

The war in afghanistan analysis



The United States of America has the highest spending force in the world, accounting for over 43% of all the world's spending on military. Despite the US President having supreme authority over foreign policy, the Secretary of State is charged with the role of maintaining diplomacy with other states. The Secretary of State, who is a similar position as Foreign Affairs Minister, will consult the President on the policies that define the interests of the United States and the strategies they will use to achieve their goals. Since as early as 1775, the United States of America has been involved in very many foreign invasions. Till to date, the US has been still involved in foreign invasions with the latest one being in Mali where they have sent their troops to assist the French in the ' Operations Serval'. The most noticeable foreign invasion by the US is the war on terror. In the recent past, terror groups, more so in the Middle East, have posed a major security threat in the world. The global war on terror is used in military to counter the attacks in the United States on the 11th September, 2001. NATO and non-NATO forces united to counter the conflict. The former President of the U. S, Bush was the first person to use this phrase on the 20th September 2001 when he was announcing the intentions of the U. S to counter the events of 11 days earlier. Their major targets were Islamic groups, such as al-Qaeda.

The War in Afghanistan

Historical Background of the Conflict

Since 1973, Afghanistan has experienced several coups, but the government always had the support of the Russians. All this time, the US and the USSR were in the Cold War after the experience in the US war with Vietnam. The

US was interested in making sure that all attempts in military by the USSR failed. They, therefore, sort to frustrate the invasions by financing rebel groups. This war was between the Afghanistan forces, led by the Soviet Union, and a multi-national group known as Mujahedeen. It lasted from the year 1979 to 1989.

In December 1979, the Soviet Union forces went to Afghanistan to try and bring down the tension in the country. The Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Hazifullah Amin, had tried to eliminate the Muslim tradition in the country in a quest to achieve a more civilized Afghanistan causing the Civil war in the nation (Bahmanyar & Palmer, 2004).

When a big number of Muslim leaders were arrested, most of those who left moved to the mountains where they started planning retaliatory attacks to the police under the command of Amin. By this time, Amin had established a communist government, which believed in rejecting the religious believes something that sparked very negative reactions from most people. The people who were not content with Amin joined the leaders to form Mujahedeen and declared a jihad on Amin and all those who supported him. Mujahedeen was joined by most Muslims in Afghanistan which used guerilla tactics and claimed to be on a mission for Allah. Their main aim was to overthrow the government of Amin.

Amin was shot dead by the USSR soldiers and was replaced by Babrak Kamal. By this time, the USSR forces in the country were 85, 000 in number. They helped keep the new head of state in power. However, the Mujahedeen forces proved more formidable an opponent they had seemed earlier.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-war-in-afghanistan-analysis/>

Despite using old weapons, they had more knowledge of the mountains of Kabal more than the Russians and were more accustomed to the weather conditions. This forced Russians to use more sophisticated weapons, such as poison gas (Bahmanyar & Palmer, 2004).

By the year 1980, the United Nations was opposing the invasion of the USSR into Afghanistan. America banned the export of grains to the USSR, and boycotted the Olympic Games held in Moscow in a move to compel it to withdraw its forces from the country.

Mr. Zbigniew Brezezinski later came out to claim that the U. S government, led by President Carter, was financing the activities of Mujahedeen from the year 1980. He said that President Carter had signed a deal with the group on the 3rd July 1979, where he pledged to give aid secretly to counter the attack of the Russians. The main aim was to revenge against the USSR after they had backed Vietnam during the U. S invasion. This is seen as one of the major causes of tension between the U. S government and the Afghan government.

By the year 1989, the Mujahedeen was able to overcome the USSR forces out of the country, and they installed a new president, Muhammad Najibullah, who was a Marxist. This government was able to control the whole country by the year 1992, and the the place of its residence was set in Kabul.

When Muhammad was president, there were inside wrangles inside Mujahedeen. There was war against each other, something that led to numerous losses of lives, and infrastructure was destroyed. During this

fighting, the Taliban group emerged and was able to rise and gain much power.

In the year 1996, the Taliban group was started in Kandahar, and by the year 1998, it has gained control in the whole country. The group had several motives, such as the introduction of laws that were termed as retrogressive and violating human rights. Most human right activists around the world condemned the group (Bahmanyar & Palmer, 2004).

The Taliban conducted several activities, such as the most famous one, the September 11 attacks on the United States. This forced the United States government to collaborate with other nations to launch attacks on the group.

September 11, 2001, and the American Invasion

The Attacks

On September 11, 2001, 4 jetliners were attacked and crashed by 19 people who were linked to the al-Qaeda group. These men were said to have been trained in Afghanistan. The first two planes were crashed into the World Trade Center in New York City; the third one was crashed into the Pentagon outside Washington, DC, and the fourth was crashed in the field that is in Pennsylvania. These attacks led to deaths of more than 3, 000 people, among them 400 police men and fire fighters.

After the attacks, the President of the United States, George W. Bush, began a plan to oust Taliban out of Afghanistan and finish the al-Qaeda completely. He went on to request the leader of Taliban, Mullah Mohammed, to surrender all the people who are leaders to the al-Qaeda group to the US authorities.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-war-in-afghanistan-analysis/>

Mohammed, however, refused to heed to these demands prompting the United States authorities to implement a plan of war on Afghanistan (Ballard, Lamm, & Wood, 2012).

Invasion of Afghanistan

In September 26, 2001, the United States' invasion in Afghanistan began, and a team from the Central Intelligence Agency went to the nation. They began work in collaboration with groups that were against Taliban. The US believed that a partnership with forces in Afghanistan would make sure that minimal force would be used to get the culprits. The Pentagon wanted to avoid a prolonged occupation of Afghanistan by the US army as it had happened in the USSR earlier. The Americans, therefore, relied on alliances from the northern part of Afghanistan, such as Tajik and Uzbek. They also had a few alliances from the south, Pashtuns and Karzai.

On 7th October, the team from the CIA together with the British and US forces started training, advising and giving equipment to Afghans to empower them in their attacks on Taliban. They trained them on air attacks and provided war aircrafts, which were used to attack the Taliban. The Afghan forces worked with the help of the US forces, but the two fell out when the forces defied US wishes by marching into Kabul while the Taliban retreated, and there was no fight.

The Taliban power ended on December 6 after the fall of its spiritual home Kandahar, which was the largest city in southern Afghanistan. It was besieged by a force from the south led by Karzai and another from the north commanded by Gul Agha Sherzai. Both forces sought their assistance from <https://assignbuster.com/the-war-in-afghanistan-analysis/>

the United States. The Taliban leaders spread in the rural areas of Afghanistan and the Pakistan border while, on the other hand, the anti-Talibans met in Bonn, Germany, where the United Nations (UN) had sponsored a conference. The underground efforts by the United States made it through, and Karzai became the country's interim leader.

There emerged an intensive search for Osama bin Laden, and Ayman al-Zawahiri who was the deputy chief of the Al-Qaeda. Other than during the time Bin Laden was killed in 2011 by the U. S. forces the only time when the Americans came closest to him was in December 2001 during the battle of Tora Bora, which was his mountain stronghold. However, Bin Laden might have slipped to Pakistan through the help of the Afghan and Pakistani forces which aided the Americans. There arose criticism as to why the U. S. military failed to lead the assault at Tora Bora themselves but instead allowed the Afghan forces to do the same. This was reiterated by Sen. John Kerry, a democratic presidential candidate, during his campaigns of the 2004 general election. Al-Qaeda re-operated in the tribal areas of Pakistan's northwest border with Afghanistan. Omar settled with the top lieutenants of Taliban in Quetta, a Pakistani city, in Balochistan, a remote south western province. In the first phase of the war, among the final major battles was in March 2002 in Paktia, an eastern province with Operation Anaconda. This battle involved the U. S. and Afghan forces that fought Taliban militants and 800 al-Qaeda. As a result, through this operation, certain countries' troops joined the war, including special operations forces from Australia, Canada, France, Norway, Germany, and Denmark (Ballard, Lamm, & Wood, 2012).

Iraq on the Move

<https://assignbuster.com/the-war-in-afghanistan-analysis/>

After the expulsion of the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda, the international focus moved to Afghanistan in terms of building and reconstruction efforts of the nation. In April 2002, Bush promised substantial assistance in terms of finance through the “ Marshall Plan”. Earlier, Afghanistan received inadequate funds since all attention had shifted from U. S. officials to Iraq. Between 2001 and 2009, the U. S. Congress offered Afghanistan over \$38 billion. More than half of this was used to train and equip Afghan security forces, and the rest was what was required in the development of a country.

There arose arguments as to U. S. allowing foreign forces to deploy beyond Kabul. This was from the Pentagon which was concerned that Afghanistan would drag down growth of the US economy since most of the resources were invested into the war. At times, the International Security Assistance Forces attempted to venture into areas that were beyond Kabul. These ventures were highly frustrated by the countries that formed the forces. Some restrictions were enforced concerning the extents to which these forces would go into the war. The force was overseen by the NATO, and it was its first mission carried out outside Europe. The biggest challenge was the lack of troops since most international nations lacked commitment.

In Afghanistan, the United States was represented by the largest force, and it was the one that bore the biggest losses. By the year 2010, more than 1000 US forces men had been killed; 300 Britons and 250 Canadian forces troops had been killed, as well. In the Afghan’s south, fighting was most intense, and the British and Canadian forces established their troops. On the other hand, more than twenty other nations, led by Germany and France, established their troops in the north where there was slightly less intense

fighting as it was in the south. With time, the war grew more intense, and casualties increased; there was more pressure from the western nations to withdraw their forces from the battlefield.

On the 1st May 2003, the United States Secretary of Defense declared an end to the 'major combat'. On this very day, the President of USA announced an end to combat operations in Afghanistan. By this time, the number of US troops in the country was 8, 000. This allowed for the first elections that were democratic for the first time since the Taliban rule had been demolished. These elections were held on October 9, 2004. The voter turnout was 80%, and Karzai was elected President for a term of five years. A year later, the country held parliamentary elections, with women garnering several seats, which had been set aside so as to ensure an equitable gender balance.

Karzai had a lot of powers vested on him by the constitution, but he ended up becoming a very weak leader since he was isolated after the war had intensified in the country. Nevertheless, several attempts to assassinate him failed, with the most famous one being the September 2004 attacks that were carried out by rockets that almost hit the helicopter he was on board. The numerous security issues made him spend most of his time in his palace situated in Kabul. His government was accused of being very corrupt, and the lack of international support made it very hard for Karzai to form an army or police forces (Ballard, Lamm, & Wood, 2012).

The Resurgence of Taliban

As the year 2005 began, Taliban came up with new tactics that it used to reassertion its presence. Initially, Taliban had used open field combat against the US. Then, they adopted guerrilla tactics to counter the U. S and NATO forces. They adopted the use of bombs buried in the ground, suicide bombers, and improved explosive devices (IEDs) that were very effective as they caused a lot of casualties to the forces. One of the attacks was the bombing on the embassy of India where an excess of 50 people were killed.

The resurgence of the Taliban championed for the increase in the anti-American and anti-Western views among most people in Afghanistan. The slow rate at which the country reconstructed was one of the major causes of the rebellion of Afghans against the western countries. Another reason was the widely reported cases of abuse of prisoners who were under custody of the US in their detention centers. The increased corruption by the government that was supported by the US and NATO forces cause a lot of rebellion from the people in Afghanistan. Lastly, the big number of casualties that were injured in the war made most civilians oppose the activities of the US and NATO forces (Samuel-Azran, 2010).

Most of funding to the Taliban groups was from some very rich people and organizations in the Persian Gulf. They also traded in opium, and thus, they got a lot of income from the business; although, poppy cultivation was banned by the end of the Taliban control of power.

During all this time, the United States did not manage either to capture or to kill any top Taliban commanders. It was until 2007 when Mullah Obaidullah Akhund, who was the number three leaders in Taliban, was captured while in

Pakistan, and later on, Mullah Dadullah, who was the top commander in the Taliban military, was killed while they were fighting against the U. S. forces. The small number of leaders that were killed by the U. S. military made them target, to a great deal, these insurgents. Most of them lived in Pakistan where the U. S. forces used missiles that were targeted at the sparsely populated. The U. S. also threatened Pakistanian religious leaders that they could use more drone attacks on these religious groups if they did not cooperate in the battle against the Taliban (Samuel-Azran, 2010).

Obama's Surge

Barrack Obama, the U. S. President, joined the White House promising to bring attention and make use of resources to end the war in Afghanistan. On Feb 2009, he sent more U. S. troops on top of those that had already been there and the NATO service members. He further replaced General David McKiernan, the commanding general, with General Stanley McChrystal, due to need for radical changes. The new strategy entailed persuading the opponents to defect and encourage reconciliation among the Talibans and Karzai's government.

In September 2009, the new commander, McChrystal, explained his need for more troops in his new strategy and did this through a private report that with time leaked to the press. According to him, they would lose the war within a year's time if there would be no troop in place. The Obama's government brought in 30, 000 extra troops to Afghanistan in December 1 through a speech he made at west Point in the U. S. Military Academy. This increased the deaths of the U. S. combatants by almost twice the number in

the earlier year over a similar period. In December 2009, there was a suicide bomb by the al-Qaeda at an air base in Bagram, in the eastern province of Khost. As a result of this attack, seven of the agency members died.

Early in 2010, there was an assault surge in Marja, a southern province of Helmand. The U. S. Marines emerged victorious even as their commander McChrystal planned another offensive in Kandahar. As president, Obama's first visit to Afghanistan was on March 28. During his visit, Obama warned Karzai against corruption in his government. From this, Karzai made attempts to reconcile, but Mullah Omar, the Taliban leader, did not yield. A further controversial effort was a Pakistan's offer to mediate Afghan peace talks. In June 2010, Obama replaced the commander McChrystal with General David Petraeus among other officials. In 2011, the war entailed dealing with Talibans and apprehending the leaders of the al-Qaeda.

On May 2, 2011, Bin Laden was killed by U. S. forces in Abbottabad Pak. It was then confirmed that talks were ongoing between the Talibans and the U. S. government. The U. S. forces were announced by Obama to have withdrawn from the Afghanistan since they had managed to see the killing of the al-Qaeda leaders and the ending of their operations. Early in 2012, the U. S. and Afghan negotiators reached a conclusion concerning the matters that had brought friction among Obama and Karzai. In this agreement, it was set out that the U. S. was committed to offering the Afghan government with military support after 2014. Most Afghans were positive about this agreement as they feared that if the U. S. totally withdrew, there would be a possibility of another civil war.

Theoretical Construct

Levels of Analysis

In most cases, the action that is carried out is always caused by another action. In this case, the cause of the United States invasion on Afghanistan and Iraq was to make sure that the Taliban was disarmed. The U. S. also had a mission of liberating people in Iraq from the dictatorial leadership of Saddam Hussein, which was oppressive. However, this decision was taken by the U. S. government, led by the former President George W. Bush for some reasons. These reasons are explained in the three levels of analysis which are: the individual level analysis, the state level analysis, and the system level analysis.

The State Level Analysis

Since this level covers the widest area of politics in America, it is the most appropriate one. In the U. S., the foreign policies are influenced, to a large extent, by the legislators, both local and international media, the opinion held by the public, and the parties that are in opposition. Lobbies, such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), said that the U. S. had to utilize its military might to eliminate the threat that was posed by the Taliban group. Led by Jim Moran who was a diplomat in Virginia, they argued that the only way to eliminate this threat was to destroy it completely. They argued that, in the past, no one could have thought the Iran could become a big threat as it had grown to be. Therefore, there was nothing to prove that both Iraq and Afghanistan could not grow to the same. Such sentiments were

expressed by most politicians in the U. S., which proved that most decisions were influencing by the public opinion (Duncan, 2008).

The nature of the foreign policies in the U. S. is based on the legacy of the country which is historical. It is also determined by the politics of the day, as well as the cultural and economic situation of the country in question. It is arguable whether the major reason for the U. S. invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq is its missionary characteristics. The U. S. has a policy which is usually very idealistic. The USA is in a position to see the countries that are becoming a threat to the security and well being of the world. It is, therefore, encouraged by the nature of its political system, and wish that one day, all the nations would cooperate to have one peaceful world. It, therefore, had to use its foreign policies to ensure that all the nations are operating in a democracy, and there is free trade.

The Individual Level

This involves the decisions that were made on a personal level, or within the cabinet. The first person to speak before the actual war was President George Bush who demanded the surrender of Osama bin Laden and asked the al-Qaeda to give up completely their base. The Afghan government was not for the idea of surrendering Osama but instead offered to try him inside its own country. They went on to request that the U. S. should give it evidence that would incriminate Osama, something which they failed to do. Then the U. S. decided to launch military operations in the country.

It was the U. S. Secretary of State who solicited for support from other powerful nations in the world, such as Germany, France, and Britain (Duncan, 2008).

The System Level

This analysis looks into the behavior of the country in respect to the international system. The systems in the international countries are usually the ones that trigger reaction from the country. Since the 1970s, there was the Cold War between the U. S. and the USSR where every country wanted to maximize its supremacy over the other. One of the major causes of the U. S. intervention on Iraq and Afghanistan was its quest to prove that it was the most powerful nation. The USA, therefore, had to use all its military power against all those who threatened it to make sure that it remained as the most powerful state (Duncan, 2008).

The Useful Theories to Explain the Conflict

Realism

According to this theory, the politics in the world is driven by the interests that are put by some individuals or groups at a competitive advantage or interests. Some of the reasons that a nation usually considers before it moves to war with another nation is whether the war is worth going onto and whether the country can actually succeed in such a war. In Afghanistan, the period that the war took was itself suspected. There was no reason as to why the U. S had to stay as long as it did in Afghanistan since it has other more threatening issues that needed to be addressed. Such issues were China,

which was establishing its sphere of influence in the world, and India, which had a lot of ambitions.

The increasing number of minerals in Afghanistan did not come very well to the United States. It is argued that, since the Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan could not trade very well with the U. S. and could opt for Russia or China. This could pose a major threat to the economic benefits of the U. S. The first major move was to threaten the political stability of these countries. These local resources, if they were exploited well, could be able to give returns in less than five years.

Liberalism

This is where a country tries to ensure that there are peace and cooperation among all the countries with which they relate. The U. S. intervention of Afghanistan was triggered by the September 11 2001 attacks by members Taliban. The U. S. defined them as a threat to international security, and something needed to be done. The Afghanistan government refused to surrender Osama Bin Laden to the United States officials and to destroy the al-Qaeda bases completely. This made the U. S and NATO forces invade Afghanistan.

Later on, they invaded Iraq when it was reported that the al-Qaeda had moved its base to the country. The Saddam Hussein government was oppressing people and was not cooperative to the U. S and NATO forces, which made them use much force to remove him from power.

People later came to realize that the excuse of liberalism was no longer justified in Afghanistan. People realized that the country was able to govern itself. They argued that the big military presence in Afghanistan was not justifiable, and the little support to the elected president, Karzai, by the U. S shows that they did not have much interest in the wellbeing of Afghanistan (Hussain, 2010).

Peak Oil Theory

This theory argues that there will be a time when the production of oil reduces drastically, meaning the prices would be very high. It is reported that the peak oil was the major force that led to the U. S. invasion of Iraq as it intended to invade the nation and take over the oil fields. Such a deed gave the U. S. a chance to exploit the fields as the peak oil period passed.

In 2001, Cheney's energy task was formed, and it examined several maps of Iraq and other Persian nation's oil wells. The U. S Vice President had been known to have a lot of knowledge on peak oil even before he went to the state house (Hussain, 2010).

Conclusion

When the United States invaded Afghanistan and later Iran, the moves looked like very justifiable. The USA moved into Afghanistan just after the September 11 2001 to demolish the Taliban.

The underlying issues were explained from the point of view of various theories and the different levels of analysis showed that the U. S. invaded the countries, due to its own interests. The Taliban group was posing a

<https://assignbuster.com/the-war-in-afghanistan-analysis/>

security concern in the world, and it was a good move to invade and destroy its base. However, the invasion also worked for the advantage of the U. S. This is explained by the unnecessarily big number of solders sent into the country and the long time that they stayed there.