14833.doc.htm.

UN Resolution 1267

This was the creation of the al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee, which labeled the two groups as terrorist organizations, which need sanctions in order to minimise their control of the region. The resolution allowed for the funding of various operations in the county and the supply of arms. This led the leader of Alqueda Osama bin Laden to withdraw from Afghanistan and move into the region known as Peshawar in Pakistan. The post-Soviet civil war gave the Taliban a window of opportunity to seize the capital Kabul, which also provided al-Qaeda sanctuary for operations.

US intervention in Afghanistan

President Bush signed this resolution in response to the 9/11 attacks with its main goal being to combat Terrorism this includes the invasion of Afghanistan, the deployment of a surveillance infrastructure in the US and the creation of a detention camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Later the U.S. military, together with British forces, begins a bombing campaign against the Taliban which controlled the country since the 1990s. This caused the formation of Operation Enduring Freedom. Australia, Canada, France, and Germany soon followed to support the US and UK.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The question of how one can minimise the Taliban intervention in neighbouring countries, is a complex one. It will require conducting a lot of research to find a realistic solution to the problem. This is, with no doubt one of the most complicated diplomatic issues of the past decades. Both the United States and its allies have tried to solve the issue and constraint the power of Islamic militias such as the Taliban and ISIS. The UN did not manage to stop the crisis in Afghanistan and yet an Islamic militia, which is known for terrorist attacks has taken control of Afghanistan and oppressed its own people.

There are two ways to look at the issue: one of them being, to try to cooperate and find some sort of middle ground with the Taliban to prevent their spread in the region or to isolate them from the world so as to pressure the Taliban to have a more inclusive society.

Urging neighbouring countries to engage with the Islamic emirate of Afghanistan on various topics such as the official borders of Afghanistan and its neighbours, something that many would regard as a more efficient way of dealing with the problem. This could be combined with the use of mediators such as Pakistan or Uzbekistan which have been promoting this strategy. Negotiations about trade are

also essential for the region, as Afghanistan is the main country that links all of Central Asia together. Furthermore another solution to the issue is having the UN deploy its assets (similarly to the UNAMA mission) in the region to ensure that there are no human rights violations so that the country can gain international recognition to some degree. Finally, many argue that a more balanced approach is the key for solving the Taliban issue. With the key being better relations between the Taliban and the West.

On the other hand, a more radical approach could be needed to solve the issue. For example, enabling sanctions such as the ones used in the Ukrainian conflict or blocking the TAPI pipeline from running through Afghanistan including some of the country's major trade routes. Negotiations have not had the most favorable outcome as we saw after the US withdrawal. If the Taliban are isolated this makes their expansions harder. In addition, strengthening the neighbouring countries' military forces such as the ones in Tajikistan, which are known for having one of the weakest armies in the region, would allow countries most affected by the Taliban to have the right means to defend their borders.

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