

## **MS THESIS**

# **UNITED STATES STRATEGIC INTEREST IN AFGHANISTAN IN THE POST 9/11 ERA: PROMISES AND PERFORMANCE**



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## ABSTRACT

*Afghanistan with its geopolitical position in the new world order, it has been active in the cycle of power and has always been at the center of competition between great powers. In addition, it has always experienced strong interventions in its internal affairs and foreign relations. The foreign policy of major powers towards Afghanistan has always been affected by the competition in the global and regional cycle of power, between superpowers and structural challenges in the international system and regional order. In the era after the First World War and the emergence of America as a superior power in the field of international developments, the United States focused its attention on the competition between the Eastern and Western blocs. Since Afghanistan was included in the cycle of these competitions, America saw its interests in supporting the Afghan Mujahedeen and the Pakistani government. Especially after the Cold War, Afghanistan is one of the pillars of American regional policy. In addition, the resurgence of post-communist Russia with equipment left over from the former Soviet Union and the rise of China after economic reforms and trade growth, as well as the emergence of a transitional period in the world order, forced the United States to change its foreign policy. The United States, realizing that the newly emerging great powers are challenging the American hegemony in the region and Afghanistan's position is close to these powers and the nuclear powers of the East, Afghanistan became the focus of the United States of America's attention. Afghanistan is one of the communication centers of structural pressures. It has become with the international system. Based on this, the research question is based on the interests of the great powers and the structural pressures of the international system and American security strategies in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, does the US follow its own strategic interests in competition with a great power, or is it based on the fight against terrorism and the nation-building strategy? In addition, the world entered a new phase of transformation after the September 11 attacks. International politics entered a new geopolitical environment that changed the path of most countries. In addition, considered Afghanistan as the center of planning of this attack. This was the basis for the invasion of Afghanistan by America and its allies, in which the United States, in addition to destroying Al-Qaeda and extremist groups, also sought its own political and strategic interests and goals.*

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Afghanistan is a mountainous and landlocked country, and in terms of topography, it is stretched from east to west by the Hindu Kush mountain range and other mountains and separates the north from the South. Afghanistan as a very important connection and bridge connects South and East Asia to Central and West Asia, the Iranian Plateau and the Middle East. Afghanistan was very important to the world in the 19th century, the area now called Afghanistan, which served as a buffer zone and semi-independent country between Britain and Russia. (Mustafa & Bhatti, 2020) At the end of the 20th century, the conflict between the Eastern and Western blocs in Afghanistan turned into the Cold War between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. After the United States involvement in the Afghanistan-Soviet war and the withdrawal of the Soviet forces, the country entered a decade of civil war between various jihadist groups. After the Cold War and during the 1990s, the West and the United States isolated Afghanistan and it was not a priority in their foreign policy. Meanwhile, regional actors supported their favorite allies. Each of the countries Russia, Iran, India, Pakistan and Central Asian countries chose their respective representatives in this war and conflict.

After the fall of the first Taliban government (1995-2001) in Afghanistan in 2001, the United States shed a lot of blood and spent huge sums of money in the country as part of the war on terrorism, as well as to rebuild and build institutions in the country. (Stabile& Kumar, 2005) Since the US intervention in Afghanistan was mainly focused on overthrowing and destroying al-Qaeda bases and overthrowing the first Taliban government, it aimed to establish a functioning government. (Bergen, 2011)

In addition, the importance of Afghanistan's strategy and geography was important to the United States in terms of securing its interests and wanted to expand its influence. Along the way, US policymakers also made a number of mistakes that undermined the stated mission and goals of the US-led international coalition. Therefore, after two decades in Afghanistan; The United States has completely failed to achieve its stated goals.

Brown University's War Research Project estimates that the United States has spent more than \$2.26 trillion on Afghanistan since 2001. The largest portion—nearly \$1 trillion—was spent on emergency defense and war spending. The largest amount of this money is from receiving interest with a high loan of the American government to cover the costs of the war, the end and outcome of which was not known. The second largest profit - \$530 billion - is the estimated profit of the US government. (Boland & Godsell, 2021)

Despite all this military and nation-building spending, Afghanistan still has one of the smallest and most fragile formal economies on the planet. Meanwhile, the illegal economy is thriving. After U.S. and NATO forces ousted the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan regained its position as the world's largest supplier of opium and heroin—a position it is likely to retain should the Taliban win again. (Gall, 2013) Had this not been a weak return, it would have been enough for the United States, the Afghan military, and the government it was supposed to protect that it would not have fallen. The President of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani, has fled the country, and the Salafist Taliban are taking him to his presidential table. That is what an additional two trillion dollars in investment has done for the United States, ending a 20-year, chaotic and humiliating war in Afghanistan. (Carter, 2021) Both Republican and Democratic governments have struggled to fight corruption and human rights abuses in Afghanistan, even as they sought to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, building a strong military in Afghanistan.

Despite all the huge losses and costs, was the United States able to achieve its goals in Afghanistan? The US intentions in Afghanistan were more hidden. In the face of all this expense, the US was pursuing a macro-policy and leadership in the region and wanted to implement it through Afghanistan. (Whitlock, 2021) Such as economic rivalry with China and approaching the borders of China, Russia and Central Asia, enmity with Iran and its nuclear program, and control of Pakistan, which has a nuclear weapon, and the drug trade were among the US hidden goals in Afghanistan.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

The interests and strategy of great powers is to influence small and weak countries, the United States of America also pursued its strategic and political interests after the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, the September 11 attack. The September 11 attack defined a new line for the foreign policy of the USA in the World. After the end of the Cold War and the

collapse of the communist bloc, the United States no longer had a rival or an agent to define its future foreign policy. After this date, he started the war against global terrorism, which brought with him great support from European countries and the world. The strategic goals of the United States in Afghanistan in addition to the fight against international terrorism; It was close to the borders of Russia and China. It was to bring Iran, Pakistan, India and Central Asia under the radius, whose main goal was to control the policies of Russia and China and to influence the regional powers.

The US invasion of Afghanistan caused great financial and human losses to the United States. Afghanistan suffered the main losses from this attack and war, Afghanistan is a country that after several decades of war, violence, insecurity and extremism entered a new phase of governance, development, freedom, political participation, freedom of expression and fundamental rights after 2001; America has been the implementer, planner and supporter of this policy in Afghanistan after the war. A double and dishonest policy has been followed by the United States in Afghanistan; the United States has sought its strategic interests, development, maintaining its power and influence in the region.

During the 20 years of post-9/11 war, the people of Afghanistan have suffered huge economic and human losses, during which more than 47,245 civilians have been killed during the post-2001 war in Afghanistan. Additionally, between 66,000 and 69,000 Afghan National Army and Police have been killed, and more than 51,000 to 52,000 Taliban forces have been killed by April 2021; both of which were from the same country and people. In total, the 20-year war has left 171,000 to 174,000 dead in Afghanistan. Economically it has an inefficient and weak economy, it is social dispersed and with many differences, it has been the most insecure and violent country in the world in terms of security, corruption, embezzlement, fraud and identity crisis in Afghanistan are the most important. This research seeks to solve and identify the causes and causes of problems and damage in Afghanistan and its impact on the region. In addition, it seeks to recognize the goals and understanding of the imperial policy of the great powers and to sacrifice the weak and small countries.

## **1.2 Significance of the Study**

As it is obvious, imperialist politics is growing in the world, and most countries of the world, especially powerful and developed countries, seek to influence and intervene in other countries of the world for their economic and political interests and hegemonic supremacy.



The United States ranks higher than any country in the world in terms of trade, economy, power and political influence. In addition, it seeks to maintain its position in the world, such as competing with China and Russia or influencing small and poor countries.

The consequences of the US intervention in Afghanistan, its impact on Afghanistan's neighbors, the achievement of the goals set by the US from its intervention in Afghanistan are important in this study. We will also find a deeper understanding of the imperialist policies of the great military and political powers and regional powers in the world.

The benefits of strategy are important and fundamental for the power and growth of a country, and the great military and economic powers in the world are looking for more benefits for more power. What is the importance of why Afghanistan has always been in the center of attention and attack of great powers?

The importance of this research is important for professors, students and scholars. The sudden withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan and the Taliban recapture of this country has added to the importance of this issue.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This research is done in order to analyze the following goals and achieve the desired result.

- To explain the Strategic Interest of United States in Afghanistan.
- To description of US promises in Afghanistan during 20 years and its performance in this country.
- To explore the contemporary outlook of Afghanistan to review United States interests and choices.

### **1.4 Major/Minor Questions**

1. What were the strategic interests of the United States during the 20 years in Afghanistan?
2. What were the promises of United States in Afghanistan and how was its performance?
3. How contemporary outlook of Afghanistan defines the future interest of United States?

## **1.5 Limitation/ Delimitation of the Study**

This study is about Afghanistan and the US intervention in that country after 9/11. This study seeks to identify US goals and programs in Afghanistan, US strategy in the region, and the impact of this intervention on China, Russia, Pakistan and Iran, US competition with these countries in Afghanistan.

It also describes the actual approach and performance of the United States in attacking Afghanistan and the extent to which the US has achieved these goals.

## **1.6 Operational Definitions of the Major Terms**

### **1.6.1 Hegemonic**

For the first time in the third decade of the 20th century, the concept of hegemony was used to analyze domestic politics, and after the 1960s, it was considered in the analysis of international politics. In the 1970s, international political economy theorists adopted it as a central concept, but since the post-Cold War period, it has been the subject of major debates. Hegemony is considered as an important concept in different attitudes and theories of international relations and effective in the field of international politics, and an attempt has been made to examine the views raised about it, the logic governing its emergence, function, continuity and decline. A hegemonic power should be expressed. (Destradi, 2010)

Hegemony is derived from the Greek language and means leadership and supremacy, and in international relations it is called a position of leadership or leadership of a group of governments.

### **1.6.2 Strategic**

The Greek word strategic means "military management". However, the concept of strategy did not come from Greece: the classic work of Sun Tzu (The Art of War) around 500 BC is mentioned as the first description and definition of strategy.

In general, strategy is a plan and vision of future goals that a military or business unit formulates and follows to achieve its goals. However, in management science, strategy formulation is one of the important management tasks that is the basis of managers' critical decisions to maintain the survival of the organization and its activities.

## **1.7 REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **1.7.1 Review of Related Literature**

September 11th was the beginning of a change and a new stage in the foreign policy of the United States and the evolution of international politics. In the post-Cold War unipolar world, the United States entered a new arena in foreign policy relations in which it emerged as a hegemon. There was no obvious enemy or rival to the United States upon which the United States and its politicians could base their foreign policy theories and policies. (Layne 2006) In fact, the United States was facing a hegemony crisis and was waiting for the opportunity to define its future leader based on it. (Walt 2009)

After the fundamental changes at the level of international politics, it was time for the United States to base the arrangement of the new world order on its interests. The United States sought to use 9/11 as a means to achieve its goals after a vacuum in the global competitive landscape. Goals such as the legitimate defense of America or a preemptive attack against possible enemies and against terrorist acts with the slogan of fighting terrorism, completing the blockade of the Middle East (the heart of energy) and establishing the hegemony of this country over the international community. (Dittmer 2005) Therefore, in the new doctrine after September 11, the United States divided the world into two poles, friends and enemies, based on its definition, in order to stabilize and consolidate its country's hegemony. (Michaelson, & Kharas, 2020).

Afghanistan was an important region and strategy for achieving US goals. Afghanistan's geographical and geopolitical features such as:

1. Afghanistan's proximity to Russia and China, two powerful rivals of the United States in the military and economic arena.
2. NATO expansion to the east.
3. Proximity to two emerging nuclear powers namely Pakistan and India.
4. Afghanistan's proximity to Iran, the heartland of energy from.

There were cases where the United States, in fighting potential enemies and terrorism as a short-term goal in Afghanistan, paved the way for establishing its hegemony over the international community as a long-term goal. (Farhadi & Bekdash 2021) In attacking Afghanistan, the United States emphasized the fight against terrorism, human rights and

democracy, but it sought influence and competition with countries such as China, Russia, Pakistan and Iran.

Afghanistan has been the scene of civil and international conflict for more than a century - stability is essential for peace in the region. Dr. Faramarz Tamna examines the Greater Middle East and terrorism in the book "America's Foreign Policy in Afghanistan" in the first section of the book. In the second part of USA in Afghanistan, in this part, the historical background of the relationship of the United States in Afghanistan and the policy of the United States in the Middle East and Afghanistan are examined in general. And to examine many scientific articles and research treatises regarding the presence of America in Afghanistan and the regional and extra-regional policies of America in Afghanistan. We study China and Russia.

## **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

The objective world of politics and the abstract world of theories have close relations with each other. We need to have theories in order to extract accurate meaning from the information we are bombarded with every day. Even politicians who don't have a good relationship with theories are forced to trust their ideas about how the actual world works, so that they can make a logical and principled decision. If the organized and fundamental principles of a person are incomplete, it seems very difficult and impossible for him to make a decent political decision. The existing theories in the field of international relations, each of them has a different view of international issues and issues according to the factors of interest and emphasis and the type of ontology and epistemology.

### **1.8.1 Application of Realism Theory**

Hans Morgenthau systematically developed this theory, which has its roots in the thought and philosophy of western historians and philosophers, such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes, after the Second World War. The emphasis of realists on a situation similar to a natural situation in international relations, reliance on power politics, mistrust and disbelief in institutional arrangements for international cooperation, lack of belief in the possibility of meaningful change in international relations, and the continuation of war in relations between governments. In the state of anarchy governing international relations, all governments must seek power, because governments can protect themselves and improve the welfare of their citizens only through power. In other words, because the

international political system or the community of governments is deprived of any central authority to resolve disputes and allocate scarce resources, it is the responsibility of each member to do whatever they can to acquire and maintain it and for protect yourself against external threats.

The realist's belief in the disharmony of interests in the world, and their emphasis on the contentious nature of international relations, has weakened the prospect of cooperation in this view. In the field of realism thinking, cooperation for common benefit is very difficult, because there is no trust, time horizons are limited, and governments are uncertain about each other's future intentions. From the point of view of realists, the fear of being exploited limits the power of interdependence to stimulate cooperation and the formation of collective identity. With increasing interdependence, actors become more vulnerable to each other and as a result have a more objective reason to feel insecure.

Neorealism is an attempt to make realism scientific and pay attention to economic issues and international structure. Although neorealism is a realist theory that accepts many of the assumptions of classical realism, such as state-centeredness, power-centeredness, unity, and rationality of states, it argues that despite the belief of classical realism, the root of war and peace lies in the structure of the international system. Realists say that this is not human nature or the nature of countries. Neorealists believe that the international system is anarchic. The chaos of the international system does not mean the lack of order and violent behavior, but rather the absence of a central governing authority in the international system. (Gilpin, 1988)

The US invasion of Afghanistan is examined by the theory of offensive realism, because the United States as a world power in the economic and political arenas and a great power seeks to expand its influence and maintain its position in the world.(Walt, 2018)The strategic and important location of Afghanistan and its proximity to the competing powers of the United States was an important strategic location for the US to expand its power and thus increase its influence and obtain economic and political benefits.(Kim & Indeo, 2013)

## **1.9 Gap of Knowledge**

This research seeks to identify the hidden and obvious goals of the great powers in the occupation and colonization of small and weak countries. In this study, we discuss the issue of Afghanistan. The knowledge gap in this research is the effects of the US intervention in

Afghanistan and the recognition of the real and mythical goals of the US in the Middle East and Afghanistan. The American attack on Afghanistan after September 11, 2001 and the presence in this country for nearly 20 years, the sudden withdrawal of the United States and NATO from Afghanistan, and the re-establishment of the Taliban after 20 years of fighting in Afghanistan are some of the basic gaps in this research.

## **1.10 METHODOLOGY**

This article is typically descriptive-analytical (qualitative). In this research, library, documentary and internet resources have been used and analyzed by qualitative and inferential methods. In descriptive analysis, data is qualitatively analyzed.

### **1.10.1 Research Design**

In general, a qualitative methodology will have used to analyze the data. Quantitative data analysis is also use when needed, but not so much. Its theoretical framework is conceptualizing, which is why qualitative data analysis is a priority. International IR theories, authors' ideas, featured sites, related books, journals, newspapers will be the approaches implemented in the research.

Meetings will be held with members of parliament, their impact on the lives of civilians, from Afghan and international professors to share knowledge about the involvement of international and regional powers in Afghanistan, to conceptualize debates through television channels, is ask. Still, the conflict of interest between the US and Afghanistan's neighbors will be conceptualized in Afghanistan.

### **1.10.2 Outline/Organization of the Study**

This research has an Introduction chapter along with four chapters deliberating on the subject matter. In total the study is divided on five chapters.

#### **Chapter One: Introduction**

This chapter includes the statement of the research topic, research objectives, main and secondary research questions, the importance of this study, and the application of international relations theories in this chapter. It has attempted to fill the gap for the study. In

addition, there are other sections like problem statement and limitations of the study, which I have used during the study.

## Chapter Two: Geopolitical Significance of Afghanistan in the 21st Century

In this chapter, a discussion on the importance of Afghanistan in terms of strategy and geography is done. The relationship between Afghanistan and the region is briefly discussed.

## Chapter three: United States Strategic Interest and Strategy in Afghanistan

In the second chapter, strategic interest and strategy of United States in Afghanistan is discussed. The United States seeks influence and supremacy in the world. In addition, with the attacks of Afghanistan, the USA had its own strategic policy and sought to increase its influence in the region through Afghanistan, which is the hub connecting Central Asia, the Middle East, South Asia and China. In this chapter, we have discussed US interests and strategy in Afghanistan.

## Chapter Four: United States Promises and Performance: A Critical Analysis

The Fourth Chapter discusses U.S. promises in Afghanistan that the United States promised at various conferences and conventions after 2002 such as state-building , strengthening democracy ,political stability ,economic growth ,and so on.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

In the fifth Chapter is a brief summary of the discussion of the findings is done.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Geopolitical Significance of Afghanistan in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

Having strong diplomatic relations, it needs to know the geopolitical codes. In addition, politicians and foreign policy agents should try to understand, and be able to properly manage and control the field of foreign policy and have a suitable strategy to establish strong diplomatic relations with other countries in the world. (Flint, 2021)

In this chapter, we tried to analyze the political geopolitics of Afghanistan based on the factors affecting geopolitics. In addition, it will provide the opportunities and bottlenecks facing the future of Afghanistan in the field of national power and foreign policy. Based on this, the factors affecting geopolitics are analyzed, defined and their influence on foreign policy is examined.

For centuries, Afghanistan has been a natural communication route for warriors, conquerors and merchants who transported their trade goods or military forces from West Asia and the European continent to the East, between the Middle East, China and India. This was the path chosen by great conquerors such as Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan and contemporary great powers. (Martin, 2011) Afghanistan is a country that has suffered from political instability and successive crises for at least the last four decades. The people of this country could not experience peace and comfort, even in a short period of time, despite different policies. These policies were: the rule of coup plotters, pro-Soviet communists, the arrival of Russian invaders, the political incapacity of jihadist groups to form a government, the sudden movement of the young Afghan Taliban, and the arrival of American invaders. In fact, instability has been institutionalized in this country.

#### **2.2. Afghanistan (strong society and weak government)**

Governments in Afghanistan have always been weak in front of society. Or the existence of weak governments and strong society has been one of the most prominent features of Afghanistan. This means that the power is concentrated in society and the government is deprived of it.



### **2.3. Afghanistan's Geography**

In general, the discussion of political geography and geopolitics of a country is to examine the mutual relationship between the geographical environment and the political environment of a country. In geopolitics or geographic politics, attention is paid to the role of geographic environmental factors in the politics of nation-states to make decisions and consider the goals and interests of the country. The foreign policy of governments depends on the factors that influence politics, including the decisions of political leaders. In many issues these decision makers are not free. And they create process, political behavior and certain decision for leaders. Factors affecting geopolitics are fixed factors on geopolitics and variable factors. (HufLa, 2021.)

Fixed factors include:

- 1- Geographical location and its forms
- 2- Space and its divisions
- 3- The extent of the soil
- 4- Topographic situation
- 5- It is the shape of the country.

Variable factors also include:

- 1- Population
- 2- Natural resources
- 3- It is political-social context.

### **2.4. Fixed factors**

#### **2.4.1. Position**

The location of a country is an important geographical input that inculcates the postuer of national power. It shows how and in what area a country is located on the planet. (Monkhouse, 2017) Some countries in the world have a barren location, these countries do not have access to the open sea from any side and are surrounded by dry land and their borders include the sea or the borders of surrounding countries or small lakes. Being far from the sea has both positive and negative aspects for landlocked countries, its negative aspect

outweighs its positive aspect, and countries with such a position always feel suffocated. These countries struggle to communicate freely and without restrictions with the world, which affects their trade, economy and politics.

A country with such a position will never enjoy real political security and stability if it is a geostrategic complement to its neighbors and its region, and conversely, it will be stable if it is not a geostrategic complement to its neighbors. They do not know their interests in the field of competition, they will enjoy relative security Afghanistan is a clear example of countries that complement the geostrategic of its neighbors.

Afghanistan is located in South Asia. It neighbors with Pakistan, Iran and China on the one side, whereas on the other side Central Asian Republics completes her neighborhood. (Laruelle and Peyrouse, 2013) This country acts as a communication route between South Asia, Central Asia, China and Iran and the Middle East, and also religiously and ideologically between Islam and Confucianism and Islamic ideology. The Hindu Kush Mountains cover a large part of Afghanistan, and have always been a strong wall against warriors. Afghanistan's location in the heart of Asia has made it unable to access the open sea from any direction and is landlocked. The shortest and closest way to the sea is through the countries of Iran and Pakistan to the Oman Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Afghanistan is a country that can access the Indian Ocean and Oman Sea only through these two countries and reach profitable and cheap trade through the sea and improve its economic situation. Also, Afghanistan connects with Beijing through the Wakhan route, and Afghanistan can use this route to replace the Great Silk Road to revive its economy and grow its trade. The countries located in the north of Afghanistan are landlocked and Afghanistan can be a geostrategic complement to these countries to reach open waters and the Indian Ocean and use this opportunity for its growth. (Lyons III, 2010)

#### **2.4.2. Extent**

In the past, size played a big role in the power of a country. Achieving greater size has encouraged countries to initiate many wars. (Mearsheimer, 2016) Political geographers, including Ratzel, considered the size of a country in terms of area to be a factor of power. (Stogiannos, 2019) While today there is no conceptual obstacle anymore and in a wide war, all regions of a country are considered as a front, and therefore the threat is not dependent on the size.

In different sources, the extent of Afghanistan has been expressed in different ways. Some sources say 649,000 square kilometers and others say 683,645 square kilometers. But according to the information of the 2013 comprehensive database atlas and also the modern cytological atlas of countries, the area of Afghanistan is 652,225 square kilometers (of course, most sources have mentioned this amount with a slight difference) it is the 40th largest country in the world.

### **2.4.3. The Size of a Country**

The geographical form of political units is taken into consideration in communication, national unity, defense considerations and in general in the assessment of power. The division of the countries of the world in terms of shape is into five categories. Countries with a shape close to a circle or rectangle, which is also called compact, like France. Long countries (the length of the earth is 6 times its average width) such as Vietnam. Comet countries (having a peninsula or a narrow path away from the body, like Thailand.

Different countries have individual and separate parts that are separated from each other by the soil of another country or international waters. As a result of this fragmentation of the soil, there are certain consequences. Usually, the communication between the scattered parts of a country is more difficult than the countries whose soil have continuous for example, we can mention the country of Indonesia.

Peripheral countries On the political map of the world, you can find a handful of countries that completely encircle the territory of another state. Such countries are known as peripheral countries. They are in a situation where in order to reach the destination of the surrounding or internal country, either by land or by air, you have to pass through their territory. The result is that the peripheral country has a superior position from the political point of view compared to the surrounding country, for example two countries, Italy and Africa. The south is called peripheral countries and the countries of San Marino and Lesotho are called peripheral or inner countries. (Blanchflower, 2021)

The favorable shape for a circular country and the unfavorable shape is the circumference. According to Wakhan Corridor, this country ranks among the comet countries. This region of Afghanistan (Dalan Wakhan or Bاريكه Pamir), which is considered as a fan handle, is a narrow and long border area that was established in the late 19th century

based on the rivalry between colonial powers and the necessity of a buffer between Tsarist Russia, India and England. (Tomsen, 2013.)

#### **2.4.4. Borders**

The border lines of Afghanistan have been created without regard to the cultural image of the region and only as a result of international politics. Border lines that have been created due to international politics regardless of the cultural image of one and only region. The southern borders of Afghanistan have caused many conflicts and political tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The border between Iran and Afghanistan starts from Malik Siah Mountain at the common border point between Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan and extends to Zulfaghar mouth, the border point between Afghanistan, Iran and Turkmenistan. In addition, the northern borders of Afghanistan are relatively less tense and calm.

The basis of borders and their route lines are different and are generally due to attention to security, border agreements, historical heritage of borders and military conflicts caused by border obstacles. The shape (geometric shape) of the borders will be derived from the geostrategic thinking of the countries. (Chellaney, 2013.)

Afghanistan has a common border of 5514 kilometers with its neighbors. Afghanistan shares 2384 km with its northern neighbors, 40 km with China's Xinjiang province, 850 km with Iran in the west, and 2240 km with Pakistan. Of course, the borders of Afghanistan and its neighbors, especially the border between Afghanistan and China, are mentioned differently in different sources. Afghanistan does not have a sea border on either side, but most of the country's northern border with Tajikistan is based on the Amu Darya or (Jihun) river, which has given this border a complex and winding shape. In this type of border, due to its concave-convex shape, this border should be provocative and debatable for the neighboring countries of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, but so far, even before the collapse of these borders, it has not been the cause of conflict between these countries. The Soviet Union, the union of the governments of these countries (Soviet Union), sought to dominate all of Afghanistan. This river is the common border of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. and parts of it are navigable during high water.

The borders that were built by colonialism are imposed borders. All its boundaries are imposed. Ethnic groups and different languages live around the borders of Afghanistan, which are also scattered in other borders of other countries. In addition to Afghanistan,

Pashtuns also live in the border country of Pakistan. Baloch also live in three countries: Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, which causes tension between Afghanistan and its neighbors. In general, the borders of Afghanistan will be controversial and insecure borders for Afghanistan in case of an increase in self-awareness and ethnic demands, especially in the era of globalization, ethnic and local identities are more stimulated.

#### **2.4.5. Water Network**

The water network of a country has many important effects in the fields of water geostrategic, the development of communication and trade of countries. Due to its mountainous location, Afghanistan is a source of sediments that move towards the lowlands of the north, west and south with the direction of the external flow. The important and main water network of Afghanistan, which includes Amu Darya (Jihun), Hirmand-Arkhandab network, Harirod network and Kabul river along with Panjshir and Kunar seas, all flow to countries outside of Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, the rivers are not navigable due to their rapidity, mountainous nature and little water. Only Amu Darya is navigable in a short distance between Shir Khan Kunduz and Tajikistan during high water. In terms of communication, they are not very important for Afghanistan. Meanwhile, in the field of agriculture, these rivers are very important for the lands of Afghanistan. (Barfield, 2022.)

#### **2.4.6. People**

Afghanistan is a country with a wide variety of different ethnicities and racial groups such as Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Hazaras, Imaq, Balochs, Nuristanis, Peshais, Ghazalbash, Brahuis, Pamiris and other ethnic groups that were and are in this country.

There are many racial and ethnic groups in Afghanistan that speak different languages. In Afghanistan, ethnic and linguistic diversity is considered one of the cultural and social assets of this land, and according to the Afghan constitution, "Afghan citizens have equal rights and duties before the law, any kind of discrimination and privilege between Afghan citizens is prohibited." After 2001, a constitution was approved in Afghanistan, which, based on Article 4 of the 2004 constitution, recognized all the languages of the country's ethnic groups as national languages without mentioning their languages: " Ethnic groups in Afghanistan include Tajiks, Pashtuns, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Pishais, Nuristanis, Imaghs, Turkmen, Balochs, Arabs, Kyrgyz, Ghazalbash, Gujar and Brahui. Article 16 of the Constitution declares Dari and Pashto as the official written and spoken languages of the

country, but in parts of the country where the majority of people speak one of the Turkmen, Uzbek, Pishie, Nuristani, Balochi or Pamir languages. each of these languages is the third official language besides Dari and Pashto and the law regulates its use. In addition, according to Article 43, the government is obliged to provide education in indigenous and local languages in the areas where they speak that language. (Runion, 2017.)

#### **2.4.6.1. Pashtuns**

Pashtuns are divided into two groups, Gholzai or Gholjai, which are among the oldest tribes that have been mentioned in different histories, and other tribes include Zadran, Mangal, Gholzi, Durrani, Hotak, Ander, Kakar, Ahmadzai, Sarbani, Popel, Suri, Gedon, Lodi, Ahmadzai, Statankzai, Mohammadzai, Yusufzai, Benouchi, Khoruti, Swati, Sohak, Shinwar, Abdali, Barakzai, etc. are among the important groups of Pashtun people. (Siddique, 2014.)

#### **2.4.6.2. Tajiks**

Tajiks are the oldest ethnic group in Afghanistan and after the Pashtuns, they constitute the largest ethnic group, and they are the most speakers of the Dari or Persian speaking group of this country. Most Tajiks live in the northern, northeastern and western regions of Afghanistan. (Spoonner, 2012)

#### **2.4.6.3. Uzbeks**

Uzbeks live in the northern regions of Afghanistan and after Pashtuns and Tajiks, Uzbeks are the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan. And they speak Uzbek and Dari and are of Turkish origin.

#### **2.4.6.4. Hazaras**

The Hazaras who live in the center of Afghanistan are one of the largest ethnic groups in the country who speak the Dari language and their majority religion is Shia.

#### **2.4.6.5. Imagh**

Imagh are nomadic and semi-nomadic Dari-speaking people in Afghanistan who live mostly in the west and northwest of Afghanistan.

#### **2.4.6.6. Baloch's**

Balochs are a minority in Afghanistan who mostly live in Nimroz province of Afghanistan and are the same race of Balochs in Iran and Pakistan.

#### **2.4.6.7. Nuristanis**

Nuristanis are of Indo-European race, which is said to have entered Afghanistan from India in ancient times; they live in Nuristan province of Afghanistan and speak Nuristan language.

### **2.5. Afghanistan's Economy**

Although life expectancy, income, and literacy improved in 2001, Afghanistan is still extremely poor, low-educated, landlocked, and highly dependent on aid. And many Afghans still suffer from lack of good housing, safe and clean water, electricity and fuel, medical care and jobs and basic necessities. After the 11th of September 2001, Afghanistan's economy started to grow and the ground was provided for the reconstruction and modernization of the country. But the fundamental work in this field was not done. In the last two decades, Afghanistan's GDP has increased from about four billion dollars to more than twenty billion dollars, and the international community has helped Afghanistan with billions of dollars for economic growth and infrastructure construction. Agriculture, industry and service sectors, which had the largest share in the country's GDP, grew significantly with foreign aid. But this growth was not sustainable in its real sense, and fundamental projects that would provide continuous work to the country's residents were not implemented. The recent data of the Central Bank of Afghanistan about the country's economy shows many positive and negative points that require careful evaluation.

Despite measures such as controlling food prices and fighting corruption, there is still no positive outlook for the country's economy. Afghanistan's dependence on foreign aid is still high, although it has decreased drastically compared to before August 1400. UN cash packages of around \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion per year, plus the same amount of in-kind humanitarian aid, are essential for macroeconomic survival and stability. Widespread administrative corruption, fragile security, weak and inefficient governance, lack of infrastructure, and the absence of comprehensive rule of law throughout the country, pose challenges to the country's economic growth and future. Before 2014, Afghanistan had an economy dependent on foreign aid, where foreign aid agencies and institutions each supported separate sectors. And after 2014, they have artificially inflated economic growth mainly due to the presence of foreign aid agencies.

The world was committed to the growth and development of Afghanistan after 2014. At the Brussels conference in 2016, donor countries pledged to allocate 3.8 billion dollars annually to development aid and economic growth from 2017 to 2020. Despite all this help, the Afghan government has been facing several challenges after 20 years, including low employment and low revenue collection. After 2012 and the withdrawal of international security forces, it has had a negative impact on economic growth. The former president of Afghanistan introduced reforms in the field of administrative corruption. But the mafia circle and the close ones of the president did the most corruption and embezzlement. After the escape of Ashraf Ghani, Afghanistan will depend on the support of international donors in the next few years. (Ghani, and Lockhart, 2021.)

## **2.6. Geopolitical Dynamics of Afghanistan**

In terms of security, political and geopolitical theories, Afghanistan is considered the meeting point and connection of security belts and global and regional geopolitical centers. The creation of geopolitical borders are actually restrictions that can guarantee stability and security or vice versa in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has always been exposed to the inevitable consequences of the competition between great powers, with geographical limitations and political instability. India and Pakistan have their own special interests and are two sources of tension in Afghanistan. Both of them have a security thinking based on creating strategic depth, and this thinking has provided the basis for security competition and the extensive use of proxy forces in Afghanistan. With a deep strategic view, Pakistan tries to address the Durand border issue, the security issues of maintaining the security rear in Afghanistan in the event of a war with India, and the economic issue such as access to cheap mineral resources in Central Asia and marketing in these countries by resorting to this strategic thinking. to make it favorable for himself.

With a slightly different perspective, India is trying to defeat its historical rival Pakistan in these competitions on the one hand and adjust the security environment according to its security doctrine, and on the other hand, to gain access to the resources of Central Asian countries. China in the northeast of Afghanistan looks at the geography of Afghanistan calmly but with a forward-looking strategic view, and after the withdrawal of America from this country, this calm view combined with strategic thinking will turn into a strong political,



economic and even military presence. In this strategic thinking bill, China sees three factors as a reason for its warm presence in Afghanistan; First, the growing trend of extremism, which is on the rise after the Taliban came to power, and shows that Afghanistan has become a safe haven for multinational terrorists. Second, it is the economic view that makes China the main line of work in its interactions with other countries.

In addition to eyeing Afghanistan's mines, China has a strategic view on the implementation of the One Belt One Road megaproject. Undoubtedly, if stability and security are not provided in Afghanistan and significant security guarantees are not given for the non-existence of security challenges in the northern borders of Afghanistan that affect the security of the Central Asian countries through which this project passes, the implementation of this super project will be full of pain. It will be the head. Third, for China, which has a different view of the international system and considers Asia as its future sphere of influence, an Afghanistan without China's strong political presence will be far from strategic logic.

To establish a lasting and permanent peace in Afghanistan, to create unity and a point of commonality between ethnic groups, and to devise a plan and policy to build a state and fight with insecurity, a strong and central power is needed. After 2017, coordination groups were formed to build peace in Afghanistan, the most active groups being the Afghan government, the United States of America, Pakistan, China, and Iran. They were looking for a way to find a reliable way for this issue through peace talks. In addition, some other actors such as Saudi Arabia, Russia, India and Central Asian countries were also interested in the peace process in Afghanistan. The interests of each of these actors related to Afghanistan are separate from each other, and these countries will in turn shape their positions to create peace in the region. (Bayramov, 2021)

## **2.7 Strategic Importance of Afghanistan**

Afghanistan is a land that has been a place of war and conflict with the superpowers of the time, from the empire of Great Britain to the Soviet Union during the Cold War and the United States after the Cold War, which has been the supreme hegemon. Therefore, analyzing the reasons for the attention and importance of Afghanistan and the events surrounding it is very important and significant for the international community in the current situation. In general, the importance of this land can be divided into three levels.

The first level of importance of Afghanistan's strategy for the international community is from the security aspect. Since the 1990s and after the fall of Dr. Najib's communist regime and then the internal conflicts between jihadist armed groups over power, Afghanistan has always been a refuge for extremist groups. The leader of these groups was al-Qaeda, which operated under the protection of the Taliban in Afghanistan. In addition to this, ISIS has also set its sights on this region with the announcement of the Islamic government of Khorasan and has clashed with the Taliban over these positions. Although it is not unlikely that in the future these differences will turn into a tactical and even strategic alliance by agreeing on interests. Based on these events, the developments in Afghanistan are in the crosshairs of the world from a security point of view, because this region can become a safe haven for terrorist groups and, in the second step, a source of terrorism export.

The second level of Afghanistan's strategic importance is related to its geopolitical position, logistical importance and political conditions. This can also be divided into two sub-levels, international and regional.

At the international level, Afghanistan is at the crossroads of world powers. Russia is in the north, a huge number of American bases and forces are in the west, China is in the east and India is in the southeast. Accordingly, it has great geopolitical and logistical importance. China is very sensitive about security issues, especially the effects of Afghanistan on the border province of Xinjiang and Muslim Uyghurs. In addition, Afghanistan's participation in the "One Road, One Belt" initiative is of particular importance. For Russia, developments in Afghanistan are of particular importance due to Afghanistan's neighborhood with its two allied states, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (in the form of the Shanghai Treaty). In order to balance its relations with Pakistan, India has always wanted to accompany and integrate with Afghanistan. Moreover, the active presence of India during the communist regime ruling Afghanistan and of course during the last twenty years shows the importance of these relations for India. The United States has also paid special attention to Afghanistan for a long time, and regardless of its hasty withdrawal from this country, it has always been an influential and decisive factor in Afghanistan's equations during the past forty years. (Whitlough, 2021)

## **2.8 Afghanistan's Strategic Importance to the United States**

During the Cold War, the neighboring countries of the Soviet Union were interested in the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO). And Russia was interested in Afghanistan, which was considered a passage to reach warm-waters. The United States paid little attention to Afghanistan until 9/11, especially after the withdrawal of Soviet troops. But the events of 9/11 showed that small forgotten countries can also have a monumental impact on international development.

The United States is pursuing multiple targets to combat terrorism in Afghanistan. Undoubtedly, Afghanistan has a valuable place in U.S. foreign policy since 9/11. The coalition strike against the Taliban was another strategic opportunity that led to the realization of America's long-term goals in the Caspian Sea and Central Asia and Qafghaz by taking advantage of this opportunity to control Central Asian and Caucasian countries, direct control of the Caspian Sea energy resources, access to the Eurasian Corridor and monitoring the activities of regional nuclear powers (China, India, Pakistan and possibly Iran). Afghanistan is the neighbor of China, in the past it has been within the limits of Russian influence, and now it is neighboring Pakistan (the traditional friend of USA in the region), Iran (a non-aligned state with the United States), and Central Asian countries with their rich energy resources. (Hassanzadeh,2013)

In other words 'since the 1990s 'the United States has had several problems in its relations with China and Russia 'so it was looking for an opportunity to pressure those countries. The United States failed to put pressure on both countries by resorting to human rights, but 9/11 created an atmosphere in which U.S. claims about terrorist threats gained legitimacy and became tangible. The country sought to form a global coalition under the name of fighting terrorism. A coalition led by the United States itself. This time, unlike in the past, opposition countries could no longer speak of the illegitimate goals of the United States, whose ultimate goal was hegemony. From this perspective, the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan can be seen as the prelude to a (grand strategy) detailed in the US National Security Strategy (2002) a year later.

For the first time in history, the United States has a set of power components, allowing friends and foes to simultaneously threaten and resort to its superior power to strategic demands. But the United States has taken action through the Security Council to justify any

military operation in Afghanistan as it will come and reserves the right to legitimate defense (in accordance with President Bush's new military doctrine), to launch military strikes against al-Qaeda and the Taliban with the assistance of international defense organizations such as NATO and the United Nations peacekeeping forces. Then pursue its presence in Afghanistan and rebuild the country. (Bayley and Sadt 2020)

Now, we will examine the position of three powerful regional states, namely Russia, China and India, which are closer to our discussion, and their place in U.S. regional policy after their presence in Afghanistan.

### **2.8.1 Russia**

The history of competitive relations between the United States and Russia greatly influenced international politics and theories for nearly half a century into the post-Cold War era and the ideological rivalry of the two superpowers that led to the confrontation of communism and capitalism for more than four decades. Although the struggle ended dormantly with the victory of the United States and the defeat of communism, the military power of the new Russia is still a concern for U.S. policymakers. The other power of Russia is the oil and gas of this country, which has the first position in the world's gas resources, as the largest oil producer outside the framework of OPEC Organization, has the capability to produce nearly twelve million barrels per day and plays a key role in US policies to moderate the power and monopoly of OPEC Organization alongside the United States, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan in adjusting OPEC members' policies and real prices. Oil is worth the penalty.

However, as the heir of the Byzantine Empire of the East, Russia still has great ability to determine international political equations. The events of 9/11 and the fight against terrorism have such an impact on the global relations of the great powers that it is safe to say that the closest point of Russia's relations with the United States in the last half century was the 9/11 attacks, to the extent that some spoke of Russia's membership in NATO. Two months later, NATO Secretary General George Robstown welcomed the situation and went to Moscow to meet Putin. Putin said he had "no intention of joining NATO."

Russia has been very involved in the US reaching Afghanistan and suppressing the Taliban. In this effort, Russia considered itself a beneficiary. Central Asian airports were opened to American aircraft. The situation was so tight that Moscow was forced to provide

any assistance, but after a while, he realized that the United States was planning to establish bases in the countries of the region, and it was henceforth that criticism of the continued presence of the United States began. In any case, it seems that after September 11, the relations between the two old superpowers have been significantly aligned on the basis of the fight against terrorism. Russia's position in US foreign policy no longer appears to be based on fear or balancing terror solely because of Russia's nuclear arsenals. There is a secondary but important reason that will cause disagreements about some issues in the region. In this sense, the foreign policy of the two countries leads to the limitation of traditional areas of Russian influence in the region. Russia considers Afghanistan to be lost and is no longer willing to lose Iran.

Afghanistan's neighborhood with the Central Asian republics has caused America to pursue some goals in the region in addition to the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan, the indicators of which are:

- 1- The fight against terrorism enabled the presence and deployment of American forces in Central Asia and the Caucasus. America, by being present in this region and expanding its security umbrella, seeks to reduce the power of Russia and Iran.
- 2- The presence of America in the Central Asia and Caucasus region is an obstacle for the possible alliance of Iran, Russia, India and China.
- 3- The American military presence in this region has led to the adjustment of the geopolitical borders of this country with the geographical borders of Russia.
- 4- America's goal of being present in the region, in addition to fighting terrorism, is to improve its position in the security arrangements of the region (especially the Middle East and Central Asia).
- 5- NATO's move to the east, which has been met with the enthusiasm of the Caucasus countries, will lead to the dominance of extra-regional powers over oil resources.(Tamna 2010)

Russia's response to the expansion of the sphere of influence of the United States of America beyond the borders of Afghanistan was to accept a benign hegemony until 2021, and for this reason, the United States has not faced much trouble. And the existence of a common enemy in the name of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism has become the point of

connection and overlap of the interests of the two historical superpowers. (Bayley and Sadt 2020)

But after 2021, Russia was opposed to NATO's expansion to Eastern Europe, because of this, it started the war in Ukraine and actually got involved in the war with Europe and the West.

### **2.8.2 China**

Afghanistan shares a border with China in the northeast through the Wakhan Strait, which is about 80 kilometers long. The province of Xinjiang, which is located on the border between China and Afghanistan, is the source of many unrests, which is mainly caused by Chinese Muslim extremists living in this province. The turning point of America's relationship with China, which is now on its way to progress, was crystallized again in the September 11th incident.

From the point of view of the United States of America, China is a powerful country with its own right in Asia, which is different from other countries in the Asian continent. China has always been the focus of American authorities in different situations. After the crisis caused by September 11, the United States should get the support of countries in the fight against terrorism, and before this fight can start, China's agreement was necessary so that military operations in Afghanistan can be carried out more reliably.

In addition, 62 Chinese people were among the missing in the New York incident and the destruction of the World Trade Center. After the incident, China noted that the correct use of this opportunity can bring the relations between the two countries out of the cold and cause more cooperation. Also, China's support to America in the war against terrorism was conditional on non-interference in the affairs of other countries, so it wants to have an opinion by proposing the necessity of observing international laws and making any decision and implementing it within the framework of the United Nations Security Council. The economic relations between China and the United States are very high, and the two countries have many international and mutual interests, and at the regional level, China has contributed a lot in the fight against terrorism and reconstruction in Afghanistan. Despite the cooperation in the fight against terrorism and macroeconomic mutual relations, this cooperation and the warming of relations have changed and been temporary. (Tamna 2010)

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **United States Strategic Interest and Strategy in Afghanistan**

Due to its geographical location, Afghanistan has long been the focus and campaign of the important powers of the time. But what caused the recent developments to happen in Afghanistan is the result of events that took place in the 19th and 20th centuries. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Afghanistan was always a buffer zone between Tsarist Russia and imperialist Britain. After the Soviet invasion, the status of this country for the United States improved and this country became an arena of conflict and competition between the two superpowers of the East and the West. With the ever-increasing development of China's all-round power in the economic and military arena, the nuclearization of India and Pakistan and the competition between these two countries and Iran's attempt to achieve this technology, the revival of Russia's military and economic power and rich energy resources (oil and gas) in Asia. Central, the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, the geopolitical location, economic geography and strategic geography of Afghanistan were revealed to the United States.

The events of September 11 gave this desire a practical aspect, and the United States attacked the Taliban forces to preserve the survival of its government, and then to fight terrorism, implement the Greater Middle East plan, and democratize the countries of the region, now by adopting the nation-building policy in Afghanistan. It has penetrated the strategic depth of this region and was trying to expand its influence in Afghanistan and the wider region.

#### **3.1 George W. Bush and the Idea of Neoconservatism**

After the September 11 attacks, Bush's political doctrine was formed based on the neoconservative thinking framework around three ideas:

1. That American hegemony in the world should be maintained,
2. The United States should maintain national and international security through preventive measures.
3. The unilateralist actions of America were theorized in the dominance of the export of American democracy and peace building.

Many researchers, liberal peacebuilding in the light of unilateralism they rejected the aggressiveness and expansion of democracy in Afghanistan after September 11, 2001, because promoting peacebuilding and identifying tension-causing situations according to the theory of peacebuilding was not compatible with aggressive approaches. Roland Paris and Edward Nyom prayed that America's intervention as a peace-loving and democracy-loving leader in Afghanistan would make sense as a humanitarian intervention and sustainable peace building in this country, and their approach is actually independent of peace building in Afghanistan and the aspect of Colonialism had found a foothold (2009, Newman). Institutional-structural reforms in Afghanistan during the rule of neoconservatives with liberal styles in the traditional society of Afghanistan had led to the escalation of violence and crisis in the field of legitimacy and could not be one of the important components of peacebuilding theory. The increase in rural protests in Afghanistan in these years shows the failure of peace-building policies and the lack of proper identification of the sources of tension in Afghanistan.

United States's peacemaking strategy during the neoconservative era was based on two axes and indicators:

1. Theoretical indicators and approaches that include:

- a) Reaching a hegemonic position in the international system.
- b) Stabilizing the hegemonic position of America and activism commensurate with international weight.
- c) Inducing the concept that the superior power and the hegemon of the international system rationally has more aggressive power than others.

2. Indicators and practical approaches that include:

- a) Fighting against terrorists and formulating a counter-insurgency strategy to deal with growing insecurities.
- b) Dealing with failed and rebel governments and countries.
- c) Preventing irresponsible and unintelligent governments from reaching to weapons of mass destruction.



- d) Strengthening regional stability, and (democracy expansion/comprehensive security).

In the strategy developed by the neoconservative government, during the first period of her government, the security scope for Afghanistan was more than the social sphere, that is, Bush tried to decisively confront the terrorists by increasing security measures and military interventions. In addition, in the second period, with more capabilities in operationalizing the goals, to pursue more successful democracy expansion and peace building in this country.

In the grand policy strategies of the United States in connection with its foreign policy in the post-Cold War era, this country has been trying to create the ground for the realization of a unipolar order led by the United States through intelligent opportunism. For this purpose, Afghanistan and Iraq were considered the top platform of America towards their big goals.

### **3.2 Obama and Peace-building Strategy**

Obama entered the White House with this thought, and he made it his agenda to talk about reducing the military duration of large-scale interventions in the Middle East. For this reason, he outlined the use of a remote balancing strategy and the proportionalization of presence in the Middle East and Central Asia region. In order to succeed in playing the role of balancer from a distance, the United States tried to transfer the responsibility and task of providing security to its regional allies. By changing the front of the war and conflict from Iraq to Afghanistan, the Obama administration also changed its method and tactics. The reason for this issue was that despite new strategic designs for Afghanistan, their results failed to achieve minimal benefits; So that General McChrystal, based on this failure of strategies in this country, demanded the increase of military forces to about 40000. He believed that increasing forces and democratic systematization could achieve positive results achieved in Afghanistan by changing methods and strategies. Regarding Afghanistan, Obama believed that the real and potential international threat to America is from Afghanistan (Stephen, 2013).

In 2009, Barack Obama stated her approach and the type of strategy she adopted regarding Afghanistan that the withdrawal of our forces from Afghanistan depends on the conditions of this country. Apart from the military approach, he stated in a civilian approach that our goal in Afghanistan will be based on mutual respect and empowerment of the government in Afghanistan. Obama always considered the war in Afghanistan as a project

that was very necessary for America. In other words, Obama's peace-building policy in Afghanistan is a behavior-building foreign policy and a security-building transition to democracy. A policy that focused on the strategic architecture and engineering of the power structure in Afghanistan with a focus on the policy of empowering the internal processes of this country. In general, Obama's peace building strategy in Afghanistan was based on three axes, which include the following.

- Restoring political stability through the empowerment of Afghans
- Increasing the military forces in this country in order to train the security forces of Afghanistan
- Proper planning for a smart exit from Afghanistan

Obama always referred to the war in Afghanistan as a "good war", this strategy meant that the United States in Afghanistan, while being present in this country, would empower the security forces based on educational strategies rather than the military force. A change during the time of Barack Obama regarding the issue of Afghanistan from a war of choice to a war of necessity and a good war shows the maximization of the situation and subsequently the maximization of security. Obama said in a speech in 2014. After 2014, we will support a united Afghanistan and America's goal in Afghanistan will be based on two missions:

1. Training and assistance of Afghan forces in the direction of reconstruction and peace building and
2. Conducting anti-terrorist operations to destroy the remnants of Al-Qaeda (Obama, 2014).

According to Larry Goodson and Thomas Johnson, the fundamental goal of the United States in Afghanistan during the Barack Obama era was to create a "clean government" and "ideal governance" in Afghanistan. In order to provide the four regional and extra-regional interests of America, these interests are as follows:

- a) Preventing terrorist threats that lead to hitting America's extra-regional interests and America must deal with them outside its territorial borders;
- b) preventing regional governments from expanding and acquiring nuclear weapons;
- c) Empowering regimes and governments that have fallen, such as Afghanistan, to ensure regional stability;

- d) Creating a solid and strong base to monitor its trans-regional competitors such as Russia, Iran and China.

According to Barack Obama's foreign policy team, domestic inefficiencies, corruption, insecurity, lack of prosperity, etc. are among the most important problems of Afghan society. Corruption has deep ties with the Afghan government and their ineffectiveness has caused many internal challenges. (Feltman 2020)

### **3.3 Obama and the Impact-oriented and Culture-oriented Strategy**

By identifying the desired results or goals of a battle, impact-oriented strategy separates tools from each other and then replaces new tools. With this strategy, the goal of the United States is to empower Afghanistan's internal institutions to prevent the return of terrorism and extremism so that it can establish sustainable and inclusive peace processes and follow the evolution of structures and infrastructures. This strategy that was pursued during the Obama era towards Afghanistan included speed of action, agility, knowledge-oriented, empowerment, and capability, strengthening of local cooperation in the direction of comprehensive and inclusive peacebuilding. In another approach, in order to legitimize the presence of American security forces in Afghanistan, Obama emphasizes the necessity of changing the operational culture of ISAF forces to focus on supporting the people, a program that is based on security in Afghanistan. (Stephen, 2013)

In addition, knowing the domestic environment is another aspect of this cultural strategy. Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Program (Afghanistan-Pakistan Connection) was defined during the Obama era for better implementation of goals. Such as sustainable freedom, education, training, force management and replacement of the strategic influence program in this country. During his administration, Obama put the security and military power of America towards security in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The goal of the United States was to bring Pakistan into the equation of Afghanistan, strengthen the expansion of the dynamic range of its enemies, and by linking the structure of Islamabad and Kabul, create a process of cooperation and interaction between Afghanistan and Pakistan in order to increase the security factor between the two countries.

In addition, change the regional context of the conflict to the geopolitics of peace. America's strategy towards Afghanistan changed from a confrontational role to a central-consultative interaction role. Obama regarding the issue of stabilization of Afghanistan and

sustainable peace in Afghanistan from projects such as: 1) supporting the TAPI gas pipeline project, which included the countries (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India) and 2) supporting the establishment of a communication network known as the Northern Distribution Network for the growth and development of Central Asia and Afghanistan. In general, Obama's peacemaking policy in Afghanistan was to consolidate the government in an ethnic-tribal order, a policy that somehow led to an increase in conflict and tension in the Afghan society. In other words, the common point of Bush and Barack Obama's policy towards Afghanistan was the realization of imposed democracy and peacemaking from above, which resulted in the failure of the process of establishing security and peace in this country.

### **3.4 Trump and the Strategy of Peace**

Trump's way of looking at Afghanistan did not always mean neglecting the "obvious threat". Regarding the issue of Afghanistan, Trump was not acting hastily and presenting an irresponsible policy in the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan; He knew that this haste in operationalizing the exit issue would allow the presence of international terrorists again in this country. For this reason, he tried to send a number of troops to Afghanistan in response to the criticisms that saw his approach as irresponsible and against the interests of America towards Afghanistan. Trump's attitude in the Afghanistan issue was to create a new policy and strategy based on creating opportunities and creating a situation for Afghanistan, a policy that could be effective in identifying the tension environment according to the theory of peacemaking. In other words, Trump's policy towards the Afghanistan issue was "the policy of creating a situation". This strategy meant that the decision-making power and power of American activism in Afghanistan would increase based on strategic opportunism and the policy of maximum pressure on the Taliban, and the security-economic and political interests of America would go beyond. The "fight against terrorists" in Afghanistan can prevent the spread of instabilities in South Asia. (Lee, Kelly 2017)

### **3.5 Trump and the Shift in Foreign Policy**

After the inauguration of the Donald Trump in 2016, the existing assumptions in the American foreign policy underwent some kind of pivot expansion rotations in the principles, bases and approaches. His way of looking both in the field of domestic politics and in the field of foreign policy was a combination of economic thinking and profit and loss. Based on

this, he proceeded selectively in choosing his foreign policy and which regions, countries have economic interests for America. In this type of foreign policy approach, taking into account that the distribution of power has happened in the field of the international system and emerging powers such as China, India, Japan and the European Union have been formed, the material interests of America are in danger and vulnerable. For this reason, the need for activism in this international order requires economic activism based on selective choices. This type of reading and view of foreign policy can see in the activism of the United States in the field of foreign policy towards countries like Afghanistan from 2016 to 2020. (Cordesman, Anthony 2017)

Trump was trying to rely on the basic position approach and the intervention of an emerging power like India, in the internal relations of Afghanistan, while consolidating and guaranteeing security in this country and raising the American security factor in the region. Trump wanted to increase the power of his economic activism, consolidate his influence in the South Asian region, and operationalize the basis of peace based on power. Trump's foreign policy group believed that by internalizing the peace processes in Afghanistan and forcing the Taliban to the negotiating table, they can return lasting peace and comprehensive security to Afghanistan. During Trump's era, diplomacy based on power and force was emphasized (John, 2019). In general, the model of Trump's foreign policy in Afghanistan was somewhat similar to the era of George Bush (Jr.), an era in which the use of aggressive diplomacy became a tool in foreign policy. On August 21, 2017, Trump presented his general policy in the name of foreign policy on the axis of Southeast Asia.

This policy was a way of expressing the importance of India and the role of this country in the interactions and the play of political power in the international system and the role of this country in regional interactions with an emphasis on the country of Afghanistan. In a way, this policy changed the Asia-Pacific order to the Indo-Pacific order. By announcing this new policy, Trump seriously criticized the strategies of the previous governments regarding the issues related to Afghanistan and stated that the policies of the previous American predecessors regarding this region by turning to mercantilist views were to the detriment of America. In addition, in the macro dimension of foreign policy, make this region safe for its presence so that it can supervise with powerful regional players such as China, Russia and Iran. In general, Trump rejected the policy of state building in Afghanistan in order to build peace and security, and he was trying to force the Taliban to negotiate with the

United States through a policy of pressure based on negotiations, so that Afghanistan becomes a reliable partner. (2017, Landler)

This point shows that Trump is only looking for points from the Afghan government, and if the US is going to create foundations for peace and security in Afghanistan, the Afghan government should pay the costs of these measures to the US. Trump's main goal regarding the foreign policy announced towards Afghanistan and the participation of emerging powers such as India in this country was actually to monitor China's regional actions as a serious competitor for the United States. Trump's long-term goal of involving India in the affairs of Afghanistan was firstly (preventing the reproduction of terrorism and secondly (ensuring America's trans-regional economic security (Benedict 2019). In general, Trump's foreign policy towards Afghanistan and the Taliban has been a "threat and pressure" policy. He had warned the Taliban that if they do not sit at the negotiation table with America and do not accept the idea of a peaceful settlement of the differences, he would destroy all their centers with the most severe attacks. The 2020 talks with the Taliban can be analyze on this basis. Two goals were stated in the talks between the Taliban and Washington during Trump's time as follows:

- The withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan;
- The Taliban's anti-terrorist guarantees and turning to the internalization of the peace-building process in Afghanistan.

One of the negative points in the 2020 Taliban-Washington talks was the non-participation of Afghan government representatives and people's representatives in these talks, which shows the neglect of internal decision-making processes to prevent tension and the lack of political openness in this country. Among the main components of Trump's strategy towards Afghanistan, the following can be mentioned:

1. Giving more power to US forces to deal with domestic threats in Afghanistan.
2. The erosion of war in Afghanistan and paying attention to political approaches in the process of peace building.
3. Establishing a long-term presence in Afghanistan and transitioning from a military-oriented approach to a security-intelligence-oriented approach.
4. Inviting India to play a constructive role in Afghanistan for the purpose of economic and developmental assistance.

### **3.6 Biden and the Decision-Making Crisis**

Joe Biden will not have strong options regarding the issue of Afghanistan. He has to decide whether he will respect the peace agreement that was made under Donald Trump or whether he will decide to withdraw from Afghanistan. The important thing is that there is no peace in this country and basically, Biden will be faced with three options:

1. Presence in Afghanistan
2. Complete withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan,
3. Conditional withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Despite the billions of dollars, that America has spent in this country since George Bush (Junior) until today. Afghanistan is still in the list of less developed countries and basically increasing violence, local corruption, weak and undemocratic governance, poor education and health have negatively affected the peace process in this country (Rinehart & Lasher, 2018) It seems that due to these crises, leaving Afghanistan will be an unreasonable option for the Biden government, in a way, he wants to increase the level of responsibility in the Afghan society to resolve crises and war. Regarding the American foreign policy towards Afghanistan, the Biden government has stated that after the withdrawal of the American forces from Afghanistan, this country will continue to support the Kabul government. The government that fell before the time set for the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan. And the Taliban were able to regain power.

U.S. foreign policy in recent decades in fragile countries like Afghanistan has often been on a double path, which was initially seen as reinforcing and discrediting state-building. In other words, in the new strategy of the Biden administration towards Afghanistan, the regional approach to stabilizing fragile states is effective. In other words, Joe Biden's foreign policy team believes that setting a region-centric strategy to sustain stability can help secure and stabilize the peace process in Afghanistan. In general, Biden's foreign policy on the issue of peacebuilding in Afghanistan will be in the form of a small footprint policy. That is, given the partial withdrawal of troops, the country will continue to be paid attention to essentially prevent the resurgence of terrorism. To this end, Afghanistan will have an ideological heartland in Biden's foreign policy apparatus so that terrorism and insecurity are not re-established in this country. In general 'Biden's stated policies on the issue of Afghanistan are as follows.

1. The reduction of U.S. forces depends on the Taliban's compliance with the Doha Agreement (De-escalation vs. De-escalation).
2. Continue to support the central government for social empowerment of governance in Afghanistan.
3. Sustainable state-building and state-based order in order to create opportunities for negotiations with the Taliban.

One of the strategic goals of Biden's foreign policy on the issue of peacebuilding in Afghanistan is to increase the country's domestic economic potential to increase the level of stability and strategic ties of the country with Central Asia, which is why it has a high position in not delegating foreign policy in Afghanistan. One of the long-term goals of the United States during the Biden period is to calibrate commitments for Afghanistan. In this regard, the prioritization and grading of U.S. goals against Afghanistan will be considered, and in light of that, trans-regional monitoring of players such as China, Russia and Iran will be considered. Another strategic policy of the Biden government in Afghanistan is the activation of the regional context. This means that the United States, along with its international allies, will engage regional players in the process of peacebuilding in Afghanistan, so that this policy will somehow lead to the architecture of the country's security structure. (Baryalay and NasimSadat, 2020)

In general, the matrix of the U.S. peacebuilding process from the Bush Son to the Biden era is as follows:

- a) Interventionism
- b) Reconstruction
- c) Withdrawal

The first path ‘from 2001 to 2008 ‘includes interventionism ‘coercive peacebuilding and nation-building from above. The second path, with the matrix-expressed matrix, involves social restructuring, stabilization, retreat and limited handover of powers to educated elites from 2008 to 2016. The third trajectory ‘which includes some of the common points of policy between the Trump and Biden eras ‘is to continue the transformation in policymaking ‘to advance the peace building process by turning to intergroup dialogue and strategic retreat.



### **3.7 The Impact of U.S. Military Withdrawal from Afghanistan**

The U.S. policy on the issue of Afghanistan and the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan has been based on two very important areas since 2001:

1. Combating terrorism in modern ways in the form of counterterrorism operations, and
2. Training, advising and empowering Afghan security forces to combat insecurity caused by militant activism.

These two axes have not always interfered with U.S. security dynamics from the time of Bush to the Biden era. In the Biden administration, U.S. officials have stated that they will continue counterterrorism and combat insecurity in the form of an "off-the-horizon" policy. That is, Biden has noted that the United States will use some of its power to prevent the resurgence of terrorism in the region. (Biden,2021)

Basically, one of the policies of the Biden administration on the issue of peacebuilding in Afghanistan will be to use the country for trans-regional purposes. China is a serious threat in U.S. trans-regional policymaking. Turning to the dam doctrine, Biden will block China's trans-regional influence with a policy of coalition. In this period, Biden will try to add that a country like Afghanistan will join this coalition circle in securing its trans-regional goals. In general, it can be said that Afghanistan will have a strategic importance and somehow Afghanistan will play the role of the insulating country in the global equations for the United States.

### **3.8 American Hegemony Against China and Russia**

The US focuses on maintaining the balance of power and preventing hegemonism in the three regions of Europe, East Asia and the Persian Gulf, which are of vital security importance. The importance of Europe and East Asia comes from the fact that they are the main source of wealth and the main headquarters of the world's great powers. The Persian Gulf is also the main source of oil as a vital factor in the functioning of the world economy. No country has enough power to dominate Europe in the foreseeable future. Although Russia is facing demographic and economic problems internally depending on oil and gas revenues and in Europe. Again, Russia is reviving under the leadership of Putin. Mearsheimer talks about the "return of Russia" which may join the China-centered international order to unite

against the American-centered international order. This option is realized while Russia, despite feeling threatened by powerful China, perceives a greater threat from America (Mearsheimr 2019).

China has the highest capacity of hegemony in the near future. By increasing its power and redefining its interests throughout the Asia Pacific, this country will pursue regional hegemony, just as the United States pursued regional hegemony in the Western Hemisphere in the 19th century. Therefore, the most threatening scenario for America in the 21st century is China's hegemony in Asia" (Mearsheimer, 2001)

The United States was present in Afghanistan for 20 years to establish the balance of power and consolidate its power in South Asia and Central Asia. which left this country in 2021 after spending a lot of money and losing energy.

### **3.9 US Interest in Withdrawing from Afghanistan**

#### **3.9.1 China**

The first speculation about the reason for America's withdrawal from Afghanistan goes back to Washington's focus on Asia and the rise of China. Based on the threat theory, the Americans consider "China's growing military capability as a long-term threat to America" (Tirpak, 2021). Therefore, the evacuation of Afghanistan from the change of American foreign policy is based on focusing on new centers of threat and control of emerging powers, especially China, as the main priority. Pulling out of Afghanistan would allow the US to focus on the Asia-Pacific and mobilize resources to counter China, without engaging in an endless war. Afghanistan without the US is considera suitable platform for establishing a balance with China from afar, because it leads to Beijing's internal and regional conflict. Therefore, the withdrawal from Afghanistan was implemented with the motivation that China will find hegemony in the region very costly based on the principle of cost and benefit.

It is clear that the removal of the American security umbrella from Afghanistan and the intensification of ideological and ethnic rivalries will lead to a power struggle and even a return to the state of "warlordism"

This instability puts Beijing in a complicated situation that some interpret as Afghanistan's swamp for China and compare it to the American war in Vietnam. From this

point of view, cooperation with the Taliban implies China's entry into the power struggle between the warring Afghan groups, all of whom are Muslim. This situation, along with Beijing's confrontation with Xinjiang Muslims, paints an anti-Muslim image of China in the Islamic world and arouses the population to confrontation (Hughes, 2021). Beijing's fear of the incitement and attack of the Uyghur rebel group known as the "Eastern Turkestan Movement" is increasing, because these groups can use the Taliban's empowerment for a cross-border attack from Badakhshan to Xin Kiang (2021, Kine). The lack of presence of Uyghurs in al-Qaeda and cooperation with the Taliban indicates the mobilization capacity of this religious minority and the increase of hostility of Xinjiang Muslims against the Chinese government. Therefore, the expansion of the unrest in Afghanistan leads to a new front of internal and regional conflict for Beijing.

Therefore, the Taliban gaining power and creating a challenge in the western and northwestern borders of China overshadows Beijing's capacity to deal with what it calls the "three evil forces" (terrorists, separatists and extremists caused by Uyghur extremism). Concerned that Beijing has exercised more control over its borders with Afghanistan, it has turned to bilateral security talks with its neighbors, including Tajikistan and Pakistan (Kine, 2021). In such conditions, it is inevitable for China to pay more attention to its tense security environment in the West and to reduce as much as possible the focus on confronting its rivals in the East (Hughes, 2021). It engages new challenges in the periphery and reduces Beijing's focus on the East, allowing Washington to limit China in the Asia-Pacific region.

The strategy of rebalancing in a wider scope is aimed at the military dominance of the US in the Indo-Pacific, which includes from the North East to the South East and South Asia. Leaving Afghanistan gives America the opportunity to allocate more resources to its allies in the region, who have a common perception of China's threat. Some of these countries have increased their defense spending in the past decade to face new challenges and play a more effective role in the security architecture of the region. They are trying to expand intra-Asian security cooperation and strengthen existing strategic relations.

America's focus on the Asia-Pacific within the framework of the open balance policy and, presumably, the release of resources from Afghanistan, also has an economic aspect. America can achieve two important goals by expanding its presence and economic influence in this region. "Firstly, to prevent China's economic hegemony over the region and secondly, to use the capacity of the region's densely populated market in order to expand its trade and

exports" (Edel, 2017). Join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

### **3.9.2 Russia**

The American presidents have always paid special attention to Russia in the framework of their major policies. Adherence to this rule is also maintained in the policy of rebalancing, and as a result, Russia is no longer a weak emperor of the Cold War era, but an actor whose choices have a deep impact on the vital interests of the United States and the agenda of global issues, because:

1. First of all, Russia is the only country that can remove America from the world map, and at the same time, it plays a key role in preventing nuclear terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and missile launch systems.
2. Second, Russia is not just a "regional" power, but it is the largest country in the East based on its size and geographic location, adjacent to many regions.
3. Thirdly, the facilities left over from the Soviet era and post-Soviet scientific achievements make Russia a world leader in advanced military hardware industries and cyber and weapons capabilities against the United States.
4. Fourth, Russia is prepared to fight, from using military force to achieve its goals, from annexing Crimea and supporting Bashar al-Assad to selling advanced systems such as the S-300 air defense system to Iran and military alignment with Iran and China. (Allison, 2017).

From this point of view, the withdrawal of American and NATO forces from Afghanistan is considered a "big deadlock" for Russia (Uygor, 2021). They have long borders with Afghanistan, while it cannot practically fill the "post-American or post-Western" security vacuum. This duality occurred while the Central Asian republics are allies of Russia within the framework of the "Collective Security Treaty Organization" and based on that, if terrorist groups attack one of these countries, Russia will be committed to intervene. This contradictory situation is also in conflict with Moscow's confrontational view towards the West. In the early 1990s, Russia was responsible for strengthening peace in Central Asia, and in the early 2000s, it was ready to cooperate with the United States in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, but today Moscow cannot match its hegemonic ambitions with its dwindling power resources. Therefore, the geopolitical power vacuum in post-American Afghanistan

and the spread of the resulting instability to Russia's natural sphere of influence will cause this country to limit its development from Syria to the North Pole and take Central Asia seriously. As a result, the strategy of reducing America's cross-border military responsibilities in Afghanistan leads to the strategic involvement of Russia in the peripheral environment and prevents it from hegemonic goals.

It is clear that Russia's focus on the Afghanistan crisis is mainly focused on its hegemonic interests in Central Asia (Danvers, 2021). The immediate threat to Central Asian countries is the growth of cross-border terrorist groups in Afghanistan, the spread of extremism, arms and drug trafficking, and the release of oil. Afghan refugees and immigrants. Thus, Afghanistan's instability, strife, and internal war spread to Russia's borders through neighboring countries in the region (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan) (Motwani, 2021). Moscow's concern is that the Tajik and Uzbek areas of Afghanistan which are like a barrier against the Taliban, have been under the control of the Taliban (Sitdicov, 2021). Therefore, Washington, with the historical awareness of the Soviet war in Afghanistan in the 1980s and its security consequences for Moscow, expects the spread of instability and insecurity from Afghanistan to the countries of Central Asia and the incitement of Muslims in the North Caucasus.

On the other hand, the strategy of Russia and the Central Asian countries has led to a change of attitude towards the Taliban and the beginning of some kind of interaction with them in order to reach agreements to prevent the spread of extremism in the region. These countries know very well that the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups consider America's withdrawal from Afghanistan to be more than a victory over a superpower, and they will probably try to expand their influence outside of this country. The Taliban will not close the territory of Afghanistan to foreign military groups, and the continuation of their aligned relationship with Al-Qaeda doubles the concern of Central Asian countries and Russia. In addition, the Taliban does not prevent foreign citizens from joining and welcomes Central Asian groups that are active in Afghanistan (Motwani, 2021). The Taliban's asymmetric warfare capability should also not be overlooked, making it more unpredictable than Russia to counter. Therefore, the US put the withdrawal from Afghanistan on the agenda based on its hegemonic interests and global power. China and Russia consider the lack of a safe security umbrella in Afghanistan inappropriate and dangerous for the future of their political stability.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **United States Promises and Performance: A Critical Analysis**

Afghanistan is a country where geographical determinism has had the greatest impact on the development process and the fate of its people and has overshadowed them (Hadin, 2008). The geopolitical importance of Afghanistan, which has always been in the position of a buffer country throughout history, is such that some have named this country as the heart of Asia. Being in a geostrategic position; Afghanistan plays an important role in the developments of Asia, the Middle East and South Asia. This position of Afghanistan has drawn the attention of other global and regional players to the internal events of this important country. The military attack on Afghanistan with ideological support had several aspects, on the one hand, the moral war is aimed at expanding American control and influence in the Central Asian region.

On the other hand, securing the economic interests of this country by imposing military costs on Afghanistan and other countries in the region and leaving it without introduction. It is only in line with providing these benefits. In fact, America pursued immoral goals (outside of the agreements and set goals) in Afghanistan with a moral justification (policy-oriented) and when it could not achieve it in general, it abandoned those justifications and showed it with a hasty retreat. The unethical aspect of his presence is heavier than the moral aspect.

The United States of America, realizing that any foundation for consistency, needs concentration and order, and based on the fact that it had the experience of nation-building in countries such as Germany, Japan, Bosnia and Kosovo after the Second World War, now it wanted to use these experiences. used in Afghanistan. What had fallen apart during more than 22 years of civil war (1979-2001) in Afghanistan is primarily the political and cultural foundations and then the economic and military foundations of this country, and this process was the path to establishing security.

A country that does not have the ability to establish order always potentially causes the growth of extremist groups.

#### **4.1 America's Twenty-year Presence in Afghanistan and its Achievements**

Bagram military airfield, the last military base of the USA forces in Afghanistan, was evacuated on the 11th of July (July) by 1,400 people. Bagram Airfield, which is located 50 kilometers north of Kabul, was one of the most important and strategic bases of American forces in Afghanistan. About 100,000 American and NATO soldiers were stationed in that field, at the height of the presence of American and NATO forces in Afghanistan. In Bagram Airfield, American forces also had a military prison where members of the Taliban group were imprisoned. The evacuation of Bagram base was actually the end of the military presence of all American and NATO forces in Afghanistan. The presence of the US-led coalition in Afghanistan had reached its highest figure of 140,000 troops by 2011. Following the killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011, in 2014, the security responsibility officially fell on the shoulders of the Afghan military forces and there was a significant reduction in the presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan. Following that, on January 15, 2021, the United States announced that its forces in Afghanistan were reduced to 2,500.

In the latest case, on April 14, 2021, US President Joe Biden announced his decision to withdraw all US forces from Afghanistan before September 11, 2021. On 24 Assad 1400, after the collapse of all political and military structures and the escape of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, the Taliban military forces entered Kabul after capturing most of the major cities. The whole of Afghanistan was completely captured by the Taliban in the year after one month after the withdrawal of foreign forces from this country. (Khosravi, 2022) But briefly and briefly, the achievements of the military, political presence and economic aid of the United States and Western countries in Afghanistan can be summarize in the following sections:

#### **4.2 Government Formation in Afghanistan**

In 2002, with the establishment of a new political system with the cooperation of the international community, extensive reforms were introduced in various political, social, economic, cultural and military fields. This law, which was approved by the representatives of all over Afghanistan in the historical Loya Jirga of 2002, from December (Azar) to January (Dec) of the same year, is described as one of the best constitutional laws of Afghanistan and the region. This law was approved in 12 chapters and 162 articles, which was ratified by

Hamid Karzai, the head of the transitional government of Afghanistan, on 6 December of the same year.

On the basis of this constitution, the separation of powers was introduced for the first time in Afghanistan and the ground for elections for the presidency, parliament and provincial councils Laws prepared. Based on this constitution, the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan were established independently. Despite the establishment of a regular administrative and governance structure in Afghanistan, the dishonesty of international partners and internal ethno-religious prejudices caused the collapse and destruction of this system and structure. (Tamna, 2010)

We examine the actions of the United States of America in the direction of nation-building in Afghanistan.

#### **4.3 Afghanistan Reconstruction Conferences**

The first step in the matter of reconstruction was to get the support of the international community in supporting Afghanistan's political projects. The formation of the Bonn Conference in late November 2001 for the formation of the Afghan Interim Administration led to the signing of an agreement between the Afghan political groups on the leadership of Hamid Karzai as the head of the newly formed political administration on January 1, 2002. In this agreement, the instructions for access to peace, security, re-stability and reconstruction of the country were formulated.

Also, on December 20, 2001, Security Council Resolution 1368 approved international aid to Afghanistan after the war. Subsequently, other conferences were held to rebuild Afghanistan and attract global economic support for the nascent Afghan government. The Tokyo conference was held in early 2002 and about 4.5 billion dollars were collected for the reconstruction of Afghanistan in four years. (Rashid, 2018)

The Berlin Conference was held in 2005 for political and security measures, and the Land Conference was held in 2006, and finally, in this conference, about 10.5 billion dollars were allocated for the reconstruction of Afghanistan until 2011, and the share of the United States in all these conferences is high it was more than the others. (Dorani. 2019)



#### **4.4 Strengthening the Central Government**

The structure of the post-Taliban government was determined in the Bonn Conference. Hamid Karzai was elected as the first head of the government of Afghanistan, and key ministries were given to other parties, including the Northern Alliance, and the interim administration was formed in Afghanistan. In general, the cooperation of the United States, the United Nations and other countries of the world was mostly in the fields of security and economy.

##### **4.4.1 Security**

At the beginning, the international peacekeeping forces, which included 5 thousand soldiers, were formed under British supervision to ensure the security of Kabul. Also, 8,000 people from the international coalition forces led by the United States were engaged in fighting with al-Qaeda and the Taliban throughout Afghanistan. The role of the United States in providing security in Afghanistan was the most obvious aspect of this country's efforts in Afghanistan, because the United States believed that only when regions like Afghanistan, Sudan, and Iraq are under military control and enjoy the benefits of new liberalism, to be The security interests of the United States will be served.

##### **4.4.2 Economy**

In the field of economic reconstruction of Afghanistan, the United States has played the most effective role. These measures are aimed at supporting the central government, raising the level of welfare, reducing poverty, increasing per capita income, the government's reliance on national resources, and in order to reduce the society's desire to earn money from illegal sources such as war, drug cultivation and smuggling, or conducting military operations due to It was money. Afghanistan has played an active and constructive role in the economic field of the United States of America and has caused the growth of the economy and the creation of work and capital.

Some of the actions of the United States and the support of this country in the direction of the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan were:

1. Laying groundwork for Afghanistan reconstruction conferences
2. Budget allocation for people's access to social and economic infrastructure

3. Reconstruction of roads and roads
4. Supporting the agriculture sector
5. aid of wheat and other food items
6. Laying groundwork and attracting opinions for the establishment of the UNAMA office

#### **4.5 Establishing Democracy and Strengthening the Governance Process**

In this section, as epic ideals for human dignity, the principles and values of a liberal society including the defense of freedom, justice, the rule of law, limiting the absolute power of the government, freedom of religion, women's rights, human rights, religious tolerance and respect for private property. The title of the principles supported by the American government in foreign policy, especially in the theory of the Greater Middle East project, is announced. According to these political and cultural considerations, the United States implemented strategies in Afghanistan, including spending nearly 400 million dollars in this matter. These measures were mostly aimed at spreading the culture of democracy and human rights among the Afghan society. (Rashid 2018)

In addition to that, supporting the elections and the development of the political process, improving the quality of the judicial structure, attracting the attention of the international community, dealing with women's affairs, strengthening the mass media, education and training, health and hygiene and other sectors.

#### **4.6 The United States and its Performance in Afghanistan**

The final assessment of the success of the United States of America in the path of nation-building and fighting terrorism in Afghanistan is unclear. It can be said that the steps taken in this field have not brought many favorable developments for the people and the government of Afghanistan in the past twenty years. But it is necessary to point out a manifestation of the challenges of the United States of America in the direction of implementing foreign policy plans in Afghanistan.

##### **4.6.1 In the Economic Field**

Poverty still casts a shadow on people's lives. Economic development and increase in national income is reflected only in the statistics of the Ministry of Finance and the reports of

the World Bank, not on the lives and income of the people. The government relied on international aid until the fall, and the import economy disrupted the production base, and the balance between export and import was not expected. A lot of unemployment, lack of work and migrations abroad are still to earn income. And people's ability to meet the basic needs of life was not raised.

#### **4.6.2 In the Field of Security**

Until the withdrawal of the American forces, security was not provided throughout Afghanistan. The activities of various groups in Afghanistan were seen with the presence of tens of thousands of military forces from 39 countries. And they could not provide the desired security. Weapons are not fully collected and armed groups use military power in different ways to determine the equations and rules of the political game. The Afghan National Army had not reached the desired level in terms of quantity. In addition, urban security and citizens' livelihoods were disturbed. (Department of Defense, 2020)

#### **4.6.3 In the Field of Democratization and Expansion of Freedom**

This field was one of the most challenging issues that could be faced by the United States of America. The traditional social system of Afghanistan, based on historical experiences in different periods, does not adapt easily to modern changes. After September 11, open court, freedom (public media expression) based on democratic rules filled the atmosphere of the society. But this container was not suitable for people's needs. (Hosain 2011) Democracy was developed from top to bottom and was developed based on political decision without being formed based on a social need, therefore it has not been institutionalized in Afghanistan. And from the beginning of its democracy, the United States tried to determine its core at the top of the power, and people began to distrust secular democracy.

On the other hand, democracy does not fit with extreme economic poverty. In the first place, people are interested in meeting the basic needs of dignity rather than civil needs, but this matter was not paid much attention. And most of the people believed that a weak and incoherent government is not able to establish a good security and meet the needs of dignity. Administrative corruption was evident in the political system to a great extent, and the distance between the nation and the government was increasing day by day, causing the inefficiency of government institutions.

#### **4.6.4 Influence of United States in the Regional Countries**

In the first stage, until 2014, he was able to unite most of the countries with him in the fight against terrorism, and the United States itself was the first to move towards this. But after 2014, the countries of the region understood that the goal and intention of the United States is not only the fight against terrorism and state building, but other goals such as hegemony in the international arena, unilateralism and control over the behavior of China, Russia and Iran.

In general, the United States wanted to adjust its new foreign policy in the fight against terrorism after 2001. After the Second World War, America benefited the most from the Cold War and facing communism and was able to become the superior power and superpower in the Western bloc. After the Cold War, the United States was no longer a leader for countries to save them from the danger of communism. The incident of September 11 caused the United States to bring different countries of the world, even its competitors, with it in the fight against terrorism, and to be able to fulfill its strategic goals and foreign policy. (Wayne, Earl 2021)

In fact, the promises of the United States in Afghanistan are due to the lack of executive elites regarding national and international macro issues, the legitimacy of the government, the lack of a strong and powerful government, the inability to establish optimal security and meet the needs of the people, and administrative corruption, which was more evident in the political system. , the distance between the nation and the government and the revival of the Taliban caused the failure of the promise and strategy of the United States in Afghanistan.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Conclusion**

It should be noted that the September 11 event is considered a turning point in global developments, especially in the United States. This incident changed the theoretical foundations in the field of international relations and ended the record caused by the crisis of meaning in the foreign policy of the United States. This development in the field of defense and security in the 21st century after the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, new experiences in asymmetric wars and in the framework of the superiority of military technology, designing a new strategy and weapons science and technology, expanding information technology, relying on modern science and technology, gaining More military skills in land, air, sea and underwater and the display of advanced technologies were given to the United States of America.

In terms of demographics, it is more about multi-ethnicity and heterogeneous population, it is a collective qualitative problem that is caused by the very low level of education, and political factors cause the real value of resources not to be in the direction of economic growth. However, the youth capital of the national population is very important; relying on it, valuable plans and projects can be planned.

The new enemy called terrorism soon replaced the former enemy of communism, and all components of the foreign and security policy of the United States moved towards the fight against terrorism. Countering terrorism was thought to have great military and economic benefits for the United States, just like the fight against communism during the Cold War. The new movements of the United States of America under the pretext of fighting terrorism are the best opportunity for this country to expand its interests wherever it wants. International relations in the post-Cold War era, which was moving towards multilateralism with the increasing power of China and the European Union, changed to hierarchical multilateralism, if not to unilateralism, after the September 11 incident. Of course, at the top of this power pyramid is the United States of America.

In any case, the presence of the United States of America in Afghanistan, which is located in the center of the global heartland, has provided the ground for this world power to penetrate the energy-rich region of Central Asia, the Caspian Basin, and the Persian Gulf, and

has also caused this country to influence the activities of prominent countries in the region. such as Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Iran and Central Asian countries have elites. The presence of NATO in Afghanistan, which is one of the important operations of this military alliance in the process of expansion to the east, provided more opportunities for the United States to share the costs of its presence in Afghanistan with its European allies. Also, these measures have made the United States' plans to democratize the Greater Middle East more practical while consolidating the hegemonic position and expanding the spheres of influence of the United States.

What have been the strategies of the United States of America for peace building in Afghanistan after September 11, with an emphasis on the era of George Bush (Jr.) to the era of Joe Biden, and what path will it follow? To answer this question, first, the theoretical explanation of the problem with emphasis The theory of democratic peace/peacemaking was discussed. After the terrorist incident of September 11, 2001, the macro approach of American foreign policy changed from a stability-oriented strategy and approach to a change-oriented approach and attitude based on the adoption of aggressive approaches. In the cause analysis of the September 11 incident, the American bureaucracy from the Bush administration to the Trump era believed that the spread of terrorism and insecurity is due to the failure of the government project, the absence of a modern democracy and the rule of law, the weakness of civil institutions, the blockage of the political space, systematic corruption and economic trends. The failure has been effective in the emergence of centrifugal and aggressive movements in Afghanistan.

In the American foreign policy after September 11, 2001, advancing the process of peace building in broken societies has been considered as one of the strategic issues of the United States, so that in this process, Afghanistan was articulated as the focal point of this issue. In general, since 2001, with the rule of the neoconservatives, the process of forced peacemaking was followed based on interventionism and alternative discourse on the axis of security-building war. From 2008 to 2016, according to the governance of Barack Obama's change-oriented discourse, the process of peace building in Afghanistan has been mainly the foreign policy of behavior for peaceful democratization and consolidation of the government in Afghanistan.

With the inauguration of Trump and a paradigm shift in the patterns of American foreign policy, the United States' peacebuilding strategy is based on the erosion of the war in

Afghanistan and paying attention to political approaches in the peacemaking process and establishing a long-term presence in Afghanistan and transitioning from a military-oriented approach to an information security approach. The axis was framed, so that the model proposed by the Trump administration for peace building in Afghanistan was to internalize the processes of peace stabilization in this country. At the same time as Biden took office in America, the issue of Afghanistan and peace building in this country was raised as the first crisis of his policy team. Basically, Biden's strategic policy regarding the peace building process in Afghanistan will be dominated by small footprint policy, government-based order, condition-oriented policy and containment doctrine with reference to the three diplomatic, legal and military levers.

In addition to the fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and the peace process, America has also put the reconstruction of this country on its agenda. In the process of nation building, an effective step towards the formation of the government, the establishment of parliament, the legal system, the police and the national army, the development of an almost pluralistic and democratic culture, the promotion of human rights and women's rights, the improvement of the economic situation and the support of the society among the international community. was a slave, but after twenty years, Afghanistan still does not have an acceptable situation.

And the United States of America, after 20 years of staying in Afghanistan, finally left this country after bearing billions of dollars in financial costs and thousands of dead and wounded, and the government supported by it fell. After twenty years, this country returned to its first place, the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban.

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