



China's Strategic View to Afghanistan After the US Withdrawal

Said Taher Erfani¹; Said Mohammad Alemi²

¹ Professor at Khatam al-Nabiyyin University, graduate of Al-Mustafa Al-Alamiyah University, Afghanistan

² Deputy Academic Director, Institute of Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan

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Abstract

The relations between China and Afghanistan have been regulated in the past decades based on Beijing's view of regional and international developments. The withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan and the establishment of the Islamic Emirate government in Afghanistan changed China's approach towards Afghanistan from various perspectives. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan changed the balance of power in Afghanistan and, consequently, its surrounding areas. China's view to Afghanistan has always been based on security considerations, and currently economic considerations are also prominent in it. China's grand economic plan in Pakistan and Central Asia on the one hand and China's security concerns about the connection between extremist groups in Afghanistan and the Uyghurs in the neighboring country have been the most important issues of China's attention. The rise of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of US forces have caused a change in the pattern of relations from calculated indifference to China's strategic view of Afghanistan. In the present study, we have discussed and examined why China's view to Afghanistan has changed from calculated indifference to strategic view.

Keywords: *China; Afghanistan; Strategic Outlook; Security Considerations; Economic Incentives*

Introduction

China is an opportunistic and rational country. It plans its actions and movements based on its own interests. During the period of its great rise, the world has been amazed by China's progress and development in various economic, political, military and cultural fields. China's positioning has always been determined to secure greater profits and national interests of the country. China has always monitored important geopolitical and geo-economic regions and has been quietly and creepily seeking to open a foothold in such regions. Central Asian countries and Afghanistan have always been of interest to China. A review of China-Afghanistan relations in the past decades shows that China's distance and proximity to Afghanistan have depended on China's internal constraints, regional and international developments, China's competition with other actors and confronting extremist threats. Looking back at Afghanistan's past four decades, we can point to China's covert assistance to arm the Mujahideen in 1980 during the occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet forces (Sharmam 2010: 2). Official relations between Afghanistan and China began in the 1950s with Afghanistan's recognition of China; China's approach to

Afghanistan has always been economic with an emphasis on security considerations. In the past decades, security considerations have always been the first priority for Chinese officials in Afghanistan. Examples of these are the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the civil war in Afghanistan, and the presence of American and NATO forces in the country. As a great power that is establishing hegemony in its surroundings, China evaluates every movement and presence of rival actors in the region from the perspective of its competition with those actors. The presence of the Soviet Union and the United States in Afghanistan in the past decades can be examined from this perspective. In this context, we can mention China's cooperation and lack of cooperation with the United States in Afghanistan. In the 1980s and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, China stood with the United States and against the Soviet Union, and after the US-led Western coalition invaded Afghanistan in September 2001, it refused to cooperate militarily and security with this country and kept itself as far away as possible from the efforts of foreign actors present in Afghanistan for political reconciliation and reconstruction of Afghanistan. It also refused to accept the title of Western partner in the reconstruction of Afghanistan (Hsusheng, 2012: 12). While coalition forces were engaged in the fight against the Taliban, threatening China's strategic interests, Beijing began plans to explore and monitor Afghanistan's underground resources, and this action was met with serious criticism from the United States and even Russia (Zhao Hong, 2013: 3). The withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan in 2021 had serious consequences for regional balance in South and Central Asia, and China's attention was focused on these two regions. All regional players sought to closely monitor developments and present multiple scenarios to minimize possible security and political costs. Any deployment of forces in Afghanistan would certainly affect the current and future interests and goals of influential players in the region. China, as a neighboring country of Afghanistan and one of the most important players that finds itself involved in an economic war with the United States, closely monitored developments in Afghanistan. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 was both an opportunity and a threat for China. China's concerns have been about the spread of extremism from Afghanistan to China's territories and borders, and China's opportunities have been to remove its major rival, the United States, from the region and Afghanistan and to pave the way for Chinese economic investments in the region. For several reasons, China has its own detailed planning in Afghanistan without the presence of foreign forces: 1- Afghanistan is one of the focal points in the One Belt, One Road initiative; 2. Religious extremists are based on both sides of the Afghan-Chinese border lines, and China is concerned about the connection between the Uyghurs and ISIS; 3. In order to expand its political influence in the region, China must expand its influence to the remaining areas such as Afghanistan and pursue its security and political goals through the economic lens; and 4. Beijing expects material and moral support from Chinese Muslim protesters in the west of the country. Hence, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan has increased China's suspicion. As one of Afghanistan's neighboring countries, China had chosen a "wait and see" approach to developments in Afghanistan in the last twenty years and during the presence of US and NATO forces. But after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, China changed its policy of conscious and calculated indifference towards Afghanistan and adopted a cooperative and step-by-step approach. With the rise to power of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan and the defeat of US and NATO forces, China has sought a strategic partnership with post-transformation Afghanistan. In this study, we seek to examine China's strategic view of Afghanistan.

Research Literature

The field of study of Afghanistan in general and Afghanistan's relations with China in particular has always faced a lack of first-hand sources. However, regarding Afghanistan-China relations, several sources can be mentioned that have attempted to examine the relations between the two countries. In an article titled "China and Afghanistan: China's Interests, Positions, and Views", Huo Neng Zhao has focused on China's security approach to Afghanistan, focusing on the component of foreign powers present in Afghanistan, such as the Soviet Union and the United States. John Calabrese (2021) in his article "The Taliban's Conundrum for China" has addressed the effects of the Taliban's capture of Kabul on China's foreign relations and geopolitical and security policies towards its western borders and beyond.

Angela Stanzel (2016) in her article "China's Strategic Interests in Afghanistan", focusing on the historical relations between China and Afghanistan, has noted that Afghanistan has never been a priority player for China and that Afghanistan has always been considered to achieve another goal. In an article titled "China's Strategic Assessment of Afghanistan," Sun Yan (2020) discussed China's security concerns about the alliance of extremist groups along China's border lines and the increased security costs of the Belt and Road Initiative. Hassan Abbas, in his book "The Return of the Taliban; Afghanistan after the US Withdrawal," discusses the friendly relations between China and the Islamic Emirate after the US withdrawal and considers these relations to be strategic economic and security opportunities for China.

Theoretical Framework of the Research

The theoretical foundations of the research are based on three axes of stasis. The first foundation is the transition of power and patterns of order arising from various turning points in the global power cycle. The second foundation is the structural pressures arising from the change in the global power cycle and the change in the pattern of relations between powers satisfied with the status quo and its challengers, which are intensified in the transition situation from two directions. The first path is the structural pressures emanating from the powers that maintain the status quo, which will try to prevent the transition and put pressure on the countries that will cause such a transition. The second path is the pressures that will be created by the growing powers to change the order and make the transition possible. The third path is the channels and operational areas that are considered the point of creating or transferring pressure, among which geopolitics can be considered the point of creating, transferring and stabilizing structural pressures (Irfani, Ghasemi, 1401: 4). Structural pressures on declining powers have two vital paths. The first path is from the emerging powers that are subject to the law of growth, and this growth activates the dynamics of relative power in the international system and intensifies its functioning. By reducing the level of power difference between challengers and declining powers, this dynamic leads the international system to a balance of opposite forces and a strategy of balancing challengers against declining powers, which is a prelude to the formation of an unstructured order and the beginning of power replacement. The second path to create structural pressures on the hegemon or ruling power is their inclusion by laws such as the law of diminishing returns and the law of increasing war costs and the serviceization of the economy. The intersection of these two paths causes the accumulation of structural pressures (Qasemi, 2008: 22). In the meantime, geopolitics has a special prominence. Geopolitics as a form of knowledge and power was born in the period of imperial competition between 1870 and 1945 when rival empires arranged, changed and revised the lines of power during the numerous wars they had with each other. The lines of power in question formed the borders of the political map of the world (Dalby, 1998: 15). These imperialist networks were formed by the great powers to achieve their goals in the world. In other words, geopolitics can be defined simply as what the great powers are involved in, what they do, and what they are best at. (Klieman, 2015: 4) Basically, geopolitics seeks to examine how geographical factors, including territory, population, strategic location, natural resources, etc., affect relations between states and their efforts to gain power and dominate others. (Qasemi, 2008: 4) Geopolitics can be said to be another type of human activity in their differences, whether political, economic, or strategic. Geographer and political strategist Nicholas Spykman believed that geography is one of the key factors in shaping foreign policy priorities. The primary characteristics of a geographical area (states on land) are their location, topography, climate, and natural "energy" resources. All of these factors affect the political and socio-cultural environment of a state. (Dhaka, 2005: 20). The growth and nature of this field of study itself became a spatial issue. The institutionalization of this field led to the establishment of several schools of thought such as the German school led by Karl Haushofer, the English school led by Hilfred MacNeider, and later the American school led by Soersky (Ibid). According to Ratzel, there are three characteristics of the state - territory, people and biospace that contribute to the geopolitical dynamics of the state. He formulated an organic theory of states that was based on the assumption that the political existence of the state is like a living organism with space and needs a larger space to grow. (Dhaka, 2005: 23) International politics is a constant struggle for survival in which states

seek to adapt to their environmental conditions: states must grow or perish. The growth of states on the surface of the earth can be compared to the growth of plants on the surface of the earth. The nation is a living entity, which throughout history has become increasingly dependent on the land on which it lives.

Background of China-Afghanistan Relations

To apply the theory of power cycles and their displacement in the international system, we must examine the history of China-Afghanistan relations. In the following, we will discuss a brief overview of these relations. Afghanistan-China relations date back to the Han Dynasty in China and the heyday of the ancient Silk Road (Iranica.com). In ancient times, the region that is now Afghanistan was famous for its devotion to Buddhism and its location on the Silk Road. Communications, not official relations, between China and Afghanistan date back to ancient times. The main point in the ancient relations between the two countries is the trip of Afghan envoys to the city of Luoyang (the capital of China at that time) and paying homage to the then emperor of the Tang dynasty with the aim of strengthening trade relations and discussing silk. Because the Chinese interpreted this trip as evidence of the renewal of the Afghan treaty with the empire and placed that land under the Tang dynasty at that time (Haywood, 1998: 19). The Tang Dynasty was one of the most prominent periods in China in terms of wealth and improved livelihoods. During this period, Afghanistan, which was located on the Silk Road, also benefited from this perspective. What is remembered from the past is the relationship between the two countries related to warding off the threat of invaders to China's western borders and protecting the land trade route from Central Asia and Afghanistan to South Asia and beyond to Iran. The relationship continued in this way until the beginning of World War II and the Japanese attack on Muslim-populated areas of China in World War II. At this time, China sent representatives to seek support from other countries (Hsiao, 2010: 17). The official beginning of relations between the two countries dates back to January 20, 1955. Afghanistan was one of the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China, and in 1955, Abdul Samad was established as the first Afghan ambassador to Beijing (Iranica.com). Subsequently, Chinese Prime Minister Chuen Lai and his deputy Wulang visited Afghanistan in January 1957. This was the first official visit by a high-ranking Chinese official to Afghanistan. During this visit, Chuen Lai met with Zahir Shah and Prime Minister Daoud Khan, Deputy Prime Minister Ali Mohammad, and Foreign Minister Mohammad Naeem of Afghanistan. The Chinese Prime Minister's visit to Afghanistan led to the establishment of a new level of relations based on mutual understanding between the two countries and laid a solid foundation for the expansion of friendly relations in the future. In October 1957, Afghan Prime Minister Daoud Khan also visited Beijing at the invitation of China. During this visit, he met with Mao Zedong, Vice Chairman Zhou Enlai, and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China (Synovita, 2013: 6). Official political relations between the two countries took a more serious form due to China's multi-million dollar aid for the development of Afghanistan during the Cold War, and led to the signing of a border treaty on November 22, 1963. This treaty resolved the border dispute over the Wakhan Corridor (under Afghan control) on the border between Badakhshan Province in Afghanistan and the Xinjiang Autonomous Region in China. According to this treaty, the length of the China-Afghanistan border was determined to be 92.45 km. In 1960, China and Afghanistan signed the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Non-Aggression in order to expand bilateral economic relations. Since then, China's approach towards Afghanistan has been limited to the economic sphere, and political and security affairs have been pursued in a transitory, limited and imperceptible manner. It is noteworthy that in 2006, they extended the 1960 treaty with the aim of redefining the relations between the two countries based on good neighborliness and respect for maintaining peace and stability in the region. During the Cold War and the subsequent deployment of forces by China's strategic rivals in Afghanistan, namely the Soviet Union and the United States, China's approach towards Afghanistan changed. On December 27, 1979, with the deployment of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, Beijing quickly condemned the military attack and refused to recognize the Babrak Karmal government. Official relations between the two countries were suspended and the Chinese embassy was downgraded to a consulate, dealing only with consular and visa issues. From China's perspective, the most important reason for the Soviets' entry into Afghanistan was to tighten the security fence around the country, and it viewed the

developments in Afghanistan from this perspective. With the coming to power of the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan, relations between Beijing and Kabul changed from friendly to hostile. Afghan communists always accused China of supporting anti-communist and anti-government groups in Afghanistan. China responded to the threats by supporting the Afghan mujahideen and increasing its military presence on the Afghan border. During this period, China imported military equipment from the United States to defend itself against Soviet attacks (Starriditor, 2004: 4). China considered the Soviet presence a regional threat to itself and its ally, Pakistan. Therefore, it indirectly entered the Pakistan-US bloc against the Soviets and sent weapons to Afghan militias fighting against the Soviets (Hilali, 2010: 2). The US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 marked the beginning of a new era in Sino-Afghan relations. In December 2001, a delegation from the Chinese Foreign Ministry arrived in Afghanistan to attend the inauguration ceremony of the interim government. The visit laid the foundation for Afghan-Chinese relations in the years that followed. China recognized the transitional government in Afghanistan immediately after it was formed and reopened its embassy in the country in 2002. China's policy during this period was to "not get involved" in political conflicts and not accept military commitments in Afghanistan. In January 2002, Hamid Karzai visited China at the official invitation of Chinese President Jiang Zemin, and met with high-ranking Chinese officials and discussed the Chinese government's assistance for the rehabilitation and development of Afghanistan. During the meeting, one million dollars was donated to Afghanistan in cash. Jiang Zemin also promised \$150 million in aid for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. 30 million yuan was also transferred to Kabul by the end of March 2002. The Chinese embassy in Kabul was officially opened on February 6, 2002 (People.cn), and in May of that year, the Chinese Foreign Minister visited Afghanistan. During this visit, he met with Hamid Karzai and Abdullah Abdullah, and an economic and technical cooperation agreement worth \$30 million was approved with the country. China had strategic concerns about the expanding influence of Russia, India, and Japan and the continued military presence of the United States and NATO in Afghanistan until 2005, but did not take overt action to repel the threat and adopted an approach of calculated indifference (Zhao Hong, 2019: 1-21). China's relations with Afghanistan during this period focused mostly on infrastructure projects such as the establishment of digital communication networks, road construction, dam construction, construction of hospitals, and irrigation systems, as well as limited cooperation in the field of military intelligence. Hamid Karzai's visit to China in 2006 is considered a turning point in the relations between the two countries. After this visit, China became Afghanistan's first trading partner by 2009 (Weitz, 2010: 21). Afghanistan's entry as an observer member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2012 also deepened the relations between the two countries and increased the capacity of China's presence and influence in the country. Since 2012, when the fifth generation of leaders came to power in China, China's diplomacy in Afghanistan has become much more active and dynamic. This trend has continued in various areas, including customs, trade and commerce cooperation, cultural and student exchanges, and the development of political and security cooperation. During this period, China strengthened its position in Kabul by relying on financial assistance and pursued its other goals in Afghanistan by accepting the role of peacekeeper. The component of economic cooperation, border security, investment in mines, and the fight against the threat of extremism had become an integral part of the relations between the two countries. Since 2017, the proposition of Afghanistan's gradual connection to regional infrastructure projects has also gained strength with the Chinese Foreign Minister's back-and-forth diplomacy between Afghanistan and Pakistan. China has tried to establish positive relations between Kabul and Islamabad by focusing on trilateral talks to establish and pursue infrastructure projects, security, and stability in the two countries. In this regard, it has made full use of the tools of the Asian Development Bank and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (Diplomate, 2018: 3). During this period, China has gradually moved from an approach of calculated indifference to a strategic partnership. After the Doha talks and the withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan and the advance of the Islamic Emirate forces from the southern regions to the center and north of Afghanistan, the security component has become a priority for China.

US Withdrawal from Afghanistan and China's Strategic Approach

China's geopolitical approach to its neighborhood includes four political, strategic, economic, and geographical features (Shafi'i, 2016). Beijing hopes that within the framework of these approaches, it can resolve its security-political concerns and achieve its economic goals. The presence of the United States in Afghanistan has always been a serious concern for neighbors, including China. Since the announcement of the withdrawal of American and NATO forces from Afghanistan and the re-emergence of the powerful Taliban in Afghanistan, China has been forced to adopt a more active diplomacy towards regional developments, especially Afghanistan, also security concerns and significant changes in geopolitical and geoeconomic conditions and growing competition with the United States and Russia. Afghanistan, as China's western neighbor, has significant cultural and ideological influence on the Muslim states of Xinjiang and the Uyghur region. The withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan and the simultaneous advance of the Taliban group and the capture of more areas have also changed China's political priorities as a neighbor of Afghanistan, increasing their concerns about the stability of Afghanistan, which certainly does not endanger the long-term interests of that country. In fact, the power vacuum resulting from the withdrawal of Americans from Afghanistan and the sudden fall of the Western-backed government in Kabul has confronted the Chinese with a series of threats and opportunities in this country (Musa, *Strategic Studies of the East*, 1400). Apart from the issue of China's geopolitical and geoeconomic ambitions, based on the theoretical framework discussed at the beginning, the cycle of power and its cyclical nature have caused China to feel responsible after the presence of America and seek to play a role as a hegemon in Afghanistan, the region and the world. China has gained the belief that America is declining and that the one who should be the global hegemon in the future is China. In this regard, two important issues for China in Afghanistan can be considered. China's Commercial and Economic Motivations With the vacuum created by the presence of China's rival forces in Afghanistan, the country's role in Afghanistan and the region is becoming more colorful. Part of this role is China's commercial and economic motivations, and Afghanistan is considered a significant market in this regard. The withdrawal of American forces and the uncertainty of the Afghan government have definitely changed China's approach towards Afghanistan, and this country needs to change its presence levels in this country in order to preserve its interests in Afghanistan and protect its interests and security outside of Afghanistan. According to China, stopping or increasing the cost of implementing the New Silk Road project is one of the US policies to confront this country, weaken its economic power and reduce its strategic depth. Using extremist tools to destabilize the project and provoke the Uyghur people have always been the main options in this regard. Therefore, the economic component towards Afghanistan is also considered with a security approach. Afghanistan's potential to connect to the markets of South, Central and West Asia, along with its rare reserves of silver, gold, lithium, rubidium, cesium, beryllium, copper and iron ore, has made the country attractive to China (Independent, 2018: 2). On the one hand, mineral reserves can make Afghanistan independent of foreign aid. On the other hand, they can exacerbate the situation of chaos, corruption through illegal mines and delay infrastructure and development projects (Jaffari, Benaei, 1401: 155). The New Silk Road and China's View of Afghanistan In 2013, Xi Jinping announced China's grand economic plan. China's goal is to build an extensive network of railways, energy pipelines, highways and border crossings. As he announced, by strengthening regional connections, Asia's transit bottleneck will be resolved (Chatzky and McBride, 2019). By examining the operational and contractual map of the New Silk Road project, it was speculated that the project had omitted Afghanistan and focused its main focus on Pakistan and Central Asian countries. In response to these speculations, China signed a memorandum of understanding in 2016 to enhance bilateral cooperation with Afghanistan in order to integrate the country into the infrastructure network of the Kashgar-Kabul railway project and the Five Nations Railway, and connect Iran, China, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, in addition to connecting Afghanistan to Pakistan (railwaypro.com). In this regard, in September 2016, the first direct train from China arrived in Hairatan in Balkh province. Connecting Afghanistan to global and regional markets and subsequently bringing economic benefits through transit can provide stability in Afghanistan (Iranica.com). The success of China's grand economic

project is largely dependent on security and stability in the region. Therefore, any insecurity and its possible spread to China's peripheral regions, especially Central Asia, will be a security threat to China. Because insecurity in Afghanistan had increased in recent years, there was naturally a possibility of its spreading to neighboring regions, including South Asia and Central Asia. For this reason, the strengthening of the Taliban and the weakening of the Republic were pleasing to China in two ways. Both China's powerful rival in Afghanistan was weakened and there was a possibility of establishing stability in Afghanistan with the coming to power of a strong and decisive government. On the other hand, from China's perspective, the coming to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan could reduce the level of tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan and the economic convergence of the two countries. With the coming to power of the new regime in Afghanistan, China's cooperation with this country has increased and China has used the opportunity to negotiate large investments with the Taliban. Of course, the realization of China's agreements with Afghanistan also has numerous challenges, which can be mentioned as follows:

- 1- Military presence in northern Afghanistan to combat peacekeeping operations and combat terrorist cells and extremism; cooperation with regional countries including Russia, Iran and Pakistan can help Beijing achieve this goal.
- 2- Creating a more efficient security umbrella with the cooperation of regional countries (Iran, Russia, Pakistan have common interests in Afghanistan and against the US and the current liberal order.)
- 3- Increasing the active role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Afghanistan. Therefore, the initiative and security architecture are very important for China, and China's presence with the cooperation of the four countries (Iran, Russia, Pakistan) and balancing their interests will be (Monauri, Kesharian, Sedagati, 1401: 77).

China's Security Concerns and Dependence on Afghanistan in the Taliban Era

In addition to economic challenges and opportunities, regional developments in South Asia affect China's security and political interests as well as its foreign policy. China is keenly interested in peace, stability, and a prosperous economy in the region. These issues contribute to the stability and security of the Xinjiang region (Behboodi Nejad, 1400: 66). Security threats from anti-Chinese groups in Afghanistan and their effects on Xinjiang are a driving force behind China's foreign policy towards Afghanistan. The security dimension in China-Taliban relations has forced Beijing to "effectively control" the Taliban's behavior after the withdrawal of American forces. Afghanistan could provide a platform for Uyghurs to connect with other extremist groups in Central and South Asia and open the way for extremist groups to enter the Chinese government (Worldview.stratfor.com). It seems that the threatening scenarios for the Chinese government are that Xinjiang province will become the next location for terrorist groups to establish themselves after Afghanistan. China has always considered this scenario as a way to undermine its economic progress and sees the immortality of extremist groups in Xinjiang as a result of the overt and covert support of the United States and even Russia. This concern stems from the fact that many Uyghur militants have taken refuge in the Pakistani tribal areas (FATA) and the southern and eastern provinces of Afghanistan (Small, 2015: 3). Given these security concerns, China's approach has shifted from the calculated distance of the past few years to an increased security partnership. China and the Taliban are seeking to cooperate to counter the threat of ISIS in general and ISIS-K in particular. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant Khorasan Province, which declared its existence in 2015, is opposed to the Taliban and believes that the Taliban has pledged allegiance to China against Uyghur Muslims. After a meeting between Chinese and Taliban officials in October 2021, ISIS supporters ridiculed the contact and called the Taliban "Chinese prostitutes." They considered the meeting between Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Taliban's acting foreign minister, and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi as a betrayal of the Taliban towards Chinese Muslims (Uyghurs) (Webber, 2021). According to the ISIS spokesperson, the Taliban has pledged to expel and expel the Uyghurs at China's request. It seems

that the Taliban has assured China that it will not cooperate with Uyghur Muslims, which has caused ISIS to react. In this regard, Beijing is seeking to use diplomacy with the Taliban to pave the way for the elimination and organization of this movement in Afghanistan, and in order for the movement not to proliferate and not to support Uyghur Muslims, the only solution for China now is to establish good relations with the Taliban.

Conclusion

As an eastern neighbor, China has always kept Afghanistan's developments in mind and has tried to keep itself on the safe side. Despite the obvious conflict of interests with the United States, Beijing supported Washington's policy during the twenty years of US presence and had chosen a policy of calculated indifference. China's view of Afghanistan has been based on security and economic components. In the current situation, China considers the Taliban as a political power that cannot be ignored. As an economic player, China needs a stable and conflict-free Afghanistan to achieve its economic interests. It seems that the two issues of economy and security are driving China to increase its level of engagement and presence in Afghanistan. China's motivations towards Afghanistan are examined at two levels: Afghanistan itself and Afghanistan as part of a larger game. China's grand economic plan can be easily realized with a stable Afghanistan. An unstable Afghanistan for China means increasing security risks in the west of the country and hindering the progress of its economic ambitions. The success of the New Silk Road depends on the stability of the region, especially Central Asia, and the spread of instability in Afghanistan will increase the possibility of insecurity spreading to Central Asian countries. China has not been able to make Afghanistan a core member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Therefore, it is difficult to create a regional consensus to resolve the crisis in Afghanistan with Chinese leadership. In the current situation, the question has often been raised as to how Chinese military and security forces will enter Afghanistan if the crisis in Afghanistan spreads. Looking at regional developments and examining the country's macro approaches, this will likely happen in two ways: 1. The connection of extremism on both sides of the China-Afghanistan border; 2. The spread of crisis and insecurity to South and Central Asia.

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