

## The Taliban and the Political Economy of International Terrorism in Afghanistan

Umoh Udofia Sunday, Ph.D

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

**Annotation:** The internal and external dynamics which led to the seizure of Kabul by the Taliban underpins issue of international politics of aids, drug trafficking and terrorism leading to a challenged sovereignty of the Afghan state, while the US led military intervention underscores political interest to which the Afghan economic strangulation seems a focus of the capitalist US foreign policy in the Asia minor. This study interrogates the Taliban and the political economy of international terrorism in Afghanistan while explicating the extenuating circumstances to its emergence. The objectives of the study included the examination of the global war on terror in view of the existing Afghan economic structure tie to opium trade. To do this, the research appropriated theory triangulation via the assumptions of the Failed State Theory of Herbrand Jeffrey (2004), Erriksen (2011), the Relative Deprivation of Gurr (1970), Berkowitz (1962) and Yates (1962) and the Political Economy of Ake (1981) and Ekekwe (2009). The ories assumptions see the intervention in Afghanistan as smokescreen for drug trafficking and economic exploitation of the Afghan natural resources. The paper generated data from secondary sources such as textbooks, Academic Search Engine, UN fact file. The methodology for the study is historically descriptive in design and qualitative in data collection. Using content analysis the paper historicized the emergence, character, politics, influence, degree of legitimacy of the Taliban and the vulnerability of the Afghan citizens to argue that the impact of the crisis in Afghanistan such as migration, food insecurity, infrastructural destruction, housing, livelihoods, health, security, and education is as complex as they are multidimensional linked to the US led military intervention in 2001. The paper further argues that the intervention has not moderated the trilemma of governance deficit, underdevelopment and insecurity that snowballed into the implosion that characterises the recent takeover of Kabul by the Taliban. The paper insists that due to the weak character of the Afghan state under the Taliban, the influence of multifarious global Political Economy variables and the implication on citizens' vulnerability, it seems the end to the crisis is nebulous and concluded that the Afghan drug problem has no immediate solution except continued negotiation between the Taliban and the UNODC. The paper recommends amongst other solutions, the close monitoring of drug and arms trade to and from the regime to identify and sanctions states and other actors sponsoring international terrorism in Afghanistan.

**Keywords:** Taliban, Political Economy, International Terrorism.

### Introduction

A group's self-perpetuation, survival and perception of risks are cardinally connected to its socio-political and economic interests which, at least in part, are a function of its perceptions of emerging realities in a given society. These realities, in the contexts of historicized terrorism and determinism of resource distribution and management are inseparable or not distal from social disequilibrium and economic disparities linked to external and internal dynamics of security, governance and interest. In attempting to reconcile the contradictions generated by these disparities and perception of risk in order to avoid being adjudged agnominal, a group's realities, sometimes are unavoidably

contradictive to the interests of other groups especially in a patriarchal and dichotomized society like Afghanistan. Often, part of this disparity and perception of risk to the group's survival emanates from the activities of states and non-state actors. In Afghanistan, the good activities of actors like the United States, Al-Qaida network and the Taliban are apposite to and indistinguishable from the evil they claim to fight. The history of how the Taliban emerged is subsumed in the political economy of state-centric terrorism occasioned by the US foreign policy in Afghanistan. The foreign policies of capitalist economy however nebulous, cannot prevaricate from exploitative interests of western countries cloaked in the toga of liberalism and democracy.

Liberalism and democracy form the bases for the pillars of contemporary integrated global economy with emphasis on the sustenance and perpetuation of strong interdependent economic structure within the orbit of capitalist world. In sustaining the ever-consuming capitalist system, the toga of liberalism and democracy is deployed to obfuscate inherent focus of perpetual exploitation. Such scenario is what led countries of peripheral economy like Afghanistan to be one of the prime targets of western foreign policy on economics and security. The Afghan security challenges are not extemporaneous, neither did they mushroom overnight, they are tangents linked to the 11 September 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks in the US that has led to a paradigm shift, which entirely changed the world order. The terrorist attacks were considered as masterminded in the Al-Qaeda bases stationed in Afghanistan which inadvertently triggered the beginning of new international war, *the global war on terror*. Consequent upon this, the US and its allies in October 2001 began the invasion of Afghanistan under the pretext of fighting international terrorism. For this, Umoh and Chijoke (2021) aver that counter-terrorism or *the war on terror* in Afghanistan, in the context of the Taliban was perceived to be about quick wins deployed by armed coercion and the imposition of any type of security by a foreign brain, while to the Taliban, counter-terrorism is an epitomized caricature of the stereotypical idea that terrorists are brutal and uncivilized as regards governance, equity, poverty reduction and improved living condition in a socio-political setting like Afghanistan whose economy is shaped by fragility and aid dependence.

Incidentally, the economic sub and superstructures in many socio-political settings of the peripheral states, especially economically disadvantaged setting like Afghanistan, most times are influenced by the politics of international aids and debts cancellation. Due to their economic dependency on remittances and financial aid assistance from the western world for example, Pakistan and Tajikistan, even with a shared long social and economic relations, history and longest borders with Afghanistan, were made through clauses in aids agreements to collaborate in facilitating war routes to the frontline countries in the so-called *Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan*. According to the United Nations' geographical region classification, Afghanistan and Pakistan are located in South Asia while Tajikistan is part of Central Asia. From the outset of the political and diplomatic confrontation between the British and the Russian empires in the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries regarding Afghanistan and the neighbouring territories in central and South Asia known as 'the great game', Afghanistan and Pakistan has always played significant role in the global political arena. However, after the dissolution of Soviet Union, Tajikistan became a conduit for the expansion of terrorism and drug-trafficking to Central Asia and beyond. With evidence concerning drug cultivation, UNODC (2018) reported that poppies were grown on 74000 -2885 square miles in 2001 before the US and British forces invaded Afghanistan. An understanding of this report shows a relationship between the continued stay of foreign forces and an increased poppy landscape from 285 to 1,266m square miles in 15 years. To this end, and as part of the arguments of this study, the US led war on terror in Afghanistan appeared to be anchored on the assumption of global war on terrorism, however the above mentioned report on the growth and expansion of poppy fields and drug trafficking since the US invasion shows that the war on Afghanistan is drug inclined with

political economy flavours. Even when this region plays a central role in global insecurity related to international terrorism.

In view of the inability of the US security forces to secure the Afghan government its installed and the subsequent withdrawal from the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), several multilateral agreements between the two countries have been entered into. While the U.S.-Taliban agreement states that the Taliban will prevent terrorist outfits from operating on Afghan soil, there is little clarity on how the agreement will be verified and enforced in the wake of the recent withdrawal. This is not helped by the growing influence of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, which shares an undeniable link with the Taliban, especially the Haqqani group. Notwithstanding a power-sharing agreement signed between Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and former chief executive Abdullah Abdullah, on May 17, 2020, it was ironic for such alliances to have been given the oxygen of trust in view of the recent political dilemma occasioned by the US withdrawal from Afghanistan linked to the increasing political instability in Kabul. The seizure of Kabul by the Taliban underpins issues which explain the processes before a state is said to fail.

As a consequence, some authors and scholars have wondered what remote and immediate causes could trigger state failure in general and specifically, what other political and economic factors could have played a decisive role in the success of the Taliban taking over Kabul. While Scholars such as Rashid (2012), Felbab-Brown (2010) Mesoy (2013) and Majidov (2011), emphasize that poverty and radicalization into extremism tied to state failure in providing adequate social services due to economic backwardness is one of the main reasons of insecurity associated with terrorism and political instability in a country. Bakken (2007) and Lankford (2013.) states that terrorist acts bring social status and economic prosperity for perpetrators. Supported by Bolton (2008), the authors added that as suicide bombings benefit families economically so is power sharing benefit terror commanders. For instance, the source added that 'family of suicide bombers usually receives a cash payment of between US\$1,000 and US\$2,500. However, according to Paizza (2008) poverty and underdevelopment cannot be a direct cause of terrorism, but can exacerbate it.

Upon the above, this study sets to interrogate the Political Economy factors for the emergence and rise to influence of the Taliban and international terrorism in Afghanistan.

### **Statement of the problem.**

If critically analysed, the internal and external dynamics accentuating tension and instability in terrorist infested societies and the intractability of global terrorism would reveal dimensions characterized by trilemma of citizens' discontent, the assertiveness in the violence of sub national groupings and the interest of international sponsors. In the Afghan contexts, the autopsy of the phenomenon will reveal a nexus between resource conflict in land, water and uranium and the political economy of the opium trade. For the Taliban, the intractable character of terrorism, insecurity and the Political Economy of opium trade is linked to the complexity emanating from radical extremism and the economic factors of international politics. Each phenomenon too, is simultaneously linked to different structures, characteristics and actors' interests. At the heart of these interests are the consolidation of power and the establishment of a new Afghanistan by the Taliban. Of specific interest here, is the issue of terrorism birthed by a spectrum of actors' interest including the US and NATO and those factors which eventuated the Taliban as a group and its consolidation of power in Afghanistan. This is apropos to the widespread impacts of the phenomenon in the lives of the Afghan citizens that has led to a preponderance of violence in the context of illegal network, a drastic drop in employment, education and a general declined in scientific advancement and socio-political stability. In view of this, the US led forces in tandem

with the Afghan government have had to establish several anti-terrorism policies such as agreement with the Taliban not to finance illegal networks, financial inducement to disadvantaged household to discourage recruitment and the militarization of the polity to mitigate the problem.

However, the persistence of the problem has eventuated the current review to see whether the prolongation and elongation of terrorism in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries is a historical and agnominal. In fact, a seeming complete historicized trajectory to the current problem could be traced to the emergence of the Russian Federation occasioned by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. This particular incident saw to the establishment of each of the Central Asian States (CAS) as independent entity webbed into a set of socioeconomic and political challenges. Russian isolation of CAS further intensified economic distress and exacerbated unemployment ratios from 11.38% in (1991), 11.46% in (1992), to 11.61% in (1993) in Afghanistan, (National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA, 2020). Similar trajectories were recorded in most breakout states of the USSR. Nonetheless, Tajikistan, having a lengthy mountainous border with a conflict-torn Afghanistan lurched into civil war in 1992. A coalition of military operation by Russian, Uzbek and Tajik forces terminated the civil war in 1997. Nevertheless, Tajikistan as a post-conflict state remained a fragile state under serious threats of radical extremism, terrorism and drug-trafficking. Incidentally at the time, attempt at penetrating and establishing a foothold in Afghanistan by kremlin was resisted by the US. The US then supported Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaida with arms, logistics and funds to fight off the Russian attempt at spreading socialism. Traditionally, the Afghan people are socialistic and communal by nature, but with the end of the cold war era, the US disengaged from this region leading to the metamorphosis of pockets of terror groups joining forces with the Taliban. These occurrences further facilitated the expansion and empowerment of non-state terrorist organizations in the region and resulted in cross-border terrorist activities, which led to a new era of global war on terror.

The advancement of terrorism in Afghanistan and the neighbouring states in the region seems to be diametrically supported by the failure of regional governments crippled by precarious political and economic situations to curb the expansion of terrorist networks and the finance from opium trade and other illegal networks that helped metastasized the preponderance of terror. Technically, on-state terrorist organizations and radical extremists are expected to be profoundly active in underdeveloped and marginalized remote regions whose weak economy acts as major factor hindering interstate cooperation in providing social and economic security. In precarious situations such as this, the citizens are usually faced with a trilemma of poverty, insecurity and socioeconomic disequilibrium. In the Afghan contexts, the trilemma is occasioned by US supported corrupt government in Kabul, the lacuna in social responsibility which underpins development deficit and the economic empowerment of the Taliban.

In view of the above, several scholars in the field of conflict, terrorism, security and foreign policy studies have attempted a diagnosis of the problem with varying policy recommendations. For instance, Felbab-Brown (2010) examined the Drug Conflict Nexus in South Asia beyond the Taliban profits in Afghanistan and found out that Opium and Cocaine trade are conducted by the US, Britain and other foreign security forces including the Taliban. Katzman(2013) x-rayed Afghanistan politics, elections, and government performance to fathom the contribution of governance morass to the hegemonic status of the Taliban, Buxton (2015) tried to show how drugs and development have occasioned socioeconomic disconnect in the Afghan contexts while Carter (2019) evaluated what a withdrawal from Afghanistan would look like in the context of Taliban Rule. However, none of the above researches extrapolated what remote and immediate factors eventuated the rise in influence of the Taliban neither did they interrogate those political and



economic variables such as international military intervention and the opioid trade as indices of the political economy of international terrorism in Afghanistan, this is the focus of this study.

### Operationalization of Concepts

**Terrorism:** Although there is an avalanche of definitions of terrorism, this paper argues that the phenomenon refers to the deliberate use of means capable of causing danger, destruction, and chaos to a people, government, its agencies or a group. It is the use of any violent means in pursuit of the political, ideological, religious or social objectives. Even though there is no common acceptable definition of terrorism, the major area of consensus is that terrorism is an asymmetrical war involving two unequal parties or premeditated violence perpetrated against the combatant or non-combatant targets by state or non-state actors.

**Taliban;** Taliban in Pashto means seeker or student, in the study it is refers to a violent adherence of Islam through the institutionalization of global militancy. This description fits the recent renaming of Afghanistan to the Islamic emirate of Afghanistan by the Taliban after sacking the government in Kabul on August 15, 2021

**Political economy;** a branch of social sciences which seek answers to questions such as; to whose interest or benefit is the pronouncement of public policy or government policy with economic undertone. This rendering mirrors the US foreign policies in the world generally, and specifically in Afghanistan.

**International Terrorism:** With the emergence and triumph of the liberal international order and the rise in globalization in the early 1990s that led to access to information, technology networks and data, the integrated digital economy created a corresponding rise in the resurgence of international insurgence replicated in global terrorist networks following the rise of the Taliban. As such, the increment in transnational networks for terrorist attacks has been made less cumbersome and increasingly built on the casualty rate of the combatant and non-combatant. To this end, international terrorism in this study is conceptualized as all forms of terrorist attacks across border or at the international levels that leads to extraordinary casualty rate of both combatant and none combatant.

### Theoretical Framework.

To explain all the dynamics and intricacies of *Taliban* terrorism and the implications of the political economy of the US foreign policy in the context of Afghanistan, the paper deploys theory triangulation via Failed State Theory of Herbs and Jeffrey (2004), Erriksen(2011), Relative Deprivation of Gurr (1970), Berkowitz (1962) and Yates (1962) and Political Economy of Ake (1981) and Ekekwe (2009). For the Failed State theory, proponents argue that a weak or failing state provides an environment in which terrorists emerge, mushroom and operate. This is because a failed state is measured amongst other variables by the loss of effective control of certain aspects of its territory. In this sense, and since the Afghanistan's economy is shaped by fragility and aid dependence, leading to an extremely narrow private sector with high rate of unemployment accounting for 60% pull factors to terrorism, the state can be adjudged as failing. However, in view of poor private sector development and diversification constrained by insecurity, political instability, weak institutions, inadequate infrastructure, widespread corruption, and a difficult business environment occasioned by the recent takeover of government structures including the arm forces by the Talban, the Afghan government can be evaluated to be operating in a failed state.

In addition to demographic pressure, extreme violence, insecurity, and the state's inability to provide essential services to the citizenry, the failed state theory is boosted by the theory of relative

deprivation. Relative deprivations a theory is anchored on the assumption that one is worse off than some standard accompanied by feelings of anger and resentment compared to other people or groups, resulting in feelings that they do not have what they deserve. This feeling leads to anger and resentment. This explains how citizens' frustration could subsequently lead to a shift in loyalty from the state to sub state group like the Taliban in Afghanistan. The theory further postulates that the etymology of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a subjective state that shapes emotions, cognitions, and behaviour which helps to situate concepts of poor physical health, poor mental health, deviance and self-preservation within the orbit of the reason citizens participate in group protest or involve in terrorism. The concept, according to Gurr (1970) is that tension that developed within the Afghan populace including the Taliban is from disaffection between "expectations" and "outcome" which disposes the citizens to join bellicism; hence the preponderance of frustration leads to violence and terrorism.

The two theories then collapse into the political economy theory. For Ake (1981) and Ekekwe (2009), the state is predatory even as it is fragmented into two major classes; the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Within this dichotomy is the ever ending struggle and competition for domination and freedom. The division of the state into these two classes further creates a gap upon which every form of contestations is predicated. Thus, political economy does not only look at economic factors that act as pulls to terrorism, such as revenue decline, which according to world Bank (2021) in the Afghan context, collapsed from 14.1 percent of GDP in 2019 to 11.4 percent in 2020. It equally takes cognizance of the economic and security implications of international donors and aid providers in the development of Afghanistan. For world Bank (ibid), money in aids and donations, rose to the sum of Afs 226.2 billion leading to an increase of (14.9 percent of GDP) in 2020 from 188.9 billion (12.9 percent of GDP) in 2019. Political economy theory further explicates those government policies that have metamorphosed into parts of the factors fuelling and escalating political insecurity and terrorism in Afghanistan. These factors have historical contexts link to international collaborators and dimensions. The al-Qaida support to the Taliban, the US training of pardoned Taliban members and integration into the Afghan security forces, the Russian and Pakistan interests all forms the basis for international collaboration in international terrorism in Afghanistan.

Expectedly, factors such as opium trade, natural mineral theft, the presence of ethnic militias, and the absence of legitimacy from the citizens to the government demonstrate that the political economy of aids circumvent real development and triggers citizens' frustration leading to recruitment into Taliban terrorism. Supported by the statistic from Afghan armed forces (2021) which shows that the Afghan armed forces of 180000 active personal and a military budget of \$12b could not defeat the Taliban is due to tacit support of the Afghan security forces to the Taliban due to perceived relative deprivation. The consideration of theory triangulation in the study is informed by the descriptive nature of the three theories and their attempt in highlighting the factors that are responsible for the emergence and rise in influence of the Taliban while at the same time focusing on the implications of international aid to the Afghan armed forces in the interest of national security. Triangulation of the three theories also offers critical assessment of the impact of the US and NATO defeat of the Taliban in 2000s and the subsequent amnesty and integration of ex-Taliban into the Afghan security forces. It shows that personal and collective safety of citizens in Afghanistan was not the prerogative of the foreign military intervention; rather, it was occasioned by the struggle to control the opium industry and other natural resources of the Afghan state. With the help of theory triangulation, the paper further argues that the sacking of Kabul by the Taliban was predetermined. This is in view of a reported zero fight from the Afghan armed forces. The armed forces incidentally are peopled by so many ex Taliban fighters given amnesty, training and

promotion into position of command within the rank and file of the security forces. Finally, the three theories have helped boost the argument that the prospects for state building, self-esteem and self-actualization through terrorism in the Afghan contexts could be distal or proximal to socioeconomic determinants of development deficits like corruption, poor gross domestic product (GDP), poverty rate, unemployment index, dual loyalty of security forces linked to the benefits of the opium trade along a continuum vis-à-vis poor to excellent. Theory triangulation shows specific roles of each theory to the understanding of the relationship between the objective of the Taliban, the US foreign policy in Afghanistan and the political economy of international terrorism in the country.

### **Remote and immediate factors which account for the emergence and rise in influence of the Taliban.**

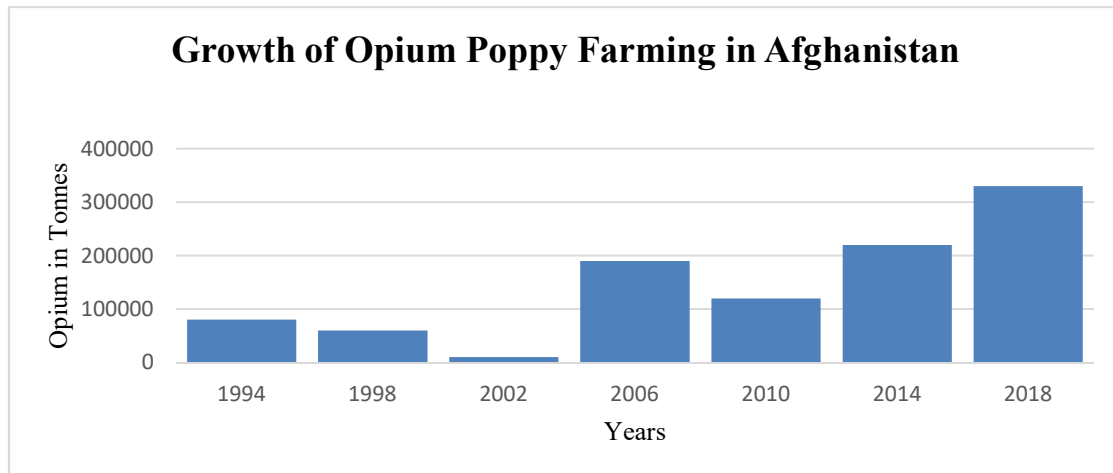
#### ➤ **Dysfunctional Political Structures and Internal Colonialism**

The history of the Taliban can be contextualized as the history of the Pashtun alienation and dominance. The fecundity for the emergence of the Taliban too, could be traced to the period in which Afghanistan was created 100 years before the Soviet Union attempted to spread socialism in 1979. This is linked to issues of the *Great Game* where British India and Russia established a state dominated by other tribes to the alienation of the dominant tribe known as the Pashtun between 1880 and 1980. As the result of socioeconomic and military support from Britain and Russia to the then central government, the Pashtun tribe became disgruntled, frustrated and terroristic. The progress to the rise of the insurgency was driven by religious students from the Pashtun tribe who were educated in Islamic schools in Pakistan. Supported by a clever exploitation of political problems in Afghanistan, the Pashtuns, the most numerous ethnic group in Afghanistan, around 40 percent of the population who felt alienated from the central government, which they believe is unfairly influenced by non-Pashtun leaders and interests began to mobilize their people. These interests, were perceived by the Pashtun leaders, who later formed the spring board for the Taliban as hegemonic and interpreted as not being circumspective of other tribes leading to perceived internal colonialism. Sharani(2012) maintained that the policies and practices of the leading tribe in government of the day gradually transformed ethnic and cultural differences among the people of Afghanistan into articulated forms of social fragmentation. As a result, these societal cleavages gained ideological traction and harnessed the strident bewilderment amongst the tribes leading to the formation of the Taliban society linked to specificity of Islam. Granted, the institutionalization of the Taliban brand of Islam at inception neither developed into a modern state, nor atrophied, however, the establishment of the regime had political implication far beyond Afghanistan. The rise to influence of the Taliban is explicative of the political and military operations of the movement over time which shows the extent to which the group had become transnational and supported by regional powers.

#### ➤ **Poppy production.**

For UNODC (2021), drug production and trafficking is cultural in the Afghan socioeconomic contexts. The economic substructure is fragmented in line with whatever natural resource is available in a particular province. Evidently, poppy production is a mainstay in the agricultural sector of the economy that underpins drug trafficking from province to province. This is diffused and group inclined. As such, the Taliban rise to prominence and influence could not have been made possible without their active participation to achieve stated objective, notwithstanding the forces behind its early mobilization. Drug production and trafficking thus controls and sustains the Taliban more than any other source of income. In fact, the Taliban feel that whoever challenges

them do so in order to take over the drug business. This is demonstrated by the failed attempts of two earlier rulers with support from the Pashtuns; the Tajiks Habibullah Kalakani and Ahmed Shah Masud to run out the Taliban. This is not helped by several failed campaigns from foreign powers including the US to challenge the Taliban.



**Source:** Author Adaptation from UNODC/Afghanistan Government Opium Survey (2018)

The graph shows that after the US invasion in 2001, there was difficulties in poppy plantation leading to a decrease in opium and cocaine production. However, as the foreign forces stabilizes, opium and poppy production began to increase resulting in a peak in 2018. This is evidence to the hitherto argument of the paper that the US led forces in Afghanistan were not in the country to spread democracy, but to secure international trade in opium and cocaine.

#### ➤ Leadership structure.

The fall of the Taliban in its history of regime change in Afghanistan is ironic. This is because, whether they are in control of the national government or not, the Afghan economic substructure remains in their control. This is helped by the unique terrain of its sanctuaries across the country and the fragmented tribal governance of the Afghan people. The rise of the Taliban after a fall is equally linked to the regional and international politics since the 1980s and its sanctuary acting as global outputs of militancy. Even with the strictness of its command system, the Taliban's leadership structure is resiliently centralized and efficient, yet flexible and diverse enough to adapt to local contexts including their pragmatic use of criminal gang and opium resources. For instance, in Pakistan, the Taliban have different structures, different leaders, and different social base. They are, in fact, an umbrella movement comprising loosely connected groups. Each group has a leader who is permitted by the higher leadership of the group to adopt participative management model which allows the engagement of many fighters in strategic decision making.

#### Conflict Management

The emergence of a 'better' Taliban is further accessioned by the ability of the group leaders to mitigate conflict via a just settlement of conflicts across the country's suburbs and provinces. It began when the old ethnic hierarchy that had placed the Pashtuns at the top before 1978 was dismantled due in parts to the collapse of the state's presence in the countryside. This was given oxygen especially when the none Pashtun ethnic groups such as the Hazaras, the Tajiks, and the Uzbeks, were empowered by Washington in the wake of the failure of the hitherto unifying narrative of jihad after Najibullah's fall in 1992. This incidences form a springboard on which the Afghan political parties were able to use existing social tensions and resentments to build a political



base as representatives of different ethnic groups, Guitozzi and Orsini(2009). In order to reconcile sectarian differences and better manage conflicts arising from such differences, some leaders were recognized by the top handlers of the political Taliban. Abdul Rashid Dostum (for the *Uzbeks*), Ahmed Shah Masud (for the Persian speakers), and Abdul Ali Mazari (for the Hazaras). These leaders having acquired the status of heroes in their communities were able to make political and economic decision for the Taliban in the Southwest and Southeast of the country. However, as a result of ethnic dominance in the leadership structures between the different groups, the Pashtuns were discriminated against in the North of the country where they are a minority. The local administration excluded them and exactions are said to have been frequent. Conversely, these negative sentiments which were essentially local in scope, became entrenched and resonate throughout the country. In particular, the resonance of negative sentiments was further propagated by the Afghan media that played a major role in expanding the geographical scope of ethnic and sectarian conflict. A typical example of sectarian conflict is the conflict between Shi'i Hazaras and Sunni Pashtuns, which has its origins in the building of the Afghan state at the end of the nineteenth century. In modern times, the state has tended to favour the Pashtun nomadic tribes over the settled Hazaras. In the Nigerian context, the Pashtun would be the Fulani and the settled Hazaras – the Hausas and other indigenous ethnic groups in northern Nigeria.

In the early days of its formation, when the conflict had not become a theme for the political mobilization of the Hazaras against the Pashtuns, Dorronsoro(2005) says that rather than promoting understanding between sectarian or ethnic groups, media outlets through a system of divide and rule, inadvertently fuelled resentment leading to different people from different tribes joining the Taliban.

#### **Natural Resource Conflict.**

Disputes over the inequitable distribution and management of natural resources such as land, water, timber, minerals and drugs, further underpins the emergence and rise to influence of the Taliban amongst rural dwellers of the Afghan people. The mentioned resources do not only act as triggers to these conflicts, they are closer tangents that often serve to exacerbate existing ethnic, political and regional divisions. As such, natural resources are the major source of numerous fracture lines in Afghanistan and the wider region. For instance, the division of water at local and transboundary levels, disputes over land ownership, the regional drugs trade, and the illegal smuggling of high value timber, adds to existing generated tension and conflict. This was exacerbated by other investments in mineral and hydrocarbon extraction which has formed additional focus in the negotiation between the external forces and the Taliban before the fall of Kabul.

#### **Unemployment and Relative Deprivation.**

The Afghan citizens in Kabul are known to be segregated upon by foreigners who enjoy the dividends of the central government. In addition, the politics of aids makes provision for migrants from donor government to be given preferential treatment by the central government. Guitozzi and Orsini (2009) says that more than 10,000 foreigners, mostly resident in Kabul, live in relative comfort, enjoy a better living environment and lifestyle consistent with the distance they maintain from the Afghan population. In sharp contrast with the deplorable condition of the Afghan people, foreigners enjoy protection from both the internal and foreign troops. This is not helped by the limit of access to city centres and some public places imposed on the Afghan population in Kabul and other major cities. Again, wage disparity and the differential in employment option exacerbates relative deprivation. The foreigners are said to have comparatively huge salaries, often do not pay taxes, and for the most part do not learn a local language (Dorronsoro, 2005).

## Afghanistan Unemployment Rate (2010-2020)

S/N	Year	Unemployment Rate (%)
1	2020	11.73
2	2019	11.98
3	2018	11.06
4	2017	11.18
5	2016	11.31
6	2015	11.39
7	2014	11.45
9	2013	11.55
9	2012	11.51
10	2011	11.49
11	2010	11.48

**Source:** Author adaptation from United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime (2021)

For the unemployed in Afghanistan, the feeling of deprivation is metastasized by constraints on local drug trafficking and migration issues. Unemployment seems to correlates with the level of disorder in the country in each year. World Bank (2020) in UNODC (2021) says that the average employment rate was 11.43% with the lowest of 10.98 in 2019 and peaking at 11.73 in 2020. Again, due to the complex and interlaced relationship between unemployment, poverty and migration, a set of measures to mitigate household poverty by the Afghan population becomes diametrically linked to the prevailing economic experiences of each household, for some, the motives for migration are seldom unequivocal, they are explicitly linked to a broader livelihood strategy aimed at counterbalancing insecurity and the lack of local employment opportunities. World Bank (2020) analysis shows that households with higher degree of insecurity in their area of residence are more likely to have economic migrant's abroad vis-à-vis increase in real violence decreases the likelihood of migration, possibly due to increased need for household protection against forceful recruitment. In other words, households with better economic outcomes are less likely to rely on economic migration. This is to say that households with higher labour market vulnerability (aged people or physically challenged) or with excess potential labour force are more likely to diversify income sources through the migration of a male household member.

Consequent upon the above, the Afghan citizens feel deprived and frustrated in their own country leading to the exercise of sympathy to the Taliban.

### Governance lacuna.

Another factor to the emergence and rise in influence of the Taliban is governance lacuna in the suburbs occasioned by the absence of administration at the district level called (uluswali). This governance morass can partly be blamed for political fragmentation between 2002 and 2009 when Hamid Karzai was appointed president of the Afghan transitional administration in Kabul. The gap in governance was created from administrative errors of the then president Karzai who took advise from the US George Bush administration. In order to eliminate local warlords and political hegemonies in the districts and outskirts of the Afghan cities, Karsai opted for the use of *coterie*- (a small group of people with shared interest exclusive to others outside the group) to fill important positions in his administration, and nominated governors who were politically allied with him. However, the plans, due to Karzai's poor choices based on incompetence and lack of political will become agnomical and the strategy backfired. His government's elimination or weakening of the

political powers and authority of local leaders produced further political fragmentation which deoxygenated the functionality of governance.

As a result, Naylor, (2008) and Dorronsoro (2009) said that in the preceding years, there were few local leaders who can control any significant territory. These included Ismail Khan (for part of Herat Province), Ustad Ata (Jawzjan Province), Ustad Rabbani (part of Badakhshan Province), and Wali Karzai (in Kandahar). The authors added that Gul Agha Shirzai, despite being presented as important by prominent media coverage, was not dependable in Jalalabad acting as a broker between local powers. As political juggernauts, the leaders who controlled sizeable territory were not interested in rebuilding the state even as the central government was helping them get elected or giving them governmental posts. Within this period, many Afghans became convinced that the international intervention groups led by the US has been secretly supporting the Taliban. Civilian casualties from foreign military strikes and arbitrary arrests by the foreign forces became a cosine of alienation. The cases of torture on Bagram Air Base during the first years of the war and reports of mistreatment of prisoners were open secrets to the population. In view of this, commanders of local militia began to ally with the Taliban, swelling their ranks.

### **The Taliban and Political Economy of International Terrorism in Afghanistan.**

#### ***The Opium Trade, insecurity and Development Nexus.***

The politics of opium trade and the internationalization of terrorism in the Afghan context has been made a legitimized interstate war for the control, production and sale of illicit drugs. Political and socioeconomic factors in Afghanistan are aware of the nexus between drug trade, insecurity and development. In societies like Afghanistan where drug trafficking is a means of production, Levine (2012) says that actors such as the CIA, Taliban, Britain, Pakistan, India, and Russia are binary to the fact that 'drugs' are a development issue linked to every security threat and should be given such recognition. The cultivation and production of opium poppy, Coca leaf and Cannabis for anything other than medical and scientific purposes is prohibited under the UN 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, Umoh, Uranta and Israel (2021) However, Pakistan, a strong ally of the Taliban, is not oblivious of the UN anti-drug law even as her relationship with the Taliban is cemented by the expanding benefits from drug trafficking. Nevertheless, examining the strategic relationship between the Taliban, the politics of international aids in the context of support to terrorism, this paper argues that the cost of a protracted and elongated war between the Taliban and the Afghan government is born by states such as the US, Russia, China and Pakistan. For the US and Pakistan, it appears that drugs forms the basis for support. This is not to say that the US is not in support of the Afghan government, however, in view of its interest evidenced by the expansion in poppy field, drug production and sale since its invasion of the Afghan state, scholars have had to infer that drug trade to Asia acts as part of the pull factors for the support to both sides. According to Rowlett of the BBC (2019), an examination of the American strikes expected to damage the poppy fields, were discovered to have been targeted at mud houses. In addition, evidence from the {UN Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC, 2017)} shows that poppy was grown on around 120,000 hectares, but that following the US and British invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, this figure jumped from 120,000 to 285,000 miles and has since risen from 328,000 to 1,266 square miles.

Factors such as political instability, marginalisation, political exclusion, poverty, unemployment and resource disputes have sustained the cultivation of these drug crops while the proceeds from sales have sustained terrorism and insecurity.

***Ideological and Religious Beliefs.***

Prior to the fall of Kabul in August 2021, it appears that the US led coalition forces were maintaining peace or had decimated the sophistication and gusto of *Talibanic* terrorism, but in reality, the US had entered into some truce with the Taliban leading to a deliberate avoidance of the US assets and interests. But for the Afghans, the intensity of the war was felt in casualty rate of both combatants and non-combatants of Afghan origin. In 2018 when the US quadrupled its forces, this numerical strength did not emasculate the Taliban tactical spread, rather, the brutality and intensity of the war led to over 28200 Afghan IDPs. In view of this, the Afghan civilian support for the foreign forces dropped from 90% to 55% a decade later. Even with delayed troop withdrawal, the Afghan forces were losing 35% of ground to the Taliban. An estimated US logistics engagements according to CNN (2021), saw 20 years, 2 trillion dollars and 13000 coalition troops and a built up of an Afghan security force of over 300,000 backed with the world's most sophisticated air power. Yet, the US lost the war to an ill-equipped 75000 Taliban forces due to ideology and religious belief. Few key variables in the Taliban ideological stance are identifiable. These include; Jena (heaven for the departed), annihilation of the infidel, the decimation of the enemies of Islam, the Afghan identity which is tied to the resistance to foreign invaders and the religious devotion to fight and die. With this, the Taliban fought for ideology and belief and won, while the invaders fought for money and lost.

***The Politics of International Aid, Development and Terrorism.***

The emergence of a dichotomised perspective on development in Afghanistan immediately the cold war ended was underscored by interests external to auto-centric socioeconomic development of the Afghan people. The capitalist perspective to development of Afghanistan championed by the control advocates and led by the US revolves around international aids and the politics of free market. This was designed to impose stringent limitations by creating countervailing pressures favouring increased agricultural production and pharmaceutical manufacturing. However, the politics in opium and clauses in aid agreements constrained actors' efforts such as the UNODC to combat illicit drugs trading and stimulate development. This was expressed in the uncertainty regarding the implication of drug-control measures resulting in economic hardship or political instability, which in turn drove strategically located producer states into the Soviet camp. On a parochial evaluation, this had seemed to hinder the efforts of control advocates. But a holistic and closer scrutiny of the focus of the control advocates indicated that the capitalist intervention was to create a kind of monopoly for the production of opium and other drugs in Afghanistan while the Afghan people would be made workers in the production line. In contrast, the socialist perspective championed by the ownership group and led by Russia wanted poppy production to be state-owned and cultivated, produced and sold by the citizens. In a faux scrutiny of the intent of the control group, Meza (2011) erroneously attributed the resurgence of the opioid economy and related poppy cultivation to a war strategy of allied powers without examining the dark and intricate web of alliance between the CIA and drug cartels such as the *Contras* in drug trafficking.

In the light of the above, an examination of Webb (1999), McCoy (1999) Levine (2012) and statistics from UNODC mentioned earlier are in support of the central arguments of this study that the US occupation of Kabul was not to fight terror, but to participate actively in poppy cultivation and drug trafficking. This is in view of the fact that in the past 20 years, since the US invasion, the conditions of insecurity and lack of economic opportunity that enable drug cultivation to flourish in Afghanistan are characteristics shared by a number of post-conflict states in Central America, Central Asia, West and East Africa and the Balkans that emerged as trafficking hubs in the 1990s and 2000s. Central to these characteristics are social displacement, loss of livelihoods, the



proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the emergence of consolidated transnational terrorism. Umoh and Nzeye (2021). In addition, agricultural challenges in the context of grants, topography and land conflict, especially with the covid19 health challenges all revolves around drugs as the structural problems that makes Afghanistan susceptible to penetration by aid donors like the USAID, who is known to have been politicizing aid in conflicts and crises settings and have been fingered in the propagation of transnational terrorism.

### ***Fiscal Imbalance and the Politics Covid-19.***

On surface evaluation, it would seem that the 2020 Covid19 challenges pulled the Afghan Central Government spending into major adjustments to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. However, recurrent and development spending were reprioritized through three budget amendments during 2020. For World Bank (2021) the overall government expenditures reached Afs 434.5 billion (or 28.6 percent of GDP) in 2020 compared to Afs 419.4 billion (or 28.5 percent of GDP) in 2019, but fell below budgeted levels. As a result, domestic revenues collapsed from 14.1 percent of GDP in 2019 to 11.4 percent in 2020. This, added to the restraint on consumption and investment due to travel bans, eventuated a sharp decline in inland taxes and custom duties. As consequences of the mentioned, World Bank (ibid) intimated that overall tax revenues declined by 7.6 percent in 2020 compared to 2019. Reflecting that the closure of government offices impacted on non-tax revenues to decline by 30 percent. In other to mitigate the expanding financial lacuna between expenditure and income, donors provided substantial on- and off-budget support to help manage the COVID-19 crisis, with grants increasing to Afs 226.2 billion (14.9 percent of GDP) in 2020 from 188.9 billion (12.9 percent of GDP) in 2019.

In all of these, the Taliban were equally providing economic and health supports to disadvantaged household in the provinces and making inroads in reconciling aggrieved communities and projecting itself as the best option for governance. This was made widespread by the US announcement to withdraw its security forces. The Taliban consolidation on power and its eventual overthrow of the Afghan government in August 2021 cannot be said to have been an extemporaneous political action. Specific spring boards such as settlement of age long disputes, the inclusion of other ethnic nationalities in the rank and file of the Taliban administrative framework and the propaganda that the foreign security forces led by the US were selectively repressive, form the structural incentive for a unified front to sacking the Afghan government.

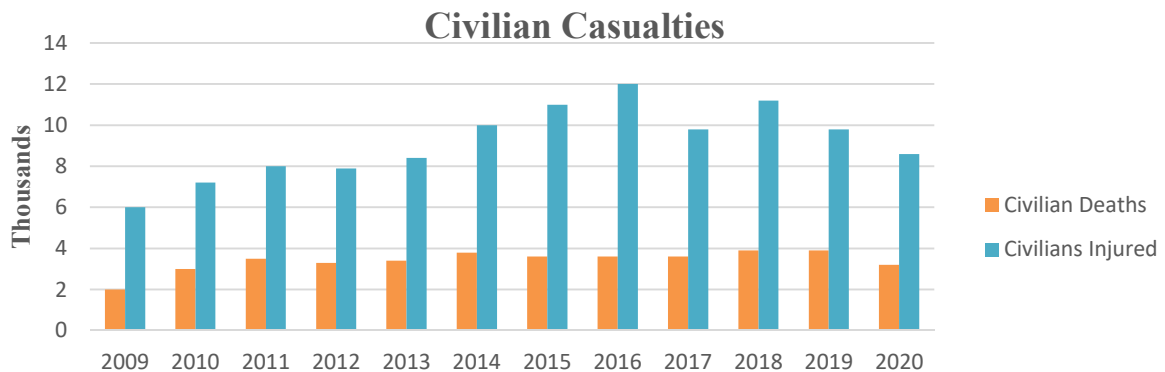
In view of the above, the study further argues that better natural resource management has an important role to play in the wider process of the Taliban rise to power and eventual rule in Kabul. In other words, the government at Kabul inadvertently presented itself as anti-people due to its support for foreign forces. The traditional sentiment of the Afghan indomitable spirit was fractured leading to grassroots support for the Taliban

### ***The Taliban Terrorism, Political Uncertainty and the Politics of Resource Management***

The government at Kabul lost its legitimacy long before it was sacked in august 2021. Both the government and foreign forces estimated the Taliban strictly from terrorism lenses without any idea that poor resource management could trigger a major incentive into terrorist recruitment. Incidentally, Afghanistan's natural resources—its land, water, forests and mineral deposits—are critical to the country's prospects for a peaceful and prosperous future, and this was annexed into the plans of the Taliban long before the 2021 political tsunami. An estimated 70-80 per cent of Afghans rely on agriculture, animal husbandry, arts and mining for their daily survival (Buxton,2015)). But the government at Kabul was not circumspective of this fact, rather its was emerged in extracting natural resources such as gemstones, uranium, common metals, rare-earth

metals, gas, oil, coal, gold and silver. Conversely, the focus at developing the country’s mineral resources via the international community, was seen by the Afghans as neo-colonialism and *aHaram*. As a result, the Taliban increased its campaigns at taking over more lands and space leading to political uncertainty, insecurity, civilian casualties and Internally Displacement of Persons(IDPs).

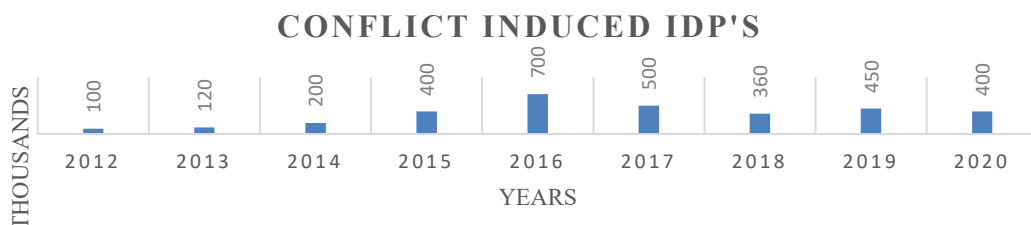
### Civilian Casualties from 2019 to 2020



**Source:** Author Adaptation from United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and UNHCR (2021)

Over 8,397 civilian casualty occur in the first 9months of 2016 as the highest due to poor resource management, distribution and in-equitable access to land and water resources occasioned by continued preponderant of violence and insecurity between foreign security forces and the Taliban. The above graph shows a peak of these casualties in 2016 indicating fierce socioeconomic and political contests between governments led forces and the Taliban. However, the decline from 2017 till the takeover in 2021 indicates that the Taliban was not only making inroads to peace building but was flourishing under ‘better’ natural resource management, by dividing natural resources as equitably possible amongst families and communities in the provinces involved in the red zones of the conflict in addition to allowing the local chiefs and family leadership to participate in the decisions that affect them; such as contracts and payments and the settlement of grievances. The settlement of grievances further reduced intercommunal conflicts leading to a reduction in the number of internally displaced persons. This is evidenced by the graph below indicating the lowest in 2018 while a slight steam to the conflict was added by covid19 poverty and hunger occasioned by lockdown in 2020.

### Conflict induced IDPs from 2012-2020



**Source:** Author Adaptation from United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and UNHCR (2021)

***The Taliban and Terrorism in Afghanistan: The End Game.***

On the one hand, the recurring themes of poverty (relative and abject), the widespread need of protection from banditry, the absence of human and food security, lack of socio-economic opportunities for the vulnerable segments of the population, economic strangulation, political manipulation and social ambiguity made possible by the US invasion, and on the other hand, the unprecedented rise of Taliban terrorism for over two decades, the afflicting migrants and inter-province drug war have been the structural factors that cause poverty in the general population and the major challenges to the socio-economic and political stability of Afghanistan. In addition, the cascading savagery, administrative ability, conflict resolution ability, assertiveness, violence regularity, consistency of objective and weapons sophistication have been some of the underpinning factors to the greatness of the Taliban. The Taliban operational patterns have repeatedly and consistently embarrassed the government at Kabul and the foreign security forces to the extent of invoking a spectre of fear over the lives of the region's inhabitants and has added to the precipitation of unparalleled loss of lives and property in the country. The unconventional warfare methods adopted by the group, coupled with its connections to several terrorist groupings and some states, have accentuated the apprehension of Afghan people about the Afghan state's security forces' ability to decimate the operational capabilities of the group. The Taliban operations are still characterised by violence, abductions, fatalities, infrastructural destruction and refugees. UNHCR (2020) reported that the Afghanistan conflict has taken a toll on population leading to about 2.6m Afghan refugees abroad battling with asylum processes. In fact, the trajectories of the Afghan conflict have engulfed human and capital resources. Global Conflict Tracker (2021) estimated that the number of civilian casualties since 2019 is about 11000 while the sum of about \$104.5b in US foreign aid has been dispensed and that 8000 people has been evacuated since August 2021. Ironically, major members of the Taliban positioning themselves to take charge of Afghanistan were part of the detainees held as prisoners of war by the US for 13yrs known as the Taliban 5 at Guantanamo Bay and are former high ranking members of the then Taliban government released by Barrack Obama in 2014. These Taliban 5 were in talks with the US government in 2019. They are Mullah Khairkhwa, Abdul Hag Wasiq, Mullah Fazel Mazloom, Mohamed Naeem, and Mullah Abdul Gani. They have been recognized by Western diplomats as the official representative of the Taliban in peace negotiations. The New York Post (2021) reported that the released Taliban 5 were deliberately ignored by the Biden administration and having formed a government in exile in Qatar, orchestrated the August 15<sup>th</sup> sacking of Kabul.

**Conclusion and Recommendations.**

The impact of the crisis in Afghanistan including migration, food, housing, livelihoods, health, security, and education, is complex as they are multidimensional. The US led military intervention in 2001 has not moderated the trilemma of governance deficit, underdevelopment and insecurity that snowballed into implosion. Unemployment has remained on the increase from 11.18% in 2017 to 11.73% in 2020; NSIA (2020). The high cost of food and its limited availability have remained a major challenge to food security. Insecurity at home, the workplace, farms and markets, the inability of farmers to grow crops and the high cost of transport to the affected areas are some of the factors that account for high food prices and limited availability. In view of this, the political economy of international terrorism is a function of the US and her allies' interests which, for the estimated 4 million men, women and children who rely on drug crop cultivation for their livelihoods have been constrained by the politics of drug control linked with development agencies in the international development agenda for Afghanistan. It is not yet in sight, that the recent Taliban control of the poppy fields and government may witness a drop in drug cultivation as means

of production neither would the UNODC development initiatives known as Alternative Development which include a broader framework for the criminalisation of the drug trade and reliance on militarised enforcement of agreement will be workable. In addition, accusation of widespread corruption in dispensing aid funds by the UNAIDS and brutality of civilian by the then US security forces should still be investigated and adequate punishment made to those who aided the security forces in committing crime against humanity while compensation should be paid to victims. About the Afghan drug problem, there's no immediate stringent measures that could mitigate its spread, except continued negotiation between the Taliban and the UNODC. In view of the above, governance by the Taliban should be closely monitored by the UNODC to emasculate drug for arms trade or sales to the regime in order to sanction states and other actors sponsoring international terrorism in Afghanistan.

### References.

1. Ake, C. (1981). *A political economy of Africa*. London: Longman Publishers.
2. Bates, R. (2008). When things fell apart: *State Failure in Late Century Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Barnett, R (2007). Saving Afghanistan. *Foreign Affairs*, (86) 1, 6
4. Berkowitz, L. (1962) *Aggression: A sociological analysis*. New York. McGraw Hill.
5. Charles, C. (2011). Beyond the failed state: Toward conceptual alternatives. *European Journal of International Relations*, 17 (2), 303-326.
6. Carment, D. (2003). Assessing state failure: Implications for theory and policy. *Third World Quarterly*, 24 (3), 407-427.
7. Carter, M (2019). What a Withdrawal from Afghanistan Would Look Like – Learning to Live with Taliban Rule, *Foreign Affairs*, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2019-10-21/what-withdrawal>
8. Dorronsoro, G. (2005). Revolution unending. *Afghanistan: 1979 to the Present*, Columbia University Press and Hurst
9. Dorronsoro, G (2009) The Taliban's Winning Strategy in Afghanistan. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*
10. Ekekwe, N. E. (2009). *An introduction to political economy*. Port Harcourt. Chuzzy services.
11. Felbab-Brown, V. (2010). The Drug Conflict Nexus in South Asia: Beyond Taliban Profits and Afghanistan. *The Afghanistan-Pakistan Theatre Militant Islam, Security & Stability*, US: FDD Press
12. Farthing, L & Kohl, B. (2005). Conflicting Agendas: the politics of development aid in drug-producing areas. *Development Policy Review*. 23:(2)
13. Guitozzi, A and Orsini, D. (2009) Centre-periphery relations in Afghanistan: Badakhshan between Patrimonialism and institution-building, *Central Asian Survey*, (13).
14. Gurr, T. R. (1970). *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
15. Herbst, J. (2004). Let Them Fail: State Failure in Theory and Practice' in Rotberg, Robert (ed.) (2004), 'When States Fail: *Causes and Consequences*'. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 302-318



16. Buxtan, J.(2015). Drugs and Development: The Great Disconnect. Global Drug Policy Observatory, (2)
17. Katzman,K., (2013). Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance, available at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21922.pdf>
18. McCoy, A (1991). *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade*. Brooklyn, NY: Lawrence Hill Books
19. Naylor, S. (2008). Insurgents in Afghanistan have mastered media manipulation, *Armed Forces Journal*, 2 (7), 23-31.
20. Oxfam (2011). “Whose Aid is it Anyway? *Politicizing aid in conflicts and crises.*” Oxfam Briefing Paper 145
21. Piazza,J.(2008). A supply-side view of suicide terrorism. *Journal of politics* 70, (1).
22. Bowlet,R. (2019) How the US Military Opium War in Afghanistan was lost. BBCNews.com
23. Rubin, B. (2007) Saving Afghanistan, *Foreign Affairs*, 86, (1), 6
24. Rashid, A (2007). Letter from Afghanistan: Are the Taliban Winning? *Current History*, January 2007.
25. Eriksen, S. (2011) State failure in theory and practice, *Review of International Studies*. 37 (01) 229-247
26. UNHCR (2020) Warns Afghanistan conflict taking the heaviest toll. August 13,2021
27. Umoh, U. S & Chijoke, N. T (2021). The politics of United Nations arms control and terrorism in the contemporary international system. *European Journal of Research Development and Sustainability (EJRDS)*, 2(8), 2660-5570
28. Umoh, U. S., Uranta, B. I. & Lebura, I (2021) Transnational Drug Trafficking and Nigeria’s Image in the Contemporary International System (2011-2019). *American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research*. 2, (5)2690-9626
29. World Bank Group (2020). Afghanistan Development Update, July 2020: Surviving the Storm. Washington, DC: World Bank. Report available at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34092>
30. Fareed, S (2021) “FAREED’S TAKE’: *The US withdrawal from Kabul*. Politics Today, CNN.com
31. The New York Post (2021) “*BLOWBACK*”. The New York Post.com.
32. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2021). Afghanistan opium survey 2019-Socio-economic survey report: *Drivers, causes and consequences of opium poppy cultivation*. Report available at: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/cropmonitoring/Afghanistan>. Retrieved on March 19, 2021
33. Lankford, A (, 2013.) *The Myth of Martyrdom: What Really Drives Suicide Bombers, Rampage Shooters, and Other Self-Destructive Killers*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan
34. Mesoy, A. (2013) “Poverty and radicalisation into violent extremism: a causal link?” NOREF Expert Analysis. Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre

35. National Statistics and Information Authority (2020) The 2019-2020 Income, Expenditure and Labor Force Survey (*IE-LFS (NSIA)*)
36. Shahrami, N., M. (2012). Taliban and Talibanism in historical perspective. <https://doi.org/10.22071.155> - 181
37. Vargas, M. (2011). USAID's Alternative Development policy in Colombia A critical analysis.
38. World Bank Group (2021) Afghanistan Development Update; Setting course to recovery. WBG,4
39. Guitozzi, A. and Orsini, D. (2009) Centre-Periphery Relations in Afghanistan: Badakhshan between Patrimonialism and Institution-Building. *Central Asian Survey*, 13.
40. Yates, A. (1962). *Frustration and conflict*. London: Methuen.
41. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2006). Legislative Guide for the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. New York: United Nations
42. Webb, G (1999). *Dark Alliance: CIA, the Contras and the Crack Cocaine Explosion*. Seven Stories Press.
43. Bolton, G (2008). Aid and Other Dirty Business: How Good Intentions Have Failed the World's Poor  
In Mansfield, D (2008) Pariah or Poverty? The Opium Ban in the Province of Nangarhar in the 2004–05 Growing Season and Its Impact on Rural Livelihood Strategies, GTZ Project for Alternative Livelihoods in Eastern Afghanistan: *Internal Document*, 11
44. Levine, M (2012). *The Big White Lie: The Deep Cover Operation That Exposed the CIA Sabotage of the Drug War*. Laura Kavanau-Levine Publishers