

# Future of Taliban Regime in Afghanistan: An Overview

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Publication date: 7 May 2023

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Afghanistan's future has become highly uncertain since the Taliban took over in August 2021. With their new governance style now in effect, many are concerned about potential impacts on human security, and regional stability within Afghanistan. My aim with this paper is to explore different possibilities for how their regime might pan out in the future using a variety of international security theories including realism, constructivism, and liberalism. In order to grasp the complex workings of this particular regime, it is important that we examine it through a variety of lenses.

## Background

Afghanistan has suffered from instability, war, and foreign interference for decades. It all started with the Soviet Union. The USSR supported Afghanistan's communist government, and after they were overthrown by anti-communist groups, the Soviets initiated an invasion. They entered Afghanistan in 1979 and began fighting against the opposition groups for almost ten years but still couldn't defeat them, so they finally withdrew their forces back and left Afghanistan in 1989. This historical event was the beginning of a dark chapter for Afghanistan, a chaotic political turmoil with no peace or stability.

Following that, several so-called "Islamic groups" started fighting for control, of which the Taliban then took control in 1996, establishing the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Under their rule, they began to provide a safe haven for Al-Qaeda leaders and soldiers, particularly Osama Bin Laden, a world-known terrorist. When the Twin Towers (9/11) were attacked in United States, the Bush administration vowed to combat terrorism, specifically Al-Qaeda, so invaded Afghanistan with the hopes of destroying Al-Qaeda and the Taliban who supported them. Following the Taliban's collapse in 2001, Hamid Karzai was elected as president, and for once, people began to hope for a peaceful, democratic, and stable Afghanistan.

Even during Hamid Karzai's leadership, Afghanistan was not stable at all; there remained fighting with the Taliban, security issues (bomb blasts), violence, crime, and corruption. Later in 2014, when Ashraf Ghani became the president, there were some signs of improvement in the development and governance sectors, but gradually the country's situation even worsened more.

Eventually in 2019, under US pressure, Afghanistan started negotiations with the Taliban in Qatar, where both sides talked about a peaceful resolution for the country. The US also reached an agreement with the Taliban in which they agreed to depart from Afghanistan in a timely way as long as the Taliban did not engage and target their soldiers. Unfortunately, all hopes for peace went down the drain when US troops started leaving in May-August 2022, the Taliban intensified their attacks and ultimately gained control, declaring their victory over the Afghan government and the US.

Now, even though the Taliban are in power, the country is in limbo, the international community has not formally recognized them as the legitimate authority, and their future is yet to be decided. So, the key actors in Afghanistan over the last 40 years have been the USSR, the US, NATO, the Afghan government(s), and the Taliban, of which only the Taliban remains in the country.

### **Human Security**

In order for my claims to have some scientific evidence and to put my knowledge into practice, I'm using different political theories and systems to analyze the situation and make predictions accordingly. Let's start with human security which is to make sure people and communities are safe and healthy, and to prevent problems before they happen. Positive and negative human security exists. Positive security benefits people and communities by addressing the root causes of the issues and providing basic needs like healthcare, education, food, clean water, and better economic conditions. Negative security relies on force or armies to prevent threats from occurring and is somehow associated with traditional thinking where the government uses the military for protection.

So, speaking of this, if we try to analyze the Taliban's current administration from the concept of human security, I think they mostly practice negative security, always showing their military strength whenever they are threatened by the public. They employ violence and fear to control people, and instead of providing them with better opportunities, freedom, security, and basic necessities, they violate their rights by limiting basic services like healthcare and education, for example, when they banned education for women. This may have repercussions for the Taliban; if people are not given positive security and are always abused, they may rebel against the group, possibly bringing them down of power.

There were multiple protests against the prohibition of women's education where people came out to streets, but the Taliban continuously resorted to employing force and violence to suppress them. Such behaviors – the Taliban's inability to provide positive services and full-scale safety – could result in more and more people standing up which could lead to great internal turmoil overthrowing their regime once again.

## **Realism**

Realism theory explains how states behave globally based on power and self-interest. States are the primary actors, and when they interact with other states, they must first consider their own interests in terms of power, security, and safety. Realists argue that the world is a very chaotic place where everyone (states) is competing for power, and that's why states should only rely on themselves, using their own strength and ability.

Looking at the Taliban's control in Afghanistan from a realist perspective, they mainly use force to achieve their objectives, including preserving their religious beliefs as well as securing their positions. This approach of extremely prioritizing power and self-interest above all else could lead to negative future consequences that can cause internal and external conflict and undermine their control. This can be seen in the Taliban's battle with some resistance groups, including the North Resistance Front (NRF), where both sides are striving for power.

Additionally, the Taliban's use of force and support for extremist groups make it difficult to build relationships in a world that assumes cooperation only takes place when it aligns with the self-interest of all parties involved. Some claims were in place that the Taliban had deployed suicide squad battalions on the border with Tajikistan. This mindset of them could result in dire consequences, including the possibility of military confrontation with its neighbors, putting their regime in jeopardy.

## **Constructivism and Securitization of Liberalism**

Constructivism helps us understand a country's behavior on the international stage by examining its social context, beliefs, and values. This theory emphasizes that international relations are about how different countries perceive themselves and interact with one another. Meanwhile, we have liberalism that is countries should prioritize democracy, human rights, and collaboration with other nations for mutual benefits. I would also like to mention securitization here as it helps me further support my arguments. Securitization occurs when governments exaggerate an issue's severity to portray it as an emergency security threat for persuading people to take immediate action against it.

Like most international actors, the Taliban has constructed a narrative for their war that legitimizes their past and present actions. They view themselves as the real representatives of Islam, whereas other countries are accused of being puppets of the West. The Taliban adhere to

radical Islam and consider themselves to be extreme Islamic fundamentalists. According to their narrative, Afghanistan has been and should continue to be an Islamic country based on Islamic teachings, with no other forms of political ideology accepted. They are strictly against liberalism, and any other Western ideologies coming from it, such as feminism, LGBTQ+, etc.

Their hatred of liberalism is so much that they have successfully **securitized** it among the Afghan people, claiming such Western ideologies are the greatest threat to Islam and the culture. Using this medium of fear, they banned women from working, from studying, from walking alone in the streets, basically confining them in their homes like prisoners. This initiative of the Taliban where they construct fake narratives to securitize liberalism and marginalize women and other minorities will showcase a bad image of their governance on international stage, making it much more difficult to get accepted as the legitimate rulers of the country.

If the Taliban continue to abuse Afghans and ignore basic human security, their reign will certainly be short-lived. If they continue practicing radical Islamic fundamentalism, where human rights are violated and democracy is destroyed, international organizations may feel compelled to intervene once more, bringing an end to their regime, as they did in 2001.

## **Conclusion**

When US and NATO troops left Afghanistan in 2021, the Taliban, an extremist group, took control of the country. The Taliban's governing style is characterized by negative human security practices such as the use of force and restrictions on individual freedoms to maintain their control. Their desire for power, as well as their belief in radical Islamist ideology, demonstrates their realist side, which prioritizes self-interest over cooperation. This is proved by their oppressive policies that violate liberal and democratic values, such as the ban on women's education for almost a year and a half now. Surprisingly enough, to justify their oppressive policies, they have constructed a narrative that portrays liberalism as threatening.

Unfortunately, the Taliban's actions have the potential to escalate conflicts, violate the responsibility to protect, and undermine their control over Afghanistan. Given these circumstances, the Taliban's future appears dark. Their realist approach to governance increases the likelihood of instability and conflict, while their oppressive policies violate liberalism and human rights, undermining their legitimacy. The narrative they constructed to justify their oppression will inevitably lead to international isolation, further weakening their grip on power. Without legitimacy or stability, neither the Taliban nor any other power-thirsty group can effectively govern, putting Afghanistan's future at great risk.

