

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Analysis of United States of America Foreign Policy on The Victory of The Taliban Group in Afghanistan

Rio Sundari

International Relations Department
Islamic University of Riau
riosundari@soc.uir.ac.id

Agung Wicaksono

Political Department
Corvinus University of Budapest
agung.wicaksono@stud.uni-corvinus.hu

Fanesa Angeli

International Relations Department
Islamic University of Riau
fanesaangeli@student.uir.ac.id

Rendi Prayuda

International Relations Department
Islamic University of Riau
rendiprayuda@soc.uir.ac.id

M. Arsy Ash Shiddiqy

International Relations Department
Islamic University of Riau
arsyshiddiq@soc.uir.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to discuss about analysis of United States foreign policy in Afghanistan by looking at case studies of the victory of the Taliban group controlling Afghanistan in 2021. Foreign policy is a unit of analysis in international relations that is related to the national political system. This strategy carried out in foreign policy lasts if the State interacts in the form of relations with the international community in making decisions to achieve its national goals. In making broad country decisions, there is a theory expressed by Richard Snyder which says there are internal factors and external factors that influence a

country in determining foreign policy. In the case of the Taliban's victory over Afghanistan in 2021, the United States' policy in responding to the conflict explained the internal and external factors that influence each other. Internal factors are influenced by the structure and social behavior of the State, where this is influenced by the ideology of the State, existing government institutions in the State, where this is influenced by the ideology of the State, existing government institutions in the State, the characteristics contained in national organizational institutions and the role of social groups in influencing decision making which are internal factors. The existence of internal and external factors then provides the results of the decision-making process that cannot be separated from action in decision-making. The conclusion, internal factors and external factors that influence the direction of the United States foreign policy in dealing with cases of conflict in Afghanistan have an impact on the victory of the Taliban group in controlling Afghanistan in 2021.

Keywords: United States, Foreign Policy, Afghanistan, Taliban

I. Introduction

In the aftermath of World War II, the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union in conquering territory for regime expansion affected developing countries. This was motivated by the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union to maintain the Marxist-Leninist government in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union troops who at that time supported the communist government received full support from the Mujahideen group.

In 1978, the Saur Revolution was the cause of the coup that overthrew the



monarchical government, thus becoming the basis for the establishment of the communist Republic of Afghanistan under the leadership of Nur Muhammad Taraki who at the time succeeded in coup the government of Mohammad Daud Khan.

This policy was criticized by the people as an acculturation of external culture that contradicted indigenous Afghan values, characterized by the emergence of defense reforms and administrative degrees based on the teachings of Classical Marxist-Leninism. The invasion was also criticized by the United States. The United States pursued a strategy to counter the influence of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The United States provided military support to the Afghan government. The resistance of the Afghan people as well as attempts to seize power and government conflicts from rebel groups turned into a war of ideology between the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc in Afghanistan, and became the end of the Soviet Union's decades-long struggle for power over Afghanistan. The United States' victory in removing the Soviet Union's army took over the government of Afghanistan.

The war in Afghanistan is also inseparable from the involvement of the United States in the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan. The Al-Qaeda group controlled by Osama bin Laden, at that time hijacked the plane by collapsing the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001. This action was carried out to reject the United States' support for Israel and the presence of the United States military in Saudi Arabia. For the action taken,

the United States fought back by attacking Afghanistan.

As for the efforts in the military strategy carried out by the United States, the United States conducted a military base defense that was inseparable from the assistance of cooperation carried out by NATO. By carrying out military interventions carried out during the time of President George W Bush with the aim of blocking the bases of terrorism in the Afghan region. With this, the dominance of American and NATO involvement can be seen from the leadership of the United States as the military centralization of the Military Committee, the highest military authority. The invasion led by the United States began to attack Islamic militant groups. Based on the goal of defending national security interests. In this act of resistance, an Islamic fundamentalist group emerged after the political turmoil of the Soviet Union left Afghanistan in 1989.

In 1994, a new group emerged that had the same goal of controlling the capital Kabul. This was the beginning of the Taliban. The Taliban group is an ultraconservative political and religious faction that supports traditional values led by Mullah Muhammed Omar Mujahed. This group originated from the membership of madrasa students who came from Afghan refugees after the collapse of the Afghan communist regime. These students managed to control the government system in Afghanistan. The word Taliban comes from the Pashtun language which means students who were born from a situation where there was no power in controlling the conditions of Afghanistan which had been divided due to



prolonged war. The basic ideology applied by its followers is Deobandism which teaches new generations to study Islam and revive Islamic religious doctrine based on learning, spiritual experience, sharia law to achieve ultimate truth.

By the end of 1996, there was popular support for the Taliban from the southern Pashtun ethnic group of Afghanistan, as well as assistance from conservative Islamic countries. With his support, the Taliban was able to capture the capital Kabul, which was due to the Taliban's presence by eradicating corruption and curtailing lawlessness by the Kabul government. To achieve its goals, the Taliban began a series of conquests of areas in southern and western Afghanistan, such as the city of Ghazni, which was initially controlled by Hizbul Islami.



Fig. 1. Taliban Territory Map of Afghanistan
Source: BBC News (2021)

By 2021, 90% of Afghanistan was controlled by the Taliban, except for a small part of Afghanistan. Such as in the central province of Ghazni and Maidan Wardak in the North and Northeast. Then in the central city areas such as Kunduz, Herat, Kandahar and Lashkar Gah. This group formed a government

based on a very strict interpretation of Islamic law. In this case, the Taliban Group has control over several districts in the administrative center, in terms of security and other government institutions.

This is very incompatible with the culture of the people and the extremist treatment carried out by the Taliban group against the regime in Afghanistan which is globally opposed. The Taliban implemented a policy against women not to have access to education and employment. The victory of the Taliban group over the territory of Afghanistan was initially marked by a peace agreement between the United States and the Taliban by withdrawing US military forces with the results of demands in the form of Taliban groups not establishing cooperative relations with Al-Qaeda groups and other radical groups in the territory of power.

The agreement involves the United States and the Taliban, with plans for the Taliban to negotiate in leading the Afghan State. In addition, the current economic crisis faced by the United States which focuses on health due to the Covid-19 pandemic is a serious problem that is currently being faced. The reduction of 6.5% of the United States economy so that it has an impact on suppressing the costs incurred by the United States in fighting the Taliban group is also a factor in the withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan. Based on the background of the problems that have been described, there is one problem about why the United States Foreign Policy allowed the Taliban Group to come to power in Afghanistan, so that the



Taliban managed to control the territory of Afghanistan in 2021?

II. Data and Methodology

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research approach using various trusted and recognized sources such as books, journals, documents and other sources that support this research. The concept used in this research is the concept of foreign policy.

Foreign policy according to Plano and Roy Olton is a strategy made by State decision makers, in this case international actors, to achieve national goals. In decision-making, decision-making behavior is influenced by external factors and internal factors. This theory was proposed by Richard Snyder, who explained that internal factors are seen from domestic politics that become a reference in decision making, such as the dominance of political parties participating with the government. This theory explains the factors that become dominant in foreign policy are considered by decision makers.

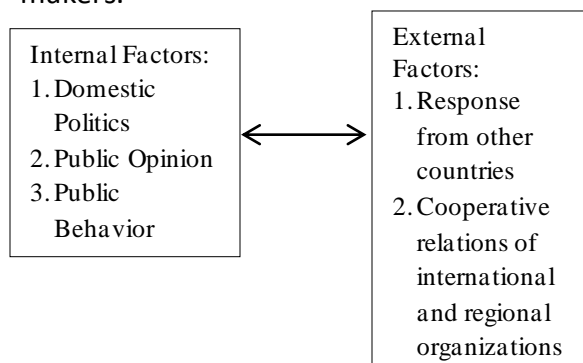


Fig. 2. Conceptual Framework I

Source: Author

In the analysis, it can be explained that internal and external factors have a correlation

in making a foreign policy supported by decision-making actors. A country's foreign policy has a continuity between internal and external factors of a country in making decisions that become guidelines in making a policy. The state as an actor in an international political situation, can be described as a state that has a policy on a particular issue, will affect countries that have the scope of regional countries in responding to policies that have been made by other countries.

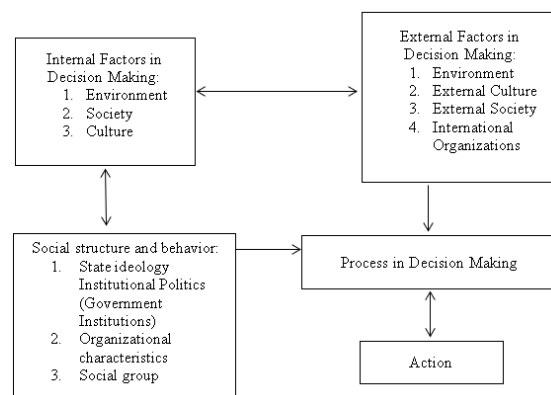


Fig. 3. Conceptual Framework II

Source: Author

Based on the chart above, it can be explained that there is a mutual influence between internal factors and external factors in decision making. Then, it can be seen that internal factors are influenced by the social structure and behavior of the State, where this is influenced by the State's ideology, existing government institutions in the State, the characteristics contained in the national organizational institutions and the role of social groups in influencing decision making which is an internal factor. The existence of internal and external factors then results in a decision-making process that is inseparable from the action in decision-making.



Thus, the basic assumption according to Richard Snyder's view is that international behavior can be interpreted as a series of decision-makers made by a group of national political actors, which includes the head of State, both in the form of individuals and groups that play a role in the decision-making process. So that it provides an overview of decision making in the organizational system with State institutional procedures, where decision making needs to consider internal factors and external factors that influence decision making.

The theory that has been described by Richard Snyder, then the author implies in the case study of the problem that the author examines in explaining the United States policy in responding to the conflict that occurred in Afghanistan in the Political Coup carried out by the Taliban Group which explains internal factors and external factors. At first the United States succeeded in controlling the territory of Afghanistan from the Taliban Group for 20 years.

Based on the theory described by Richard Snyder, the author makes implications in seeing the internal factors and external factors that are the reasons for the United States in making a decision and changing the direction of foreign policy in handling the case of a political coup that occurred in Afghanistan carried out by the Taliban Group.

Foreign policy carried out by the State is a policy that must be considered as a reason for the domestic political interests itself. The consideration of internal factors and external factors that influence the direction of US foreign policy in handling conflict cases in Afghanistan has an impact

on the Taliban group's victory in controlling the Afghan State in 2021.

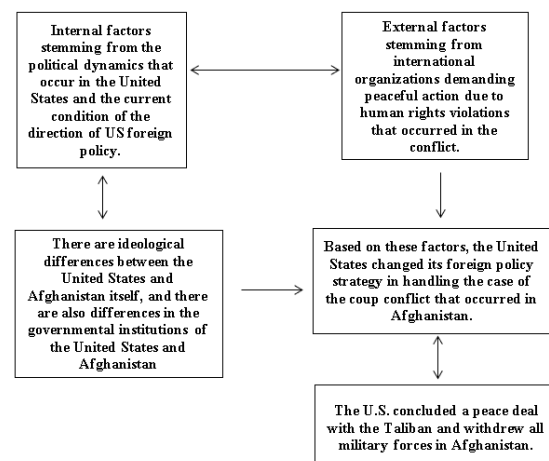


Fig.4. Conceptual Framework 3

Source: Author

III. Internal Factors Affecting U.S Foreign Policy Toward Afghanistan

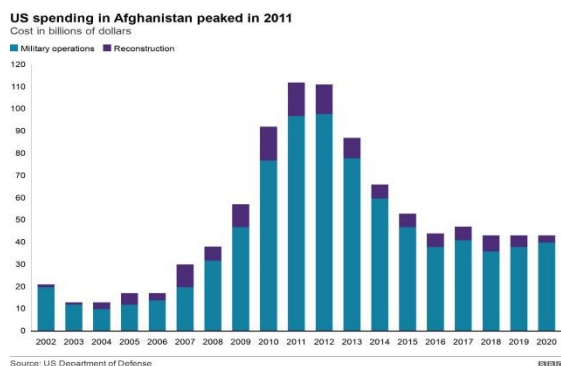
a. U.S Economic Crisis

Seeing the strategy carried out by the United States to stabilize Afghanistan that made the United States spend more than US \$ 1 trillion (Rp. 14,000 trillion more) and more than 2,400 American military members and tens of thousands of Afghan civilians died. The condition of Afghanistan in conflict from 2001 until now, the United States has spent Rp 4.31 trillion to the Afghan people. This proves that the US retreated from Afghanistan due to the high cost of the US military invasion in fighting the Taliban.

According to the US Department of Defense, total military spending in Afghanistan (from October 2001 to December 2020) was \$825 billion, with about another \$130 billion spent on reconstruction projects. That brings the total cost, based on official data, to about



\$955 billion between 2001-2020 which is close to his lower \$1 per year estimate issued by President Joe Biden. Most of the money spent in Afghanistan has gone for counter-insurgency operations, and for troop needs such as food, clothing, medical care, salaries and special allowances. Nearly \$36 billion has been allocated for governance and development, while smaller amounts have also been allocated for anti-drug efforts and for humanitarian aid.



Source: US Department of Defense
Fig. 5. US Costs of Invasion in Afghanistan
Source: BBC News (2021)

In addition, the current health crisis is also sweeping the international world. Currently, almost the whole world is focusing on the covid-19 pandemic. The United States as the largest contributor country infected with the corona virus. There have been various efforts made by the United States in anticipating the spread of the corona virus. This makes the State focus on economic and health recovery. Data shows that the economy is experiencing a very significant recession. Military spending reached a very significant decline during the covid-19 pandemic.

b. U.S Domestic Political Policy Change

The role of the United States in the international world is very significant whereas a superpower America has succeeded in influencing various regions by spreading the values of democracy, human rights and other liberal ideas. The role of the United States, which is believed to be a guardian of the stability of world peace either unilaterally or multilaterally by carrying the interests of the United States, in reality is not infrequently opposed by several countries as a form of resistance to the dual policies of the United States. After the 9/11 incident at the WTC Building, in 2001 it changed the direction of US foreign policy by focusing on the issue of War on Terrorism (WOT) which was manifested in the form of a campaign in response to the tragedy that befell the World Trade Center (WTC) which resulted in Al-Qaeda aircraft which then crashed deliberately into the WTC and Pentagon headquarters.

The United States policy in combating acts of terrorism has been implemented by monitoring terrorist networks in North and South America, Asia, Africa, Europe without exception countries in the Middle East region. The WOT policy contained in the 2002 NSS can be concluded on the United States' goal of dealing with acts of terrorism in an effort to attack, fight, and silence terrorist groups and any country that indicates a form of terrorism, especially to countries that have or are developing weapons of mass destruction (Weapon Mass Destruction). The United States will take firm action against these countries through military



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c. Keep America Safe Interests (U.S Interest Group)

The interest group *Keep America Safe* is one example of an interest group that is quite active in US politics. This group approaches important institutions in the US government, namely the legislature and the executive branch. The purpose of this interest group is to support the existence of the state in order to continue to prioritize military power in anticipating terrorism networks. The role of interest groups is one of the important forces in the realization of politics which at its stage dominates the political system, so that the birth of groups that emphasize competition by the community. The realization of interest groups is proof that there is public awareness of the influence of foreign policy. Currently, the United States has an official

website to provide information on national security.

In practice, *Keep America Safe* uses several online media and conventional mass media. In online media, through the website <https://votesaveamerica.com>, *Keep America Safe* tries to build public awareness of the importance of criticizing foreign policy in the Obama Administration. *Keep America Safe* also uploads various articles through their website. In addition to online media, *Keep America Safe* also uses conventional mass media to achieve the interests of its group. *Keep America Safe's* interest group has a YouTube account that was actively used to spread criticism of President Barack Obama's policies related to terrorism.

However, in the end, the *Keep America Safe* group was not successful in influencing congress to attract sympathizers from the citizens of the United States at large and finally the lack of participation from the citizens of the United States made *Keep America Safe* finally retreat from politics and eliminate the existence of *Keep America Safe* as an interest group in the United States.

IV. External Factors Affecting U.S Foreign Policy Toward Afghanistan

a. The Changing Map of International Politics

The success of the Taliban Group in taking power in the territory of Afghanistan has an influence on the geopolitical map that occurs. geopolitical shifts will have an impact on the United States and its allies. Pakistan as an ally of the United States that has close ties with the Taliban group, has geopolitical influence when dealing with the United States.



The invasion of the United States at that time became a momentum that was utilized by the enemies of the Taliban. After the invasion carried out by the United States in Afghanistan for 18 years, the United States changed its strategy in Afghanistan by stopping the invasion and emphasizing its commitment through a peace agreement with the Taliban. The position of security as the main issue after World War II has now shifted with the emergence of economic issues. The shift in issues affects the performance of the United States as a hegemon state. Moreover, the emergence of revisionist countries such as China and Russia, which are increasingly showing their existence and threatening the position of the United States as a hegemonic country, has made the United States a hegemonic country.

The US foreign policy decision to withdraw US troops from Afghanistan has been heavily criticized and raises questions about the projected direction of US power in the future. However, the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan is a consideration for several countries regarding the attitude of the United States in the event of a conflict with China. Some Southeast Asian analysts have observed that the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan may lead the United States to intervene in other regional countries. In addition, the United States is a key economic and security partner for most countries in Southeast Asia, is allied with Thailand and the Philippines, and has defense cooperation with Singapore and Vietnam, one of their main partners in Asia today. The United States also supports Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia in

the South China Sea territorial dispute with China.

b. Geopolitics of Afghanistan

Basically, the victory of the Taliban group in controlling the country of Afghanistan is inseparable from the geopolitical influence of the country. Then, this group also managed to utilize the resources owned by the country. So that this group is able to ensure the continuity of life in the country. Based on its geographical location, Afghanistan has relied on the port of Pakistan as an international trade route that supplies several needs needed by the country. Then, this group also managed to utilize the resources owned by the country. The success of the Taliban group in leading Afghanistan during 1996-2001 was due to the trust that the Afghan people had given to the Taliban group. The success of the Taliban group in eradicating corruption and imposing a 50% tax on cooperatives in Afghanistan. In addition, the Taliban group also imposed import taxes on commodity goods brought into Afghanistan.

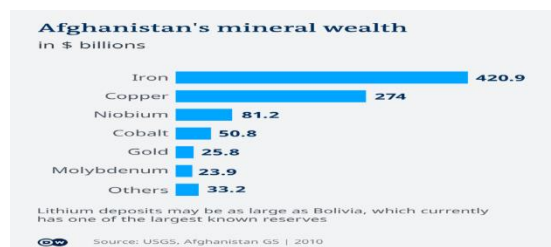


Figure 6. Afghanistan's Mineral Wealth

Source: DW (2021)

The success of the Taliban group in controlling mineral resources in Afghanistan has opened a path of cooperation between other countries and the Taliban. The existence of interests owned by several countries makes



many foreign investors provide investment in the management of mineral resources in Afghanistan.

c. Other Countries Support in Helping Taliban Groups

With the end of U.S military aid, the vast amount of U.S military weaponry provided to Afghanistan is now controlled by the Taliban. In addition, several other countries also aided the Taliban group. Notwithstanding the support provided by the former Soviet Union colonies in the Central Asian region who joined the Taliban. The Taliban received full support from several surrounding countries.

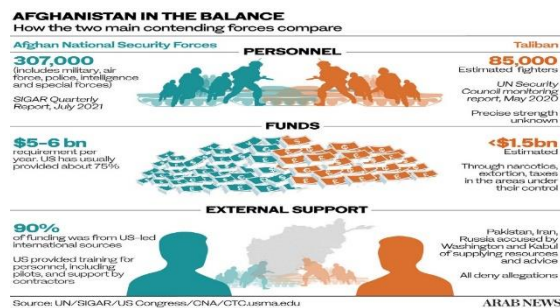


Figure 7. Afghanistan in the Balance
Source: Arab News (2021)

Based on the data above, the strength of the Taliban group is seen from three factors. The first is the military personnel of the Taliban group, which consists of 85,000 personnel. With the source of funding obtained from the drug trade and tax amnesty carried out in every region in Afghanistan. From the aftermath of the Taliban's success in controlling the Afghan state, many countries have collaborated with the Taliban group.

V. Conclusion

By looking at an overview of the history of the conflict in Afghanistan, as well as

the involvement of US foreign policy in allowing the Taliban Group to come to power in Afghanistan, so that the Taliban managed to control the territory of Afghanistan in 2021. It can be concluded that there are internal factors and external factors that are the reasons for the United States in making a decision and the influence of changes in the direction of foreign policy in handling the case of a political coup that occurred in Afghanistan carried out by the Taliban Group.

Internal factors originating from the political dynamics that occur in the United States and the current conditions of the direction of US foreign policy are influenced by the social structure and behavior of the State. The United States gave a statement of attitude by emphasizing that the United States made a peace agreement with the Taliban, on condition that the Taliban group no longer allowed Al-Qaeda groups and other terrorism groups to operate in the territory of Afghanistan.

External factors originating from international organizations that demand peaceful action due to human rights violations that occurred in the conflict. The Taliban's success in gaining control of Afghanistan was due to the internal conflicts that occurred in Afghanistan and the lack of trust crisis by the Afghan leadership.

So that the conclusion shows that there is a relationship between internal factors and external factors that influence the victory of the Taliban group to control Afghanistan in 2021. So that the foreign policy of the United States must be based on the concept of decision making in decision making so that this has an effect in handling conflict cases in



Afghanistan which have an impact on the victory of the Taliban group in controlling the Afghan State in 2021.

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