

The Legalization Strategy of Taliban Regime in Afghanistan and its Influence on China

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Abstract

The rapid withdrawal of US troops has further destabilized the situation in Afghanistan, which is known as the "imperial graveyard". The Taliban took the opportunity to grow and announced the establishment of the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" on August 19, 2021. How to consolidate the regime and ensure the legitimacy of the regime is the primary problem that the Afghan Taliban urgently need to solve. To this end, the Afghan Taliban have mainly adopted strategies such as strengthening armed struggle, attaching importance to traditional culture, improving propaganda means and winning external support to further consolidate their political power. Afghanistan, which is constantly in turmoil, has ushered in a new crossroads. At the same time, as an important neighbor of Afghanistan, what is the impact of the administration of Atta on China, and what role China will play in the peace process in Afghanistan is worthy of continuous attention.

Keywords

Afghan Taliban; United States; Legalization of Political Power; Armed Struggle.

1. Introduction

Afghanistan is located in the hinterland of Eurasia, and its unique geographical location determines that it has excellent geopolitical advantages, strategic position and important position. In history, it was once invaded by Britain, the Soviet Union and other foreign powers, and even became a strategic buffer zone between Britain and Russia[1].

In the 1990s, Afghanistan, which had just emerged from Soviet gunfire, fell into the abyss of civil war. Omar, a Pashtun religious student born in Kandahar province, took advantage of the war-torn Afghan people's yearning for a peaceful life with the indirect support of the United States. At the same time, the strong religious atmosphere in Afghanistan makes it quickly bring together many supporters with Pashtun as the main force, which is the earliest Taliban. Since then, the Taliban carried the banner of liberating the whole of Afghanistan and established the "Islamic emirate of Afghanistan" for the first time in 1997.

However, the good times did not last long. In 2001, the "9 / 11" incident that shocked the world made al-Qaeda a target of public criticism. The Taliban, who are inextricably linked to al-Qaeda, have naturally become the target of condemnation and attack. After the negotiations failed, the Bush administration of the United States flagrantly launched a military strike against the Taliban in Afghanistan in the name of anti-terrorism. Together with the Northern Alliance's invasion of Kabul, the Taliban were forced to become a regime in exile. Led by Omar and others, the Taliban entered the mountain tribes in Pakistan's border with Afghanistan and continued to fight against the United States and other Western forces in the form of guerrilla warfare.

On December 5, 2001, the signing of the Bonn Agreement marked the beginning of "political reconstruction". On December 22 of the same year, Karzai, a pro-American faction, announced that he would become chairman of the interim government. In September 2014, Afghanistan is preparing to form a "unity government" with Ashraff Ghani as president. At the same time, the Afghan government security forces will be set up to guide the elimination of the Afghan Taliban

by the US military. The whole of Afghanistan is in a state of tripartite scuffle between the Taliban, Afghan security forces and local warlords. Although American and NATO allies control strategic routes in Afghanistan, the Taliban are still active in nearly 70% of Afghanistan's territory. This is a huge burden for the United States, and it is undoubtedly a "black hole of war."

On February 29, 2020, the United States and the Taliban formally signed a peace agreement aimed at ending the war in Afghanistan. A year later, on April 14, US President Joe Biden officially announced that US troops in Afghanistan would withdraw by September 11, ending the 20-year war and the longest war in US history[2]. On August 15, 2021, the Taliban announced that it had regained control of Kabul, and US troops hurriedly withdrew from Afghanistan, leaving a trail of devastation. On August 19, the Afghan Taliban once again announced the establishment of the "Islamic emirate of Afghanistan."

After returning to power, the first problem that the Afghan Taliban need to face is how to consolidate the regime and ensure the legitimacy of the regime. After two decades of war, more than 100,000 Afghan civilians have been killed or injured as a result of the war, and about 11 million have become refugees. In the face of the interference of external powers, there is an urgent need for post-war reconstruction, factions, ideological differences and many other problems. Whether the new Taliban regime can "stand on its feet" is facing severe practical challenges.

2. The Legalization Strategy of the Taliban Regime in Afghanistan

The United States has gradually withdrawn its troops from Afghanistan, the rule of the Taliban has become a foregone conclusion, and the future security situation in Afghanistan is eye-catching. As an "armed rebel organization", the Taliban, mainly through strengthening armed struggle, attaching importance to traditional culture, improving propaganda means, and winning external support, and gradually change the status quo, win the war, win the hearts and minds of the people, and achieve the legalization of political power.

2.1. Strengthen the Armed Struggle

In nearly 20 years of forced exile, the Taliban have always adhered to the strategy of strengthening the armed struggle. After years of development, the Afghan Taliban has become a multi-ethnic political and military force, maintaining exuberant vitality. The Afghan security forces and US troops stationed in Afghanistan have been seriously harassed by guerrilla warfare in the vast rural and mountainous areas, but it also provides an important support for the Taliban to gain political legitimacy.

With the formal signing of the US-Tajikistan peace agreement and the acceleration of the withdrawal of US troops, the situation in Afghanistan has fluctuated violently. The Afghan Taliban have launched an unprecedented armed operation throughout Afghanistan. Key attacks were carried out against anti-Taliban strongholds in northern Afghanistan and Afghan security forces, especially in areas bordering Central Asian countries. Although the Afghan security forces have received a great deal of US assistance, the Afghan government forces are weak in fighting and often surrender without a fight. From the beginning of May to the end of June, the Taliban seized control of at least 80 new counties [3]. As of July 13, of all about 400 counties in Afghanistan, the Taliban had direct control of 223 districts and were competing with government forces for control of another 111 counties. In addition to rapidly expanding the scope of control in rural areas, the Taliban also began to infiltrate around central cities such as provincial capitals, rapidly expanding the scope of control in a short period of time. On the one hand, the Afghan Taliban maintain a strong military offensive, on the other hand, they put forward the slogan of armistice and cessation of war in order to promote peace. Through a

strong form of armed struggle, the Afghan Taliban has achieved from forced exile to a comeback, increasing influence, providing a strong guarantee for its follow-up power.

2.2. Attach Importance to Traditional Culture

Geography determines history, history determines culture, and culture determines system. 80% of Afghanistan is mountainous and plateau, with low productivity, high closeness, backward social process and lack of national identity. The unique geographical location has given birth to a unique political culture. The Taliban regards traditional cultural values as an important source of legitimacy of their regime. On the one hand, attach importance to consanguinity genealogy and show goodwill to tribal elders. As a multi-ethnic Muslim country, the composition of ethnic groups in Afghanistan is very complex, and tribal culture has a profound impact on national construction. The tribal society in Afghanistan is based on blood relationship and has a number of social functions, on which a unique tribal culture is derived. Under the background of the interference imposed by external forces and the continuous instability of the country, tribal organizations play the role of team organizations that perform the functions of the state to a certain extent. Therefore, in Afghanistan, the ability to deal with the relationship with tribal organizations has become the key to the long-term survival of a regime. The Afghan Taliban have been entrenched in mountain tribes for many years and are well aware of the importance of consanguinity pedigree. By courting tribal elders and making efforts to participate in the traditional tribal assembly, the Afghan Taliban have continuously improved their influence and laid a solid foundation of public opinion. On the other hand, strengthen the tradition of teaching method and integrate national identity. Each nation has its own unique cultural symbols. For the Afghan people, Islam is not only a religious belief, but also a "glue" of various ethnic forces in Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban continue to improve the Islamic judicial system, set up religious courts, and implement the Islamic management model in the areas under actual control. At the same time, the Afghan Taliban regard religion as an important virtue of identity, regard the Western countries dominated by the United States as aggressors, and successfully construct the nationalist stand of Afghanistan. The erosion of Afghanistan by external forces has made the nationalist ideas with Islam as the core in Afghanistan more and more powerful. It is not difficult to see that the Afghan Taliban regard the tradition of Sharia as an important starting point and shape foreign forces as the opposites of the people of all ethnic groups, thus effectively enhancing the centripetal force and cohesion of the country in Afghanistan.

2.3. Improve the Means of Propaganda

Propaganda refers to the social activities that use various media to express certain views in order to influence the thoughts and actions of others, with the aim of changing people's opinions and attitudes [4]. Propaganda means are self-evident for the Taliban to spread their own positive image. As early as the 1990s, the Afghan Taliban have attached great importance to propaganda, relying on unique communication strategies play an important role in winning the hearts and minds of the people and controlling ideas. The Afghan Taliban mainly improve the means of propaganda from the following two aspects.

First, the use of emerging media to shorten the distance of the audience. Different from previous propaganda strategies, with the development of information technology, the Afghan Taliban tend to publish their news and spread their influence through multiple languages and using emerging social media such as Facebook and Twitter. As of May 2011, the Taliban Twitter account had received a total of 993 followers [5]. For example, the Taliban posted a selfie of Kunduz people and spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed on Facebook and Twitter. The two looked smiling and intimate.

The photo was forwarded wildly by the Taliban to exaggerate its Brotherhood with the Afghan people [6]. At the same time, the Afghan Taliban will also attract the staff of some other media

to further broaden the propaganda channels. Second, attach importance to international public opinion and seize the highland of public opinion. The issues of women's rights and the protection of human rights in Afghanistan are related to the basic rights enjoyed by the people of that country and have always been highly concerned by the international community. Afghan Taliban spokesman Suhair Shahin promised: the Taliban will respect women's rights, and the newly formed Afghan government will protect women's rights to leave home, work and receive education alone. Unlike in the past, the Afghan Taliban who returned to power safeguarded the political rights generally enjoyed by the Afghan people in accordance with the constitution, which won a lot of domestic and international public opinion support for the Afghan Taliban.

2.4. To Enlist External Support

The geopolitics of Afghanistan are complex and the interests of great powers are intertwined. There are great differences in policies towards Afghanistan between intra-regional and extraterritorial powers because of their different interests, but they are inextricably linked with the Taliban, the Afghan government and tribal forces in Afghanistan. The recent continued deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan has also caused deep concern among stakeholders on the Afghanistan issue [7]. Active contact with external forces will help to enhance the international influence of the Taliban and provide important external support for their political legitimacy. Therefore, to win external support, especially focusing on neighboring countries, is the best choice for the Afghan Taliban.

First, maintaining traditional cooperation with Pakistan is the primary external consideration of the Afghan Taliban. Pakistan is an external influence force second only to the United States in the peace process in Afghanistan [8]. As a neighboring country of Afghanistan, there are a large number of Pashtuns living on the thousands of kilometers of Abba border, which provides an important demographic basis for the friendly cooperation between the two countries. Historically, Pakistan has become the rear base for Afghanistan to resist the Soviet invasion, and during the years when the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was forced into exile, the Afghan-Pakistani border and even Pakistan became the preferred place to keep a low profile. Pakistan also acts as a "peacemaker" between the Afghan Taliban and the United States, playing an important role in the signing of the US-Tajikistan peace agreement. Similarly, for Pakistan, the Afghan Taliban has become an important counterweight to India, and a friendly Afghan regime is particularly important for Pakistan. It can be said that the two countries share the strategic depth of each other.

Second, the Afghan Taliban need to actively enlist the support of Russia in many aspects. As an anti-Soviet Taliban, although there are historical disputes between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, it is extremely necessary to win Russia's support in all aspects based on practical interests and considerations of pressuring the United States to withdraw its troops. Russia is well aware of Afghanistan's geopolitical advantages, and for its own strategic interests and counter-terrorism needs, Russia is also actively seeking direct contact with the Afghan Taliban. As early as 2017, Russia launched the Moscow process aimed at promoting peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. The breakthrough in Russia-Tajikistan relations can not only provide an important fulcrum for Russia's Central Asian strategy. At the same time, the Afghan Taliban can also use it to increase their international recognition.

In addition, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries adjacent to northern Afghanistan, as well as its western neighbor Iran, have also become the key targets of the Afghan Taliban. There are many countries in Central Asia, and the political situation often affects the whole body. Actively promoting cooperation with neighboring countries and allowing them to participate in the peace process in Afghanistan will be of great benefit to the development of the Afghan Taliban and the security and stability of the entire Central Asian region. On the one hand, the Afghan Taliban show goodwill to neighboring countries and

exercise relative restraint. At the same time, the strategy of dialogue with extraterritorial countries and striving for external support has undoubtedly created a good external environment for their subsequent governance. With the increasing interaction between the Taliban and external forces, its international recognition is also on an unprecedented rise.

3. The Influence of the Taliban in Afghanistan on China

With the accelerated withdrawal of US troops and the rapid rout of Afghan security forces, the regional situation has been reshuffled. There are signs that, as an important military force in Afghanistan, the rule of the Taliban has become a foregone conclusion. China, as a close neighbor to the east of Afghanistan, the peace and stability of Afghanistan is related to the development of China's periphery and is an important part of China's strategy in Central Asia. The coming to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan is bound to have a significant impact on China's surrounding security environment and Sino-Afghan relations.

First of all, the rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan is conducive to the cooperation between China and Afghanistan in economic reconstruction after the war. Afghans are eager for faster economic growth in order to create more jobs and increase national income [9]. During the period of the Afghan government, despite the stimulus of US dollars and the assistance of the US military, a large amount of corruption led to public grievances, lack of capacity to build economic infrastructure and promote endogenous development, and governance performance declined seriously [10]. Therefore, since the Taliban came to power, the whole country has been faced with a large number of post-war reconstruction needs, but at the same time, it also provides a great opportunity for China and Afghanistan to carry out post-war reconstruction cooperation. As Afghanistan's largest neighbor, China can help Afghanistan as much as it can in areas such as agriculture, infrastructure and poverty alleviation, and can even turn it into a model of Belt and Road Initiative's strategy. On September 8, 2021, China decided to urgently provide 200 million yuan worth of materials to Afghanistan, which undoubtedly greatly increased the strategic mutual trust between the two sides. At the same time, the coming to power of the Afghan Taliban will contribute to the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. As an important strategy to connect the development of China and Pakistan, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has had an important impact not only on the economic development of the two countries, but also on the economic development of the whole South Asian region. The completion of Gwadar Port, a landmark project in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, has not only found a new sea outlet for China in the direction of the Indian Ocean, relieved the pressure on energy imports, but also injected strong impetus into Pakistan's economic development. However, attacks on Chinese citizens in Pakistan occur from time to time, mainly on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which casts a shadow over the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The rapid unification of the Afghan Taliban and coming to power will bring a glimmer of hope to this negative phenomenon. As Pakistan's traditional ally, the Afghan Taliban has a profound traditional friendship with it, and out of practical interests, the Afghan Taliban promises not to allow any terrorist forces to use its territory to engage in terrorist acts harmful to other countries. there is no doubt that it is a great boon to the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Second, the coming to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan is bound to have an impact on the liberation of Taiwan by Chinese mainland. The Taiwan issue concerns China's core interests, and the successful entry of the Afghan Taliban into Kabul sends a clear signal to Taiwan: is the United States reliable? After 20 years of war in Afghanistan, the United States has cultivated an Afghan puppet government, brought about the so-called "democratic system" and invested a lot of human, material and financial resources. But at a time when allies needed it most, the US military, known as the world policeman, chose to accelerate its withdrawal, and the "Saigon

moment" was repeated, leading to major changes in the situation in Afghanistan. As for Taiwan, as an inalienable part of our territory, although it is obvious that the United States also has "support" at present, when it really needs "help," whether the United States will fully support Taiwan, whether it will "rescue" or choose to stand idly by? all these need to be a big question mark!

In addition, although the coming to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan is conducive to economic exchanges between China and Afghanistan, it will still increase the pressure on anti-terrorism in western China. At present, there are more than 10,000 foreign rioters in Afghanistan, especially the mountain tribes along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and many of them even come from the Middle East and other regions. Despite the relevant commitments made by the Afghan Taliban, the interference of individual Western countries and the backing of Western anti-China forces make it difficult to completely eliminate the residual poison of terrorist forces in a short period of time. At the same time, the problems of refugees and drugs on the border between China and Afghanistan have increased the uncertainties in the western border. Regional countries and the international community need to jointly curb the breeding and spread of terrorism in Afghanistan, maintain regional peace and stability, and have a long way to go to combat terrorism [11].

4. Conclusion

From a team of only a few hundred people at the beginning, the Afghan Taliban has grown into a national political and military organization with tens of thousands of armed forces, successfully marching into Kabul and seizing political power throughout the country. And by constantly strengthening the armed struggle, attaching importance to traditional culture, improving propaganda means, and striving for external support, we will continue to consolidate political power and improve their own political legitimacy and international recognition. As a responsible big country, China will play an increasingly important role in the process of peace and reconstruction in Afghanistan. At the same time, China welcomes the emergence of a friendly and peaceful Afghanistan in the western part of our country. The withdrawal of American troops is only a phased victory for the Afghan Taliban, and the future of Afghanistan is in the hands of the Afghan people themselves.

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