



US-Taliban Peace process: Post-Withdrawal Scenarios

* Javeria Noor Sawal

† Anfal Afridi

‡ Ruqaiya Bibi

- Vol. VII, No. I (Winter 2022)
- Pages: 92 – 99
- p- ISSN: 2521-2982
- e-ISSN: 2707-4587

Key Words: Afghanistan, US, Taliban, US Troops, NATO, Peace Process, Withdrawal

Abstract: Afghanistan encountered a US-led invasion in 2001 in response to the 9/11 attacks and ended the Taliban's government in Afghanistan. Thousands of US troops were deployed on Afghan territory in the war against terrorism to direct anti-terrorism operations in Afghanistan and to contain Talibanization. Thus, the immediate objective of the US invasion of Afghanistan was to prevent the country from terrorism, but the objective remained unachieved to date. As there was a divergence of interests of involved actors, and thus the efforts could not reach the desired result. The US in Afghanistan has exerted influence for almost two decades. Thereby, both the warring sides have now decided on a political settlement and a permanent ceasefire. The agreement took place on February 29, 2020, and its provisions include the withdrawal of all US troops and NATO forces from Afghanistan. Thereby objective and significance of the study are contributed to assess the post-withdrawal scenarios.

Introduction

Afghanistan is a war-torn country that has a long history of foreign interventions. The country has been engrossed by big powers for more than two decades. Ceaseless wars and interventions have shattered the country and given rise to extremist elements. Further, the September 11 attacks in the US targeted Afghan territory to eradicate terrorism. AL-Qaeda network and Taliban were alleged for the 9/11 attacks on the US world trade centre and pentagon. Following the disastrous episode, the US started a full-fledged war and intervened in Afghan territory. Thus the Taliban's government ended, which had been in effect since 1996. Thousands of US troops and NATO forces were deployed to target terrorist groups in Afghanistan. This US-led war transformed the global security dynamics and peace in the region. Moreover, the US, until its withdrawal, has acted as a dominant player in the country and brought alarming security concerns to Afghanistan's

neighbouring countries, mainly Pakistan ([Gul, 2006](#)).

Afghanistan being a war-zone country, is at the crossroads of insecurity and instability to date. The US, while planning strategically to root out terrorism globally (in the name of a war on terror), attempted to annihilate the Al-Qaeda network and its other groups through several drone attacks and military operations. Thus NATO forces operated in Kabul, and the Taliban regime was dissolved by November 2001 ([Hussain & Mughal, 2017](#)). In Afghanistan, around about 11000 troops continued to operate and were responsible for conducting military training to train Afghan soldiers. International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) which is a coalition force of forty countries around the world, led stability and security operations nationwide in Afghanistan. US operations have produced tangible results in Afghanistan. The country that suffered three decades of wars and economic crisis now has a democratic government where females are empowered, and there is a sign of maintained

* Visiting Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Government Post Graduate College, Charsadda, KP, Pakistan. Email: javeriabashar@gmail.com (*Corresponding Author*)

† Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Women University Mardan, KP, Pakistan.

‡ BS Honors Graduate, Department of Political Science, Women University Mardan, KP, Pakistan.

infrastructure, more educational facilities, and Afghan people have better access to health care ([Skelton, 2008](#)). Although things have improved over the decades, and US troops fought for almost 20 years in Afghanistan to make a terrorism-free country, the objective is not yet achieved as the region is still conflicted, and Talibanization has its roots in the country.

A surprise shift was seen in the region when the current US president Joe Biden announced US withdrawal to finally cease the 20 years of war in Afghanistan. The US-Taliban agreement took place on February 29, 2020, on the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, which was then delayed till September 11, 2021. Whereas Taliban's spokesmen have responded to the announcement and said that until US troops have not fully departed from the region, the Taliban group will not attend any conference to decide Afghanistan's future ([Watkins 2021](#)). The Taliban, after two decades of the conflicted period, has become the most active group in Afghanistan to hold back the administration, which ended in 2001.

It is obvious that after the US withdrawal Taliban will completely take over the government, and the situation will bring adverse effects to Afghanistan ([Kaya, 2021](#)). "History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme". - Mark Twain. With the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan, the question that comes into sight is: how will the US exit impact Afghanistan? The aftereffects are quite alarming for Afghanistan in many ways, such as the lack of US interest in the region that will affect the political situation. Taliban and their opponents may indulge in attacks to take control of the government, which may lead to civil war in the region. Apart from that, Afghanistan is highly dependent on foreign aid; thus, the reduction in US aid will affect the economic condition of Afghanistan even after the Taliban takes over the administration. Further, the political process also seems to be in danger, i.e. many regional actors like Pakistan, Iran, India, Russia, and the Gulf States may indulge in armed conflict in Afghanistan. Consequently, the unsettled political environment will be difficult to tackle ([Kakakhel, 2021](#)).

Despite the US-Taliban peace agreement and the prospect of US withdrawal from Afghanistan, the region has been left fragile, i.e. to make the Taliban stronger by holding up the government

after two decades. Thus Afghanistan's changing dynamics may lead to India's involvement which could better serve the US interests in the region. India could adopt its old policies of backing up anti-Taliban units likewise the Northern Alliance. Pakistan will therefore oppose the Indian involvement, yet there will be a possible way of the uncertain situation and Indo-Pak proxy-war in Afghanistan. The changing dynamics indicate that Pakistan may support this new Taliban government. As a result, to overcome the waned influence in Afghan over the years and to settle ties with the Afghan people. Meanwhile, the peace process evidenced that impacts on the region are unpleasant and adverse ([Jamal, 2021](#)).

US Invasion in Afghanistan: Two Decades at a Glance

The US-led war against terrorism in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, changed the dimensions of the Afghan region concerning political and economic scenarios. They aimed to flush out the Taliban's regime and restructure Afghanistan's government backed by the US. Thus US troops operated in the region for twenty years ([Hussain, 2015](#)).

US principal objective was to target Al-Qaeda, alleged for attacks on the US world trade centre and the pentagon in September 2001. Since then, the US has adopted several strategies regarding counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency in Afghanistan and deployed its forces to make Afghanistan a terrorist-free country. Although the US invasion ended the Afghan-Taliban rule, however, after several years of confrontation with the Taliban's and Al-Qaeda, their influence remained undefeated. Afghan territory is still surrounded by insecurity and is neither secure nor stable. Despite operating US troops over the territory, both the Taliban and Al-Qaeda network gathered their strength, and the US didn't find its way out to stabilize the country and counter global terrorism successfully ([Taddeo, 2010](#)). Thus it has been seen that the Taliban's defeat and the objective of a stable Afghanistan is therefore far from being achieved.

New dynamics have been seen in Afghanistan when finally, US Presidents Joe Biden's attempted to withdraw all of its troops by September 11, 2021

and concluded the peace agreement with Afghan-Taliban. The US-Taliban peace agreement was signed by the US special representative 'Zalmay Khalilzad' for the US-Taliban Peace Process, and the Taliban's Political Deputy and Head of the Political Office 'Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar' on February 29 2020, in Doha, Qatar. After a twenty years US invasion of Afghanistan, and more than a year of negotiations, the US and the Afghan-Taliban representatives set down for the peace agreement, i.e. the signing of a bilateral accord. [Thomas \(2021\)](#) stated that the agreement consists of mainly two agreeing guarantees. Firstly, the withdrawal of US forces by September 11, 2021, and secondly, to ascertain the Taliban's action to prevent the AL-Qaeda group from using Afghan territory to threaten the US and its allies.

Moreover, the US allies, United Nations Security Council, coalition partners, and regional parties to the conflict have expressed their support for the joint effort of the peace process. However, the peace process in Afghanistan will be difficult to implement, given the unsavoury impacts on the region in the post-withdrawal scenario ([Ismail, 2020](#)).

Hence the attempt seemed pleasant and a new way forward for the Afghan people in the form of US withdrawal. But the peace process has unfolded new ways of uncertain situations, i.e. Taliban's attempted to seize control of half of the country's districts since withdrawal. Thus, conceded that US military troops remained unsuccessful in making Afghanistan a modern and stable democratic state ([Zucchini, 2021](#)). The withdrawal strategy has brought various security concerns for Afghanistan and other social, economic, and political issues. Although US forces fled from Afghanistan but still the country is in the limelight of major world powers as an unstable state due to its long history of wars and interventions.

The peace process in the post-withdrawal scenario has brought major impacts on the region. Further, US withdrawal also signalled initially that the US wanted to engage with the countries to pursue the relationships that are more beneficial to them. The impacts mainly include; the Taliban's return to power which may lead to warlordism in general and political unrest in particular. As it was quite clear after US withdrawal that the Taliban would take over right after the territory was free

from US troops, but it will create a treacherous situation for the Afghan people ([Green, 2021](#)).

Inter-Taliban Dialogues: Role of External Actors

It is not surprising that the external actors have been involved in the Afghan-Taliban issue. Their influence had increased since 2001 when the US invaded Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks. Thus it seemed obvious that several external players having divergent interests create challenges to the success of the US-Taliban peace process. Thereby, the regional actors such as; China, Pakistan, Iran, and Russia wanted the US to depart the Afghan territory; hence none of the actors had a clear intention to settle down the crises that were obvious to occur following the US withdrawal. A variety of regional and international players have been involved in the inter-Taliban peace process since 2012. These peace dialogues were facilitated by countries such as; China, Pakistan, Germany, Russia, and Qatar rather than involving the key players such as India, Iran, and the Afghan government. Following is the interpretation of the countries' involvement in the US-Taliban peace process.

Pakistan

As far as Pakistan is concerned, it has always backed the Taliban against the Afghanistan government, which it perceives to be pro-Indian. Therefore relating to the US-Taliban peace process, Pakistan showed full support that allowed the Taliban to secure influence over Kabul. Pakistan, in this connection, also supported the peace talks facilitated by the other external players and also the dialogues involving the Taliban. However, the first round of dialogues involved the delegations of the Afghan government and the Taliban, hosted by Pakistan in 2015. Despite this, Pakistan with the Taliban also holds face-to-face dialogues. Thus in October 2019, Pakistan hosted the Taliban's delegation at Pakistan's Foreign Office in connection to supporting the US-Taliban peace process. Thus, playing a vital role in the peace process, Pakistan became an anchor of regional stability and a key supporter of the Taliban's government. In addition, Pakistan does not want India to be part of the peace process and play the role of a prominent actor; likewise, Pakistan's engagement in the peace process is not acceptable to India. Such a tussle between the

regional players of South Asia may disrupt the peace process ([Akbarzadeh et al., 2020](#)).

India

Dealing with the US-Taliban peace process, India's stance seems to be sceptical due to Pakistan's upper hand and proxy to the deal. India perceives that US withdrawal from Afghanistan is guided by Pakistan's support. Although India wants to become a part of the peace process yet, it has not been part of the three-sided dialogue of US-China-Russia nor been part of the 6 plus 2 Group on Afghanistan (Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan plus Russia and the US). The US, concerning the peace process, urged India to get involved with the Taliban for peace talks, but this proposal has been refused by India so far. Nevertheless, speaking about South Asian actors' history is witness to the fact that there is a historic struggle mainly between Pakistan and India to influence Afghanistan. Hence, tracing back history, India had close ties with the Afghan government except for the period under the Taliban reign. However, this new strategic alignment over the US-Taliban peace process is causing India a great deal of discomfort.

China

Nevertheless, China, both on the regional stage and domestically, has increased its role in Afghanistan. China has been equivocal in relating to Xinjiang separatism and making it a central consideration of its relations with Central Asian countries and particularly Afghanistan. China and Russia, through Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), aim to address evils like; terrorism, separatism, and extremism. In addition, for China, security and peace in Afghan territory are more pivotal for its successful One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative, as via this project, China will be able to connect with the rest of the world and particularly with the Central Asian Countries. However, the successful realization of China's interests relating to Afghanistan needs its increased influence. Thus, in 2015 China hosted a bilateral meeting at Urumqi between the members of the old Afghan-Taliban government and the Afghan officials ([Siraj & Sarwar, 2021](#)).

Iran

Iran didn't enjoy good ties with the Afghan Taliban before 2001 due to the organization's close links with Saudi Arabia and their anti-Shia policies. However, since 2001 during the US presence in the Afghan territory, Iran diplomatically developed ties with the Taliban possessing a common goal to defeat the US. By the time when the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) in 2015 started to rise in Afghanistan, the relations between Iran and Afghanistan became an open secret to the world. Since then, Iran started supporting the Taliban, particularly in the western part of the region, to counter Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K). Moreover, following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, it's not acceptable for Iran to see its Eastern side as a "Sunni Islamic Emirate" ([Akbarzadeh et al., 2020](#)). However, Iran in the US-Taliban peace process does not contribute any formal involvement. Hence, noting the US-Iran troubled ties, it's not surprising that Tehran is not invited by Washington to engage in the peace talks.

Russia

Noting Russian-Afghan ties, both shares a history of upset relations relating to the nine years of a Russian invasion (1979) in Afghanistan attempting to back the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul, and thus departed the Afghan soil in 1989. In the present years, Russia extended its support to the Taliban and often invited them even before the Doha agreement between US-Taliban. Russia has also backed some of the Taliban's groups against the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) since 2015. Following the US-Russia traditional rivalry, as per the US intelligence reports, Russia paid the Taliban for killing the US soldiers in Afghanistan, which was then profoundly denied by Russia. However, Russia needs to get rid of the civil war in the Afghan territory following the US withdrawal. Chaos in Afghanistan seems to pave the way for extremist groups such as IS-K that threatens the soft Southern borders of Russia via Central Asia. Therefore, Russia is demanding both the Taliban and the Afghan government settlement. Although China and Pakistan hosted the Inter-Taliban talks in 2015, and since then, both sides have backed Russia's initiatives of involving the Afghan leaders and the Taliban in the November 2018 talks in Moscow ([Kaya, 2021](#)).

Summing up the inclusive inter-Taliban dialogues, the involvement of the state actors and non-governmental players in the conflict and post-conflict scenarios is pivotal. Thus grasping the key issues among the domestic players possessing higher stakes in the Afghan issue seemed to be decisive for the successful realization of the peace process. Today Afghanistan has been enormously changed from the previous by representing women's empowerment, an independent Media, and a vibrant Afghan civil society that must be the focal points of the peace talks.

Assessing Post-Withdrawal Scenarios

What Afghanistan is going to confront after US withdrawal is of great significance. Post withdrawal may lead to a more deteriorated situation for Afghanistan's internal stability. Moreover, the re-emergence of the Taliban as a more influential party in Afghanistan, changes in political and new economic dynamics, and security threat perceptions are likely to impact Afghanistan's stability and prospects. The following themes will shape the region's post-withdrawal scenarios in terms of negotiations settled with the US, socio-economic and political conditions, and Afghanistan as a centre-stage battlefield for its people.

Control of Afghan Taliban

Soon after the US troops withdrew from Afghan territory, the Taliban's attempted to immediately take over the control of the government. Following, rapid control of key districts of Afghanistan has raised the risk of emerging problems, including; threatening domestic stability, spilling over extremist actions, cross-border attacks, civil war, and threat perceptions for neighbouring countries. US withdrawal, in one way or the other, gave rise to the independent establishment of the Taliban's regime, considered to be a major victory for the Taliban after two decades.

"A major shift is that today's Taliban are proactive and are politically aware". The result could be detrimental to the Afghan people and neighbouring Pakistan as many Afghans know the fact of Pak-US cooperation in the US-led war against terrorism. Despite recognizing their control after US withdrawal, however, the

Taliban's regime is no less than a worrisome situation ([Jabarkhail & Yousaf, 2021](#)).

The Outbreak of the Civil War

Afghanistan is likely to be seen as a battlefield either by outside actors or by its people. Following the US-Taliban negotiations for a peace settlement, in the post-withdrawal scenario, a prolonged civil war in Afghanistan could take place given the Taliban's rapid succession. Taliban's full victory over the region may disturb their people; the situation may indulge the Afghan citizens in a civil war against the Taliban government and leads to a deteriorated territory. According to the report of Easterly and Threlkeld (2021), resulting from the civil war, Pakistan may confront the huge influx of refugees towards its country and the spilling of violence across the border.

Any delay in assisting Afghan refugees or lack of hospitality may give rise to controversies and affect the Pak-Afghan community's relations. Thus facing such uncertain circumstances, Pakistan could step up to assist and support both the Taliban's new government and Washington to play a substantive role in regional diplomacy. This logic is apparent why Pakistan is supporting the Taliban's government, as a policy of assisting Afghan refugees during the civil war would not be without any risk. Thus Civil war is considered to be the most immediate implication in a post-withdrawal scenario.

Political Unrest

According to Statista Research Department (2021), The Taliban re-established their government over Afghanistan following the withdrawal of US troops and NATO forces. With that, the US ended up its mission which lasted for twenty years and began as a consequence of the 9/11 attacks on the US World Trade Center and Pentagon. US invasion in Afghanistan overturned the Taliban's rule and aimed at stabilizing the country by making it terrorist-free and establishing democracy. However, it is argued that no political stability has been achieved in the past two decades. Further, it was encouraging that during US mission central government in Afghanistan was facilitated with foreign aid and support, but the Taliban takeover will make the Afghan political mechanism more complex. The debate about Afghanistan's political

future takes place against the backdrop of increased insurgent attacks. Although the commitment and efforts of international organizations remain crucial in Afghanistan, a lack of strategy and coordination hampers progress and frustrates the Afghan people. Thereby, this was aggravated by the view that once foreign troops exit the territory, the central government will lose the flow of foreign aid. The Taliban's return took many people in the country and across the border by surprise and are sceptical about the Taliban's claim to be more moderate and reformed for its people. To date, the politically destabilized structure of the country, the exit of US troops, and the Taliban return is an inevitable development. It is difficult to assess how the Taliban will be more moderate in their policies and views despite possessing radical Islamic ideology. However, the results could be more fragile than the original expectations, and insurgency may remain a greater problem in the country.

Social Inequalities and Economic Crisis

US withdrawal leaves Afghanistan in an economic crisis. US withdrawal seems to be congenial to the Afghan Taliban, but the worst is yet to come. Taliban's conservative policies will likely inevitably shrink the economy. Taliban takeover will give rise to social inequalities such as; gender discrimination against females to overturn their freedom. In addition, female education will highly get suffered, and their empowerment will be affected. Speaking of the economic crisis, it is expected to shrink by 30% as the Taliban's policy to freeze public and private assets. Especially, the closure of schools, colleges, and other educational institutions for females is in particular danger. Thus, the economy of Afghanistan is faring no better in that ([Toscano et al., 2016](#)). US stoppage of financial assistance and aid will hamper the country's survival as 10% of the GDP of Afghanistan was made up of foreign aid. Further, approximately US\$8-10 billion have been frozen by the US. Economic shocks will weaken Afghan's economy significantly. According to the United Nations estimate, if Afghan people are not served with foreign aid, people up to 22.8 million will experience severe starvation and food stress. Unfortunately, the Afghan people will suffer profoundly ([Rice, 2021](#)).

Security Concerns

How far has the US succeeded in bringing up stability during its twenty years long mission in Afghanistan? With the US withdrawal and NATO forces, Afghanistan has been left with nothing but a fragile and feeble Afghan government under President Ashraf Ghani to manage the unsettled political environment, which soon resulted in the Taliban taking over control. Thereby, the post-withdrawal scenario did not favour the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) as their capacities were not in a position to counterbalance the US troops and NATO forces and thus led to the recent fall of Kabul. However, following the Taliban takeover, the country is in dire need of global acceptance. The Afghan government, to fall into a legitimate status, must make sure not to use Afghan soil to threaten the US and its allies, as stated by Doha Accords. Apart from ANDSF's lack of military capabilities in the post-withdrawal scenario, the US withdrawal has brought the brunt of instability mainly to neighbouring Afghan countries ([Ali, 2021](#)). And it has been mostly Pakistan to bear adverse effects. In this regard, an armed Islamist alliance and a group of militant networks, Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), based along the Pak-Afghan border, aim to pose as many threats as they can against Pakistan's government. Various factors fall into TTP's policies against Pakistan, but Pakistan's support for the US-led war on terror remains the main factor. Although TTP is not part of the Afghan Taliban, thereby the US withdrawal could pave the way to massive militant activities against Pakistan while being based in Afghanistan. To counter TTP, Pakistan also launched several military operations back in 2014 ([Syed, 2021](#)). In conclusion to the security concerns in post-withdrawal scenarios, two main issues, in particular, can disturb the peace in Afghanistan and consequently for other countries in the region. The first main debate would be on ANDSF's military capabilities that have lacked due to the loss of foreign military aid with US withdrawal, and the second debate concerned the militant activities of Afghan-based extremist forces.

Conclusion

With the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, the country, in particular, is left to get along with more

violent Afghanistan. Whether the western troop's withdrawal is precipitous or timely, it will bring adverse challenges and will render aftereffects on its people. The peace process in Afghanistan through a limited agreement will neither bring peace to the country nor will it stabilize Afghanistan internally and externally. The withdrawal will impose complex and distinct scenarios, as discussed above. Hence, a peaceful Afghanistan will remain unachieved if the assessed scenarios may occur tragically. Further, in this ongoing decade of new transformations, Afghanistan's fragility will affect regional stability and its relations with neighbouring states. Speaking about the political future, the continuous

insurgency will hinder a political settlement. As far as the economy is concerned, the country is dependent on foreign aid, which needs a serious focus to generate its revenue from domestic sources. It is quite evident that Afghanistan is at risk during the Taliban rule, which is more challenging than that US operations in the country. As a consequence of the US troop's departure Taliban proved to be more resilient while taking over control of the territory. Growing instability and economic hardships in the country may lead to the escape of many people from the Taliban regime. Hence, the creation of a stable Afghanistan remains elusive.

References

- Akbarzadeh, S., Farsoo, A., & Ahmed, S. Z. D. (21st September, 2020). *External Actors in the Afghan Peace Process*. The Australian Institute of International Affairs. <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au>
- Ali, N. (2021). *Withdrawal of US Forces from Afghanistan: Security Implications for Pakistan*. Peace Research Institute. <https://www.blog.prif.org>
- Gul, N. (2006). Post-9/11 Afghanistan and the regional Security Scenario. *Pakistan Horizon*, 59(1), 45-57. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41394380>
- Green, M. (2021). *Hindsight Up Front: Implications of Afghanistan Withdrawal for the Middle East*. Retrieved from <https://www.wilsoncenter.org>
- Hussain, E. D. (2015). Afghanistan: The Western Withdrawal and its Implications for Security and Economy. *South Asian and Comparative Politics*, 76(1), 1-30.
- Hussain, N., & Mughal, R. S. (2017). US Withdrawal from Afghanistan: Implications for Pakistan. *Journal of Political Studies*, 24(2), 485-486. http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/pols/pdf-files/13_24_2_17.pdf
- Ismail, M. (2020). *What to Know about the Afghan Peace Negotiations*. Council on Foreign Relations, Center for Preventive Action. <https://www.cfr.org>
- Jabarkhail, M., & Yousaf, F. (2021). *US withdrawal and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan: Future Policy Directions*. Swisspeace Policy Brief, 1-6.
- Jamal, U. (2021). *Treacherous Triangle: Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan After US Withdrawal*. <https://www.thediplomat.com>
- Kakakhel, A. S. (2021). *US troop withdrawal and impact on Afghans*. <https://TheExpressTribune-com-pk.cdn.ampproject.org>
- Kaya, E. (2021). *The Regional Effects of the US Withdrawal from Afghanistan*. <https://www.ankasam.org>
- Kaya, E. (2021). *Afghanistan Peace Process and Regional Actors*. <https://www.ankasam.org>
- Rice, J. (2021). *More tragedy in Afghanistan is just beginning after US withdrawal*. <https://theconversation-com.cdn.ampproject.org>
- Skelton, I. (January 23, 2008). *Assessment of U. S. Strategy And Operations in Afghanistan And the Way Forward*. <https://www.govinfo.gov>
- Sarwar, F., & Siraj, U. (2021). Afghan Peace Process: Regional Complexities and the Role of China. *NUST Journal of International Peace & Stability*, 40-52. <https://doi.org/10.37540/njips.v4i1.78>
- Syed, A. (2021). *The Evolution and Future of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan*. Carnegie Endowment For International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/12/21/evolution-and-future-of-tehrik-e-taliban-pakistan-pub-86051>
- Taddeo, V. (2010). US Response to Terrorism: A Strategic Analysis of the Afghanistan Campaign. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.3.2.3>
- Toscano, R., Leguen, R., G., Daud, M., & Hooper, E. (2016). *Conclusion: The way Forward*. The Barcelona Centre of International Affairs, 346-347.
- Thomas, C. (2021). *Afghanistan: Background and US Policy: In Brief*. Congressional Research Service.
- Watkins, A. (2021). *How the US Withdrawal Decision Will Affect the Afghan Conflict*. <https://www.crisisgroup.org>
- Zhang, Z. (August 25, 2021). *Current Political Situation in Afghanistan in 2021 Statistics & Facts*. <https://www.statista.com>
- Zucchini, D. (2021). *The War in Afghanistan: How It Started and How It Is Ending*. <https://www.the-newyork-times.com.org>