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**The US Withdrawal from Afghanistan: A Critical Overview of three
Presidencies (Obama, Trump, & Biden's)**

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DEDICATIONS

I thank Allah for granting me strength to finish my
thesis. I dedicate this work to my family

To My Beloved Mother

To My Father

My Perfect Mentor

My Brothers and Sisters,

To everyone who supported me.

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Abstract

The American War in Afghanistan is an extensive and comprehensive account that delves deep into the multifaceted history of the war, spanning the years from 2001 to 2020. In its meticulous exploration, this historical opus meticulously examines not only the military engagements but also the intricate political, cultural, strategic, and tactical dimensions that shaped the conflict. By meticulously dissecting the actions and decision-making processes of key stakeholders such as the United States, the Afghan government, and the Taliban, this work sheds light on the complex dynamics at play. Employing a compelling narrative format, the research artfully guides readers through the pivotal periods of the war, including the notable US surge of 2009–2011, the subsequent drawdown efforts, and the consequential peace talks held between 2019 and 2020. Throughout its pages, the focus remains steadfast on unraveling the overarching questions that have haunted the war: What led to the United States' ultimate failure in achieving its objectives? How has the withdrawal of troops impacted the region and its inhabitants, both in the short and long term? In addition, perhaps most critically, what were the strategies and mechanisms employed by the United States to execute its withdrawal from this protracted conflict? In pursuit of a comprehensive understanding, this profound work endeavors to unravel the intricate layers of this complex war, shedding light on the interplay of various factors that influenced its course. With an unwavering commitment to historical accuracy and a nuanced perspective, *The American War in Afghanistan* invites readers to embark on a thought-provoking journey, wherein they can explore the multitude of factors that shaped the war's outcome and grapple with its far-reaching consequences.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Taliban, Karzai, Afghan War, Pashto, defense contractor, withdrawal, counterinsurgency, US Army.

ملخص

الحرب الأمريكية في أفغانستان هي سرد واسع النطاق وشامل يتعمق في التاريخ متعدد الأوجه للحرب ، ويمتد عبر السنوات من 2001 إلى 2020. في استكشافه الدقيق ، يدرس هذا التأليف التاريخي بدقة ليس الاشتباكات العسكرية فحسب ، بل أيضاً القضايا السياسية المعقدة والأبعاد الثقافية والاستراتيجية والتكتيكية التي شكلت الصراع. من خلال التحليل الدقيق للإجراءات وعمليات صنع القرار لأصحاب المصلحة الرئيسيين مثل الولايات المتحدة والحكومة الأفغانية وطالبان ، يسلط هذا العمل الضوء على الديناميكيات المعقدة التي تلعبها. باستخدام تنسيق سردي مقنع خلال الفترات المحورية للحرب ، بما في ذلك فترة 2009-2011 ، وجهود الانسحاب اللاحقة ومحادثات السلام التي عقدت بين عامي 2019 و 2020. يظل التركيز ثابتاً على حل الأسئلة الشاملة التي تطارد الحرب: ما الذي أدى إلى فشل الولايات المتحدة النهائي في تحقيق أهدافها؟ كيف أثر انسحاب القوات على المنطقة وسكانها على المدى القصير والطويل؟ بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، وربما الأهم ، ما هي الاستراتيجيات والآليات التي استخدمتها الولايات المتحدة لتنفيذ انسحابها من هذا الصراع الذي طال أمده؟ سعياً وراء فهم شامل ، يسعى هذا العمل العميق إلى كشف الطبقات المعقدة لهذه الحرب المعقدة ، وتسليط الضوء على تفاعل العوامل المختلفة التي أثرت على مسارها. مع التزام ثابت بالدقة التاريخية ومنظور دقيق ، تدعو الحرب الأمريكية في أفغانستان القراء إلى الشروع في رحلة تحفز الفكر ، حيث يمكنهم استكشاف العديد من العوامل التي شكلت نتيجة الحرب والتصدي لعواقبها بعيدة المدى.

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General introduction

This research is an attempt to overview the US withdrawal from Afghanistan during three presidencies (Obama, Trump, & Biden's). The United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan has been a long and complex process that unfolded over several presidential administrations, notably during the tenures of Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden. This overview aims to introduce the key events and policies shaping the US withdrawal from Afghanistan during these administrations. It explores the strategic considerations, challenges, and outcomes that have characterized this significant foreign policy endeavor.

During the Bush administration, the Afghan War emerged as a direct response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Led by President George W. Bush, the war aimed to dismantle the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which had provided a safe haven for the terrorist group Al-Qaeda. The US, along with its NATO allies, launched a military campaign in October 2001 to overthrow the Taliban and disrupt Al-Qaeda's operations. The war witnessed intense fighting, with a focus on counterinsurgency and nation-building efforts. The Bush administration sought to establish a stable and democratic Afghanistan, promoting security, reconstruction, and the establishment of Afghan security forces. However, the war presented numerous challenges, including a resilient Taliban insurgency, complexities of tribal dynamics, and the involvement of neighboring countries. Following the Bush administration, the Afghan War entered a new phase under the leadership of President Barack Obama. As Obama assumed office in 2009, he inherited an ongoing conflict that had not achieved its desired goals. He pledged to shift the focus from Iraq to Afghanistan and authorized a surge of 30,000 troops in December 2009 to counter the resurgent Taliban. The goal was to stabilize Afghanistan, strengthen its security forces, and facilitate a transfer of responsibility to the Afghan government. Alongside the military surge, the Obama administration pursued diplomatic efforts to promote a negotiated settlement with the Taliban. However, challenges such as corruption, insurgency, and a fragmented political

landscape hindered progress in achieving these objectives. In January 2017, Donald Trump assumed office as the 45th President and pursued a different approach to Afghanistan. While expressing skepticism about prolonged involvement, Trump focused on pressuring the Taliban through increased airstrikes and an expanded military presence. His new South Asia strategy, announced in August 2017, involved deploying additional troops, removing artificial timelines for withdrawal, and seeking regional support. The administration aimed to compel the Taliban to come to the negotiating table through military pressure and conditions-based outcomes. However, achieving a lasting political settlement remained elusive during Trump's presidency. Joe Biden assumed office as the 46th President in January 2021, inheriting the complex challenge of ending America's involvement in Afghanistan. In April 2021, he announced the full withdrawal of US troops, setting a deadline of September 11, 2021, to end America's longest war. The decision was made after assessing that a continued military presence was no longer aligned with US national security interests. However, the withdrawal process faced significant obstacles, with the Taliban escalating attacks and gaining ground. The ability of the Afghan government to withstand the onslaught without US support was questioned, and the Afghan security forces encountered substantial challenges. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan, spanning the presidencies of Obama, Trump, and Biden, involved evolving strategies and complex challenges. While the objective of stabilizing Afghanistan and fostering a political settlement with the Taliban remained consistent, the approaches varied across administrations. The long-term impact of the withdrawal and its consequences for regional stability, counterterrorism efforts, and the Afghan people continue to be subjects of ongoing analysis and debate.

The Research Problem

The US war in Afghanistan has been controversial from the start. The United States had many opportunities to avoid war, but it rejected diplomatic options to solve this crisis, yet it pumped billions of

dollars to fund its alleged war on terrorism in Afghanistan, enabling corruption with US ready money while lying about the real goals and the progression of the war. This research attempt to explore and understand the purpose of the military operations, political strategies, and withdrawal from Afghanistan during three presidencies (Obama, Trump, Biden).

Research questions

The engagement of the United States in Afghanistan under the presidencies of Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden has witnessed the implementation of diverse strategies aimed at addressing the complex challenges faced in the region. Each leader has employed distinct approaches in pursuit of their objectives. This discussion will delve into the strategies employed by Obama, Trump, and Biden in Afghanistan, analyzing their respective approaches and the implications of their decisions. What were the strategies of these three presidents in Afghanistan?

The withdrawal of the United States from the Afghan war marks a significant event, signifying the end of a lengthy and intricate military involvement. The execution of this withdrawal and the strategies employed have garnered considerable attention and analysis. This discussion will explore how the United States navigated its withdrawal from the Afghan war, examining the methods and decisions that shaped this process. How did the United States carry out its withdrawal from the Afghan war, and what were the key factors that influenced this significant undertaking?

The withdrawal from the Afghan war has ushered in a new phase, bringing about a notable shift in the dynamics of the region. As the United States concluded its military involvement, questions have arisen regarding the aftermath of this momentous event. The

conclusion of any conflict leaves behind a complex web of consequences and challenges that require careful consideration. In this discussion, we will explore the aftermath of the withdrawal from the Afghan war, examining the wide-ranging effects and implications that have unfolded.

What is the aftermath of the withdrawal from the Afghan war?

Research objectives:

By collecting data in relation to the topic in hand, the research will develop a well-articulated work that tries to understand the purpose of political strategies, and the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Methodology

In this research, online libraries will be utilized to gather sources and interviews relevant to the research field. The narrative technique will be employed to underscore any disparities among statements, aiding in the comprehension of various reasons and opinions. The research methodology will encompass a comprehensive overview of the Afghanistan war.

The aforementioned findings will be reinforced by reliable essays, books, articles, interviews, and dissertations, contributing to the credibility of the research and yielding a robust outcome.

Chapters Demarcation

This study consists of three chapters. Each chapter aims at exploring an aspect from the following investigation in the Afghanistan war.

The first chapter of the research, as entitled: New Strategies Old Battles that deals with the political and military strategies of Obama, Trump and Biden and the US forces in Afghanistan.

The second chapter, which is entitled complete withdrawal from Afghanistan: tackles deeply into the causes of the withdrawal and the aftermath.

In the third chapter, The Afghan War came Into an End: deals with the aftermath of war and the future moves of the US on Afghanistan.

Chapter I: New Strategies, Old Battles

Introduction

The Afghanistan war, a conflict that has spanned over two decades, has witnessed a series of strategic approaches implemented by different U.S. administrations. Under the Obama administration, the "Surge" strategy was introduced, involving a substantial deployment of troops to achieve peace and counter the threat of al-Qaeda. This approach aimed to disrupt the Taliban, train Afghan forces, and prevent the resurgence of terrorism. However, challenges such as a lack of support and constraints on troop numbers posed significant obstacles. The Trump administration pursued a different path, focusing on ending America's "endless wars" and signing a peace agreement with the Taliban. While troop levels were reduced, a complete withdrawal was not achieved. Now, under the Biden administration, a pivotal decision has been made to withdraw all U.S. forces from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021, marking a significant shift in the country's involvement. However, this decision carries risks, including the potential for increased Taliban control and the failure of the ongoing peace process. The strategies employed by Obama, Trump, and Biden in Afghanistan have shaped the course of this long-standing conflict, and their implications continue to unfold.

1. U.S and Taliban Forces in Afghanistan

American officials consistently provide exaggerated estimates of success that contradict reality. Since 2017, the Taliban has controlled more Afghan land than at any other point since the American invasion. Insurgents killed 200 Afghan police officers and troops in only one-week last month, overrunning two key Afghan bases and the city of Ghazi.

According to the American military, the Afghan government "controls or influences" 56 percent of the nation. However, that evaluation is based on statistical deception. The Afghan government controls just the district headquarters and military barracks in several districts, while the Taliban controls the remainder. Afghan security forces outweigh the Taliban by a factor of ten, if not more. However, according to some Afghan authorities (Nordland, et al., 2018), one-third of their military and police officers are "ghosts" who have fled or deserted

without being removed from payrolls. Many others have inadequate training and are unqualified. The Afghan government claims it killed 13,600 terrorists and detained 2,000 more last year, accounting for over half of the estimated 25,000 to 35,000 Taliban members operating in the country in 2017, according to an official US study. However, US authorities estimated at least 60,000 fighters in January, while Afghan officials recently assessed the Taliban's strength at more than 77,000. With the war situation looking bleak, American officials assert that the coalition has at least improved Afghan living conditions — but they sometimes make inflated statements in this regard as well. The Taliban, who took everything but a few government facilities, overran the strategic city of Ghazni in southeastern Afghanistan on Aug 12, 2021. The local authorities denied there was any problem, telling President Ashraf Ghani only late on the third day how serious it was, officials said. They did regain control from the insurgents, but only after six days, and at the cost of nearly 200 police officers and soldiers killed. Throughout, the American military led the chorus of denial (Nordland, et al., 2018).

2. Obama, Trump, and Biden strategies in Afghanistan

The strategies employed by Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden in Afghanistan have shaped the course of the United States' involvement in the country's long-standing conflict. Each president approached the challenges and objectives in Afghanistan with distinct strategies.

2.1. Obama's Strategy in Afghanistan

President Obama announced his "Surge" program at the end of 2009, in which he chose to send 30,000 extra US soldiers to Afghanistan. The President intended to "deploy and remove troops quickly a "surge" akin to the one carried out by his Republican predecessor in Iraq, but with a set deadline to begin withdrawals. A variety of stories published of the biggest newspaper in the United States have received a mix of good and negative comments. By mid-2010, the "surge" approach would have increased the overall US military force in Afghanistan

to about 100,000 (Chatterjee, 2010).

2.1.1. The Surge Strategy

The major focus was divided into two sections: "The Thumbs Up", which outlines why the surge strategy was implemented, and "The Thumbs Down," which examines why the surge approach was not implemented. The paper emphasizes the importance of peace in The United States' blunders in Afghanistan committed in the past, as well as the required efforts done by the United States to achieve peace; the paper also emphasizes the necessity of pledges made by Obama to the people in his nation. The study "The Thumbs Down" focuses on the surge strategy's shortcomings, which include a lack of support for the United States, reservations about the plan, Obama's institutional flaws powerlessness and a lack of suitable recognizable solutions (Chatterjee, 2010).

2.1.2. The Thumbs Up

According to (Wilson & Chandrasekhars, 2010, as cited in Chatterjee, 2010) on how Obama made diplomacy part of the Afghan's policy, as well as the success of the U.S foreign policies in Afghanistan. The Taliban's fortress Marjah was apprehended. Skelton, the highest-ranking Democrat, had also favored sending extra soldiers to Afghanistan. Skelton had underlined that the shift from Afghanistan to Iraq was a strategic blunder that must not be repeated. Top Obama aides have also demanded that the government remain dedicated to the war's aim of disrupting al-Qaida and preventing the terrorist organization from having a safe haven in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The defense review is taking a "top-to-bottom look" at American priorities and "positioning" (Shear, 2009, as cited in Chatterjee, 2010), "Conventional knowledge" must be challenged by "rethinking old dogmas and questioning the existing quo." (Shear, 2009, as cited in Chatterjee, 2010).

A great deal of thought would be necessary on the forces required and the weapons to be purchased. According to Obama, the Taliban's rise and the continued presence of al-Qaida over

the border in Pakistan are a "disease" on the area. (Shear, 2009, as cited in Chatterjee, 2010) Obama saw this as a clear threat to Americans and felt compelled to respond. Unnecessary funding to the Karzai government would be discouraged further, according to former US General McChrystal, who also stated that the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan could only be improved if Americans committed to protecting the Afghan people and assisting them in establishing their own government. The US should also be wary since the Taliban did not seek an opportunity to topple the existing government.

According to Robert Diamond, a former Navy officer, in the article "Obama's Surge Strategy in Afghanistan," deploying 30,000 soldiers will put the "insurgency on the run," "give a security cover for development," and "enable the Afghan government to continue to extend its reach." (Shear, 2009, as cited in Chatterjee, 2010) However, 30,000 troops would not be enough to defeat the militants permanently; therefore the US must train the Afghan Army. As a result, President Obama devoted a significant portion of his Surge plan to training and expanding the country's military and police forces. According to former General McChrystal, the situation in Afghanistan is "serious and worsening." After eight years of war, the Americans would be "beginning from zero." (Kornblut, 2009, as cited in Chatterjee, 2010) rather than focusing on military numbers and other proposals, the President wished to "get agreement." This was dubbed the "Shinseki Legacy." (Kornblut, 2009, as cited in Chatterjee, 2010) Obama wants a strategy devised that would give them a sense of the military strength necessary.

2.1.3. Obama's Promises

In a speech on December 1, 2009, Obama not only pledged an increase in soldiers in Afghanistan, but also vowed to bring American forces home by mid-2011. He had stated that the US could not afford and did not believe it was essential to carry an open-ended commitment. Obama also pledged to "bring this fight to a victorious finish." (newyork times, 2010, as cited in Chatterjee, 2010) He planned to "attempt to reverse Taliban gains in vast

portions of Afghanistan, better protect Afghans, raise pressure on Afghanistan to build its own military power, create a more effective government, and ratchet up operations on al-Qaeda in Pakistan (newyork times 2010, as cited in Chatterjee, 2010) Obama has also stated that the US's primary aim is to thoroughly defeat the Taliban and prevent the return of al-Qaeda to either Pakistan or Afghanistan. Obama argued that it was critical for Americans to have an "exit strategy" so that the military stationed there could be returned. (Allen, 2009, as cited in Chatterjee, 2010).

2.1.4. Thumbs Down

According to (Jamison 2009, as cited in Chatterjee, 2010). Said unequivocally that neither Americans nor Afghans were pleased with Obama's Afghan policy. The following are the plan's specifics; first, rather than 40,000 troops surged to the war zone as his former general's request, Obama will "dribble" in 30,000 over the next twelve months. Second, As soon as the 30,000 extra troops are finally on the ground in Afghanistan next year, Obama intends to begin withdrawing them.

The report (Jamison2009, as cited in Chatterjee, 2010) also represented Democrats like Nancy Pelosi and Anna Eshoo's withdrawal of support for Obama's plan. There was also no support from anti-war organizations such as Code Pink. Many Republicans were dissatisfied with the "plan." The essence of the strategy demonstrated that the needs and desires of the American people had been overlooked during its formulation, and it had been formulated under the pressure of Army Generals in the Pentagon, American Neo-conservatives, and the wealthiest few in America for the protection of their interests, thus the U.S colonialism strategy. He hoped to reduce public resistance to the military surge and persuade his international partners to send additional soldiers, which may or may not be a good thing.

2.1.5. Obama facing obstacles

According to Robert Diamond a veteran Navy commander, in a discussion with Carnegie

council about the difficulty of deploying more soldiers was that the President was limited to 30,000 men. There were little more than 55,000 active Army personnel and around 200,000 active marines. Not everyone served in front-line combat units. The Army and Marine Corps could not be deployed simultaneously. Furthermore, over 100,000 soldiers were stationed in Iraq, with 68,000 in Afghanistan. The rest of them had returned home. So it was determined that 30,000 troops would be deployed, which would not be enough to put an end to the insurgency in Afghanistan permanently (Chatterjee, 2010).

2.2.Trump’s Strategies in Afghanistan

Donald Trump has spent years claiming that America's "endless wars" are depleting the country's resources and lives. That has altered in the aftermath of President Joe Biden's pullout from Afghanistan. “Trump has been eager to end America’s two-decade-long military occupation in Afghanistan before his term of office expires. His administration signed a peace agreement with America’s erstwhile enemy, the Taliban, in February.” (McGraw, 2021). The peace agreement effectively called for the removal of US and coalition soldiers from Afghanistan within 14 months in exchange for a Taliban guarantee that Afghan land would not be used for hostile acts against the US and its allies.

2.2.1. Trump’s Promises

After more than six months of deliberation, US President Donald J. Trump has finally disclosed an Afghan policy that encompasses the whole area around Afghanistan. Unlike past administrations' Afghan policies, which were primarily focused on rhetoric, President Trump's policy was long overdue from an Afghan perspective and is extremely straightforward and pragmatic in terms of reaching its aims, if adopted in its entirety. It is something that Afghans have been hoping for more than a decade. One of the most crucial components of the new US strategy is that it nearly precisely fits with the Afghan government's objectives. Trump indicated that the United States will continue to assist the Afghan government in implementing

vital reforms and combating corruption. On the domestic front, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani appears to be devoted to reforming the government, notably the security agencies. He also seeks to combat corruption. Trump's speech would undoubtedly help him in his quest to root out crooked elites and warlords.

It was a significant move for Trump. In other speeches, he claimed that he would have carried out a more "dignified" exit from the 20-year war, particularly in the context of supporting the deal reached by his administration that established the conditions for the US to leave Afghanistan in May. The push for further military conflict came at a time when other Republicans, including some in his cabinet, were criticizing the initial deal, arguing that it was flawed in its own right and that the party would be better served by taking a different path.

"I think both administrations bear the blame for where we are today," said Lisa Curtis 2021, a Trump National Security Council official. The Trump administration for negotiating a very bad deal with the Taliban. The Biden administration for not reevaluating that deal and changing course (McGraw, 2021).

2.2.2. Negotiations with the Taliban

After the White House announced Wednesday Aug 17th, 2021 that the Taliban would permit "safe passage" to Afghan civilians traveling to the capital's airport, (Haley,2021, as cited in Dale, et al., 2021), Trump's former US ambassador to the United Nations, criticized the Biden administration for relying on the word of the Taliban.

"To have our Generals say that they are depending on diplomacy with the Taliban is an unbelievable scenario," Haley tweeted. "Negotiating with the Taliban is like dealing with the devil." Haley failed to acknowledge that the Trump administration engaged with the Taliban, and that she had spoken highly of such talks while serving in the government (Dale, et al., 2021).

"We are witnessing that we are closer to negotiations with the Taliban and the peace process than we have ever been," Haley said at the United Nations on January 17, 2018, in New

York. Haley went on to say that Afghan authorities were "confident that the Taliban would come to the table," and that "US policy in Afghanistan is succeeding.", the Trump administration said in the summer of 2018 that it was ready to begin discussions with the Taliban and, after much ado, signed the February 2020 deal with the Taliban for the US to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan by the beginning of May 2021. On October 2018, Haley resigned from her position in the government. Despite the Taliban's ongoing attacks and inability to follow through on agreed-upon regions, the United States proceeded to withdraw troops from Afghanistan (Dale, et al., 2021).

On January 15th 2021, only days before Biden's inauguration, Trump's acting defense secretary, Christopher Miller, revealed that US soldiers had been reduced to their lowest level since the conflict began. "The number of US troops in Afghanistan has risen to 2,500." "Directed by President Trump, on November 17, this reduction puts U.S. forces in the nation to their lowest levels since 2001," Miller said in a statement. "We don't disagree with Haley's assessment of the Taliban". Her post, however, entirely ignored the Trump administration's own discussions as well as her earlier support for the approach (Dale, et al., 2021).

2.2.3. The Ruse

According to claims by (Miller 2021 as cited in Tucker, 2021), Trump's last acting defense secretary, President Donald Trump's senior national security aides never meant to withdraw all US soldiers from Afghanistan. Miller revealed to Defense One that, while serving as the top counterterrorism official on the National Security Council in 2019, he commissioned a war game that determined the US could continue to conduct counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan with only 800 American military personnel on the ground. And, according to Miller, by the end of 2020, when he was acting defense secretary, many Trump administration officials anticipated the US would be able to negotiate a new shared government in Afghanistan comprised mostly of Taliban representatives. The new administration would then allow US

soldiers to remain in Afghanistan to assist the Afghan military and combat terrorist elements. That plan never materialized, in part because Trump was defeated in his reelection effort in November. Other former top Trump administration official called Miller's account into doubt. However, by exposing it, Miller refuted previous claims that Trump is responsible for the tumultuous scenes erupting across Kabul. Miller said that, despite Trump's numerous public commitments to finish the Afghan war and bring all US soldiers home, many senior national security professionals in his cabinet thought a comprehensive pullout was not unavoidable.

2.3. Biden's Strategy in Afghanistan

President Joe Biden announced the complete withdrawal of US soldiers from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021, aiming to end the long-standing conflict. However, this decision comes with significant risks, including the potential for increased Taliban dominance and the uncertain future of the peace process with the Afghan government. American officials' optimistic assessments contradict the reality on the ground, with the Taliban controlling more territory and recent incidents highlighting ongoing challenges. The situation remains complex and raises concerns about the potential consequences of the withdrawal.

2.3.1. The Withdrawal

After more than two decades of engagement in the country's war, President Joe Biden stated that all US soldiers in Afghanistan would be evacuated by September 11, 2021. However, the pullout has significant risks: the Taliban may increase its dominance over Afghanistan, and the existing peace process between the organization and the Afghan government may fail. In last year's talks with the Taliban, the US requested that the Taliban renounce al-Qaeda and desist from attacking US forces.

Dexter Filkins, argues in his report in *The New Yorker*, President Biden, having inherited the Trump bargain, confronts some difficult options. If Biden is successful in withdrawing soldiers, he will bring an end to a never-ending conflict. However, with American soldiers gone, civil

war might erupt, the Taliban could seize control, and the war Americans waged may be declared a failure (Filkins, 2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the strategies employed by Presidents Obama, Trump, and Biden in Afghanistan reflect a complex and evolving approach to addressing the challenges in the region. Each president faced unique circumstances and pursued distinct policies, resulting in both successes and failures. Under President Obama, the initial strategy focused on increasing troop levels and implementing a counterinsurgency approach to stabilize Afghanistan. The surge in troops aimed to reverse the gains made by the Taliban and create conditions for a political settlement. However, despite some notable achievements, such as the elimination of Osama bin Laden and weakening of Al-Qaeda, the overall impact was limited. The Afghan government remained weak, corruption persisted, and the Taliban continued to pose a significant threat. President Trump introduced a different approach by adopting a more transactional stance towards Afghanistan. His strategy aimed to pressure the Taliban into negotiations through a combination of increased military pressure and diplomatic efforts. The Trump administration signed a landmark agreement with the Taliban, which included a timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. forces and commitments from the Taliban to prevent terrorist groups from using Afghan soil. While the agreement was a notable step towards potential peace, it faced criticism for excluding the Afghan government and raising concerns about the sustainability of gains made in human rights and democracy. President Biden inherited the ongoing withdrawal process initiated by his predecessor. His strategy emphasized ending the "forever war" in Afghanistan and shifting the focus of U.S. foreign policy towards other priorities. The decision to withdraw U.S. forces faced criticism for the chaotic and rapid collapse of the Afghan security forces and government, leading to the Taliban's swift takeover. The hasty evacuation of American citizens and Afghan allies, coupled with the resurgence of

the Taliban, raised concerns about the stability of the region and the potential for increased terrorism threats. In evaluating these strategies, it is essential to recognize the challenges and complexities inherent in the Afghan conflict. The pursuit of stability, security, and peace in Afghanistan has proven to be an elusive goal for multiple administrations. The strategies implemented by Obama, Trump, and Biden reflect their respective attempts to navigate a highly intricate and volatile situation, balancing military, diplomatic, and political considerations.

Chapter II: Complete Withdrawal from Afghanistan

Introduction

The US withdrawal from Afghanistan has been a momentous event with profound implications for Afghanistan, the region, and global security. After nearly two decades of military presence, the decision to withdraw American forces has marked a significant shift in the dynamics of the conflict. The decision to withdraw US forces from Afghanistan was influenced by a combination of factors. Firstly, the extended duration and high cost of the war had taken a toll on the American military, with thousands of lives lost and substantial financial resources expended. As the conflict dragged on, public sentiment in the United States increasingly called for an end to the protracted war and a reevaluation of the US role in Afghanistan. Secondly, the strategic landscape had evolved since the initial invasion. The core objective of dismantling Al-Qaeda and preventing Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for terrorists had largely been achieved. However, the ongoing presence of US troops shifted towards counterinsurgency efforts against the resurgent Taliban. This shift prompted a reassessment of priorities and a growing sentiment among policymakers that the US military should not be indefinitely committed to the internal conflicts of another country.

Moreover, the United States sought to reallocate its resources and focus on other pressing global challenges. As the geopolitical landscape evolved, strategic priorities shifted to address emerging threats such as China's rise, cyber warfare, and non-state actors, among others. The decision to withdraw from Afghanistan was, therefore, driven by a desire to rebalance resources and focus on these evolving global challenges. However, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan was not without significant challenges and risks. One of the foremost concerns was the potential for a security vacuum, as the Afghan security forces were still grappling with issues of capacity, corruption, and internal divisions. The rapid collapse of the Afghan government and the swift resurgence of the Taliban following the withdrawal raised questions about the sustainability of the gains made in the past two decades. Additionally, the hasty nature of the

withdrawal and the chaotic scenes at Kabul airport highlighted the logistical complexities and the need for careful planning and execution. The implications of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan are wide-ranging and will have lasting effects on various fronts. The Taliban's swift takeover has raised concerns about the protection of human rights, particularly the rights of women and minority groups, as well as the potential for reprisals and regression in terms of governance and democratic values. The resurgence of terrorist groups, such as ISIS-K, in the power vacuum left by the withdrawal poses an ongoing threat to regional and global security. Furthermore, the withdrawal has had an impact on America's reputation and credibility on the international stage, raising questions among allies and adversaries about the steadfastness of US commitments and its role in global affairs.

2.1. Causes of the Withdrawal

2.1.1 Forced Into Withdrawal

The world is experiencing devastating results in Afghanistan because of a rare area of agreement between President Biden and his predecessor, Donald Trump. Both presidents considered the 20-year conflict as an unpleasant inheritance and an encumbrance in the isolated and rocky region. It was a good example of the "forever war" Trump pledged to halt as part of his "America First" campaign. Frustrated with his early attempts to end the US operation, Trump eventually circumvented the Afghan government in order to talk directly with the Taliban. He reached an agreement with them on February 29, 2020, promising to withdraw all US forces by May 1, 2021 (Filkins, 2021).

When Biden took office, he did not change this path, but he did postpone the withdrawal until September. He desired additional time to withdraw US military and, if necessary, evacuate US citizens as well as Afghan translators and others who assisted the US combat effort. He was told he would have a few weeks or months to do this after September.

Ending the war in Afghanistan was one of Donald Trump's campaign promises. He

reached a deal with the Taliban on 2020 to remove all US personnel by May 1, 2021. in less than two months. Members of the Afghan government were not represented in the accord. They are in talks with the Taliban. Meanwhile, having inherited the Trump deal, President Biden confronts some difficult decisions, Dexter Filkins, describes in his report in The New Yorker. If Biden is successful in withdrawing soldiers, he will bring an end to a never-ending conflict. However, with American soldiers gone, civil war might erupt, the Taliban could seize control, and the war Americans waged may be declared a failure (Filkins, 2021).

2.1.2 Failing To Tell the Truth

Seventeen years into the Afghan conflict, American officials consistently provide exaggerated estimates of success that contradict reality. More than 2,200 Americans have died in Afghanistan, and the US has spent more than \$840 billion battling the Taliban insurgency and providing relief and rebuilding. In current currency, the conflict has grown more expensive than the Marshall Plan, which helped reconstruct Europe after World War II. Because of this expenditure, Americans was under enormous pressure to demonstrate that the Taliban are losing and the country is developing. However, the Taliban now control more Afghan land than at any time since the American invasion. Insurgents killed 200 Afghan police officers and troops in only one week last month, overrunning two key Afghan bases and the city of Ghazni.

According to the American military U.S. government data. May 15, 2018, the Afghan government "controls or influences" 56 percent of the nation. However, that evaluation is based on statistical deception. The Afghan government controls just the district headquarters and military barracks in several districts, while the Taliban controls the rest (Cordesman, 2019).

Afghan security forces outweigh the Taliban by a factor of ten, if not more. However, according to some Afghan authorities, one-third of their military and police officers are "ghosts" who have fled or deserted without being removed from payrolls. Many others have inadequate training and are unqualified.

The Afghan government claims it killed 13,600 terrorists and detained 2,000 more last year, accounting for over half of the estimated 25,000 to 35,000 Taliban members operating in the country in 2017, according to Lead Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations SIGAR; Fatiullah Qaisari and Shayestabaz Nasiri, members of the Defense Committee of the Afghan Parliament. However, US authorities estimated at least 60,000 fighters in January, while Afghan officials recently assessed the Taliban's strength at more than 77,000. With the war situation looking bleak, American officials assert that the coalition has at least improved Afghan living conditions —The rate had dropped to 327 by 2010, according to the United States Agency for International Development (Nordland, et al., 2018).

According to the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group, 1,575 women died per 100,000 births in 2010. Other figures reported by the organization range from 885 to 1,600 per 100,000, implying that approximately one in every hundred Afghan women will die during giving birth. In the United States, the rate is 24 per 100,000. According to USAID, life expectancy has increased dramatically, rising from 41 years in 2002 to 63 years in 2010. Nevertheless, the statistics were modified to exclude a high mortality rate in children, which distorted the results (Nordland, et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization stated that Afghan life expectancy was 48 years in 2009. Even the Central Intelligence Agency disagrees with USAID's estimate, claiming in 2017 that Afghans normally live to the age of 51. The Taliban took over the vital city of Ghazni in southern Afghanistan last month, taking everything but a few government institutions. Local authorities denied any problem existed, telling President Ashraf Ghani only late on the third day how terrible it was, according to officials. They did retake control from the militants, but it took six days and approximately 200 police officers and troops were slain. In report of (Nordland, et al., 2018) contains contradictions. Most contradictions can be found in the statements of the Colonel O' Donnell chief spokesman for the United States military in Afghanistan statements from Aug 10 to Aug. 14, 2018. "Initial reports indicate minimal Afghan

security force casualties. This is yet another failed Taliban attempt to seize terrain.” While the reporter of New-York times reveals that more than 1,000 Taliban insurgents launched an offensive against the city of Ghazni shortly after midnight; In addition, in another statement he said “The Afghan government said it was in control of Ghazni, The city was relatively quiet Friday evening ... clearing operations are ongoing and sporadic clashes are occurring.” Yet the reporter shared Taliban were seen in control of every city intersection. Fighting appeared to be spreading to districts bordering Ghazni. The Afghan government continued to hold their ground and maintain control of all government centers tactically, operationally and strategically according to Lead Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations SIGAR; Fatiullah Qaisari and Shayestabaz Nasiri, members of the Defense Committee of the Afghan Parliament. Taliban appeared to be in control of most of the city. More than 100 Afghan police officers and soldiers are confirmed dead. Ghazni City remains under Afghan government control, and the isolated and desperate Taliban forces remaining in the city do not pose a threat to its collapse as some have claimed. In opposition on the other hand, Taliban insurgents took over most of the rural areas of Ghazni Province, even as they battled over control of the provincial capital. “What we observed as these Afghan-led operations drove a large portion of Taliban from the city over the last day or so, was the retreating Taliban attacking the more vulnerable surrounding districts, which Afghan forces are reinforcing.” In addition, (Nordland, et al., 2018) reported that after the Taliban’s brief seizure of the city; the insurgents were reported to be pulling out of Ghazni. Residents said there were large numbers of bodies in the streets and the river.

2.1.3. Stability of Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a typical example of a “fragile state” given its broken social contract, weak institutions, and the disputed legitimacy of its government. The Afghan government was unable to generate enough cash to maintain itself for many years to come, especially if the violence

persisted. The 2016 Fragility Study Group described fragile states as characterized by the absence or breakdown of a social contract between people and their government. Fragile states suffer from deficits of institutional capacity and political legitimacy that increase the risk of instability and violent conflict and sap the state of its resilience to disruptive shocks.

Prior to September 11, 2001, US policy acknowledged that, while weak governments may cause instability in their regions, they would most likely harm only distant US interests. However, as stated in the 2002 National Security Strategy, “the events of September 11, 2001, taught us that weak states like Afghanistan can pose as great a danger to national security as strong states.” This awareness inspired a need to comprehend, confront, and avoid fragility. In this vein, the 9/11 Commission recommended in its 2004 report “a prevention strategy that is as much, or more, political than military”.

The recommendations of the 2016 Fragility Study Group study and the 2019 Task Force on Extremism in Fragile States report, which further studied the linkages between extremism and fragility and highlighted the high costs of disregarding prevention, both focused on prevention. In 2019, Congress passed the Global Fragility Act (GFA), which codified the concepts of past attempts and declared that it will be enforced saying “Is the policy of the United States to seek to stabilize conflict-affected areas and prevent violence and fragility globally.”(Global Fragility Act, 2019).

2.2. The Aftermath of the Withdrawal on Afghanistan and the U.S.

As investigations into the withdrawal from Afghanistan continue, US authorities are faced with the continued difficulty of relocating displaced Afghans. In late July 2021, the United States began evacuations, taking some of the 18,000 Afghans who had requested for special immigrant visas (SIVs) to U.S. military facilities according to (Schmitt & Steinhauer as cited in Eichensehr, 2021).

By the end of August, the US had evacuated over 123,000 people according to Secretary Antony J. Blinken’s Remarks on Afghanistan Aug. 30, 2021, “even with this effort some US

citizens and Afghans who assisted US forces were left behind at peril” (Eichensehr, 2021).

Evacuees confront a difficult journey to resettlement in the United States. Many passengers used military and charter planes to transit hubs in third-world nations such as Qatar, Germany, and Italy (Cooke & Rosenberg, 2021). Evacuees have been kept on US military sites in several nations, where they are subjected to "biometric and biographic security checks" in addition to COVID-19 and other health exams according to White House Press Release Sept. 2, 2021.

According to press report by (Savage & Rosenberg 2021 as cited in Eichensehr, 2021), several dozen people have been identified for "apparent histories of violent crime or ties to Islamist militants" and have been moved to a NATO installation in Kosovo to await further determinations. Afghans with security and health certifications are eligible to go to the United States (Eichensehr, 2021).

Hundreds of millions of frequent flyer points have been donated by private airlines to offer evacuees with free trips to the United States (White House, Fact Sheet, 2021). The majority of refugees have arrived at Dulles International Airport in Virginia, where some have gone to live with relatives and others have been moved to domestic military posts (Hackman, 2021). Despite the fact that private organizations such as Airbnb have promised to provide temporary lodging for 20,000 evacuees (White House Press Release, 2021), tens of thousands have lingered at US bases for weeks or months while resettlement agencies struggle to place them in more permanent homes according to (Kirby, 2021).

According to the (Donati, 2021), 95,000 Afghans will be relocated to the United States. The US has maintained "frequent communication" with the Taliban in order to provide safe passage out of Afghanistan for individuals who choose to leave and to support the reopening of the Kabul airport U.S. The State Department intends to begin regular evacuation flights by the end of 2021 but in the meanwhile, evacuees have mostly left on charter planes, with a tiny minority escaping overland (U.S. Department of State Press Release, 2021). Since August 31,

the United States has personally aided 479 American Citizens and 450 legal permanent residents in addition to their immediate family members to escape Afghanistan and migrate to the United States, according to the State Department (U.S. Dep't of State Media Note, 2021). Afghans who were hired by or worked for the US government and "have faced a continuing significant threat as a result of their employment" (U.S. Dep't of State Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2021).

Prior to the Taliban takeover, an estimated 76,000 Afghans entered the US on these visas (Maizland, 2021), and roughly 7,000 SIV applicants were evacuated during the August evacuation (U.S. Dep't of Defense Press Release, 2021). Nonetheless, a State Department official informed the media that "the vast majority" of SIV candidates were turned down (Donati, 2021). After the evacuation deadline passed, congressional offices received a "steady stream of requests" for assistance leaving Afghanistan and to address these requests, Representatives Jason Crow (D-CO) and Peter Meijer (R-MI) introduced legislation to increase the cap on SIVs by 10,000 and expand eligibility for the program. Aside from the SIV program, the US enhanced refugee status eligibility for Afghans who did not qualify for SIVs in August. The State Department announced a new "Priority 2" refugee status category for those who are at danger because of their U.S. association but are ineligible for SIVs because they do not have qualifying work or have not satisfied the time-in-service criterion to become eligible (U.S. Dep't of Defense Press Release, 2021). The Priority 2 program is available to specific US government workers, US government-funded programs or initiatives, and US-based media or non-governmental groups.

Beyond contacts to enable departures, doubts remain regarding whether the US and the Taliban would collaborate to fight ISIS-K threats. The organization has carried out a series of lethal strikes in Afghanistan, including attacks on mosques in Kabul and Kunduz in early October according to (DeYoung, 2021) and a military hospital in Kabul on November 2, 2021. Undersecretary Kahl said before the Senate Armed Services Committee that the intelligence

community believes ISIS-K "may acquire the capacity to plan and conduct foreign attacks within six months if unchecked."

Despite early promises of probable coordination in the (Burns & Baldor, 2021) the new Taliban administration has explicitly opposed cooperation with the US to combat ISIS-K. 61 Following the first direct negotiations with the US since Kabul's fall, Taliban spokesperson Suhail Shaheen stated that, while the Taliban told the US that they would attack ISIS-K, the Taliban "are equipped to confront ISIS-K individually." (Gannon, 2021). A top Taliban intelligence official, Aziz Ahmad Tawakol, went on to remark, "We previously destroyed the US, so we feel we can beat ISIS-K as well, and in less time." (George, et al. , 2021). According to General Assembly Decision on Afghanistan and Myanmar Seat Dec. 6, 2021, The Taliban also wishes to get formal international recognition. The Taliban has demanded Afghanistan's UN seat, but the UN General Assembly delayed action on the Afghan representative's credentials on December 6, after a recommendation from the UN Credentials Committee. In "a rare occasion of unanimity," the United States, Russia, and China believe that while recognition is unlikely to occur anytime soon, it may be used to gain Taliban concessions on human rights and counterterrorism (Wainer, 2021). According to Blinken, the US has taken the stance that "the Taliban seeks international credibility and support... any legitimacy and any support will have to be won." (U.S. Dep't of State Media Note, 2021).

The Taliban takeover and US exit have fanned fears of a humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan, but current US sanctions and financial constraints on the Taliban make assistance delivery difficult. The US froze around \$9.5 billion in assets from Afghanistan's Central Bank in August to prevent the Taliban from obtaining the monies. (Mohsin, 2021). Long-standing sanctions against the Taliban and the Haqqani network, a recognized foreign terrorist organization led by the Taliban's acting interior minister, Sirajuddin Haqqani, remain in place (U.S. Dep't of Defense Press Release, 2021) Nonetheless, the US and the international community are working to improve humanitarian relief delivery in order to confront the rising

catastrophe.

On December 22, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved a resolution exempting Afghanistan from existing UN sanctions in exchange for "humanitarian assistance and other activities that support basic human needs in Afghanistan," as well as financial transactions required to facilitate such aid as Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution 2021 shows (UN Press Release, 2021).

Through the end of October, the United States pledged a total of "nearly \$474 million in 2021" for "humanitarian aid in Afghanistan and for Afghan refugees in the region," all of which "will flow through independent humanitarian organizations." (White House Press Release, 2021)

Governments and other donors promised \$1.2 billion in humanitarian aid during a UN donor summit in September the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. The United Nations predicts that over 500,000 Afghans have been internally displaced since the beginning of 2021, with "a hypothetical worst-case scenario envisioning over 515,000 newly displaced refugees escaping across borders" by the end of 2021 according to (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021). These figures would be added to the existing 2.6 million Afghan refugees worldwide, 2.2 million of whom live in Iran and Pakistan according to UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Afghanistan 2021.

Conclusion

In early 2002, the US military gained a fast but short-term success against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and the Pentagon's emphasis moved to Iraq. The Afghan battle devolved into a secondary endeavor, a foggy spectacle of nation building, with sporadic troop surges to undertake high-intensity counterinsurgency offensives but with a small number of troops carrying out an uncertain mission.

Despite the fact that the Taliban returned in increased numbers and troops on the ground

expressed worries about the American strategy's developing flaws, senior American officials virtually always claimed that progress was being achieved.

Biden's government also failed to take advantage of the time available to them from the agreement that been made by trump to strategically plan for the withdrawal.

Leaving the battlefield with heavy losses to Afghanistan, as well as incurring huge material losses estimated at trillions of dollars. The United States has also spent a lot of money in its strategies to rebuild Afghanistan which it was not successful in. Even with the withdrawal, which was supposed to limit losses, it cost them most of their military equipment that was left in Afghanistan, which is estimated at hundreds of millions. As well as leaving thousands of Afghans who supported the U.S behind to make their own exit. creating new refugees' crises.

Chapter III: The Afghan War Comes to an End

Introduction

Over the last two decades, states and international organizations have contributed to the United States' efforts to depose the Taliban and strengthen Afghanistan's government, democratic institutions, and civil society in the following ways:

First the military power; after invading Afghanistan in October 2001, US soldiers rapidly deposed the Taliban. The Taliban then launched an insurgency against the Afghan government, which was backed by the United States. The gang weathered counterinsurgency operations by the world's most powerful security alliance, NATO, and three US military forces. Administrations during a war that claimed the lives of over 6,000 US servicemen and contractors and over 1,100 NATO personnel. Between 2007 and 2021, an estimated 47,000 civilians and 73,000 Afghan army and police officials were murdered. Tens of thousands of Taliban militants are also thought to have been killed. In 2011, the number of US forces in Afghanistan peaked at roughly 100,000. NATO acquired command of foreign forces in 2003, marking the organization's first military commitment outside of Europe. NATO has about 130,000 troops from fifty countries stationed in Afghanistan at its peak. The United States pledged to remove all US and NATO forces from Afghanistan if the Taliban met promises such as breaking connections with terrorist groups in the 2020 agreement. In August 2021, the United States concluded its military pullout.

Second way is the Sanctions, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions on the government for hosting al-Qaeda in 1999, and the restrictions were increased after 9/11. They go after Taliban commanders' financial holdings and prevent them from traveling. In addition, the Security Council placed a weapons embargo on the Taliban. Additional sanctions are maintained by the United States and the European Union.

Third way is through Democratic reforms and assistance According to a 2019 World Bank study, dozens of nations have contributed aid to Afghanistan, with grants from foreign

partners covering 75% of the government's public spending. However, several Western governments have discontinued funding, and the World Bank has barred the Taliban from accessing millions of dollars as a result of the group's control, threatening more economic chaos.

Forth way is Investigation; The International Criminal Court is now investigating the Taliban for alleged abuses of Afghan civilians, including crimes against humanity, committed since 2003. Both U.S and Afghan soldiers are being probed for possible war crimes.

3.1. The Aftermath of the Afghanistan War

3.1.1. Taliban's Finances and International Support

According to the (UN monitoring group, 2022), prior to their takeover, the Taliban largely made money through illicit activities like as opium poppy farming, drug trafficking, extortion of local companies, and abduction. Their yearly income is estimated to be between \$300 million and \$1.6 billion. According to one estimate, opium poppy farming would bring them roughly \$460 million in 2020. Despite harsh UN sanctions, they have supplemented their finances through illegal mining and foreign donations. It is unclear how the Taliban's financial streams would evolve under the new administration.

In the article of (Chatterjee, 2021) on council foreign relations, the Pakistani security establishment continues to provide financial and logistical assistance to the Taliban, including safe haven for Taliban terrorists, in order to offset India's influence in Afghanistan. Islamabad denies these allegations. At the same time, Pakistan has been fighting its own insurgency organization, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, also known as the Pakistani Taliban and different from the Afghan group.

3.1.2. Afghans Support the Taliban

For years after their demise, the Taliban had widespread support. The Asia Foundation, a

non-profit organization located in the United States, discovered in 2009 that half of Afghans, predominantly Pashtuns and rural Afghans, supported armed opposition organizations, notably the Taliban. Afghan support for the Taliban and affiliated organizations was motivated in part by complaints against official institutions. However, according to the same study in 2019, just 13.4 percent of Afghans sympathize with the Taliban (Maizland, 2023). As intra-Afghan peace talks stagnated in early 2021, an overwhelming majority of those polled believed it was critical to safeguard women's rights, freedom of expression, and the present constitution. Approximately 44 percent of Afghans polled felt that Afghanistan may achieve peace over the next two years.

Following the 2021 takeover, tens of thousands of Afghans attempted to evacuate the country, and the UN refugee agency predicted that more than 500,000 Afghans would emigrate by the end of the year. In addition, the National Resistance Front, a resistance movement comprised of former politicians, local militia members, and Afghan security forces, arose in the remote and hilly Panjshir Province. After more than a week of warfare, the Taliban grabbed control of the province, but the resistance organization has promised to continue fighting.

3.1.3 Profiting from the War

Eric Prince, an American businessman, former U.S. Navy SEAL officer, and the founder of the private military company Blackwater saw a business opportunity. He offered to help charter a plane to evacuate people from Kabul, the price tag of which was 6.500 per person. Eric Prince decided that market price. However, this was not the first time Eric Prince used the war in Afghanistan to get rich. In fact, this was one of the last of many instances where he profited off the Afghan war (USA congressional hearing 2007 as cited in Harris, 2022).

The United States leaned heavily “defense contractor” and not relying on the federal government to manage the war. The U.S hired many private companies to do it for them instead; these companies fight the US wars. All of this contributed to what a former Secretary

of Defense Robert Gates call a culture of endless money inside the Pentagon.

Another example Robert Stevens, the former CEO of a company called Lockheed Martin, A company that manufactures the Blackhawk helicopters; they manufacture missiles, fighter jets, bombs. This company gets a lot of business from the Pentagon. In 2020, this company acquired \$75 billion worth of Pentagon contracts. On the other hand, the budget of foreign ministry of the State Department totaled \$44 billion (Lockheed Martin Corporation, 2000\2008 as cited in Harris, 2022).

Next is Stephen Orenstein, Owner of company Supreme Group that was chosen in 2005 to feed U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Since he won the contract, Supreme Foods business increased 50-fold. Over the course of six years, the Defense Department paid Supreme \$5.5 billion to deliver food to the troops; it became 90% of his business. Orenstein realized that he could charge absurd amounts of money for the meals that he was providing to troops. In addition, he knew that no one would notice because Defense Department was just pouring money in this war (U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 2014 as cited in Harris, 2022). The government contracts kept coming, even though his prices were very high; then he started to create fake subcontracting companies and started to win contracts that were for nothing. Moreover, the Pentagon would just pay him a lot of money for doing no work to the point where he became a billionaire.

Moving to politicians and especially the congress members by being able to buy stocks in defense companies like Lockheed Martin. At least 47 members of Congress and their spouses hold between 2 million and 6.7 million worth of stocks in top defense companies. One of the politicians is Kevin Hern, a Republican from Oklahoma who owns over a million dollars in stock from defense contractors and \$880,000 alone in Honeywell (Barchart. n.d. as cited in Harris, 2022), conflict of interest gets worse, when you look at somebody like Senator Gary Peters a democratic Senator from Michigan who is a member of the Arms Services Committee, which is the committee that authorizes the Pentagon's budget. He invested in Raytheon

Technology Corporation. Raytheon is a major government contractor for wartime. He gives money to the Pentagon to do war things with private contractors and he has invested in the private contractors (United States Senate. n.d. as cited in Harris, 2022).

3.2. The U.S Future Moves On Afghanistan

3.2.1. Assisting Americans and At-Risk Afghans

Blinken stated that the government will continue "relentless efforts" to assist the less than 100 remaining Americans, as well as perhaps thousands of at-risk Afghans, in leaving the country if they so desired. The State Department refuses to offer an official count of Afghans seeking to evacuate, citing the "ongoing terrorist threat to activities of this sort (U.S. Dep't of State Media Note, 2021); at least 1,300 at-risk Afghans and Americans are attempting to flee through Kabul airport via overland transit. Approximately 8,200 people are attempting to evacuate from the Mazar-e-Sharif airport, where charter flights have been awaiting clearance for weeks. "The United States has used every lever at our disposal to enable the departure of these charter planes from Mazar," stated a State Department spokesman. Those aiding with evacuations, on the other hand, are growing impatient and accuse the administration of making "false promises". As the days pass and the situation for our 704 passengers worsen, it's difficult to have trust in governmental promises; independent humanitarian Hazami Barmada told voice of America podcast (VOA). She has been aiding in the evacuation of a group of nine American citizens, nine lawful permanent residents of the United States, and 170 Special Immigrant Visa holders and their families in recent weeks of the withdrawal. The gang is still stuck in Mazar-e-Sharif (Widakuswara, 2021).

3.2.2. Engaging Diplomatically With the Taliban

The United States and other Western countries have relocated diplomatic activities from Kabul to Doha, Qatar. Blinken stated that the US was willing to deal with the Taliban from the Qatari capital in collaboration with friends and partners "based on whether or not it promotes

our goals." With military action no longer a viable option in the near future, the question is "how to be diplomatic with a terrorist organization," according to Brian O'Toole, a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council Diplomacy, when combined with the appropriate leverage, might be beneficial, according to O'Toole. This includes the former Afghan government's \$9.5 billion in assets now frozen in American institutions, the United States' supremacy over the global financial sector, and threats of UN and Western sanctions or trade restrictions. Offers of international aid, fiscal support, and recognition of the Taliban administration might be used as incentives (Widakuswara, 2021).

According to Blinken, the United States has coordinated important nations to utilize their joint power over the Taliban. He convened a ministerial conference of 22 nations, as well as NATO, the EU, and the United Nations, in 2021 to coordinate these efforts. The success of soft power relies on whether the Taliban continues to act as an extreme organization or moves toward managing Afghanistan as a member of the international community in some way. The signs are ambiguous at this stage, according to O'Hanlon, 2019, senior scholar at the Brookings Institution. Despite their claims to form an inclusive administration, members of the all-male provisional cabinet are Taliban old guard who may be more concerned with protecting the group's internal cohesiveness than with appeasing the West. In addition, the Taliban has been generally helpful with the US-led evacuation of 124,000 Afghans (Widakuswara, 2021).

"When our nation was seized, we were rivals.» a Taliban spokesperson to VOA. He went on to say that the Taliban had "turned a new page" with its erstwhile combat adversary and it depends on the United States whether they would contribute to Afghanistan's reconstruction. So far, the Taliban has determined that it is in their best interests to assist Washington, according to O'Hanlon. "Even though they won the last conflict, they really don't want to engage in a military fight with the United States." (Widakuswara, 2021).

3.2.3 Over-The-Horizon Capability

The administration's top aim is to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a breeding ground for terrorists planning strikes on the United States. However, US intelligence can no longer carefully monitor extremist organizations such as al-Qaida and the Islamic State-Khorasan province. «There's no doubt that when you go out, without soldiers on the ground, without the infrastructure we had, without the Afghan government in the position that it was, our information collection is decreased," National Intelligence Director Avril Haines told delegates at a national security summit. The regime is now depending on its "over-the-horizon" capability, which allows it to detect and remove terrorist threats via aerial surveillance and drones fired from outside the nation. The similar strategy has been used in countries across the world where the US does not have military soldiers on the ground, according to Blinken. However, the US has at least some intelligence and logistical assistance in such countries, either through a military installation or a close partner country (Widakuswara, 2021).

"We are close to Somalia in Kenya. We are close in Iraq or Turkey in Syria. We have access to water all the way around Yemen and, if necessary, facilities on the Arabian Peninsula" O'Hanlon explained. "However, in Afghanistan, the landlocked Hindu Kush, there are no simple, nearby waterways. And there are no countries who are really interested in assisting us in monitoring the Taliban." There are no American bases in any of Afghanistan's six neighboring nations. The nearest base, in the United Arab Emirates, is about 1,600 kilometers distant and was utilized to launch drone attacks against IS-Khorasan during the chaotic last days of evacuations before the August 31 retreat (Widakuswara, 2021).

According to James Jeffrey, former special envoy to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and current leader of the Wilson Center's Middle East Program, engaging with Pakistan is the best choice for Washington. "We've had disagreements with Pakistan because of their backing for the Taliban," Jeffrey explained. "However, given that the Taliban is no longer an enemy, I see no reason why we can't force the Pakistanis to enable us to strike ISIS and al-Qaida from

their land as part of our larger strategy." It remains to be seen how much help Washington can wring from Islamabad. "There will be no bases, no operations from Pakistani territory into Afghanistan," Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan stated in June 2021. US Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns travelled to Pakistan and India to discuss security concerns raised by the Taliban's control of Afghanistan with peers (Widakuswara, 2021).

The government stated that it would send about \$64 million in fresh humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, bringing the total amount of aid to the Afghan people this fiscal year to \$330 million. Blinken stated that the help will be channeled via nongovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies rather than the Taliban regime. "That would work for \$64 million in aid because you can air-drop goods and the Taliban has no air presence," O'Toole explained. Larger assistance packages, however, will be difficult to deploy without the approval of those in authority. "You're talking about having real supply convoys and land routes," O'Toole added. "It may be hard to avoid the Taliban." (Widakuswara, 2021).

3.2.4. Moving On From Afghanistan

While Afghanistan has been the administration's first big foreign policy problem, the focus will remain on Biden's domestic concerns, according to Aaron David Miller, senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "Within that framework, Afghanistan is a subject that they would prefer to put behind them," Miller explained. According to polls, Americans are more concerned about topics like as the pandemic and the recent Biden vaccination requirement, the struggle to repair the nation's infrastructure, and the forthcoming debt limit debate (Widakuswara, 2021). "There are simply so many concerns out there that I wouldn't be shocked if Afghanistan faded to some extent," said Karlyn Bowman, a distinguished senior scholar at the American Enterprise Institute who studies public opinion in the United States. "However, as we approach the 2022 elections, Republicans will undoubtedly remind Americans of what occurred in Afghanistan," Bowman warned. According to a

(NPR/PBS and NewsHour/Marist national Poll, 2021), Biden's popularity rating has slipped to a new low of 43 percent, with Americans disapproving of his handling of foreign affairs 56 percent and the US departure from Afghanistan (61 percent). Nonetheless, according to recent (Pew Research Center and ABC News/Washington Post surveys, 2021), a majority of Americans favor the choice to leave.

Conclusion

US created a disaster in Afghanistan, once the bombing began in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks, and in the lead-up to it, it was no longer just about looking for bin Laden. It was about the Taliban state. There were actually offers to turn over bin Laden by the Taliban, and the United States refused. They wanted surrender directly to the United States. Shortly after the bombing campaign started, the Taliban fell fairly quickly. And by April of 2002, it was very apparent to the Americans that they couldn't just sweep in, overthrow a regime and walk away. They needed to build a new government, this nation-building program that really prioritized counterterrorism, eventually led to the killing of Osama Bin Laden and Obama declared his death in his speech 2011.

At the same time, billions of dollars in reconstruction funds were flooding into a country that lacked the necessary infrastructure. This includes the construction of health centers, schools, bridges, and roadways. Furthermore, such rebuilding funding, when combined with America's counterterrorism ambitions, was a lethal combination. In exchange for enabling them to establish a school on this site, you would grant us the contract for the health clinic next door.

The majority of media coverage from Afghanistan that Americans may hear comes from metropolitan areas, mainly Kabul; yet, in the remote countryside, support for the Taliban has grown as a result of this tremendous campaign of airstrikes and bombs. Many of which have resulted in heavy civilian casualties. The Taliban were vanquished. And yet, the American presence in Afghanistan brought them back from the dead, and US information was either

grossly misrepresented or terribly defective.

Notably, the president refused to talk with the Taliban, and when the Biden administration stated that they would continue Trump's withdrawal strategy, many Afghanistan watchers expected the Taliban to gain territory. The United States, which has been providing air power to Afghan forces, is no longer going to be something on which Afghan forces can count. The Taliban stormed across additional rural regions, with an increase in violence in May 2021. Nobody anticipated it to take traction as rapidly as it did. It was a failure on the part of the United States government.

Despite the fact that the Taliban returned in increased numbers and troops on the ground expressed worries about the American strategy's developing flaws, senior American officials virtually always claimed that progress was being achieved.

General Conclusion

The United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan during the administrations of Presidents Obama, Trump, and Biden marked a significant turning point in the country's history. The decision to withdraw was driven by various factors, including the rampant corruption within the Afghan government as well as the US, the evolving security situation, and the desire to shift focus and resources towards other pressing domestic and international concerns. However, the aftermath of the withdrawal has been marred by uncertainty, violence, and the resurgence of extremist groups, leading to a complex and challenging situation for Afghanistan and the broader region. During President Obama's tenure, the United States began shifting its approach towards Afghanistan, recognizing the need for an eventual withdrawal and a transition of power to the Afghan government. However, the issue of corruption within the Afghan government proved to be a major hurdle in achieving stability. Despite extensive financial and military support from the U.S., corruption persisted at various levels, undermining governance, eroding public trust, and hindering efforts to build a capable and accountable Afghan security force. This corruption weakened the legitimacy of the Afghan government, making it difficult to establish a strong foundation for stability and sustainable progress. President Trump's administration continued the process of withdrawal, driven by a desire to end what was perceived as an endless and costly war. Trump emphasized the need for the Afghan government to take greater responsibility for its own security and the need to prioritize American interests. However, the abrupt nature of his approach and the lack of a comprehensive plan for post-withdrawal created significant challenges. The sudden removal of U.S. troops and the subsequent power vacuum allowed extremist groups, particularly the Taliban, to regain strength and influence. This highlighted the fragility of the Afghan government and exposed the vulnerabilities that had not been adequately addressed during the

previous years of U.S. involvement. President Biden faced the difficult task of completing the withdrawal process initiated by his predecessors. He emphasized the need to end America's longest war and redirect resources towards other pressing issues, such as domestic priorities and emerging global challenges. However, the withdrawal under Biden's administration was marred by controversy and criticism. The rapid collapse of the Afghan security forces, despite years of training and support, exposed the deep-rooted weaknesses within the Afghan government and military. The Taliban's rapid territorial gains, coupled with the humanitarian crisis and the evacuation chaos at Kabul airport, raised questions about the planning and execution of the withdrawal. The aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan has been marked by an escalation in violence, human rights abuses, and the resurgence of extremist groups. The Taliban's return to power has raised concerns about the potential erosion of human rights, particularly for women and marginalized communities. Moreover, the withdrawal has created a vacuum that allowed other extremist groups, such as ISIS-Khorasan, to exploit the instability and establish a foothold. The security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated rapidly, leading to a humanitarian crisis with thousands of Afghans fleeing the country. A range of factors, including corruption within the Afghan and US government, evolving security dynamics, and domestic considerations, influenced the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan during the Obama, Trump, and Biden's administrations. However, the aftermath of the withdrawal has been characterized by instability, violence, and the resurgence of extremist groups. The lack of a comprehensive and coordinated approach to address corruption and build a capable Afghan government and security force, combined with the rapid withdrawal, has contributed to the challenges faced by Afghanistan today. It is imperative for the international community to continue supporting Afghanistan in its efforts to establish stability, promote inclusive governance, and address the underlying causes of the conflict to ensure a more secure and prosperous future for the Afghan people.

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