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**COMPARISON OF RUSSIAN AND AMERICAN VIEWS ON TERRORISM IN AFGHANISTAN**

**Farid Ahmad Seddiqi**

**MA in political science and international relation, Istanbul Aydin University**

**Institute of Social science**

Abstract

The United States has decided to increase its force in Afghanistan as Russia has recently stepped up its intervention and is responding immediately to Washington's new decision on Afghanistan. It raises important questions, is it possible, through the new US strategy, to intensify US-Russian competition in Afghanistan, thereby to shape new geopolitical conditions in the region, and to realize the great historical game that always feared? On the other hand, can Afghanistan become the summit of the US-Russia negotiation table on counterterrorism? To answer these questions, the new US strategy must consider in Afghanistan, the reasons for Russia's concern and reaction, as well as Russia's strategies towards Afghanistan. Russia and the United States have had similar goals in Afghanistan over the past decade. Prevent chaos and reopen a safe haven for terrorists. This coordination enabled the two countries to work together. However, there were important differences. Although both countries want stability, they define it in different ways. The US approach based on the creation of a strong central government in Afghanistan and well-trained security forces, while Russia works with a range of actors, some of whom are directly competing with the government in Kabul. Moscow has even contacted the Taliban to legitimize the group, which this group continues threaten the security of Afghan, US and NATO forces. Over the past decade, the gap between US and Russian strategies has been widening. Russia is largely convinced that the US approach is no longer working and that Washington has no political will to continue cooperation long ago. This country convinced that it must engage with Afghanistan.

**Keywords**: Geopolitics, Ideological Heartland, Afghanistan, US, Russia, War on Terror.

Introduction

Since World War II, Russian-US relations have been one of the most important international positions, and have influenced international politics and even the relations of other states more than any other relationship. Much of this relates to its systemic implications for the world system and international political and security issues. The impact of these two countries' relations on the international system and its various issues in different fields can help to shape or end crises. Therefore, it can be said that many of the issues on the agenda of the international system are somehow resolved by the will of these two powers and their proximity to each other. It is one of the structural features of the international system, from the Second World War to the end of the Cold War and even today. Post-Soviet Russia does not have the power and influence of years ago, but given its membership in the United Nations Security Council, nuclear power, neighborliness and involvement in a wide range of global geography (From Japan, China, Central Asia, the Caspian, the Caucasus, the Black Sea, Eastern Europe, to the Baltic Sea). In addition, the prospect of military support and opposition to US opposing governments is still undeniable for the United States, the West, and other players of international politics. Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, new Russian relations with the United States have maintained their importance.

Afghanistan, as a buffer state between Russia and the Indian Ocean and the transit of goods from South Asia to Central Asia and Europe, was of particular importance in geopolitical theories as the focus of the powers at the time. Followıng Monroe's doctrine of isolationism 1823 US did not enter international developments until World War I. With the United States withdrawing from isolation and entering the international arena, The country has also adjusted its policies in the region by realizing Afghanistan's geopolitical indices, and Relying on new geopolitical aspects has given Afghanistan extra importance. This study compares the Russian and American views on terrorism in Afghanistan.

Following the transfer of power in Washington, Russian observers have identified new opportunities for Russian-US cooperation in Afghanistan. Initially, Russia made the impression that it had a positive view of the US mission and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Afghanistan. In the first few years, Washington and Moscow actively worked together. But the deterioration of bilateral relations in recent years has led to the gradual departure of Russia and the West over the issue. Washington, for example, criticized the secret talks of Russian diplomats with extremist Islamist Taliban in Afghanistan. The Russian Foreign Ministry claims that such a conversation never happened. Central Asian affairs expert Orchidy Dubnov said in an interview with DW, that Russia's policy in Afghanistan was to launch talks with the Taliban, in the late 2015. He noted that Russian Special Envoy for Afghanistan zhamir Kabulov spoke of shared interests with the Taliban. The Kremlin has been reviewing threats coming from Afghanistan in recent years, Dubnov says. Russian leaders previously worried that Afghanistan's instability could spill over into Central Asia's neighbors. Moscow understands that a political force in Afghanistan, the Taliban even if it is radical, is not a threat to Central Asia, which Russia considers its sphere of influence. The question that arises is what is the difference between the US and Russia's view of terrorism in Afghanistan? To answer this question, we have the assumption that the United States and Russia seem to have similar views on combating terrorism in Afghanistan. Because American politicians blame the failure of the United States in Afghanistan for the existence of terrorist groups, and Russia has warned that terrorism in Afghanistan may be a danger to their country and Central Asia. Therefore, this paper compares the views of the United States and Russia on Afghanistan. In addition, this paper uses a descriptive-analytical method combined with library sources.

**Theoretical Foundations: Geopolitics**

Geopolitics defined as the science of studying “the influence of geographical elements on political action”. Part of the tradition of realism in international relations. (qasemi.2012 p29). During the first half of the twentieth century, geopolitics mainly referred to the role of geographical factors in determining foreign policy of countries, so geopolitics became a subject of colonial powers' competition in the early 1875 until 1945 as a means of gaining power. However, over time, the concept of geopolitical geography has taken on new dimensions. A look at the theories put forth in the geopolitical field illuminates the developments in this sense. (safavi and shekhani. 2011 p3)

With the theorization of Alfred Tire Mahan in the second half of the nineteenth century, geopolitics became apparent. He made a significant contribution to the theory of maritime power, believing that well-offshore lands were powerful countries. (Melkotian. 2005 p.35-36) He considered the domination of the seas, especially strategic straits, essential for the existence of great powers. (safavi and shekhani.2011 p.3) Mahan was the first to influence US policy by emphasizing maritime power and US control of the newly built Panama Canal. (Hil. 2009 p.235)

However, the theory of Hartland should be the beginning of all geopolitical debate, presented by Sir Halford Macintyre in 1904 and completed in 1943. Mackinder named the three continents Asia, Europe and Africa the World Island and named its central axis Hartland. (safavi and shekhani. 2011 p.4) It also named an inland crescent around Hartland that extends to the free seas. (Melkotian. 2005 p.41) He then stated that whoever ruled Eastern Europe would be the ruler of the heart of the land and the center of the land. Whoever ruled the heart of the land would rule the world island. Whoever rules the island will rule the world. In 1943 Mackinder extended the western range of Hartland to Eastern Europe, covering a large part of Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and an important part of Russia. (gukmen 2010 p.32)

Nicholas John Spikeman presented Remland's theory in criticizing Macintyre. (Melkotian. 2005 p.50) Spikeman named the areas around Hartland as McIntyre’s inner and outer crescent, Rimland, and cared for the area more than Hartland. This is because the region has been able to better combine land power and sea power. (Ezati. 2002 p.16) Therefore, while Macintyre believed in land power, Spikeman valued a combination of maritime and land power. (Melkotian. 2005 p.51) According to Spikeman, Afghanistan is located in Asian Heartland.(Hekmat niya. 2005 p.100)

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the importance of militarization diminished and competition for geo-economics status started. Therefore, the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian Sea region, Because of this capability become important geostrategic and geo-economics areas. These indicators have been added to the land and sea characteristics of countries as their empowering factors; because with the advancement of countries, the intrinsic importance of the sea and the land, and their combination with new components, has created a new form of geopolitics. Given the importance of geo-economics and economic power, competition for energy resources and the increasing need for energy, especially from the newly industrialized countries of East Asia and South Asia, and competition and efforts to extract, exploit and transfer energy and proposed routes, new issues open to geopolitical issues. This view called the Hartland Energy Strategic Oval, proposed by Jeffrey Camp. (safavi and shekhani. 2011 p.4) Afghanistan became important because of its proximity to the strategic oval. Afghanistan as a country outside the US security sphere, with its proximity to important and powerful countries Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran and its strategic position in the area of influence and proximity to Central Asian energy - Caspian Sea, It had created special geopolitical attractions for US. In the geopolitical perspective, the United States considers the two main sources of energy supply to the Gulf and the Caspian at least until the first half of the 21st century. So one of the US goals of attacking Afghanistan is the Eurasian Corridor Plan. (Minayi. 2003 p.823-824)

In addition, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the concept of geopolitics became confused, because until then, geopolitics defined in a competitive environment, the last being in the context of competition between East and West. Iraqi invasion of Kuwait prompts new theory of new world order aimed at restoring peace and freedom to the world. Fukuyama's essay on the “end of history” formed the basis of the new world order. (O`Tuathail,et al 2002 p.241) According to Fukuyama's theory, since the West has reached the end of history, it is more complete than other countries. Moreover, it must safeguard vital public resources and stand up to aggression. Accordingly, the New World Order any changes to the current geopolitical situation that are not in the best interests of the United States It will be consider illegal. (Otile, et al 2002 p.244, 305, 252) The geopolitics of the New World Order seek the supremacy of political and economic liberalism, as it calls the enemies of the world order the enemies of freedom and humanity and expands its geopolitical domain. (Molai.2004) In other words, the field of political geography expands to the extent that the enemies of the world order are present. To this end, enemies are devised, the most important of which is the religious terrorist, so that the ideological Hartland concept was created. A concept that Afghanistan has at its core. (Hekmat niya. 2005 p.101)

Thus, over time, various material and non-material factors have determined the geographical position of countries and thus their place in the international system. In the meantime, some countries have retained their special place despite different approaches to geopolitics. That is to say, they are not only strategically, positioned in the marine theory of Mahan and Macintyre, but also in the Hartland theory of Jeffrey kamp energy. Afghanistan is in such a situation. Afghanistan has long been regard as the key to the conquest of India since India surrounded by it on three sides the east, west and south, and bounded on the north by the mountains of Qar-e Qorum and the Himalayas. Afghanistan is the closest way to Soviet access to hot water and the way to dominate Central Asia is to reach Afghanistan. Afghanistan in peace and stability can become a viable transit route that will have important economic benefits for world trade. Occupation of this country by various powers such as Alexander the Great, Genghis Mogul, Timur Lang, Babar, Nader Shah Afshar, and the three bloody wars with Britain and the stand between Russia and British India illustrates its Hartland's position. (Hekmat niya. 2005 p.97) Since the second half of the eighteenth century, when British authority began to consolidate its influence in much of southern and central Asia, other European powers, mostly French and Russian, with a tendency toward the East, competed with Britain in Asia. (Khalili et al 2014 p.43) Its position in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the great game between Russia and Britain peaked, can be examined in Mahan's theory of maritime power. At this time, it was believed that the greater the access to free water and the straits, the more it could play a decisive role in the power of nations. The Russians longed for access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. Britain also sought to prevent the Russians and consolidating its control over the region's waters. Today, Afghanistan is also the focus of Mahan's maritime power theory. Because the powers of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf can control much of the world's energy. Thus, in Mahan's theory, Afghanistan has become increasingly important because it is located in vicinity of the region vital energy. (safavi and shekhani. 2011 p.6)

Afghanistan in Asia is also in the Heartland of Macintyre theory has strategic conditions. (Hekmat niya. 2005 p.100) With the emergence of the United States as a new power, especially in the Cold War era, the importance of Afghanistan is more than can be ascertained from the perspective of Macintyre and Remland of Spikeman. By the time the US-Soviet rivalry peaked, Afghanistan had been the focus of both Soviet power and the United States as part of Hartland. Following the Reimland theory put forward by Nicholas Spikeman; the United States intended to put the Soviet Union in greater straits by conquering the Rimland regions, so Afghanistan played a double role. (safavi and shekhani. 2011 p.6)

Therefore, Afghanistan's geopolitical position includes elements such as sectarian internal instability, relative positioning, and the restraining role of Afghanistan, which is primarily the cause of the existence of weak states to prevent conflict between the two strong states, driven by land and proximity to energy reserves. Caused for occupation of the country by the Soviet Union in the 1979, and more over in 2001 came under the occupancy of the United States and NATO. (Khalili et al 2014 p.41-44) So while there has been a lot of writing on US policy in Afghanistan in different eras, examining the geopolitical element from the US exit from isolationism to the current Obama presidency is a topic in this research. We also seek to analyze developments in the concept of geopolitics in view of US foreign policy towards Afghanistan. As recent global developments and geopolitical intertwining with ideology have made US policy as the most important post-World War II power in Afghanistan, the next section looks at how geopolitical US policy in Afghanistan is concerned.

With the gradual independence of Afghanistan in the early twentieth century, competition between the Russians and the British for access to open water and the creation of a buffer zone was established. (Tamana.2009 p.100) Although, powers such as Britain and Russia had made it their place to compete in terms of Afghanistan, by 1939, they were involved in the consequences of their isolationist policy, and by 1945, the United States was not considered a power. However, with the outbreak of World War II, America entered the international arena as a world power.

The US Presence in Afghanistan can be divide into five periods: the first period, insignificance until to block the influence of communism (145-1979). Second Period: Indirect Intervention and Mujahedeen Support through Pakistan (1979-1991). The third period of forgetfulness (1991-1995). Return period (1995-2001). Moreover, the period of military intervention from 2001. (Wahizi and Bagheri.2010 p.139) Prior to 1979, the United States did not pay much attention to Afghanistan until the Soviet invasion in 1979 caused indirect US intervention. Therefore, beyond the period of isolationism, except for a brief period, the United States has always placed Afghanistan at the center of its policies, which analyze US policy at every period.

**The commercialization of the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan and its consequences on international security**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, President George H. W. Bush proclaimed a new world order, and the US had to play the role of world police in that order. One consequence of the new US-led world order was the attack by the world's largest military power and its allies on Iraq to withdraw its forces from Kuwait and to secure order in the Middle East and global energy security in the Persian Gulf. The rapid defeat of the Iraqi army, for many international security analysts, meant that the United States had become the world's hegemonic power with the Soviet defeat in the Cold War. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the United States assumed a hegemonic role in the Western Hemisphere, but World War II provided the United States with an opportunity to define itself as a global heir, but until the fall of the Soviet Union, no one could say that United States had become a hegemonic power. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dramatic advance of the United States in the production and modernization of space missiles, for many it was the notion that the United States had become a global power and that no country could compete with the United States and that view with the famous and controversial book by Francis Fukuyama. (End of History) Strengthened in Western scientific and media circles. Fukuyama claimed that with the fall of the Soviet Union, the liberal-democratic system had become global, and that no ideology would no longer emerge that would be able to challenge the liberal-democratic order established by the US-led world. The emergence of Islamic fundamentalism (al-Qaeda) shortly after the declaration of the new world order raised doubts about the end of history and the establishment of a liberal-democratic order and reinforced the question of the clash of civilizations. In 2001 when the al-Qaeda terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the liberal world order became more skeptical, and even Bush stated to take revenge on the terrorists, saying the incident was a repeat of the Crusades. For many international relations theorists, the existence of an important nongovernmental actor in the international arena was a new phenomenon. Intellectuals and decision-makers in powerful governments have come to believe that once the overthrown governments such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen are abandoned, they could be subject to the growth of terrorism, which is itself a very serious threat to international security. To address this challenge, the United States and its Western allies camped in Afghanistan and declared their fight against terrorism. Although there is no precise definition of terrorism and terrorist activities, terrorism in its entirety refers to violent acts and behaviors, whether government or nongovernmental groups. That they target civilians for the purpose of extending the influence or acceptance of a cultural political demand by another government, and There is no specific behavioral criterion for achieving their goal. Terrorist acts include bombing roads, bridges, schools, hostages and suicide. According to this view, al-Qaeda and Taliban deployments in Afghanistan classified as terrorism, and cost billions of dollars from the United States and its international partners in Afghanistan to destroy these groups, and thousands of foreign and Afghan soldiers were kill. Since the US financial crisis in 2008, many politicians and political thinkers have sought to rethink the fight against terrorism. Obama, himself a Democrat and a believer in liberal democratic values, continued the process of diverting US foreign policy from the Middle East and fighting Islamic fundamentalism (terrorism) to East Asia in the 2009, and continued until the end of his presidency. Donald Trump, who is considered a successful individual in the business field, but lacked experience in foreign policy in particular, so he has repeatedly said during his campaign that we have made a huge expense in Afghanistan, but our achievements are few, And that is not acceptable to us (American taxpayers). Under this type of Trump view, Pakistani policies that had received billions of dollars from the United States in the fight against terrorism were not accept by the United States, which strained Washington's relationship with Islamabad. Trump had a businesslike view of Pakistani politics, saying many times that we paid big money for Pakistan, but that country always lied to us and deceived us. Continuing his planned policies, Donald Trump stated in the early days of 2019 that we had incurred enormous costs in Afghanistan, but Afghanistan's neighbors, especially Pakistan, India and Russia, had not done anything and had to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan. Now, the question is: what are the consequences of commercializing the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan for international security? In the first place, it seems that the commercialization of the fight against terrorism can be harmful to countries facing numerous threats, and countries that are far from threat are not harmed, but the reality is something else. Since everything is globalized in today's world, from economics and culture to the politics and security of nations, so the commercialization of counterterrorism, (radicalism and terrorism) can create a huge security vacuum in the region. As a result, terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism will benefit from this situation and will emerge stronger than ever. When terrorism breaks into weak countries, it will not confined to the same country, but rather used that country as a refuge and a place of recruitment and military training, because the main terrorism aim is not poor country but an opposition to the modern world and to modern humans. Therefore, No one in London or New York will be safe, as has happened many times. Trump's claim that the United States alone has borne the fight against terrorism is partly true, but other countries such as the European Union, India, Japan and other countries have also made significant contributions. From Trump's point of view, countries like India, Russia and Pakistan must fight the Taliban in Afghanistan because they are more vulnerable than any other country, but it is not the reality. India is vulnerable to terrorism (Taliban, al-Qaeda, Kashmiri Islamists and Lashkar-e-Taiba) and has provided much help to the Afghan people and government in combating terrorism and consolidating the power of the central government in Afghanistan, Given its problems with Pakistan and terrorism; it will work with Afghanistan in the long run.

Russia and Pakistan's position on the Taliban is different from India. Pakistan despite of suffering from Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, the Taliban seen as a lever for regional pressure and a very effective influence in Afghanistan. That is why it will not fight honestly with this group when international pressure, especially the United States, lifted from Pakistan. Russia shared interests with the Taliban after the Arab Spring and the rise of ISIS in the Middle East, somehow making the Taliban acceptable to Russia and no longer being labeled terrorists, and even Russia hosted the Taliban at the Moscow summit. In the end, it can be said that the commercialization of the fight against terrorism endangers international security and it is up to the Afghan government to persuade the United States and the European Union to assist in the fight against terrorism. The United States and the European Union will continue to assist to Afghanistan as long as Afghanistan fulfills its commitments to reform governance, fight corruption, and consolidate democracy.

**New American Strategy**

Washington's new strategy for Afghanistan has opposed the withdrawal of US troops, but the number of new troops deployed to Afghanistan is unclear. Donald Trump, who criticized US spending in Afghanistan during the election campaign and claimed that United States should benefit from these costs, now with the accusation of Russian, Chinese, Pakistani and Iranian interference in Afghanistan, says he does not let united states enemies to know about Washington's plan. But some sources are aware of Trump's agreement to deploy 4000 troops to Afghanistan. While some also speak of the White House's agreement to supply these forces through private security companies, a strategy that observers refer to as the privatization of war or the privatization of security. The set of assessments is also, what has boosted Trump's drive to increase the number of troops in Afghanistan. Not just terrorism, but the efforts of the current Afghan government and White House efforts against China, Russia and Iran to work with Pakistan on Afghanistan, and possibly bring Trump's view of new economic, political and military plans beneficial to the US in Afghanistan.

While the new US policy on Afghanistan is still unclear, Russia's interest in Afghanistan is on the rise. As the 16-year US war continues in Afghanistan, Russia is reviving its interests in Afghanistan. These Russian maneuvers include contacting the Taliban and leading a new diplomatic effort to deal with the future of Afghanistan while the world is still unaware of Washington's new strategy for Afghanistan. President Donald Trump's administration is not sure about Moscow's main goals and has refused to attend the meeting, which will held in Moscow next month with representatives from China, Pakistan, India, Iran and several Central Asian countries. A representative of the Afghan government will attend the meeting, but the United States declined the invitation and said it was not invite in time. While Taliban sources have said they are attending the meeting in Moscow, there are reports that no one has invited the Taliban to the summit. According to Associated Press reports, The Russian move, reminiscent of the terrible consequences of the occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, is a major change in the stance, And that position comes as the Kremlin launches a campaign to gain international support against the US, including efforts to stop the Syrian civil war. Moscow has even tried to mediate Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, which challenge Washington's political dominance over the Middle East. (Azadi radio.2019)

These new Russian invasions in Afghanistan continue to be another worrying consequence of a renewed Washington stance. This perception or vision at the international level is strongly shaping as President Donald Trump's administration designs a new strategy for Afghanistan. Since his inauguration as president, Trump has rarely been called Afghanistan, the country where most US troops are stationed in the war zone. According to the Associated Press, Putin's government is an unlikely mediator of peace in Afghanistan, but Afghans look at it with a completely uncertain view. Afghans wait to see if Washington sends more troops to Afghanistan, adopts appropriate strategy against growing Taliban attacks and withdrawal of Afghan troops? The insurgents were trying to overthrow the centers of several provinces last year. They seized Helmand's Sangin district last week, a district where US and British forces had fought bloody battles to surrender to the Afghan government. Moscow has rejected claims that it appears to support the Taliban with equipment, saying its contacts with the Taliban is only focused on securing and encouraging this hardline group to compromise with the Afghan government, What Washington has failed to do in the past few years. Russia has also spoken of reducing the sanctions on those Taliban leaders, which ready to cooperate. It can be said that Russia looking at the Afghan war in a different way than the West. Russia often imagine US activities in Afghanistan in terms of the Big Game of the past years of 1800, which is, when Russia and the Great British Empire were competing for influence in Afghanistan and its neighbors, deciding to chart Afghanistan's strategic position with Asia and the Middle East. Russia is slowly beginning to see the Taliban as a local force and a partner in the fight against IS, not an international jihadist threat. In January, Russian special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Zemir Kabulov told Turkish media that US military bases in Afghanistan were similar to if Russia is having troops stationed in Mexico. While the Russians worry about instability in Afghanistan due to its proximity to its sphere of influence, perhaps Moscow, with its recent efforts, wants to improve its diplomatic stance and strengthen ties in Asia. Russia's eastward pressure increased when Moscow's relations with Washington and the West have been strain due to Ukraine’s and Crimea accession to Russian territory and to interference in US elections. Russia has improved its formerly cold relations with Pakistan, which hosts Taliban leaders, and has drawn closer economic ties and cooperation with China. (Azadi radio.2019)

After months of speculation, president Trump has finally announced his new strategy for Afghanistan and the region, that is, to stay in Afghanistan. Consider the following four points that Western officials have mentioned. From the beginning, it expected that none of the other two options, namely complete withdrawal or surrender of war to the contractors, would be preferred. If we leave Afghanistan, it will again become a safe haven for international terrorists and will attack the US from there. Thousands of Afghan refugees will be flown to Western countries. It will embolden most of the terrorist groups around the world. Finally, it will cause of losing the credibility for The United States and NATO. Can a new strategy and approach guarantee security and stability in Afghanistan. There are a few key points in this strategy.

**Strength points**

For the first time in sixteen years, the United States has fulfilled one of Afghanistan's greatest demands in the context of a new and serious strategy, namely to name Pakistan as a supporter of those with whom the United States fights and to put Pakistan two ways ahead. Either cooperate with the United States and benefit from it or continue to support the Taliban and become a loser. If Pakistan cooperates, one can expect positive developments in Afghanistan's stability and security, but sanctions will imposed if Pakistan chooses not to cooperate. Mr. Trump's first big punishment for Pakistan can seen in calling for India to play a greater role in Afghanistan's economy. Given Pakistan's sensitivity to India's role in Afghanistan, it is bitter for Pakistan. If Pakistan does not comply with the new demands, another consequence could be to include Pakistan in the list of countries that support terrorism and to impose economic and diplomatic sanctions on it. A direct military strike on Pakistan is unlikely; of course, it would be possible for US Special Forces to operate inside Pakistan. Another point is that the departure of coalition forces in the future will not based on a timetable and will based on conditions. That is, contrary to what happened in the period of Mr. Obama and the announcement of the end 2014 as the date of the withdrawal of Coalition troops, it has delivered this message to Pakistan and the Taliban that you are waiting for us to leave. This led the government to deal with the Taliban from a weak position. Another positive point in the strategy is to define the purpose and definition of victory, and to eliminate terrorist groups and prevent the Taliban from coming to power in Afghanistan. This will force the government to deal with the Taliban from a position of power and use the reconciliatory elements to come to the table. (Aria.2017)

**Weak points**

Mr. Trump did not mention corruption, which called Afghanistan's second name. Perhaps he did not want to deal with the Afghans like Mr. Obama and his team made Mr. Karzai and his administration directly address to the problem of corruption in the media. However, Mr. Trump points to the lack of good governance in the country. Given the explicit warnings given to the Afghan government in recent years, and especially recently, donor countries will prioritize the issue of corruption and pressures will increase in this context. The strategy stipulates that the United States have nothing to do with state building, nation building and democracy development in Afghanistan. If that is the case, given the fragility of the system in Afghanistan, the new strategy will be nothing but an exit plan. That is not the case, and the US and its European allies will have to continue the process of state building. Mr. Bush had initially said his goal in Afghanistan was not state building, but he had spent billions of dollars on it. In his speech, Mr. Trump himself made it clear that aid would continue in the diplomatic, development and military arenas. This will mean that the United States and other donor countries will continue their effort in the non-military field also. (Aria.2017)

**Is US new strategy will efficient**

The success of the new strategy is not guaranteed, and depends on many factors. In the regional dimension, for example, a negative scenario could be that Russia and Iran have somehow started cooperating with the Taliban and have a hostile relationship with the United States. If Pakistan and these two countries will form a common front to confront the West in the region, and China will not play a very positive role, making the situation in the region more complex than before. It should remembered that the power of regional countries in the military, economic, diplomatic and intelligence fields has more doubled from 15 years ago. Therefore, diplomacy of Western countries and Afghanistan with regional countries is more important than ever. On the domestic side, the success of the new strategy will require the efforts of the Afghan government to fight against corruption. In addition, address the current situation that has made the government more vulnerable, the government must pave the way to building trust, decentralization and providing the ground for genuine participation of all political groups.

**Russian reaction**

The Russian Foreign Minister has described the new US President's new strategy for Afghanistan as ineffective, and says President Donald Trump's new strategy in Afghanistan is based on coercion, and that strategy will not get anywhere. Lavrov also responded to US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's accusations of sending Russian weapons to the Taliban, saying this is not the first time Russia has been accuse of supporting or even sending weapons to the Taliban. However, so far no evidence has been provide. Russia's foreign minister claims that the country maintains its contact with the Taliban only to ensure the security of Russian institutions and citizens in Afghanistan and to invite the group to negotiate with Kabul. Lavrov's remarks come just shortly before the US strategy in Afghanistan announced. The Russian special envoy stated the failover of US policy in Afghanistan. In addition, on behalf of Moscow, he called for the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan. Kabulov, speaking to Russia's Izvestia newspaper, said Russia's position on the developments in Afghanistan had been clear, although Russia had no problem with US troops in Afghanistan in the past, but they had to leave Afghanistan due to the failure of its military mission. He added that the purpose of US presence in Afghanistan was to prevent the country from becoming a safe haven for international terrorists, but after a decade, Afghanistan has become a terrorist producer. Last year, Moscow showed that it welcomed the trilateral mechanism (China, Russia and Pakistan) and the quadrilateral mechanism (China, Russia, Pakistan and Iran) minus the US. In fact, with Russia's recent stance on the new US strategy for Afghanistan, these efforts and contacts with the Taliban and diplomatic engagement with the Hekmatyar Party have not merely tested Russian diplomacy, and there are stronger goals and motivations in that context.

**Moscow concerns**

Russia opposes increasing US military presence in Afghanistan, while Moscow in 2001 backed the US invasion of Afghanistan and the overthrow of the Taliban regime this year, and even at a later time, in 2014 following the announcement of President Barack Obama's downsizing strategy, In Afghanistan the strategy seen by Russia as a sign of Washington's irresponsibility towards Afghanistan. In fact, the difference in Russia's approach to the US presence in Afghanistan over the past two decades questions the motives and goals of this country and raises doubts about the fate of Afghanistan with the possible intensification of Russian-American confrontation there. Russia's Concerns, Motivations, and Goals from Public Opposition to US Policies in Afghanistan Issues can be raised at various bilateral, regional and international levels.

The simplest points to bear on Russia's concerns about the new US strategy in Afghanistan are that Russia's sensitivity to extremism extends from Afghanistan to Central Asia, and, on the other hand, to increased US military presence in Afghanistan and Central Asia, and Consequently, it is an excuse to increase NATO presence in the region. However, more importantly, although it can be said that the US-Russian rivalry in Afghanistan will complicate the geopolitical situation in the region, yet another fact is that Russia's inaction will also create a precarious position for Russia. Accordingly, there is no other way than to resolve the Afghan crisis for Russia.

In addition to geopolitical algebra and the importance of Afghanistan in global ambitious economic plans, including the Silk Road, new US congressional sanctions against Russia have heightened Moscow's incentives to compete regionally, including Afghanistan. However, another point is that by competing with the United States in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, the Russians have also targeted US policy in Afghanistan to increase their importance at the negotiating table with the United States as they identify themselves as effective international actors.

**Russia's contingency Strategy for Afghanistan**

From recent statements by Russian officials, about the US presence in Afghanistan, it seems that Russia has decided not to remain neutral in the evolution in Afghanistan. Russia cannot indifferent to the increased US military presence in Afghanistan because of all the issues it has found with the US. So at least for Moscow there are two ways to counter the US in Afghanistan: first, to increase US spending in Afghanistan, The second is trying to come up with a political solution to the Afghan crisis and thus reducing the excuse for a US military presence there. On the one hand, Russia could increase the scope of war and crisis by providing more weapons to the Taliban and providing intelligence support through intelligence agencies and increasing US spending in Afghanistan. In particular, the new US strategy in Afghanistan itself, can help for strengthen the Taliban in Afghan society. While US stance against Pakistan, it could also help Russia to regional assistance against US conditions in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, China and Iran see their interests in Afghanistan more closely aligned with Russia. In fact, local conditions are in place for Russia's serious confrontation with the US in Afghanistan, and as result of the realization of the great game scenario in Afghanistan. However, this will not be officially and informally beneficial to Russia. In addition, it will intensify tensions with the United States and increase political and economic pressure on Russia. In addition, the current Russia is unlikely to be ready for military action on the other front besides eastern Ukraine and Syria, while inheriting the experience of a major historical mistake in Afghanistan. However, Moscow cannot remain idle until the United States increases its potential for anti-Russian movements in the region.

Another strategy ahead of Moscow is to try to increase its power and influence in Afghanistan by strengthening relations, especially with nongovernmental groups such as the Taliban. However, it will also continue to consult with the United States, as a source at the Russian Foreign Ministry told Interfax that a meeting between Moscow and Washington representatives on Afghanistan might held in September.

Of course, despite the fact that the Russians have so far made credible claims about the need for an international effort to resolve the Afghan crisis, they face significant obstacles within both Afghanistan and the United States. Russians say prolonged war and emergence of IS in Afghanistan have shown that the crisis has no military solution, And further, they claim they are trying to support a peace deal between the Afghan government and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and extend it to other Taliban groups. Nevertheless, according to Russian opposition in the US, Moscow wants to use the Taliban to increase pressure on Washington. In particular, one of the Taliban's most important prerequisites for peace is the precondition for US withdrawal. On the other hand, Afghanistan's reliance on US funds makes Kabul more inclined to US solutions. However, the change of government in Afghanistan in is likely to change this trend.

When the United States occupied Afghanistan in 2001, United States and Russian’s interests largely aligned. Both countries wanted to eradicate al-Qaeda and its ally terror groups and prevent Afghanistan from once again become a haven for terrorists. Since the withdrawal of Soviet Union forces from Afghanistan in the end of the Afghanistan-Soviet war in 1989, Moscow has been afraid that the political vacuum will lead to the rise of extremists and the creation of intimidation threats. Moscow was concerned about the long-term US military presence, but tolerated US and NATO operations in the hope of helping and bring stability to South Asia and Central Asia. Cooperation between Russia and the United States in Afghanistan reached its highest level during the Obama administration, when Moscow allowed US and NATO forces to transport their equipment across Russian territory and sold the MI 17 helicopters to US-backed Afghan forces. In addition, worked with the United States to combat drug production and eradicate the drug trade. However, over time, Russia has lost confidence in the United States' commitment and its ability to carry out its mission in Afghanistan. Moscow has begun developing its strategy of defending its interests in the event of if there is a possibility for collapse of the Kabul government. The destruction of US-Russian relations over Ukraine in 2014 further undermined Russia's desire to support the United States. However, Moscow has made it clear to Washington that it does not want withdrawal of US troops from of Afghanistan. In January 2017, Russian Special Envoy in Afghanistan, Zamir Kabolov told, "if Trump decides to withdraw troops, then everything will collapse." Moscow, despite support for continued US presence in Afghanistan also Disappointed by the new US strategy for Afghanistan announced by the Trump administration. For Moscow, the strategy, which involves a slight increase in troop numbers, a re-focus on terrorism, and an open timetable, is nothing new. Russian intervention in Afghanistan includes proposals for commercial investment, diplomatic contacts, cultural programs, and military and financial support from the central government, influential people in the north and the Taliban. In 2014, Russia opened a cultural center in Kabul. Russia in 2016 has provided weapons and ammunition to the Afghan government. Pursuing these policies has several benefits for this country. Many of its military officers, security-intelligence personnel, and diplomats have experience and background in Afghanistan since the Soviet war. Many Afghan military officials and officers have already been train in Russia. In addition, the Russian government, not bound by an ideology or set of particular values, can freely align itself with any group that it considers most influential in Afghanistan. Such flexibility in Russia's approach has allowed it to cooperate even with the Taliban. Russia believes that the group focused on gaining power inside Afghanistan and is therefore a threat to the Afghan government, not outside its borders. This view is in contrast to that country's view of ISIS. ISIS, which some of its elements operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan, seen by Moscow as an international group and a threat to Central Asia and Russia. Kabulov said in 2015 that the common interest of Russia and the Taliban is the defeat of IS. Moscow's support for the Taliban, including whether it is arming and equipping the Taliban, is still unclear. However, the important point is that Moscow has established a relationship with the Taliban leadership, one that Moscow will use to bolster its influence and make peace talks possible. Russia hosted three rounds of negotiations with the presence of China, Iran and Pakistan from December 2016 to April 2017. In The third round, the Russia also included Afghanistan to the negotiations. Although these negotiations did not produce any tangible results, but Russia achieved its primary goal. That goal was to gain a place for Russia as a key player in future talks on Afghanistan.

**Conclusion**

Although the evolution of the international system in each period has given rise to geopolitical aspects of geographical features, some countries have been at the center of geopolitical theories. To the extent that, over time, and to highlight their geopolitical significance, new geopolitical criteria are developed and addressed. Afghanistan has always played a vital role in traditional geopolitical theories based on geographical algebra. Proximity to the region with energy resources, proximity to global and regional powers such as the Soviet Union and Iran, access to Central Asia on the one hand, and India, and in general the East of the world and on the other, The path to the Indian Ocean's open water has historically been important to the United States. Factors that have not diminished with the passage of time and developments of the international system and technological progress. Although Hartland was used to constant geographical indications until the turn of the 21st century, United States’ need to explain Afghanistan's geopolitical significance also led to the ideological Hartland of the new century, which was exactly in line with Afghanistan. In other words, although traditional features of Afghanistan's political geography are stable, explaining the US presence in Afghanistan based on these components considered a new colonialism. The issue that led the United States to pursue its policymaking that geopolitics is one of its most important pillars remains the focus of its policies on Afghanistan by creating an ideological Hartland within the wider Middle East in President Bush and Obama’s periods. The instable situation in Afghanistan require for an abundance of US-Russian cooperation. Defeating terrorist groups, training and equipping Afghan security forces, rebuilding the economy and infrastructure, and providing humanitarian aid are among the areas for cooperation between the two countries. Both Russia and the United States are seeking to counter the threat of ISIS, whose presence is expanding in northern and eastern Afghanistan. Russia wants to stop poppy cultivation in Afghanistan. About 25 percent of the heroin produced in Afghanistan goes to Central Asia and Russia and from there to Europe, and drug sales are an important source of income for terrorist groups in Afghanistan. At present, only very important issues, namely the fight against terrorism and drugs, provide a realistic prospect for the two countries to cooperate.

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