



RESEARCH PAPER

**Afghanistan Under the Shadows of Taliban and Implications For
Pakistan and Regional Security**

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ABSTRACT

The Taliban's possible return to Kabul would affect the region, in the short term, the situation in Afghanistan may benefit regional players; China, Russia, Pakistan, and Iran but in long term, can become problematic for these nations. This study shed light on the future prospects of regional politics, in case the Taliban return back to the driving seat of Kabul as there are historical and ideological facts that can help to understand it. The power structure of future government in Afghanistan will determine, the future of the region and Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan. In case the Taliban remain successful to seize power alone, it affects differently on the neighboring states and the region, and if they return with power-sharing formula as desired by the western power, the implications will be different. Pakistan and regional players should prepare for both situations so that they can manage the situation accordingly. This study examined the eventual geopolitics of the region, in case of Taliban return to power.

Introduction

America has decided to leave Afghanistan with a proper deal or without a deal in 2021. This development has serious implications for the regional players, i.e, Pakistan, Iran, India, China, Russia, and neighboring nations. The prevailing situation in Afghanistan can escalate into a civil war in Afghanistan if America started withdrawal from Afghanistan without prior arrangements in Kabul. Afghan Taliban can use violence to secure power in Kabul and in such a situation they have the need of Pakistan support for sanctuaries in the TTP hideouts and this can limit the use of power against TTP to save the Afghan Taliban. The civil war in Afghanistan is not in the interests of regional players excluding America that can use it to target Pakistan and Iran and can use it as an excuse to provide assistance to India against Pakistan and China. Possible Taliban control of Afghanistan has created new foreign

and security policy concerns for Pakistan and other regional players that may see the formation of new alignments in the region. The return of the Taliban in Afghanistan can result in decade's long complex local, regional and international dynamics. The United States has spent more than two decades in the region and holds many lessons, deciding how and where to apply those lessons requires careful consideration. It is no secret that the situation which this region facing is full of challenges. America's withdrawal could undermine the credibility of its global security partnerships, including those in the Middle East (Afzal, 2021). The turbulent nature of withdrawal also highlights the costs of terminating ongoing commitments. Pakistan perceived India's presence and influence in Afghanistan as a threat to its national security. The Pakistani military suspected that India was seeking a political blockade of Pakistan to weaken its role in the global and regional equations. Therefore, Pakistan has been doing its best to prevent India's presence and influence in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 (Chaudhuri, 2020) Fetzer. It should be noted that the marginalization of India was not the only ultimate goal of Pakistan, ending Afghanistan's territorial claims to the lands beyond the Durand Line and access to Central Asian economic markets and natural resources are other Pakistani goalmouths in Afghanistan and with the return of Taliban in power it with the coordination of China can see to be grasped in future. This study explained the possible situation and policy options for regional players especially Pakistan if the Taliban return to power. Such a situation is apprehensive in the long term for the interests of Pakistan. There are different dimensions of the situation that can emerge after the expected entry of the Taliban into Kabul (Shahid, 2021 & Muzaffar, et. al. 2019). All the regional and international players are waiting for the right time to declare their policy towards Afghanistan as the historical and ideological background of the Taliban has put the world in an apprehensive situation. All regional players have to develop their policy for Afghanistan according to the structure of the Afghan government in Kabul that can be an exclusive government of the Taliban or a collation government with the important role of the Taliban.

This study has objectives to find out the policy options of Russia, China, India, Iran, and Pakistan after the possible return of the Taliban in Kabul and to examine their response to the American withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 and aftermath. Hypothesis; the possible return of the Taliban in Kabul will affect the relations of regional players including Pakistan's with Afghanistan depending upon the role of the Taliban in Kabul.

Literature Review

Ramani (2018), says Pakistan's relationship with the Taliban was a convenience marriage based on strategic differences in Afghanistan. By assisting the Taliban, Pakistan was able to keep Indians out of Kabul. The Taliban's strategy was to fight the US influence in Afghanistan and start to push it out by using strongholds

in Pakistan. Beyond this convenient marriage, Pakistan's relationship with the Taliban has its own ups and downs, conflicts, and regional differences. While Islamabad has substantial clout with the Taliban leadership, it has refused to utilize that clout to modify Taliban conduct or break the Taliban's ties to terrorism. The author says that Pakistan would be foolish to believe the Taliban. As it remained annoyed by the Taliban's failure to act against the tens of thousands of Pakistani Militant groups in eastern Afghanistan. All such developments are important and this study provided sound grounds for the current study.

Material and Methods

This research project required qualitative research with the narrative model in which existing martial on Afghanistan and Pakistan has become raw data. The narrative model of qualitative research work is very important as this is a very important research approach in which historical accounts themselves become the raw data. The narrative research model in this work is used to explain the different narratives on the strategic implication of the possible return of the Taliban in Kabul on Pakistan and the regional politics of Asia. Secondary sources of data are used in this research work; newspapers, journals, websites, books, and online material.

Results and Discussion

Taliban can accept a power-sharing deal with the incumbent government of Ashraf Ghani that can result in bringing back the political and economic stability in Afghanistan. But if they do not accept a partnership that is expected due ideological agenda of the Taliban and insist to wield all the power, there can be uprisings in the country in the short term or long term. Such a situation in long run, will not be in the best interest of neighboring countries. Pakistan and the regional players have to develop careful planning to deal with possible outcomes of the Taliban's return to Kabul. The conflicting nature of interests in Afghanistan of Pakistan, Iran, India, China, America, and Russia, can result in new regional alliances. Pakistan can be directly affected by the wave of terrorism as TTP is the leading terrorist organization targeting Pakistan and they have been openly pledging their allegiance to the Afghan Taliban. Power in the hands of the Afghan Taliban can boost the power of TTP and can force Pakistan to leave the policy of war against TTP.

Pakistan has been supporting the Afghan Taliban to pursue its strategic depth policy and counter the wave of violence having a strong footing on Afghan soil since the emergence of the Taliban in 1996. Afghanistan has become a problematic neighbor of Pakistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Pakistan wants a pro-Pakistan government to resolve the issue of the Durand Line and to save its soil from anti-Pakistan elements operating from the Afghan soil. TTP has become a major security threat for Pakistan and has strong religious relations with the Afghan

Taliban as the leadership of TTP accepts the allegiance of the Afghan Ameer (Leader). Pakistan's first priority will be the collation government in Kabul in which Pakistan can bargain with different factions of the government to secure its interest but chances of such government are very rare. If Taliban captured the Kabul with power that is possible due to the American policy of quick withdrawal, the influence of Pakistan on the Taliban government will be limited and Pakistan have to do something special for the Taliban to please them as the Taliban will be in a strong position to put pressure on Pakistan.

Pakistan has to restrain Indian influence on the Taliban as the Taliban has a strong ideological connection with Deoband Madrassa in India. India can use religious institutions and individuals of Deoband Madrass to develop a link with the Taliban that will not be in the interests of Pakistan. Iran being an anti-American regional player can come close to the Taliban and offer its soil and resources to influence the Taliban and in such a situation, the importance of Pakistan will be reduced for the Taliban and they can bargain for more amenities for terrorist groups in Pakistan. In such a scenario, Pakistan will try to oblige the Afghan Taliban by arranging international assistance and acceptance of the new Afghan regime and reaching out the agreement with TTP. Such an agreement can weak the image of Pakistan's security forces and result in boosting the regrouping of terrorist groups in Pakistan. China, Iran, Russia as other important regional players can pursue the policy of cooperation with the Afghan Taliban that will reduce Pakistan's influence on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Pakistan has a long history of hostility from Afghanistan as between 1960 and 1970, Afghanistan strongly supported Pakistani Pashtun and Baloch separatists and insurgents. But developments and ongoing instability in Afghanistan turned the tide in Pakistan's favor (Kaythwal, 1994). Pakistan, with the support of the Mujahideen and later the Taliban, sought to end the Durand Line issue and eradicate nationalist sentiment among its own Pashtuns. To end the Pashtun separatist challenge, Pakistani intelligence has devised a strategy to Islamize Pashtun areas between Afghanistan and Pakistan and attract thousands of immigrants to religious schools to cultivate a sense of nationalism among Pashtuns by cultivating the idea of pan-Islamism. Durand line issue was never mentioned when the Taliban were in Kabul. Taliban used to say that there can be no border between Muslims (khan, 2010).

The same Taliban ideology of Pan-Islamism is dangerous that has the potential to turn the table. The Pan-Islamist movement was, in fact, a reactionary movement. In order to overthrow the Ottoman Empire, Russian monarchs launched the "Pan-Slavism" movement in which Slavs race people of Balakan states were urged to Join and revolt against the Ottoman Empire, against which Sultan Abdul Majeed II of the ottoman empire envisioned "Pan-Islamism" so that Muslims all over the world could unite and fight this heinous movement. In the Arab world, and the non-Arab world there is a number of organizations preaching the philosophy of Pan-

Islamism just because of the absence of any central religious authority after the end of Khilafat in Turkey? Behind the fabric of this, it goes somewhere with Jamaluddin Afghani. The concept of Jamaluddin Afghani is presented in religious literature under the name of Pan-Islamism and is affectionately called and written as Political Islam. Let's say that Pan-Islamism is simply called Political Islam. If this ideology is to be known and understood in one word, then there is no better word than 'Ummah'. Muslims have no clear vision of the nation-state and mechanism to deal with the state of affairs in which people of different languages, cultures, geographies, and races can be asked to join one state under one leader (Khalifa) (Keddie, 1966). Muslims think they have a glorious past that needs to be restored. The United States can withdraw from Kabul without protecting its interests in Afghanistan. The one who elevated the Taliban ideology can sense that the Taliban has defeated the United States (Ahmed, 2014).

If the Taliban believe in the struggle to achieve the rule of Islam in the world, how they can restrict it in the geographical boundaries of Afghanistan and accept the Durand Line as the border between the two Muslim regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. If the Taliban believe in Pan-Islamism theory then what will be the status of neighboring Muslim states? If the Taliban believe in pan-Islamism then how they will disassociate from TTP (Tehreek Taliban Pakistan)? If the Taliban believe in the one Muslim State under one Muslim ruler then what will be their policy towards the non-Muslim states including Russia and China? It is clear that Russia and China want to prevent any spread of Islamic bigotry in Central Asian countries and reduce American influence in the region, and if that happens, it will create opportunities for them. The radicalism in the Taliban government will not be limited to Afghanistan. This is what is threatening Pakistan and other regional players and neighboring nations.

There is a number of causes that can result in the victory of the Taliban in near future. For other reasons, the Taliban enjoys constant external support, especially from Pakistan. Other regional actors are also playing their roles as China has agreed to Pakistan's position of supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan, which aims to counter Indian interests in Afghanistan and make the United States an unreliable player in the region. Russia, for its part, supported and legitimized the "Taliban" movement through the Moscow series, which was a Russian-hosted dialogue aimed at weakening the Afghan government. The Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan after 20 years of patient struggle and sacrifice of thousands of lives will be different in a positive direction or negative. The restoration of the 'Islamic Emirate' in Afghanistan will be undoubtedly a great victory for the Taliban. (Hashim, 2020). In such a situation coalition government in Kabul is possible but it needs a compromise of the Taliban on its ideological agenda.

Taliban's strategy to force the quick withdrawal of American forces can result in victory as the Kabul government's recklessness, incompetence, and corruption can also play a positive role in winning over Kabul. In such a situation President Ashraf Ghani and his allies can flee the country and government forces without leadership can join the Taliban ranks and result in more power for the Taliban. The Taliban leadership can provide an opportunity to maintain order in the city by announcing a general amnesty for the ruling class and army personals. It has been noted that the government machinery is ineffective and it can allow the sudden fall of Kabul after the withdrawal of American forces. (Kitwood, 2021). Taliban's Qatar office is a place of attraction for foreign players and questions are arising about the future of Afghanistan. What is the reason that despite assurances of the Taliban, no country is looking ready to believe them about their intentions to return to Kabul through the deal, not violence? What are Russia, China, and Pakistan thinking? What will be the US objectives for the region after the disgraceful withdrawal of troops? Will the US leave Pakistan and the region alone as before to face the return of the Taliban in Kabul? What will happen in the future and can the international community recognize the Taliban government? To answer these questions, we need to wait for the situation in Afghanistan after the complete withdrawal of Americans and NATO (Nossiter, 2021).

China can pursue the Taliban to show a good, positive, and realistic attitude and call on the international community to abandon its stereotypes about the Taliban. Beijing believes that it can work with any setup in Afghanistan including the Taliban as China has started long-term projects in the region and its attitude has changed towards regional politics. If Chinese policy is based on these results, it means that China will give the Taliban the benefit of the doubt and will support them unless the Taliban make a big mistake. The other big player in this game is Russia. It has kept the options open and to play an active role in Afghanistan even after the Taliban control of Kabul. Although its relations with the Taliban are years old and, unlike in European countries, Russia has a soft spot for the Taliban. It is relieved to see the disgraceful return of the United States. Despite having a good "working relationship" with the Taliban, Russia can act cautiously to observe the Taliban's promises and future attitude.

Afghanistan, Russia Pakistan, and China have the greatest interest in regional security and stability. China Russia and Pakistan are concerned about the possibility of terrorist groups taking root on Afghan soil and spreading to South and Central Asia, and attaché importance to working relations with the Taliban to avoid this. As for Pakistan, it seemed to recognize the Taliban even before the fall of Ashraf Ghani's government, and it is preparing to play a role in Kabul even if the Ashraf Ghani government remain in power, it also can ask for financial assistance to assist in the evacuation of foreign troops. Pakistan's interest in Afghanistan is certainly historical, as all analysts point out, but its motives are purely based on security and political

interests (Nossiter, 2021). As far as US policy is concerned, it will not remain indifferent to the region because its focus is on China, which wants to limit the role of China in the region. If China sees the US's disgraceful withdrawal from Afghanistan as a weakness of America, it could open up new fronts in the region, and China could use force to make Taiwan part of it. In that case, a new war will break out in the region. As far as the Pak-US partnership is concerned, the two countries are now pointing fingers at each other. While the US is accusing Pakistan of not getting full cooperation and covert support of the Taliban, Pakistan is repeatedly blaming the US for betrayal during the war on terror. Relationships will be restored when the era of accusations and grievances is over. This time Pakistan will have no hope of military and economic assistance from the United States and America will not be ready for any such assistance but the important thing is that all players are talking about a comprehensive and representative government in Afghanistan. ((Worden, Walsh, Ahmadi & Olson, 2021).

The United States has decided to withdraw its forces altogether, Taliban entry in Kabul is looking like a dream for foreign and local actors including the Taliban itself. When the Taliban will be in Kabul and will have control over their country, the international community has to develop new strategies to answer the question of the legitimacy of the Taliban government in Kabul. The choice to give or deny recognition will be a political one that will leave to member nations' sovereign authority. States and governments can both receive recognition in principle. In terms of the former, it is just necessary to mention that the state of Afghanistan has been recognized by a large number of countries for many years, including, five permanent members of the UNSC. Where political power has divided to the level that it has in 2021 in Afghanistan, there can be more than one organization claiming to be the representative of Afghans, currently, the president of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani has the status of representative government of the people of Afghanistan. Taliban can emerge as the de, facto ruling entity of Afghanistan as they had more than sixty percent of Afghanistan under their control.

The applicants' decision on how to pursue such claims is a critical question of the foreign policy of all nations, especially neighboring states. After taking over Kabul, the Taliban's initial broad foreign policy goal will be to gain legitimacy as a government. Nonetheless, the issue of acknowledgment proved to be one of the most difficult for the Taliban to deal with (Afzal, & Hanlon, 2021). To understand the nature of the Taliban's challenge, it is necessary to delve into further depth regarding the nature of legitimacy and the events that can occur in the aftermath of the Taliban's takeover of Kabul. Looking at international law, recognition entails a state's acceptance that the recognized government body has an international legal personality and the rights and privileges that come with it, or that the recognized ruling entity is the exclusive representation of a body with an international legal personality. Looking at the past it can be said that if the Afghan cannot form a

coalition government, there could be a civil war in the coming days and the result will be an unstable and chaotic Afghanistan. If all factions in Afghanistan can work together to make decisions in line with the aspirations of its people and the international community, and to build an inclusive political structure, it can result in peace in Afghanistan. The most important thing will be that the promises of the Taliban during the Doha talks, including their commitment to limit their agenda of an Islamic state within the geographical boundaries of Afghanistan (Motwani, 2021).

Key supporters of the Taliban in Kabul will be Pakistan, China, and Russia and they will not be able to recognize the Taliban government until they observe that the Taliban are committed to forming a comprehensive government, adhering to the aspirations of the international community, distancing themselves from terrorist organizations and progressive thinking in governance. Pakistan sees the return of the Taliban in Kabul in the context of antagonism with India. The incumbent government in Afghanistan is leaning towards India but the government with Taliban as part of the government can result in good relations with Pakistan (Dubey, 2018). Both China and Russia are unhappy with US dominance in Afghanistan. Their goal is to fill the vacuum that would arise when the United States will leave Afghan soil. China is also monitoring Afghanistan's resources. Recognizing the Taliban government is a card that can increase pressure on the Taliban government to assure the world that they are working according to the aspirations of the international community and fulfilling the promises. China, Russia, and Pakistan can try to hold the card for the day when they can satisfy their recognition of the Taliban before the international community. All the nations' especially neighboring states are not clear about the international agenda of the Taliban leadership as the Taliban have not declared a policy of limited Islamic rule (Siddique, 2021).

The way the existing Taliban was tried to be presented separately from the Taliban of 1996, and the task of forming a new coalition government in Afghanistan does not seem to be happening. From the beginning, Russia, China, and Pakistan have insisted that Afghanistan's territory should not be used against them under the Taliban regime. Pakistan has been voicing its concerns about the TTP, while China fears the East Turkestan Islamic Movement will not strengthen in its Xinjiang province and Russia wants to Islamic militancy away from its borders and Iran wants to maintain peace with its neighbors (Mukhtar, 2017). Observably, the kind of government that works in Afghanistan is very important for Pakistan. That is why Pakistan is one of the countries in the region that has played a key role in Afghanistan's internal affairs. Supporting the Taliban is one example. Pakistan's foreign policy is pragmatic that can be observed in some cases; it is associated with China where necessary and at the same time Pakistan aligns itself with the United States where it needs it, and, of course, Pakistan has worked against the interests of United States where it deems it necessary. Even if it feels necessary, it can turn its back to the Taliban. The best example of the Pakistani government's cooperation with

the United States is in overthrowing the Taliban after the 9/11 attacks. Of course, Pakistan also has concerns, including that some terrorist attacks inside Pakistan are beyond the control of its security forces (Mashal, Masood & Rehman, 2021).

The influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan is another problem for the country and it can become worse if a civil war started in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of America. It is true that Pakistan is influenced by the United States, but this is not always the case, and Pakistan acts independently in its decisions where it sees fit. Another concern of Pakistan is the pressure of some European countries to control the Taliban. Pakistan, which, however, does not have much trust in the Taliban about the sponsorship for the terrorist organizations working around Afghanistan. These concerns have led Pakistan to oblige the Taliban and guide them to disassociate themselves from such organizations. Taliban have several interests in Pakistan, including their association with the terrorist groups, with whom they spent difficult years of the American war in Afghanistan. Taliban will try to get accommodations for them from Pakistani forces utilizing their position in the Kabul regime.

Radicalism in the Taliban is a real threat for Pakistan as Pakistan is not only frightened by the growing terrorist activities, but its economic situation is also not stable. Things have changed a lot since 1996. Earlier, the world did not care what was happening in Afghanistan. Now the whole world is talking about Afghanistan's internal situation. Apart from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were the first countries to recognize the first Taliban government of 1996, but they are not interested in due to their own regional disputes with Doha and internal policies. That is why Pakistan will not able to take such a big step at the moment to recognize the Taliban government in Kabul if the Taliban try to capture it without dealing with the Ashraf Ghani government. (Batool, 2021).

This time Pakistan has contacted Russia and China on this issue and can wait for the decision of these two big giants about the new collation or sole government of Taliban in Kabul. Previously when Pakistan recognized the Taliban in 1996 had faced international criticism and sanctions, so this time Pakistan will be cautious and stand with the international community on the issue but, Pakistan's support for the Taliban is obvious. Meanwhile, aid can be provided and trade issues can be discussed with the Taliban so that when they will become part of the government in Kabul or take it independently, Pakistan can engage it. Things that happen in bilateral relations are active here too, but Pakistan is hesitant for legal and diplomatic reasons. (Cornwel, 2021). The issue of terrorism, however, is one of Pakistan's biggest problems and Pakistan needs to put pressure on the Taliban to take action against the TTP. It is a matter of fact that the Taliban of Afghanistan and Pakistan are two faces of the same coin and the Taliban in Kabul will ultimately pressurize Pakistan to negotiate with TTP and they will not act against TTP. Pakistan will have to find a solution to this

problem on its own, and the kind of support that Pakistan expected does not seem possible. But more important than the TTP in the broader context is the stability in Afghanistan and the need for Pakistan to maintain its lead in the region (Rana, 2021).

The international community, including Pakistan, is pushing for an inclusive government because the Taliban themselves will not be able to take control of Afghanistan without a comprehensive government. It could lead to a civil war and reduce the chances of economic growth and foreign aid. And this situation could affect Pakistan and China's economic interests in Afghanistan. The Taliban government has been constantly trying to get it recognized internationally. As well as calming the internal conflict, the new government will have to abandon its tough stance on ideological grounds, which will not easily be easy for the Taliban. Because the basis of the formation of this group is based on the Wahabi tradition, if it can leave it, it will cease to exist. Even if the Taliban start to take a liberal stance, another group will emerge within them (Akhtar, 2008 & Muzaffar, et. al. 2021). The statements made by the Taliban in the border areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan are important to understand the future policy of the government that will have the participation of the Taliban. They have pledged that after coming to power, peace and security would be restored in those areas and the implementation of Islamic law, ie Sharia, would be ensured.

China's ability to provide the Taliban with infrastructure and technology could be more important for the Taliban than relations with the Uyghurs Muslims. China's Belt and Road project benefits it economically, and in return, the Uyghurs of China may become irrelevant. The Taliban will expect economic benefits from China, so they need Chinese investment, and a strong government of Taliban can be more attractive for Taliban than the Uyghurs of China. The Taliban for Chinese aid can assure China that they would play a key role in bringing peace, reconciliation, and reconstruction to Afghanistan and they would not allow their territory to be used against China. Under a 2020 peace deal with the United States, the Taliban have agreed not to allow al-Qaeda or any other extremist group to operate in areas under their control. But they do not appear to have publicly rejected al-Qaeda, and al-Qaeda has certainly not softened its stance against the United States, such a situation is creating ambiguity about their commitment (Sarkar, 2020).

The Taliban's relationship with al-Qaeda strengthens its credibility in hardline jihadist circles, and its historic allegiance to al-Qaeda means that it no longer wants to leave its ally once it comes to power. Al-Qaeda has strong ties to the Haqqani Network, which is part of the Taliban. These issues are an example of the real dilemma facing the Taliban. On the one hand, the Taliban wants to be recognized on the international stage and reap the benefits. But all this is conditional on their rejection of extremism. The return of the Taliban can boost the morale of the armed groups' active against Pakistan, including the Pakistani Taliban. It can become a

moral victory that some terrorist groups may exploit to try to recruit more young people in Pakistan. Pakistan must have to think about the implications of support of a government of Taliban in Afghanistan for the militant groups operating within Pakistan against its people and security forces. In the past, fruitless talks with the Taliban over the extradition of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden have been the bitter experiences of Saudi Arabia. However, if the Saudi and Taliban's ideological direction has changed then things can become better. The Taliban of 20 or 25 years ago, who was deeply influenced by Saudi Arabia, is no more as relations between the Taliban and Saudi Arabia are no longer the same as it was during the first Taliban regime. For the Taliban, Qatar, and Turkey have become more important. Saudi Arabia had expectations from Pakistan against Iran, but they did not materialize, on the basis of which Saudi Arabia sought new allies.

Conclusion

The situation in Afghanistan has changed so quickly after the clear stand of America to leave Afghanistan in 2021 that almost all regional players including Pakistan are developing multiple strategies to counter the situation that will be emerged after the withdrawal of American troops. Pakistan is a neighboring country, its significant role is visible to some extent. There are varying levels of concern in Pakistan, China, Russia, Iran, and India over the possible withdrawal of American forces and as a result, the possibility of Taliban return in Kabul. For Russia and Iran disturbance within the geography of Afghanistan has no special meaning but both are supporting peaceful Afghanistan for their own interests. Afghanistan has special meaning for Central Asian nations, and central Asia has special meaning for Russia and Iran. Pakistan, the Taliban's return to control of Kabul can represent a strategic victory over India, but it is also likely to constitute a nightmare by giving a boost to the terrorist organization like "Tehreek Taliban Pakistan" TTP. TTP has been fighting with the Pakistani government and is not different from the Tehreek Taliban Afghanistan. Pakistan, which has been facilitating the Taliban's return to power, has to analyze different options on militancy on its soil and its policy toward TTP. For Pakistan TTP and other militant groups can become problems in sustaining its relations with the Taliban as the Taliban will never support the use of power against TTP and can even pressurize Pakistan to negotiate and facilitate them in Pakistan on their ideological bindings. As for India, the return of the Taliban in form of a coalition government or independent government in Kabul will increase its concerns about the situation in Kashmir, in the light of border tensions with Pakistan on the one hand, and China on the other. India can expect a repeat of the 1990s scenario when foreign fighters poured into Kashmir from Afghanistan and helped to fuel the insurgency (Chaudhuri, 2020). To control such a situation, India significantly reinforced its borders in the past few years. India can use the Deoband center in India to manage the affairs with the Taliban as a religious decree from Deoband (India) has meanings for the Taliban. As for China, the US withdrawal has raised fears of the expansion of

extremist groups that threaten the ambitious infrastructure projects that Beijing is building westward across Eurasia. There will be tougher Chinese positions and pressure to ensure stability in the neighborhood that is impossible when groups like ETIM (East Turkistan Islamic Movement) and TTP have support from Afghanistan. China looks ready to contain any repercussions on the Afghan amphitheater by pursuing the Taliban to publicly distance itself from the "militant forces associated with Xinjiang", and to conduct joint military exercises with Russia and other countries in the region. Taliban will take over Afghanistan through deal or violence and it will make Islamic groups more powerful and violent from Kashmir to Xinjiang.

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