

WHAT IS THE RIDDLE OF AFGHANISTAN'S FOUR-DECADE WAR?

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Abstract: The United States is not the only country that has fought for Afghanistan, the Mongol Empire, Alexander, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union is the countries that invaded Afghanistan before the United States. Alexander said once “Easy to march into Afghanistan but getting back is very difficult”. In terms of geopolitics, Afghanistan has been a territory of significance ever since the 19th century, there was fierce competition between the British and the Russians, and the center of their confrontation was Afghanistan, and this conflict of interests between the two empires was called the Great Game.

At the end of the twentieth century, Afghanistan was in the throes of rivalry between the great powers of the time, such as the Soviet Union and the United States, which later turned into a full-blown guerrilla war and the Cold War. Finally, in this century, the United States launched this war under the guise of fighting terrorism and overthrowing the Taliban in 2001, which is still ongoing. The clutches of the last three empires to invade Afghanistan show that Afghanistan has always been in the spotlight of the great powers, the geostrategic position in different periods of history has made Afghanistan the center of confrontation between the great powers. The war started 43 years ago, the previous generation of us witnessed the beginning of the war but unfortunately, the war is still going on has ambiguities and riddles that have not yet been defined and are unclear that need to be addressed and defined.

Keywords: Proxy war, Intervention, Great Game, Geostrategic location of Afghanistan.

INTRODUCTION

It is now almost four decades that the war in Afghanistan has gone on, more than two and a half million people have lost their lives, millions of others have become disabled, and over six million people have migrated to foreign countries. All infrastructure and institutions have been destroyed and the country has devolved into ruins. Yet, still, the war goes on. Daily, hundreds of people are killed and thousands more migrate to other countries, with those planning to leave the country taking very risky routes, with untold numbers of them sinking in the oceans before they reach their destinations.

Why the war has continued for almost four decades and why it has not ended is a puzzle everyone wants to solve. Many people in other countries also want to know the answer to this question. In order to decipher this mystery, we must first investigate the causes of the war and only then we can answer the question of why this war is ongoing? Afghanistan is a landlocked country with no access to the ocean. According to the geographical survey, Afghanistan is an enriched country, having large sources of oil, gas, and other precious minerals, but unfortunately, so far it has not been able to get used to these minerals and natural sources. The number of export items in comparison to imports is very low, the illiteracy rate is very high, but the land has been the target of various invaders, as well as a source from which local powers invade neighboring areas and form their own empires. In fact, the geography of a nation determines its politics, history, and the nature of its people. Furthermore, this geography was praised and called the “Heart of Asia” by Indian poet Mohamed Iqbal and “cockpit of Asia” by Lord Curzon, which shows all the importance and geo-strategic location of Afghanistan (Holt, 2012).

Afghanistan has long been the spotlight of the great world powers and has been a bridge between South and Central Asia, as well as a transit point for international trade and political games. Since the second half of the twentieth century, when large oil wells were discovered and developed in the Central Asian region, the international community has been paying more attention to Afghanistan than ever before. Although Afghanistan is a transit bridge with abundant natural resources, the cultivation, and trafficking of narcotics has slowed economic growth in the country and continues to pose a major problem for the international

community. As a result, many major military and regional powers have begun to openly intervene in Afghanistan to remove such obstacles, which has paved the way for a protracted crisis in Afghanistan (Nordland, 2017).

It is worth mentioning that none of the conquerors was able to easily subdue Afghanistan, many of their soldiers lost their lives to conquer the country, but some were finally able to remain for some years in this country after occupation. Alexander the Great was the first emperor who attacked Afghanistan in the year 330 B.C after he conquered Egypt and Iran. At that time, Afghanistan had no centralized, powerful government, and Alexander thought that he could easily overcome the country. However, his armies faced resistance in every city, and it took him four years to finally conquer Afghanistan and be able to pass through Toes, Herat, Kandahar, Kabul, and Balkh to reach the Amu River, which he then crossed on the eastern border of Afghanistan in 327 B.C to attack India (Ghubar, 1967).

Afghanistan was subsequently attacked by others such as the Greek, Turkish and Iranian empires, which in turn made Afghanistan, part of their empire. But sometimes Afghanistan itself formed a large empire and ruled over India, Iran, and parts of central Asia. In the Thirteenth Century, the notorious emperor Genghis Khan conquered Mongolia and China, he wanted to maintain good relations with the other great emperor of that time, King Sultan Mohammad, who was ruling the central Asia countries of Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, Genghis Khan, sent a mission with valuable gifts to strengthen their relationship. However, Sultan M. killed the members of the mission and plundered the gifts which made Genghis Khan furious and wish to seek revenge on King Sultan M. Accordingly, Genghis Khan attacked his territory with a huge military expedition. Sultan M. left the battleground and escaped to Iraq, with Genghis Khan following him and conquering his territories. Yet when Genghis Khan attacked Afghan cities, he faced significant resistance, and it took him more than six months to overwhelm Herat city. After six months when the city collapsed, Genghis Khan massacred the inhabitants. (Zada, 2003).

In the 19th Century, Russia and Britain were two giant powers, each one wanting to expand its territories and hold sway over many countries. Russia wanted to occupy Afghanistan in order to reach the warm ports in the Indian Ocean, and also wanted a buffer state to help defend the Central Asian countries from Britain. At the same time, the British wanted to occupy Afghanistan and not allow Russia to reach the Indian Ocean or expand toward India, so Afghanistan was their battleground. That is why in the 19th century Afghanistan had two wars with Britain, and then at the beginning of the 20th century another war with the British (Kuhzaad, 2002) .

The causes of these wars were the expansionist policy of the British; they requested the Afghan kings not to have relations with Russia. In the first two wars with the British, there was no powerful central government, yet the Afghan people fought the British Army and defeated them. Before the third war with Britain, the Afghan King Amanullah requested that Britain grant Afghanistan independence, but when he did not receive a positive answer, he sent his army to the borders and the third Anglo-Afghan war started. The Afghan army defeated the British army and Britain accepted Afghanistan's independence in 1919. The treaty was signed on the 19th of August, and that is why Afghans celebrate August 19th as the country's Independence Day. The announcement of Afghanistan's independence opened the way for other countries that were subjected to colonialism and paved a path for countries in Asia and Africa to seek their independence.

The Afghan government under the leadership of King Amanullah started to take necessary steps towards democracy and enhancing civilization, schools were opened for female students, women were encouraged not to cover their faces, primary studies for male students became obligatory, road construction projects started, development plans for the country were prepared, relations with other countries were strengthened, and the King and Queen took a six-month tour of Asian and European countries. After returning, he wanted to implement his development plans and ideas, but unfortunately, a reactionary movement against the King emerged, this movement was supported by Britain, some mercenary religious leaders accused the King of ignoring religion, and internal fighting started. The king, not wanting to enforce his rule militarily, and in order to avoid bloodshed, resigned and went to Italy. For a nine-month period, an illiterate person who was the leader of a big opposition group took power, stopping all development projects and banning women's education, yet still, internal fighting continued. The Afghan Ambassador in Paris, M. Nader, returned to the country and defeated the Gang leader who had called himself "king" and a "servant of Islam." King Nader and his son King Zahir ruled the country for 44 years. This era was peaceful, schools and universities were reopened, and women had the right to be members of parliament and the cabinet. The country was slowly developing, maintaining good relations with its neighbors and other countries. Politically, it was not linked to military blocks but kept a neutral position (Ghubar, 1967).

In 1973 there was a coup, wherein Mohammed Daoud Khan, the cousin of the king, overthrew the kingdom and announced a Republic Regime. In the beginning, it was assumed that Daoud was in favor of the communist party, as half of his cabinet members were from the communist party.

However, soon he changed his cabinet and replaced all the communist members with non-communist members, and started to strengthen relations with the USA, western countries, and other Islamic countries. When the leader of the Soviet Union found that the Afghan leader was turning towards democracy and strengthening relations with western countries, he invited him to Moscow. In a meeting with the leader of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet leader in contravention of all political rules turned to the Afghan leader and claimed that some of the western countries had sent their spies to Afghanistan under the names of tourists. Brezhnev alleged they were spying on Northern Afghanistan, close to the border with the Soviet Union, and requested the Afghan leader to deny them visas and not allow them into the north of the country. In response, the Afghan leader said that Afghanistan may be poor and may stay poor, but it will not let any country -- whether the USA, Germany, France, or the Soviet Union -- interfere with Afghanistan's internal affairs.

He explained that Afghans know better who to invite into our country and whom not to allow. Then he stood up and walked out of the meeting with the Soviet leader and returned to Afghanistan. The above-mentioned incident worsened Afghanistan's relationship with the Soviet Union. Thereafter, the Soviet Union reunited the two communist parties in Afghanistan, and after one year they staged a coup that collapsed the regime of President Daoud. Purportedly, the reason for the communist coup was the murder of a communist leader, Mir Akbar Khyber, by unknown people. The communist party accused the government and launched a big demonstration. In response, the government imprisoned the leaders of the party, but military members of the communist party staged a coup and assassinated President Daoud along with 18 of his family members. The coup took place on the 28th of April, 1978, and it was this coup, the so-called Saur Revolution, which initiated the 37 years of fighting in the country (Farhang, 1988, pp. 50-60).

HOW THE FIGHTING STARTED AND WHY IT IS STILL CONTINUING

As pointed earlier, when the relationship of Afghan's first president with the Soviet leader worsened after that meeting, the two communist parties in Afghanistan united at the request of the Soviet leaders. When the Afghan government imprisoned the leaders of the communist party after their anti-government demonstration, the party's military members planned a coup and after 24 hours of resistance, the president and 18 of his family members were killed. Subsequently, the communist party took control of the country, the party secretary became the president of the country, and they changed the name of the country to the "Democratic Republic of Afghanistan." The party placed communist members in all government positions and began to imprison all religious leaders, members of other political parties, and any who opposed them. Nobody felt safe; everyone was scared of murder and imprisonment. In just the first year of the communist regime, over 12,000 people were killed and tens of thousands of others were imprisoned. The slogan was: those who are not with us, our enemies. Afghan people are Muslims and love their religion; they would tolerate almost any cruelty except disrespect to religion. The members of the communist party insulted those who performed religious obligations, and people started to flee the country, migrating to Pakistan and other countries.

Pakistan was apprehensive after the communist coup in Afghanistan, as it knew the strategic plans of the Soviet Union, which wanted to reach the Indian Ocean. They knew there was a communist party in Pakistan as well, and worried that if the communist party in Afghanistan was successful, the communist party in Pakistan might also stage a coup. The government of Pakistan opened its border to Afghan refugees and announced that all refugees from Afghanistan would be received in good faith. When the Afghan people heard that Pakistan would allow them entry, they started to leave Afghanistan because they were afraid of being murdered or incarcerated. Daily, thousands of refugees fled to Pakistan.

Afghan refugees were settled in Pakistan; they started to fight with the communist government, although at first they just fought with hatchets, small hand bombs made of petrol, and simple guns. During the first year of the coup, the two united communist parties re-split over the distribution of power. The stronger party, Khalq, expelled from power the members of the opposing party, Parcham, and sent them out of the country as ambassadors. The lower-level members of the Parcham party were imprisoned. After one and a half years, the leader of Khalq, Noor M. Taraky, and his assistant, Hafizullah Amin, became rivals, each one wanting to overthrow the other. Finally, Amin succeeded and executed Taraky, and replaced him as the communist

leader. The Soviet leader was very upset with the change, and after three months the Soviet army crossed the border and occupied Afghanistan, assassinating Amin, the leader of the country's communist party, and appointing the former leader of Parcham, Babrak Karmal, as the new leader for the reunited communist party. Leaders of the Soviet Union then announced that the Afghan government had invited them to bring troops into Afghanistan to assist the Afghan government in securing the country from foreign intervention and that only under this invitation; they send limited troops in agreement with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter (Ghubar, 1967).

The occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet army had very negative impacts on the people of Afghanistan immediately, and soon the country's religious leaders announced Jihad against the Soviet army. This occupation was also widely condemned by the United Nations, Islamic countries, and NATO. Islamic countries and Afghanistan's neighbors started to support Afghanistan's freedom-fighting Mujahidin groups. The Soviet Red Army was murdering people and bombarding their houses, initiating mass migration to Pakistan. Villages and districts became empty as over six million people emigrated.

The Russian army used every kind of advanced weapon to win the war but failed. When Western countries realized that if Mujahidin groups could have access to advanced weapons they would fight more effectively against the Russian army, they equipped the Mujahidin with advanced anti-aircraft rockets. The US, still stinging from its defeat by the communists in Viet Nam, wanted to chase the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan. Daily, the losses of the Russian troops increased. China did not want to see the Soviet Union win the war, so China also sent advanced weapons to the Mujahidin. Islamic countries were afraid if the Soviet Union won the war in Afghanistan, later they might attack other Islamic countries. Pakistan in particular played a key role, as it was on the frontlines with the Soviet army; Pakistan knew if the Soviet Union succeeded in Afghanistan, the next step would be Pakistan. Each of the above-mentioned countries supported the Mujahidin and hoped for the defeat of the Soviets. Many volunteer groups from Islamic countries joined the Mujahidin groups in Pakistan and fought side by side with Afghan Mujahidin.

The losses of the Soviet army harmed the morale of the army, and the Soviet Union was hemorrhaging Rubles to maintain the army in Afghanistan, both factors making it difficult for them to continue the war. The three pro-occupation Soviet leaders (Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko) passed and the new reformist leader, Gorbachev, decided to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan. He first deposed the Afghan president Babrak Karmal and replaced him with Dr. Najibullah, who had been the head of intelligence services. Official talks on the withdrawal of the Soviet army started in Geneva. It took months to finalize the agreements, but finally, the accord was signed by the Afghan Foreign Minister and Pakistan Foreign Minister while the foreign ministers of the US and the Soviet Union were present as guarantors. The agreement was signed on April 14th, 1988 and it was decided that the Soviet Army would withdraw over a nine-month period spanning from the 15th of May, 1988 until the 15th of February, 1989 (Farhang, 1988).

After the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the Kabul regime under the presidency of Dr. Najibullah was able to continue in power for three more years.

Peace talks started under the United Nations Special Envoy Benon Sevan, who made several trips to Kabul and Islamabad and took many months to bring the two sides together and discuss how to end the war. Finally, it was agreed that Dr. Najibullah would transfer power to a neutral committee of 25 members who would come to Kabul and prepare for the smooth transfer of power through a transitional government and eventual presidential elections.

The arrangements were initiated according to plan -- the Neutral Transitional Government members came to Peshawar to be transferred to Kabul and a small plane was on its way to Kabul to take the President to India. Unfortunately, the President was stopped and a coup formed by one mujahidin group with the support of the former communist party took power in Kabul and the UN plan was cast aside. Dr. Najibullah sought refuge in the UN headquarters in Kabul, while Mujahidin armed groups entered Kabul and captured different parts of the city, the state military was dissolved, and fighting erupted in Kabul among the different militias. The US, other Western countries, and the UN forgot Afghanistan, as internal fighting killed over 70,000 people in Kabul city and half of the city was destroyed. The inhabitants of Kabul who had the means left the city and migrated to Pakistan or other parts of Afghanistan, while those who were poor stayed in the city and daily faced the threat of death or injury. Women were taken from homes and properties were looted. Over 500-1000 rocket attacks were exchanged daily between the warring

militias. The fighting was not limited to Kabul, but in every city, there was fighting among different groups. Property and physical safety for both men and women were vulnerable -- anything could happen to them (Farhang, 1988).

Under such terrible conditions, a group of 50 people from former Mujahidin Groups under the name of the Taliban came from Quetta and crossed the border to bring order.

They proceeded from Boldak to Kandahar city, on their way disarming militias and finally capturing Kandahar city, the second-largest city. At first, the Taliban earned a positive reputation for disarming militias and restoring security -- in two years they captured 80% of the country and disbanded many brutal militias; only three provinces -- Panjshir, Takhar, and Badakhshan -- remained out of their control. At first, the Taliban relied heavily on taxes on opium exports, but reversed their approach in 2001, when the Taliban were able to reduce poppy cultivation to very low levels. Despite the goodwill gained by the Taliban's suppression of corrupt warlords, they alienated other Afghans by implementing severe rules, a mixture of Pashtuns tribal codes with radical interpretations of Islam from Saudi Arabia, which was not per Islam as traditionally practiced in Afghanistan.

These extreme rules, such as requiring beards and Hijab for female, making prayer compulsory, and banning women's education and working, were not consistent with Sharia . They appointed Taliban members to all high-ranking government positions, even if they lacked qualifications, thus the government ministries essentially ceased to function. The Taliban regime was recognized only by three states: Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. The Taliban hosted Osama bin Laden and his Arab followers, as bin Laden financially supported the Taliban (Tanien, 1992).

After the September 11 attacks, the US warned the Taliban to hand over Bin Laden, but the Taliban refused, demanding first proof that he was involved in the September 11 incident. The US rejected this condition, so the Taliban did not hand over Bin Laden, and as a result, the US attacked Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, within one month the Taliban regime had been toppled (Atayee, 2004). After the collapse of the Taliban regime, the US supported the establishment of a new administration for Afghanistan, organizing the Bonn Conference. A president, vice president, and 27 members of the cabinet were appointed -- all from former rival groups, but the main portion or key ministries were given to former Mujahidin, in particular, the Northern Alliance and followers of Ahmad Shah Massoud. The majority of the cabinet members had been formerly involved in fighting and killing over 70,000 people in Kabul city and looting private government properties. The nominated cabinet members returned to Kabul and Hamid Karzai was appointed as the interim president for six months.

Afghanistan's new administration had to start from ground zero -- they had to find offices, buy office equipment, and assign new employees. Schools and universities were reopened, millions of boys and girls started to get an education, books were printed. Women received permission to work in offices.

After a short interim government, the transitional government started its duties under the leadership of President Karzai, a constitution draft was prepared and finally approved by the grand assembly, an election law was prepared and approved, a human rights office was established, and every arrangement was made for presidential elections. The first election took place on the 9th of October, 2004. President Karzai won 55.4% of the vote and was elected President.

Until 2004, the security condition was relatively good -- only in some remote areas were there any significant security incidents. Unfortunately, International Security and NATO forces killed many innocent people in the villages, took actions against Afghan culture, entered peoples' houses at nights and killed them, bombed wedding ceremonies, captured innocent people under the name of Taliban and sent them to jail and Guantanamo -- all these incidents turned people to the Taliban side. Moreover, former killers, looters, and warlords held high-ranking positions in the government, thus corruption became the normal practice -- nothing would get done by the government unless one provided a bribe -- corruption was so widespread, you even had to pay a bribe to pay your bills! Police, judges, and attorneys were all involved in corruption, and Afghanistan became the second most corrupt country in the world. People became disillusioned and started to support the Taliban again, began to fight against the government and the international forces. Due to the brutal actions of the international forces and the corruption of the Afghan government, citizens were forced to leave the country and driven towards Jihad. On the other hand, our two neighbors Iran and Pakistan welcomed these Afghans and used them against the international and government forces.

Iran, an enemy of the US with no diplomatic relations with the US over the past three decades, made every effort to involve the US in fighting to increase their casualties and finally make the US leave Afghanistan. Accordingly, Iran persuaded and funded Afghans to fight against the US. Similarly, Pakistan, which never wanted a stable and peaceful Afghanistan, never wanted US

troops in Afghanistan to support the Afghan government, thus Pakistan's intelligence service has done all they could to force the US government to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan. Pakistan trained, equipped, and equips the militants to Afghanistan to fight and attack US and NATO forces. Some Arab countries were also not happy with the presence of US forces in Afghanistan. In addition, China and Russia did not want the US and NATO forces to be present on joint borders with their countries. All these countries have supported the Afghan people to fight against US and NATO forces.

In 2008, when Obama won the US election and became president, at first he sent additional troops to fight the Taliban and win the war by force. When he realized that he couldn't win the war militarily, he changed his policy and in his second round of presidency prepared a withdrawal schedule for the US and NATO forces, signing a bilateral security agreement with the Afghan government to keep some of the US forces in Afghanistan until the end of 2016. With the US and NATO withdrawing the majority of their forces at the end of 2014, only 18,000 troops are left in Afghanistan.

At the end of 2014, when the US and NATO started to withdraw their forces, the Taliban increased their attacks on US and NATO forces, casualties increased and many innocent and civilians people were also killed, the Taliban captured many places in the northern part of the country.

This was somewhat unusual, as in the past the Taliban were primarily active in the southern and eastern parts of the country. When Ashraf Ghani came to power, signed the Bilateral Security Agreement with the US and starts to negotiate with the Taliban over the peace process. In the beginning, it seemed that Pakistan was interested in negotiations and officially confirmed they would provide facilities and persuade the Taliban to engage in peace talks. All Afghans were optimistic when the first round of official talks took place in Islamabad. The second round was planned, but just one day before this batch of negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan Government were to start, Pakistan announced that the Taliban leader Mullah Omar had died in April of 2013, hence the Taliban was not ready for talks and the process was stopped. The current leader of Taliban Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada has insisted on Jihad and says he will continue Jihad until the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the fighting is still going on, and daily over 200 military and civilian loses their lives. There is as yet no end in sight for this bloody fighting.

With the aforementioned discussion, now we are coming close to finding our answer to the question why the war in Afghanistan is not ending.

As we mentioned at the very beginning of this study, one of the reasons for this war is the geostrategic and geopolitical location of Afghanistan. As always, the great powers have used Afghanistan as a springboard for the expansion of their authority, or at least kept Afghanistan under their control. For this justification, we gave an example of the three Anglo-Afghan wars that Britain instituted to stop Russia from expanding and to prevent it from using Afghanistan to reach the Indian Ocean, just as Russia wanted to stop Britain from encroaching on Russia.

When at the end of the 20 Century, the Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan that was also related to its strategic goal to reach the Indian Ocean and, if possible, attack Persian Gulf countries. NATO, Pakistan, and the US all supported the Afghan Mujahidin war against the Soviet Union, with the hope to expel the Soviets from Afghanistan. When the Mujahidin were victorious and the Soviet Union was expelled from Afghanistan, some feel that contributed to the collapse of the Soviet empire.

Under the name of fighting terrorism in Afghanistan, when the US and NATO forces invaded and occupied Afghanistan, again Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan, and some Arabic countries did not want NATO so close to their borders, hence they supported the insurgents and the Taliban to fight against the US and NATO forces. For almost 20 years this fighting has been going on, many people have emigrated, and hundreds of thousands have lost their lives (Nordland, 2017).

U.S. AND TALIBAN AGREEMENT FOR BRINGING PEACE TO AFGHANISTAN

The United States signed a landmark agreement with the Taliban in Qatar on February 29, 2020, to withdraw its forces and establish lasting peace in Afghanistan. Marty in US -Taliban Deal, in the Diplomat Magazine, 2021 argues that the agreement explicitly states that in the future there will be no direct or indirect threats from Afghan land to the United States and NATO, the US claims that the 9/11 attacks were planned from Afghanistan and that al-Qaeda is responsible for it, and if in the future this kind of threats emerges to the security of the United States and its allies from Afghan land, it will be eliminated by the Taliban military forces, and the Taliban must continue to cut ties with Al-Qaeda, negotiate with the Kabul government to resolve the

Afghan crisis. In return, the United States will withdraw all its troops from Afghanistan. One year has passed since the signing of this agreement, while some parts of this agreement such as the release of prisoners on both sides, the beginning of inter-Afghan negotiations, and withdrawal of more US troops from different military bases in Afghanistan are among the issues that have been implemented so far. But unfortunately, after almost a year, the level of violence is still high and the inter-Afghan talks have not yielded any results. It is necessary for the US and the international community to intervene to accelerate this process. Meanwhile, fighting in Afghanistan between Taliban and Afghan forces has intensified and the level of violence has risen sharply. Under US-Taliban agreement, inter-Afghan talks were to begin on March 10, 2020 but failed, and two months later, talks between the government team and the Taliban began, but have not yet yielded any concrete results. The main reason for the delay in the current negotiations is the bargaining over the release of the remaining Taliban prisoners, the removal of the Taliban from the blacklist, and the complete ceasefire in response to the Taliban request by the government team. The start of the Doha talks and agreement was hailed by the world as a historic opportunity, but unfortunately, a year later, negotiations between the Taliban and the government team have not yet reached a fundamental agreement, and both sides insist on bargaining. And if this negotiation and peace talks fail, it will lead to a crisis and an escalation of the war in Afghanistan. This is where the United States must put pressure on the parties so that this agreement is not broken and is a guarantee for peace in Afghanistan (Marty, 2021).

It should be noted that Afghanistan reached the forefront of the US foreign policy after the 9/11 attacks, US launched a military campaign against the Taliban government and Al-Qaeda, which overthrew the Taliban government and established a new government in Afghanistan. But in its 20 years of military presence, it has failed to eliminate the Taliban completely, the war has intensified, the United States losing 2,400 troops and spending about \$ 143 billion on reconstruction and security forces. They entered into negotiations with the Taliban in February 2020 when they saw that the war would not end militarily (Thomas, 2021).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes the main causes of war in Afghanistan below and unless solutions are not found for the causes the war will continue:

- The geopolitical location of Afghanistan is a primary cause of the continuing war.
- Afghan people love independence and do not want to be ruled by foreigners; during the first and second Anglo-Afghan wars, Afghans without strong central leadership still fought the British forces and finally expelled them from the country. Furthermore, Afghan showed severe resistance with Genghis Khan and Alexander the Great; fought with them for many months in each city, despite the lack of any central government.
- Afghan people love their religion, and when they feel there are threats to their religion or their religion is insulted, they will fight to the death. At the beginning of the Russian occupation, people start fighting the Soviet army with mere hatchets and petrol bombs, they were not afraid of dying.
- Many Afghans are illiterate and don't understand political games, so they are easily used by warlords. In addition, many young people are jobless, with very few opportunities available for the younger generation, thus they go to the front lines to fight.
- Also double-faced policy of the US and NATO forces, some analysts believe that the US and NATO don't want the war to end.
- Finally, the interests of warlords and drug smugglers, because of the ongoing war, became millionaires. They now command hundreds of millions of dollars, they know if the war ended they would be questioned about attaining so much wealth, and some might be taken to court for looting and murder.

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