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Security Challenges in the South Asia Region Post the Transition of the Afghan Regime in 2021-2022

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Abstract

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The current situation in Afghanistan involves internal conflict with the Taliban group, who have managed to gain control of the country. Therefore, the author formulates the problem: What is the Influence of the power transition in Afghanistan to the Taliban on the security of the South Asia region in 2020-2021? The objective of this study is to gain insight into and examine the power transition in Afghanistan, which was previously overseen by President Ashraf Ghani and is now under the authority of the Taliban. The study utilises two theories: The Power Transition theory and the Regional Security theory. According to the findings of this study, it is evident that the government under Ashraf Ghani's leadership exhibited significant weaknesses. Consequently, following the departure of US and NATO forces, Afghanistan faced a void in governance that the Taliban capitalised on, resulting in their control over multiple regions, including the capital city of Kabul.

Introduction

Afghanistan was historically a nation where most of the population practiced the Islamic faith and upheld the moral principles taught by Islam. Over time, Afghanistan came under the leadership of a president who displayed communist tendencies, influenced by the spread of Soviet ideology during the Cold War. Communist teachings were effectively spread by embedding these values within educational institutions, including schools and universities across the nation. This went against the country's ideology, rooted in Islamic teachings. Over time, the Taliban emerged with the aim of enforcing laws based on Islamic Sharia in the country, employing a notably stringent approach. Afghanistan achieved independence on August 19, 1919, and received recognition from numerous nations ([Bahmanyar, 2012](#)). Afghanistan is home to various significant ethnic groups, such as Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, Turkmen, and others. In Afghanistan, the official languages are Pashto and Dari.

Under President Burhanuddin's leadership, the nation grappled with a range of internal challenges, such as social unrest and a rise in street crime orchestrated by organised criminal syndicates. Many individuals who are attuned to matters of faith were deeply troubled and saddened by this particular situation. Muhammad Omar led a movement to end crime because of his intense concern for the situation in Afghanistan. He urged the students of madrasahs across the country to come together and work towards eradicating crime. Islam and Jihad hold significant importance in the lives of most Afghans, who see them as essential for protecting their beliefs and honour. Challenging social and political circumstances faced by the population, particularly following the mujahideen's victory over the Soviet Union, motivated Muhammad Omar to spearhead a fresh movement originating from the madrasah. In September 1994, Muhammad Omar, along with 50 students, established a movement called the Taliban.

The movement was comprised of religious students hailing from the Pashtun regions of eastern and southern Afghanistan. These students had received education in traditional Islamic madrasahs located in Pakistan (Roy, 2001). The origins of the Taliban can be traced back to madrasahs in Afghanistan, specifically in Kandahar Province. This suggests that the movement initially emerged in the southern region (Al-Ghiffari, 2013). Amidst the conflict with the Soviet Union, Afghan refugees found themselves dispersed along the southern and eastern borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Maulana Fazlur Rahman's Jamaat Umat Islam, a Pakistani Islamic party, oversaw the emergence of new madrasahs in the area (Noor, 2003). When implementing their political agenda, the Taliban had the challenge of overthrowing two prominent factions in Afghanistan: President Rabbani and Hikmatyar, along with their respective supporters.

During the battle, the Taliban emerged victorious, inflicting substantial casualties on Hikmatyar and his supporters. This included the destruction of approximately 20 combat tanks (Hassan, 2023). The Taliban's recent triumph has prompted them to intensify their efforts to capture Kabul, which is widely regarded as the most crucial political stronghold in Afghanistan. In late September 1996, an incident took place in Kabul. The city's forces prepared themselves to defend against the impending Taliban assault, only to discover that the Taliban had already encircled them from two different directions. Following the successful capture of Kabul by the Taliban, the three occupying forces (Rabbani, Hikmatyar, and Massoud) were compelled to withdraw to the northern region, specifically Jabal al-Saraj, located north of the city of Bagram.

Despite challenges, Massoud managed to retain control over three provinces in northern Afghanistan: Badakhshan, Kunduz, and Takhar. Simultaneously, Mullah Omar issued a special decree from the Taliban Headquarters in Kandahar, directing the establishment of a temporary government consisting of six members. The establishment of this new government signalled the downfall of Rabbani's regime due to a coup and the commencement of a Taliban-led administration. The Taliban's ideology was a synthesis of Pashtunwali, Deobandi, and Sharia principles. The Deobandi movement in Sunni Islam originated in response to British colonialism in India. It began with the establishment of the Darul Uloom Deoband Islamic madrasah in 1866 in Northern India. Meanwhile, Pashtunwali serves as the traditional system of the Pashtun ethnic group, which the Taliban uses to address various social issues.

Through the application of these two principles, the Taliban garnered substantial backing from the Pashtun ethnic group across the country, with the aim of reinstating the ethnic group's national prominence. During the Taliban regime, women in Afghanistan were disproportionately impacted. During that period, women were perceived to be in an earlier stage of societal development, where their roles were restricted to serving men. However, the mistreatment of women in Afghanistan extended beyond the Taliban era. In her work titled "Afghan Women: The State of Legal Right and Security," Ahmad (2006) highlights the marginalisation of women in Afghanistan. This marginalisation was not limited to the Taliban regime but also extended to the Mujahideen regime and the Soviet conflict. Instances of rape forced marriage, and slavery.

Literature Review

Under the leadership of Ashraf Ghani, Afghanistan conducted its inaugural general election in 2004 after the war, resulting in Hamid Karzai securing a majority of 55% of the votes. In the 2009 election, he emerged victorious after his opponent, Abdullah Abdullah, declined to partake in the second-round election. Hamid's ineligibility for the 2014 election was a result of constitutional limitations on the presidential term. Consequently, Ashraf Ghani ran and emerged as the victor. He was elected for a second term in 2020 after a significant delay in announcing the election results. Ashraf lived a life of global recognition. Hailing from Logar province, he ventured to the United States in the 1960s to pursue his studies, ultimately obtaining a bachelor's degree from the esteemed American University in Beirut.

In 1983, he earned a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from Columbia University. Prior to his tenure at the World Bank, he held a position as a professor at Johns Hopkins University. He gained recognition for his extensive public lectures on the reconstruction of nations in post-conflict scenarios, such as Afghanistan. He initially served as a Senior Adviser to Hamid Karzai, later transitioning to the position of Finance Minister. He was renowned for his progressive perspective. Throughout his term, former President Ashraf Ghani pursued a distinct foreign policy approach compared to previous administrations. In the past, Afghanistan's foreign policy had primarily focused on neutrality. Following its independence in 1919, Afghan leaders have consistently adhered to a familiar trajectory, with only a brief interruption during the Soviet occupation in 1979. This trend has persisted even in the post-Taliban era. Former President Hamid Karzai, for example, maintained a consistent foreign policy orientation by adopting a balanced approach towards major countries and regional powers, despite facing external pressures.

During Ghani's presidency, Afghanistan's foreign policy underwent a significant shift away from neutrality towards a non-neutral direction. Ghani's recent shift in focus is evident through the strengthening of relations with Western countries, the gradual distancing from Iran and India, the expansion of ties with China, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, and even the endorsement of the Saudi-led alliance in Yemen. These changes can be viewed as surprising foreign policy decisions, as they go against the principles of neutrality and the long-standing balanced approach to foreign policy. Given the regional conditions, it may be seen as unrealistic. Moreover, these decisions can be viewed as a disregard for Ghani's economic preferences, as they undermine Afghanistan's crucial economic advantages. Throughout his term as Finance Minister, Ghani implemented a series of impactful reforms. These included the introduction of new currency, the computerization of the finance department, the adoption of a balanced budget, the centralization of revenue collection, the reform of tariffs, and the overhaul of customs duties.

Regular reporting to stakeholders was emphasised to promote accountability and transparency. He established the National Solidarity Programme, a crucial development initiative that extended citizens' rights to almost 13,000 villages across the country. During his presidency, he enacted legislation mandating the inclusion of the mother's name on a child's identity card, demonstrating his commitment to women's rights. He prioritised boosting trade with Central Asian countries, highlighting the significance of the Chabahar port in Iran for strengthening trade with India. This move aimed to strategically reduce reliance on Pakistan and align with US South Asian policy. In addition, he approved the Lapis Lazuli transport corridor, which aims to link Afghanistan with the Caucasus and the Black Sea. Significant initiatives also encompassed the CASA-1000 hydropower transmission and the TAPI gas pipeline. He selected numerous young and progressive individuals for governmental roles to depart from conventional patronage practices. One of his shortcomings was perceived as a deficiency in making prompt decisions and implementing promised reforms at a slow pace. His lack of involvement in the talks between the Trump administration and the Taliban renders his position inconsequential and somewhat ineffectual for meaningful negotiations with the Taliban.

Likewise, he faced allegations of depending heavily on his inner circle and alienating those outside of it. It has been reported that he advocated for the promotion of Pashtun ethnicity to replace capable leaders with individuals who prioritise loyalty and ethnic background. He was known for his volatile nature and frequently caused public embarrassment for officials. Under President Ashraf Ghani's leadership in Afghanistan, the country has forged diplomatic ties with multiple nations, both within and outside the South Asian region. The purpose of these bilateral relations was to bolster Afghanistan's global standing and to garner support from other nations in addressing the ongoing conflict with the Taliban. Afghanistan and Sri Lanka have a long history of interconnected civilizational ties, influenced by major belief systems including Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism. The belief systems had a significant influence on the Gandhara region, encompassing present-day Afghanistan. Buddhism expanded its reach to South Asia, Central Asia, and East Asia. Afghanistan and Sri Lanka established non-resident diplomatic relations on November 1, 1958, during the modern era.

The diplomatic missions in New Delhi focused primarily on bilateral affairs—a commitment that persisted even after the Taliban's downfall in 2001. Following fruitful high-level discussions between former President Hamid Karzai and former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who led Sri Lanka as Prime Minister from 2011 to 2012, Afghanistan sought to strengthen its diplomatic ties with Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka reciprocated by opening an embassy in Colombo in 2013, and Afghanistan did the same in 2014. The growing ties between Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, two democratic nations in South Asia, have received significant backing from the leadership of both governments. Further discussions between Afghanistan and Sri Lanka highlighted the mutual dedication of both countries to maintaining bilateral relations, which was positively received by the respective governments. As countries in the South Asian region focus on safeguarding

their domestic security, the Afghan government aims to resolve conflicts peacefully by engaging in negotiations. This includes addressing the demands of Afghan society, such as the desire for a Taliban-led negotiation process to bring an end to violence in Afghanistan, ultimately leading to a widespread ceasefire.

Another important concern arises they are seeking the government's release of over 5,000 Taliban prisoners as a peace gesture to bring an end to the conflict. In addition to working together to combat terrorism, they also appreciate Sri Lanka's assistance in addressing transnational security threats associated with the illicit drug trade. This includes efforts to tackle drug-related issues such as cultivation, production, and sales in Sri Lanka and neighbouring countries in South Asia. Ghani departed Afghanistan on August 15, following the publication of a comprehensive statement on his Facebook page. Amid the Taliban's advance towards Kabul, he departed the capital following the Biden administration's decision to withdraw military forces from the country. It is disheartening to observe that Afghanistan, despite having a significant number of individuals trained by the US military and provided with weapons and vehicles, experienced a rapid collapse without engaging in combat. The lack of motivation among Afghanistan's security forces raises concerns about the effectiveness of the country's leadership. As per reports, he made his escape from the presidential palace by helicopter.

According to reports, he allegedly used funds provided by the US government to operate the country and ended up becoming entangled in corruption while attempting to combat it. During his time in office, he stated that he departed the nation to "prevent bloodshed." Nevertheless, numerous individuals within his administration branded him as a betrayer. At first, there was a lot of uncertainty surrounding the president's intentions, with some people speculating that he might have initially travelled to Uzbekistan or Tajikistan. According to a recent report, he and his family visited Termez in Uzbekistan and spent some time there before continuing their journey to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The UAE has officially announced that they have granted asylum to Ashraf due to humanitarian reasons. Former President Karzai is currently working towards establishing an inclusive government, while one of Ghani's advisors is engaged in negotiations regarding the success of the Taliban in Afghanistan. On February 29, 2020, a significant agreement was reached between the United States and the Taliban in Doha, Qatar, marking a moment of triumph for the Taliban.

The Taliban and the Trump administration started talking in 2018, which led to the agreement. Several countries, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, facilitated communication and negotiation between the United States and the Taliban. The key points agreed upon were as follows: Firstly, the Taliban committed to preventing Afghanistan from becoming a haven for groups opposed to the United States and its allies. Secondly, the gradual withdrawal of U.S. and allied troops from Afghanistan over a period of 14 months was agreed upon. Furthermore, the United States

agreed to release 5,000 Taliban prisoners and 10,000 other prisoners by March 2020. Additionally, there would be subsequent negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government concerning the future of Afghanistan. Also, a lasting ceasefire would be implemented between the Taliban and the U.S. government. The agreement highlighted that the successful execution of the initial two points marked a favourable progression towards implementing the remaining two. The hypothesis arising from the agreement focused on addressing Afghanistan's challenges, particularly with regards to the Taliban, a prominent faction in the nation. The United States also recognised the importance of not underestimating the Taliban, considering their significant power ([SIGAR, 2021](#)).

The Taliban, upon assuming control, permitted certain Afghan citizens to depart the nation, albeit with a specified deadline of August 31, 2021. In addition, the Taliban began engaging with the mass media and the press to convey their plans. According to General Sir Nick Carter, Britain's Chief of Defence, the Taliban appears to be taking a more open approach, which is in line with his predictions ([Maizland, 2023](#)). The Governance of Afghanistan During the Taliban Regime Following their takeover, the Taliban gained control over television and radio broadcasts. They utilised these platforms to announce their triumph and communicate important details regarding the transfer of power in the nation, along with outlining their future. This action was undertaken as part of their strategic effort to demonstrate a notable shift in their conduct during this timeframe. Additionally, they aimed to demonstrate their dedication to collaborating with the global community as well as neighbouring nations to foster economic well-being for all Afghan citizens. On September 1, 2021, the Taliban marked their triumph by declaring Afghanistan's liberation from foreign forces and external interference. Following the Taliban's assumption of power in Afghanistan in August 2021, a significant shift occurred in the country's domestic political landscape.

During the period from 1996 to 2001, the Taliban effectively controlled Afghan politics. Throughout their reign, the Taliban did not receive official recognition from numerous countries across the globe. The Taliban strategically established a power network in the region, which proved advantageous when they re-entered national politics in Afghanistan in 2021 after the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Focusing on implementing an Islamic Sharia-based political system was a defining characteristic of the Taliban's takeover ([SIGAR, 2021](#)). Thus far, the Taliban has pledged to establish a government that is inclusive and open to various societal groups in Afghanistan. Based on their previous actions and statements, it appears that they may take a more practical approach, although it may be limited in scope. Nevertheless, it is difficult to anticipate the extent to which the Taliban's commitments will genuinely encompass all parties involved. Afghanistan has never witnessed a period of significant economic growth amidst the prolonged war. It is evident that Afghanistan's income is significantly lower than that of other developing nations. If the Taliban effectively manages the economy and meets the basic needs of the Afghan

people, it will increase their chances of gaining the attention of the Afghan population in the future. When examining the global economy, Afghanistan has placed significant emphasis on international aid programmes.

Following the Taliban's rise to power in Afghanistan, certain international funding was suspended, suggesting a change in global economic cooperation policies within the country (Thomas, 2021). Following the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan, there is a palpable sense of apprehension among the populace regarding the potential deterioration of national stability, reminiscent of the previous Taliban regime. The country's stability and peace have been greatly affected, even though the U.S. occupation was not characterised by peace. The United States strongly denounced the Taliban, branding them as terrorists (Thomas, 2021). Following the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan, their attention turned to addressing Human Rights concerns within society. Under the previous Taliban regime, human rights were largely ignored. This was evident in the exclusion of women from the government cabinet, despite the importance of considering women for positions in the government. Women should have equal rights and opportunities in public life, including the right to participate in government and express their opinions (Leclerc & Shreeves, 2023).

One could argue that there was a shortcoming during the Taliban's prior governance. Upon their return, this matter quickly became a significant and contentious concern. The Taliban had made enticing pledges to women regarding their inclusion in the government and the protection of their rights. Once again, it appears that the Taliban is not giving due consideration to these promises, rendering them empty rhetoric. The Governance of Afghanistan During the Taliban Regime According to U.S. Intelligence, the recent takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban came as a surprise. In 2020, the United States under the Trump administration, held multiple negotiations with the Taliban to establish political and security conditions favourable to a U.S.-supported regime in Afghanistan (Nainggolan, 2021). However, the decision to engage in negotiations with the Taliban had unfavourable consequences, as the Taliban capitalised on the opportunity to reestablish their authority in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of U.S. forces in August 2021. The abrupt withdrawal of troops without prior notice and coordination with the Ashraf Ghani government had a significant impact on the political and security stability of Afghanistan. The government established by the United States in Afghanistan was found to be susceptible to and heavily reliant on financial, technical, and military assistance from the United States.

After the withdrawal of this aid, the stability of the Afghan government started to decline. Ashraf Ghani's choice to depart his homeland for the United Arab Emirates followed the Taliban's seizure of Kabul and the Presidential Palace of Afghanistan (Guzzini, 2018). Afghanistan, as a sovereign state, must address the issue of whether the international community officially recognises the current Taliban regime. It is essential to address this issue because other countries' recognition and support have

had a significant impact on Afghanistan's economic development and growth. This impact becomes even more significant following the departure of the United States and the subsequent power transition, which has resulted in a state of chaos. When analysing the Taliban regime, it is crucial to consider two key aspects to pursue national interests. They should aim to establish a more favourable reputation than in the 1990s, a decade marked by its association with violence and fear. The objective of this step is to establish a favourable political and security environment domestically and garner international support for development.

Furthermore, it is crucial for the Taliban to understand that they cannot have complete control over all aspects of Afghanistan. Hence, it is crucial for the entire Afghan society to actively engage in the political system and governance. This will contribute to the stability of conditions in South Asia. Conflicts, both internal and interstate, are prevalent in the South Asian region. According to Joseph Lngold, a renowned expert, this region exhibits limited regionalization processes and a heightened susceptibility to conflict when compared to other areas in Asia. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is often criticised for its slow progress in fostering regional cooperation and promoting regionalism in South Asia (Mohan, C. Raja). Doctrines play a vital role in shaping a country's decision to employ force to uphold its policies. Nuclear development in the South Asian region has been driven by the instability caused by numerous conflicts and wars. The countries in this region, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, possess distinct international relations patterns shaped by historical conflicts, such as the ongoing India-Pakistan conflict and the Sri Lanka conflict. India, being the largest country in the region and displaying hegemonic tendencies, gives rise to concerns among its neighbouring nations. This also has an impact on the diplomatic positions of major countries outside the region, including Russia, China, and the United States. These countries play a role in shaping diplomacy in South Asia to protect their own interests.

Historical events like the struggle for independence and the subsequent partition of India and Pakistan, which had a significant impact on the prevalence of conflict, have shaped the stability of this region. The instability in South Asia is a result of both internal factors and the interventions and interests of major countries outside the region. This has contributed to the ongoing complexity of conflicts. The rivalry between India and Pakistan in South Asia has escalated to the point of nuclear deterrence, contributing to heightened complexity and security concerns in the region. Every nation in this region encounters challenges that pose a threat to security and stability, leading to multiple conflicts. India has been involved in several significant conflicts, such as political disputes in Bangladesh, the ongoing Kashmir conflict, water management disagreements with Bangladesh, terrorism threats, the India-Sri Lanka conflict, and tensions with Nepal. It is worth mentioning that conflicts in this region often revolve around India. The conflicts in question are a clear reflection of India's desire for dominance, which is further bolstered by its

superior military capabilities in the region, as noted by W. Lawrence Prabhakar in 2002. India's participation in different conflicts has a significant impact on regional dynamics and presents substantial security challenges in South Asia. The Taliban and Al-Qaeda are believed to have bases in South Asia, making them significant terrorist organisations. There is a belief that the Taliban has a presence in Pakistan, while Al-Qaeda is primarily located in Afghanistan. This perspective has gained acceptance from India, Pakistan, and the international community at large. Both factions employ aggressive methods to assert their political influence. A group known as the Taliban emerged in the early 1990s in Northern Pakistan following the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan. They have recently taken control of multiple villages in Pakistan and have enforced Sharia law. The group's members primarily consist of ethnic Pashtuns, and it has emerged as a prominent entity in Afghanistan since 1994. Their stated objectives include establishing peace and security in the Pashtun region along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border while also enforcing Islamic Sharia law (Thomas, 2021).

In 1988, Osama Bin Laden established Al-Qaeda while the Afghan mujahideen were engaged in conflict with the Soviet Union. The objective of Al-Qaeda is to establish a comprehensive Islamic caliphate that encompasses all nations adhering to the Islamic faith. Al-Qaeda established multiple training centres to challenge the influence of Western nations, particularly the United States. The primary training centre of Al-Qaeda was initially located in Afghanistan, but it subsequently expanded its operations to encompass diverse regions, including Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Caucasus. During the 1990s, numerous Muslim youths were trained in Taliban and Al-Qaeda training camps to participate in conflicts across the globe (Sahrasad et al., 2019). An example of training for warfare includes locations such as the Philippines (Mindanao), Indonesia (Maluku and Poso), Myanmar, China (Xinjiang), Kashmir, Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, Dagestan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen. The region of South Asia Following the Taliban's assumption of power in Afghanistan the international community has expressed concerns and mistrust following the fall of the legitimate government of Afghanistan and the swift transfer of power to the Taliban.

Many experts had anticipated that the process would take longer than it did, with the Taliban quickly seizing control of important cities, including the capital Kabul, in less than a month. This rapid takeover came as a significant surprise. The swift transition of power in Afghanistan prompts inquiries into the stability and resilience of the former government. The sudden departure of President Ashraf Ghani, who fled the country prior to the Taliban's arrival in Kabul, has heightened global apprehensions regarding the security and humanitarian conditions in Afghanistan. The Taliban's history of human rights enforcement during their previous rule has raised concerns regarding the protection of Afghan people's rights under their current rule. The Afghan population is concerned about the potential reoccurrence of human rights violations and restrictions on

freedoms, given their past experiences with the Taliban government. The global response to these events is characterised by scepticism regarding the legitimacy of the Taliban government and apprehension regarding the well-being of the Afghan population. The rapid power shift in Afghanistan and the global response it has generated highlight the intricate nature of the situation and the substantial challenges faced by governments and the international community in addressing this swift change of power.

The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh's statement demonstrates a prudent and astute perspective on the transition of power in Afghanistan and the formation of the new Taliban-led government. The statement highlights the importance of exercising caution and prudence when commenting on or recognising the Taliban government. It also emphasises that Bangladesh's decisions will be informed by the evolving situation. The government of Bangladesh highlights the importance of a democratic nature and popular support when considering cooperation with the new government, while also expressing vigilance and caution. This position demonstrates Bangladesh's dedication to democratic principles and the involvement of the public in shaping the government. Many countries tend to adopt a cautious approach and a policy of careful assessment before offering support or recognition during regime changes or significant shifts in power. These countries can assess the political, security, and humanitarian implications of these changes before proceeding with tangible actions in collaboration with the new government. The Sri Lankan government's approach to the situation in Afghanistan is characterised by caution and deep concern.

Authorities are closely monitoring the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan and expressing significant concerns regarding the potential consequences. These concerns include the risk of the country becoming a haven for extremists, the possibility of a migration crisis, and an increase in drug trafficking in the surrounding region. The Sri Lankan government expresses optimism that the Taliban will honour amnesty and their commitments, underscoring the significance of upholding human rights, including women's rights. Meanwhile, the official statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal emphasises the importance of achieving peace in Afghanistan for the benefit of the country. Nepal maintains a stance of neutrality on the issue, emphasising the need for decisions to be based on evolving circumstances. They underscore that their future responses will be contingent upon the global reaction to the situation in Afghanistan. In South Asia, countries like Sri Lanka and Nepal are taking a cautious approach to the power dynamics in Afghanistan, adopting a strategy of observation and assessment. This approach demonstrates a meticulous and thoughtful response to a multifaceted situation. Anticipated reactions from these nations will likely be shaped by changing internal security, political dynamics, and external factors. When addressing the ongoing changes in Afghanistan, it is crucial to consider domestic security, domestic politics, and external factors. These factors play a significant role in formulating effective responses.

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach, with a focus on societal events and the social aspects of human life. Qualitative research entails gathering data in a real-world setting through scientific methods carried out by researchers who have a genuine interest in the subject (Siyoto, 2015). This approach highlights the importance of thoroughly comprehending a problem and employing advanced analytical techniques (Hardani et al, 2020). The analysis considers different case studies, acknowledging that the problem's characteristics can differ between cases. Qualitative research investigates participant perspectives using interactive and adaptable strategies, with the goal of comprehending social phenomena from the participants' viewpoint (Creswell, 2014). The primary objective of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the inherent characteristics of the subject matter, with the researcher assuming a central role in data collection and analysis. In numerous qualitative studies, researchers gather diverse data forms to investigate research issues and acquire comprehensive information (Kothari, 2004). Thus, this paper will present a conceptual framework to develop these ideas, as follows:

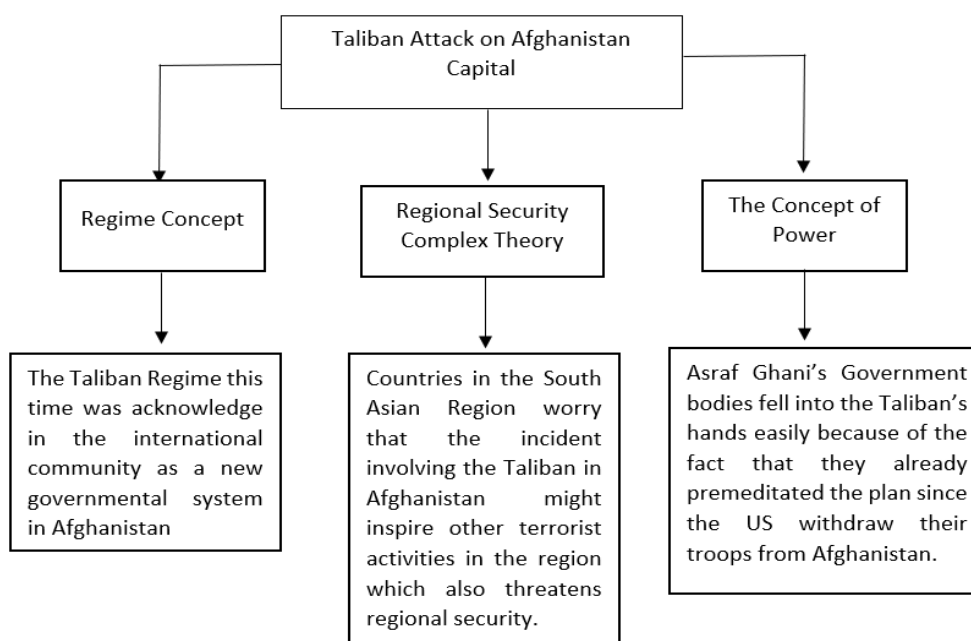


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.

Result and Analysis

Barry Buzan's theory of Regional Security focuses on the key factors that shape the concept of security, specifically within the realm of regional security. Buzan emphasises the importance of understanding security as a relational phenomenon, where the security of an entity is intricately connected to other elements. It is crucial to have a grasp of international relations patterns to fully comprehend the security aspects of a country, as these two factors are deeply interconnected. According to Buzan's work "People, State and Fear," the security of a country is frequently jeopardised by its geographical proximity to potential threats. Therefore, it is crucial to

prioritise cooperation with neighbouring countries to mitigate potential conflicts. Buzan identifies two primary patterns in the study of security cooperation: Amity and Enmity. Amity entails cooperation founded on friendship and mutual support among partner countries, whereas enmity involves cooperation rooted in fear and suspicion of those partners.

Various factors contribute to the emergence of relationship patterns between countries, such as border conflicts, interests, ideologies, ethnic lines, and historical ties. The theory of security complexes emerges from the concept of security cooperation and the various factors of interest that exist between countries. This theory posits that a cluster of nations faces significant security challenges that are deeply intertwined, rendering their individual national security inseparable. The security of one country in the group has a direct impact on the security of other countries in the group, making it impossible to separate them. Cooperation between countries in the South Asian region is frequently shaped by two primary patterns: Amity and Enmity, as elucidated by Barry Buzan. Collaboration built on friendship, trust, and mutual support among partner nations forms the foundation of Amity-based cooperation.

Following the recent power transition in Afghanistan, which is now under Taliban control, it seems that the relationship between these countries has shifted towards hostility. In this context, cooperation based on enmity is established through a sense of suspicion and caution towards partners in collaboration. The recent power shift in Afghanistan, specifically with the resurgence of the Taliban, has the potential to generate uncertainty and caution among partner nations when it comes to establishing collaborative efforts. Neighbouring countries may have reasons to be cautious and sceptical of the Taliban due to their track record of involvement in conflicts and the implementation of controversial rules. Given the evolving security and political landscape in the region, partner countries may need to reevaluate the trust and security aspects of their collaboration with Afghanistan. Suspicion and caution are significant factors that can greatly influence the dynamics of regional cooperation following the power transition in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

This analysis provides a comprehensive portrayal of the complex power transition in Afghanistan and its wide-ranging consequences, not only within the country but also throughout the South Asian region. The swift change in power dynamics and the consequences of foreign troop withdrawal, specifically by United States forces, have brought about significant uncertainty in regional security and political balance. The recent swift power transition and the departure of President Ashraf Ghani highlight the vulnerabilities of the previous government, which seemed to heavily depend on support and assistance from the United States for its strength and stability. The 2020 agreement between the United States and the Taliban has led to a security void, allowing the Taliban to regain authority due to the phased withdrawal of troops. South Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal are currently dealing with the regional implications of these changes.

Issues include the possible rise of sanctuaries for extremists, migration crises, and an increase in drug trafficking. Several countries in the region, such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, are taking a cautious and neutral approach, choosing to wait and observe the unfolding events. The importance of establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan cannot be overstated, as it has the potential to greatly impact the entire region. As an example, Nepal strongly emphasises its neutral stance while advocating for the achievement of peace in Afghanistan. The neutral position reflects the complex dynamics and interdependence that exist in South Asia. Having a deep understanding of regional dynamics and how neighbouring countries are responding to Afghanistan is crucial for developing effective strategies to tackle the changing political and security situation. Considering the ever-changing circumstances, it is crucial to remain vigilant and adaptable to regional policies to effectively navigate any potential consequences (Farrell & Giustozzi, 2013; Hasyim & Massi, 2022; Rashid, 2000; Ruttig, 2012).

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