



universität
wien

MASTER THESIS

Titel der Master Thesis / Title of the Master's Thesis

"Afghanistan - Graveyard of Empires: Which domestic and foreign factors have been decisive for the current development in Afghanistan and have contributed to the strength of the Taliban?"

verfasst von / submitted by

Mareike Wiederhold

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Advanced International Studies (M.A.I.S.)

Wien 2022 / Vienna 2022

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt
Postgraduate programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 992 940

Universitätslehrgang lt. Studienblatt
Postgraduate programme as it appears on the
student record sheet:

Internationale Studien / International Studies

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Professor Arthur R. Rachwald



diplomatische
akademie **wien**

Vienna School of International Studies
École des Hautes Études Internationales de Vienne

Acknowledgment

This research is a master's thesis for receiving the Master of Advanced International Studies (M.A.I.S.) at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna. First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Professor Arthur R. Rachwald for his guidance and constant supervision and kind assistance throughout the writing of my thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Guido Woldering, who supported me throughout my Bachelor's degree and for always believing in his students. Professor Arthur R. Rachwald and Dr. Guido Woldering have invested considerable time and effort to assist me in accomplishing this Master's degree. All of this would not have been possible without their constant support; therefore, I am infinitely grateful.

Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna for providing me with the opportunity to obtain such a valuable experience. A special thank you goes to my cousin Lara Wiederhold, who always sacrificed her time and energy to support me throughout my studies. Not to forget my partner Hans von Schenck, who has constantly supported me and encouraged me at all times. I also would like to thank Darija and Manfred Sorko, who always looked after me and made my time in Vienna special and memorable. Finally, a massive thank you is due to my South Asia Team at GIZ, who kindly companied me during this time. I highly appreciate the time and efforts of all national and international colleagues who contributed to this master thesis. Without them, this would not have been possible. Last but certainly not least, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family and friends for their unwavering love, understanding, and motivation throughout my studies.

ABSTARCT

My research focuses on the global and domestic balance of power attributable to the Taliban in Afghanistan. The scope of this research is centered within the concepts of international relations and history. The paramount objective of this research is to identify and analyse the most significant changes in Afghanistan's domestic and international politics applicable to the Taliban regime. More specifically, the thesis will focus on the following internal developments like arising challenges and limitations for the Taliban regime, implications for the Afghan society due to the rise of the Taliban, and the country's relation with Pakistan, Russia and the United States. This specificity of contexts and local perspectives make qualitative methods more suitable for answering the research questions. Furthermore, it is useful for my thesis to follow Hans Morgenthau's Classical Realism and apply his theory accordingly.

Meine Forschung konzentriert sich auf die globalen und inländischen Machtverhältnisse, die den Taliban in Afghanistan zuzuschreiben sind. Der Rahmen dieser Studie wird durch die Konzepte der internationalen Beziehungen und der Geschichte abgesteckt. Vorrangiges Ziel dieser Studie ist es, die wichtigsten Veränderungen in der afghanischen Innen- und Außenpolitik zu ermitteln und zu analysieren, die auf das Taliban-Regime zurückzuführen sind. Im Einzelnen wird sich die Arbeit auf folgende interne Entwicklungen konzentrieren: die Herausforderungen und Grenzen, die sich für das Taliban-Regime ergeben, die Auswirkungen des Aufstiegs der Taliban auf die afghanische Gesellschaft und die Beziehungen des Landes zu Pakistan, Russland und den Vereinigten Staaten. Aufgrund dieser Spezifität der Kontexte und der lokalen Perspektiven sind qualitative Methoden für die Beantwortung der Forschungsfragen besser geeignet. Für meine These ist es außerdem sinnvoll, dem klassischen Realismus von Hans Morgenthau zu folgen und seine Theorie entsprechend anzuwenden.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
2. Literature Review.....	6
3. Research Question.....	10
4. Historical Background.....	12
4.1 Afghanistan - Graveyard of Empires.....	16
5. International Relations Theory.....	20
5.1 Classical Realism.....	20
6. Methodology.....	23
6.1 Expert Interviews.....	25
6.2 Inductive Approach.....	26
7. The Domestic Context of Afghanistan.....	43
7.1 Role of the Taliban.....	43
7.2 Afghanistan and Pakistan.....	49
8. The International Context of Afghanistan.....	54
8.1 Afghanistan and Russia.....	54
8.2 Afghanistan and the US.....	56
9. Summary.....	60
10. Conclusion.....	61
10.1 Policy Findings.....	62
10.2 Policy Recommendation.....	67
11. Bibliography.....	69
12. Pledge of Honesty.....	75
13. Annex.....	76
13.1 Interview Transcript	
13.2 Interview Transcript	
13.3 Interview Transcript	
13.4 Interview Transcript	
13.5 Interview Transcript	
13.6 Interview Transcript	
13.7 Interview Transcript	
13.8 Interview Transcript	
13.9 Interview Transcript	
13.10 Interview Transcript	

Illustrations

1. MAP 1. Afghanistan (Barfield 2010).....	13
2. TABLE 1. Interview Participants.....	26

1. Introduction

Afghanistan's role has become a highly discussed topic on the world stage. Due to history and current events, the domestic and international landscapes has dramatically changed. Especially, regarding the areas of economic, political and military context and the role of the Taliban within the country (Barfield 2010, 2). The study focuses on the change of power in Afghanistan and the developing role of the Taliban regime, and on the specific impact from outside on selected countries, e.g., Pakistan, Russia and the United States (US). I, furthermore, intend to include the Afghan policy setting, including policy recommendations and findings, which are particularly crucial in a globalised multilateral and bilateral perspective. Due to ongoing activities, Russia and the US have formalised the present attitude and approach towards Afghanistan. Another important partner and counterpart is Pakistan, which has played an essential role throughout history and plays a critical role in the future of Afghanistan, especially if the overall evacuation process is considered, where many Afghans are being evacuated to Islamabad via land route.

International structures tend to compete among states, increasing or reducing their power. Considering both the historical background of Afghanistan and its current position in the broader context, the author of this thesis will attempt to create a more comprehensive picture of Afghanistan's role in the regional power struggle.

This thesis will examine how rulers in Afghanistan gained political legitimacy and provided order over centuries, focusing on Afghan people as the major protagonists in understanding the country and its political dynamics. When discussing political order and the billiard ball approach, it is common to overlook culture and avoid history, but I will also consider tense factors (Barfield 2010, 2).

The appearance of ethnic and religious conflicts, underdeveloped economies, terrorist movements, and failing regimes, especially in developing countries, should be addressed. Moreover, I should ask myself whether these topics mentioned are fundamentally similar? Unfortunately, they are not, assuming they impose a dangerously deceptive uniformity. Afghanistan may have a lot in common with other countries and communities, but these parallels should be documented rather than considered (Barfield 2010, 2).

My internship, which is specialised in the context of Afghanistan and Pakistan, was the first time I came in contact with such a specific issue. The environment changed dramatically following the government's fall and the Taliban's conquest of power on August 15th 2021. I began to delve further into the subject and approached it academically. The national staff's particular tragedies

extremely impacted me, and I'd like to address their thoughts and concerns herein. I would like to gain insight into the topic and look back in history to see how the current circumstances came into existence.

2. Literature Review

The strength of this literature review lies in the fact that there is a high level of interest in the development of Afghanistan regarding the international as well as the national stage. Nevertheless, there is little literature on the subject since many significant changes are currently happening. I would like to have a closer and more detailed look at several examples of literature. Therefore, I would like to discuss the book *"Afghanistan a cultural and political history"* by Thomas Barfield in 2010.

As from Mughal Empire¹ in the sixteenth century to the Taliban revival nowadays, Afghanistan recounts the historic battles and shifting nature of political power in this unstable area of the globe. Thomas Barfield presents an introduction to Afghanistan's astonishing array of ethnic and tribal groupings, emphasising what they have in common as Afghans regardless of their geographical, social, and political disagreements. He examines why the American intervention in the event of 9/11 was so successful in overthrowing the Taliban and how this facile triumph promoted the US to believe that a functioning nation could be built almost as quickly. Barfield presents a compulsory reading for anybody interested in learning how a state that had been invaded and subjugated by various empires became the British and Soviet Graveyard of Empires, as well as what the US need to do to prevent a similar outcome (Barfield, 2010).

Thomas Barfield's publication primarily introduces the background of Afghanistan's cultural and political aspects. He furthermore provides a historical overview to deliver a basic understanding of the situation and actions in Afghanistan. The book does not include a discussion of the relevance and the reference to current concerns and fears. Moreover, the role and development of the Taliban are not adequately addressed. On the positive side, Barfield addresses both the international and national context of Afghanistan. His book does not include the discussion points of current events, such as the withdrawal of US troops and the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Thomas Barfield is still dealing with the US invasion of 2001 (Barfield, 2010). Addressed by the question *"Why did the US invasion of 2001 that toppled the Taliban not immediately set off a similar national insurgency (as it did in Iraq), and despite that, still fail to bring stability to the country?"* (Barfield, 2010).

¹ Mughal Empire was a state that existed in the Indian subcontinent from 1526 to 1858.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to observe that he utilised the concept of the "Graveyard of Empires". While addressing the Anglo-Afghan Wars and State Building in Afghanistan, presented in his question *"How did Afghanistan, which was overrun and ruled by a series of foreign dynasties for more than a thousand years, become renowned as the "Graveyard of Empires" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries after forcing the withdrawal of both the British and Russians in a series of wars?"* (Barfield, 2010). A further crucial question which I would also like to cover is *"Why have foreign attempts to change Afghanistan's politics, social structures, and government proved so ineffective?"* and the topic of Afghanistan in the Twentieth Century: State and Society in Conflict (Barfield, 2010).

In the 2021 published article *"The Return of the Taliban and the Revival of Jihadist Extremism"*, Jang Ji-Hyang addresses whether the United States troop withdrawal from Afghanistan was the right move during this time. She highlights two theories: those who argue it was now or never, that delaying it might not have changed the outcome, and those who say it was an un-strategic move, which was taken too soon. Numerous new questions emerge, such as *What will happen to Afghanistan after all US and coalition forces have left the nation. Might it be feasible that terrorists will have a safe harbour? What are ISIS ties with the Taliban? And what will the nation's implications be due to their dispute and disagreement?* She argues that the Taliban have also been sending reassuring words to the Afghan people, particularly women, and have attempted to portray themselves as a stable government. However, throughout her research, she found that Afghans who suffered under Taliban control are fleeing the nation with their families, mainly females, children, and reporters. She proposes the question, of *What does the rise of the Taliban imply for Afghans? What makes them so terrified?* Open Questions like: *What does the height of the Taliban mean for Afghans? What makes them so scared?* still needs to be addressed accordingly (Ji-Hyang, 2021).

A highly beneficial aspect of Jang Ji-Hyang's writing is that her work is extremely up-to-date and, therefore, extremely relevant for my study. She particularly deals with the Taliban's return and the US's withdrawal from Afghanistan, which is crucial for my thesis. She could have elaborated a little further on the difficulties encountered by the Taliban regime's current role in Pakistan.

I would like to discuss the book *"Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security"* by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever published in 2009. They argue that regional security tendencies became more relevant in international politics throughout decolonisation. Both authors integrate a regional security operational theory, including an empirical approach throughout the

international order. A variety of different states in the region are all discussed in separate chapters. The emphasis is on the post-Cold War era, yet every regional security building's history is linked directly to its origins. The book develops an unique perception of post-Cold War international security by referring regional security developments to the ongoing discourse on the global structure of power, attempting to avoid generalisations rooted in the unipolar perspective and the severe deterritorialisation of several internationalist viewpoints of a future world disorder. The paradigm highlights the extreme fluctuation of security dynamics around the globe, according to Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (Buzan & Waever 2003). One disadvantage of this publication is that it was written in 2003 and therefore, misses several important events.

In his work *"Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Taliban"* published in 2009, Nasreen Akhtar highlights three main variables: the Taliban's revival, President Karzai's leadership, and the regional backdrop. The Iraq war was an expensive diversion, and focusing nation-building on elections instead of establishing governing structures was a failure. Economic growth has rarely been studied, particularly in agriculture, resulting in a surge in drug manufacture. However, she argues a growing consensus that a certain dialogue with the Taliban is required. According to western standards, they've evolved into a more advanced military organisation, but they're still very simplistic. However, Afghanistan is a tribal country with a large ability for tolerance, which is a major benefit for social and political organisations. Nasreen Akhtar found that they have not solve Afghanistan's challenges yet (Akhtar, 2009).

The reference to Pakistan and the country's close ties with Afghanistan is emphasised in Nasreen Akhtar's publication, which is essential for the domestic influence in this study. In addition, the overarching role of the Taliban is elaborated. The post-Taliban regime after the withdrawal of Russian troops is discussed. Still, it would be particularly helpful to compare it with the present Taliban regime after the departure of US troops. However, the article, which was written in 2009, is far too outdated for this purpose. In addition, international relations in the context of traditional order and stability are discussed with special reference to Russia and the US, which are essential for my thesis.

In their academic work *"The US Withdrawal from Afghanistan Portends a Vacuum and Uncertain Future "* published in 2021, Yoram Schweitzer and Oded Eran elaborating on the US withdrawal from Afghanistan satisfy the objectives of the three administrations before the Biden presidency to terminate the US function as a conqueror, enforcer, and provider of this split and destruction caused nation, which it joined in the aftermath of the September 11th 2001 terror acts. The primary goals of the US effort in Afghanistan were met, with Al-Qaeda being attacked and the

Taliban government being deposed. Still, the US failed to stop the Taliban from reclaiming control. The US has promised to retaliate if it is targeted on its soil again, but Afghanistan's neighbours are concerned about the impact, considering the void created by the withdrawal. Moreover, the Taliban's image spread about the fundamentalist Islamic “Muqawama”² (resistance) against a nation might serve as a model to other forces in many countries. They propose that especially western governments should be prepared for the prospect that Afghanistan may once again become a hub for terrorism around the world and an example to be emulated (Schweitzer & Eran, 2021).

The strength of the article by Yoram Schweitzer and Oded Eran is its topicality and relevance to my study. In particular, it deals with US troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan and looks at past events. It elaborates on how the US might proceed and how the engagement with the current Taliban regime might proceed. A possible weakness could be that the paper mainly deals with the Biden administration and is, therefore, insufficiently placed in the context of world affairs as a whole.

Kathryn Stoner's 2015 published academic work *"Russia's 21st Century Interests in Afghanistan: Resetting the Bear Trap"* starts with the nineteenth-century conflict between Russia and Great Britain across Central Asia as the first "great game." She argues that a different "Great Game" has evolved, placing the US against a resurgent Russia and China, vying for control of one of the world's most dangerous territories: the vast disputed territory running from Iran to Pakistan. To her, all three global powers seek significant objectives: the US wants military forces, the Chinese want control of resources, and the Russians want more political clout. Central Asian governments, on the other hand, have demonstrated to be formidable powers around their capacity, creating local regulations to ward off outside interference and strengthen their sovereign power. Kathryn Stoner presents a detailed and startling analysis of how minor states engage with major powers in this crucial area and contributes to our knowledge of how global politics works in the modern period (Stoner, 2015).

The concept of the “Great Game”³ is an essential idea explained in Kathryn Stoner's article, which may help to understand my study as well. The article is relevant to the international context and Russia's influence on Afghanistan. Besides introducing the historical background, the article also discusses Russia's main interest and instruments in Afghanistan post-2014 and other

² Muqawma "Resistance" is the direct translation of the Arabic term Muqawama. "The doctrine of continual combat" might be a more accurate translation.

³ Great Game was the historical conflict between Great Britain and Russia for supremacy in Central Asia. It lasted from 1813 until the Treaty of Saint Petersburg in 1907.

international actors such as the US. Unfortunately, the article fails to be timely, so it can only be used in connection with the relationship between Russia and Afghanistan. Moreover, the role of the Taliban is only touched upon and not elaborated in detail.

The historical aspects and the development of Afghanistan, the influence of Russia and the USA on Afghanistan are addressed accordingly in several academic publications and the relationship with the neighbouring country Pakistan. Nevertheless, as the topic is still relatively young and current, there is a deficiency of academic literature and data collection. I, therefore, plan to address this specific gap in the literature. There is still some progress to be made in this area and questions like, *What does the rise of the Taliban mean for Afghans? What might be arising challenges for the Taliban regime?* still needs to be addressed.

In his literature work “Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace“, Hans Morgenthau lays out six political realism principles. His work is available in several editions, his first edition was published in 1948. Morgenthau makes it clear, however, that establishing power as a core idea does not imply that power relations are the only determinants of political activity. The concept of interest expressed in power is the basic guide for Realism. He focuses on the interest and power game of states. It is presumptively assumed that political actors behave and think about power-defined interests. Because of this concentration of interest and power, Realism avoids focusing on political actors' intentions and ideological preferences. Realism's definition of power does not pretend to have an absolute and eternal meaning. The environment has a significant impact on the interests that drive political activity. The focus on power must be adjusted to the evolving circumstances of these specific situations (Morgenthau, 1960a, 8)

Hans Morgenthau's oeuvre is a foundation for those interested in international relations, history and foreign policy. Especially in such academic fields, the book is unavoidable. Solid work for those who want a basis for the theory of Realism. Unfortunately, due to its numerous ideas, it occasionally is somewhat confusing. Furthermore, since the first edition was written in 1948, it lacks topicality and current examples.

3. Research Question

The paramount objective of this study is to identify and analyse the most significant changes in Afghanistan's domestic politics and the international balance of power attributable to the Taliban regime? More specifically, the thesis will focus on the following internal developments like arising challenges and limitations for the Taliban regime, implications for the Afghan society due to the rise of the Taliban, and the country's relation with Pakistan, Russia and the United States. This scope of

the study should enhance our understanding of the key elements of the country's domestic dynamics and determine their impact on the regional structure of power. As a result, the study is expected to advance our grasp of Afghanistan as an independent state and an international actor.

By its very essence, research is a challenging endeavour that necessitates an in-depth understanding of the relevant topic, careful preparation, and great efforts. From my perspective, this study aims to investigate the issues posed by strengthening the Taliban in Afghanistan. The scope of this study is centred within the concepts of international relations, political science and history. It is an extremely pertinent topic, as I was closely involved in the matter due to the nature of my work and also participated in the evacuation process of international and national experts. My research question focuses on the global and domestic balance of power attributable to the Taliban regime and their arising changes and limitations in Afghanistan.

I want to clarify what I want to accomplish within my research topic's aim and purpose. Furthermore, this section answers why it is important for future implications and what research gap needs to be filled. I will briefly specify what kind of research topic I want to pursue.

Furthermore, I will elaborate on the expression known as "Graveyard of Empires "and look at the different aspects of this view from national and international experts. Therefore, the qualitative analysis is among the research tools utilised in this work. While conducting research, I encountered various challenges and difficulties, including complexity determining a research question, limited knowledge of methodology, challenges finding current, specific, and connected references, a lack of understanding of the subject matter, time constraints, and research directing. Numerous data points are required for research, some challenging to handle and others sometimes hard to coordinate. I also have to deal with the possibility that my approach is still too broad or too limited. This anxiety is unavoidable. This may necessitate increasing the research's emphasis or narrowing it down to make it more manageable. In addition, one should not lose the focus and the reference to the related research question.

It would also be useful to mention the diverse responses of different countries to the change of government in Afghanistan. Cross-sectoral coordination and transnational cooperation are critical to prevent and battle crimes, such as human trafficking and crimes related to the new regime. The concerns are dominant in Afghanistan, yet they are primarily seen as transnational crime issues that begin from outside the country and propagate worldwide. In conclusion, my study's overall and primary objective is to elaborate on the role of the Taliban and evaluate their rise to power and their strengthening in Afghanistan. In addition, I will examine the domestic influence of Pakistan and the global impact of Russia and the USA.

4. Historical Background

Afghanistan is strategically located at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia, and it has the potential to serve as the principal gateway connecting all three regions (see Map 1.). Pakistan and Afghanistan's geo-economic, geo-strategic, and geo-political situations are historic and will continue to be so in the future, particularly for Russia, China, and the US. The geo-strategic importance of Afghanistan as a platform to project influence towards the East, West and South need to be emphasised (Khan & Shirazi 2021, 137).

Afghanistan is a landlocked country in Central Asia that connects three main cultural and geographic regions: the Indian subcontinent to the southeast, Central Asia to the north, and the Iranian plateau to the west. For millennia, geography has shaped the path of Afghan history as the doorway for invaders pouring out of Iran or Central Asia and into India: Cyrus the Great⁴, Alexander the Great⁵, Mahmud of Ghazni⁶, Ching-gis Khan⁷, Tamerlane⁸, and Babur⁹, to name a few notable instances (Barfield 2010, 1).

What is the location of Afghanistan, and how long has it been an "autonomously" country? In the first part of the nineteenth century, "Afghanistan" had not yet established itself as a reigning designation; instead, the "Kingdom of Kabul" was used. At the time, Afghanistan was broadly defined as the Pashtun tribal lands, now found in the country's south and east and northern Pakistan. "Afghanistan" did not become a country designation until the second part of the nineteenth century. The region today known as Afghanistan, on the other hand, was located further north than it had been at the turn of the nineteenth century. A delineation to neighbouring Afghanistan across tribal or ethnic lines had become outdated with the push of British-Indian soldiers into eastern Pashtun tribal territories. The term "Afghanistan" was no longer understood to refer to the Pashtun tribal area but rather to the rule-free buffer zone between Russia, British India, and Persia (Schetter 2017, 10).

Afghan historians go to great lengths to portray its history as very old, stretching back to antiquity. According to history, the modern Afghan nation-state began in 1747, when Ahmad Shah

⁴ Cyrus the Great ruled Persia from about 559 B.C. to 530 B.C. as the sixth king of the Achaemenid dynasty.

⁵ Alexander the Great was king of Macedonia and hegemon of the Corinthian League from 336 BC until his death.

⁶ Mahmud of Ghazni is the most famous ruler from the Ghaznavid dynasty of Turkish origin.

⁷ Ching-gis Khan was a Khagan of the Mongols and founder of the Mongol Empire. He united the Mongol tribes and conquered large parts of Central Asia and northern China.

⁸ Tamerlane was a Central Asian Islamic military leader of a Turko-Mongol tribal confederation based in Samarkand and conqueror at the end of the 14th century.

⁹ Babur was the first mogul of India.



MAP 1. AFGHANISTAN
SOURCE: BARFIELD 2010, 1

Durrani¹⁰ established a hereditary kingdom. However, because this empire was not even called *Afghanistan* and did not establish any contemporary state structures, this date cannot be considered the birth of a modern Afghan state. The late nineteenth-century rule of Abdur Rahman¹¹ is a far more accurate period for the start of Afghan national history. At the time, the colonial powers of

¹⁰ Ahmad Shah Durrani was the founder of the Durrani Empire and is considered the father of the modern state of Afghanistan.

¹¹ Abdur Rahman was Emir of Afghanistan from 1880 to 1901.

British India and Russia constructed Abdur Rahman state structures and provided the semi-autonomous state of Afghanistan with definite political-geographical borders (Schetter 2017, 11).

In the nineteenth century, the Khyber¹² became the pivot of the Great Game, a rivalry between the United Kingdom and Russia for control of Central Asia and India. The first Afghan War (1839-1842) began when British commanders dispatched a massive force of British and Indian troops to Afghanistan to defend the country against Russian invasions, replacing the governing emir with a British appointee. Faced with Afghan resistance, the British were compelled to evacuate from Kabul in January 1842, sending a column of 16,500 troops and civilians east to the stronghold at Jalalabad, 110 miles distant. Only one member of that party made it to Jalalabad alive. However, British forces were able to retrieve some detainees many months later. (Bearden 2001, 18).

The occupation of Afghan territory by foreign troops, the installation of an unpopular emir on the throne, the harsh actions of British-supported Afghans against their local enemies, and the reduction of subsidies paid to tribal chiefs by British political agents all contributed to the British disaster. A century later, the British and the Soviets would repeat identical mistakes in the second Afghan War (1878-81). In 1917, the British conducted a third war with Afghanistan, which neither enhanced British military history nor crushed the Afghan people. That part of the Great Game, however, was ended by the end of World War I. However, following the conflict, the nation reverted to its natural condition of ethnic and factional strife (Bearden 2001, 18).

The beginning of Afghan national history, on the other hand, is rarely traced back to 1923, when Amanullah wrested complete sovereignty from British India, founded the constitutional monarchy, and formally legitimised his rule with the Afghan people's desire. Although it has been feasible to speak of an Afghan state since Abdur Rahman's time, this book also discusses the country's historical forerunners. Five main features can be recognised in Afghanistan's history, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries, that continue to affect the country's growth today: To begin with, the hard, forbidding natural environment was an undesirable environment in which to establish dominion. Since agricultural harvests were so low, only overland trade between China, India, and Persia was profitable. To show an economic surplus, all empires in this region attempted to include one of the three neighbouring fertile regions, namely Khorasan, Punjab, or Transoxania. Agriculture surpluses were insufficient to establish a lasting reign once an empire was limited to the land of today's Afghanistan (Schetter 2017, 11).

¹² Khyber border province between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As a result, every king has relied on foreign aid to keep in power since the 19th century; in the 19th century, it was financial support from the British, and in the 20th century, development aid from the United States, the Soviet Union, and Germany. More than 40 % of government money has come from outside the country since 1957, primarily through development assistance. At the same time, Afghanistan's limited economic resources have resulted in a high level of mobility among Afghans, whether through traditional nomadism, raids into India (particularly in the 18th century), or labour migration and escape since the 1970s. The second point is the stark disparity between urban and rural locations. The few cities along the caravan routes served as major stops and were part of the Silk Road's cosmopolitan commerce network, while the rural areas were mostly left to their ways and had little contact with the cities. Throughout the twentieth century, the disparity between city and countryside became the primary source of conflict. Traditional social systems were maintained in rural regions, whereas cities, particularly Kabul, were the engines of state development and modernisation. Third, Afghan society is characterised by a high degree of individualism. The essential references for identification and activity in Afghanistan were villages, valley communities, clans, tribal groups, and religious communities, on which patronage and clientele systems were formed. Egalitarian forms of rule have remained in many areas, along with this social framework. As a result, social status and political hierarchies are constantly questioned and contested. Personal rivalry shattered political coalitions throughout Afghan history, and disagreements over the succession were fought out in blood amongst possible successors (Schetter 2017, 12). Fourth, major cultural schisms have frequently been used as political mobilization. Afghanistan is a country with a wide range of linguistic and ethnic diversity, as well as religious diversity. Rulers and politicians have long exploited cultural variety to achieve their own goals. This cultural mosaic was a specific stumbling block to becoming a nation-state. Fifth, Afghanistan has created history in world politics on several occasions. The "Great Game" in Afghanistan between England and Russia in the nineteenth century marked the end of the imperial era. The Soviet Union sat on the fence, but Afghanistan was so far removed from the Western perception that it received little attention until the last ruler, Zahir Shah¹³, was toppled in 1973. Then began the dispute cycle, which continues until today (Bearden 2001, 18).

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 ended the Cold War's détente policy, and the Soviet occupation led to the Soviet Union's demise. Finally, the traces of September 11th were the pivotal turning point in Afghanistan. These key events in Afghanistan are invariably tied to foreign

¹³ Zahir Shah was King of Afghanistan from 1933 to 1973.

influence. Decisions with huge implications for the country were frequently made in far-flung power centres like London, Moscow, or Washington. As a result, it isn't easy to write an Afghan history without considering foreign interests. Only those political and military movements with international assistance could maintain power. If this source went away, the action on the issue would lose control. At the same time, Afghanistan's populace began to flee in large numbers due to the continued conflict and dwindling economic opportunities.

Furthermore, the urban-rural split widened during the War, as cities were modernised along communist lines in the 1980s. Still, traditional values and conventions were retained in rural areas deliberately to keep them apart. The resistance, like the Afghan government, splintered into a plethora of rival organisations due to this intense particularism. The possibility of ethnic warfare arose during the War, as the government and resistance forces used ethnic tensions to motivate fighters for their ends (Schetter 2017, 13).

4.1 Afghanistan - Graveyard of Empires

In today's Afghanistan, the "actual world" is replete with war, brutality, corruption, and poverty. Thirty-nine tribal languages complicate two major languages (Pashto and Dari Persian). Modern technology has been around for decades but is only used in Kabul, the capital city. Despite its immense natural resources and mineral endowments, Afghanistan is barely a frontier market in the traditional sense (Hummel/Freeland/Craft/Mckellips 2012, 663).

Foreign powers employ aggressive rivalries and competitions to advance their strategic objectives in many regional countries. There is an active component at work, and foreign governments with interest in the area wish to achieve their goals at the expense of local actors. In the fight against terrorism, the United States, its allies, and the Russian Federation are devising strategies to achieve their objectives by boosting their image and addressing security concerns, which have resulted in a major European and US military presence in Afghanistan. Central Asian countries share numerous characteristics, including significant historical, cultural, social, and ethnic linkages (Khan & Shirazi 2021, 148).

Afghanistan, known as the "Graveyard of Empires," has served as a battleground for Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, the Soviets, the Taliban, and NATO countries. Afghanistan has not made significant progress toward modernity or emerged as a viable player on the global stage of international commerce in the absence of armed conflict (Hummel/Freeland/Craft/Mckellips 2012, 664).

Afghanistan typifies historical resistance to external forces in most journalistic accounts and certain scholarly publications, making it the perennial "Graveyard of Empires," to use a well-worn cliché that has been deftly critiqued and contextualised. Indeed, until the mid-nineteenth century, the region was more of a "route of conquest" (Barfield 2004), when a modern Afghan polity arose due to the British and Russian governments' operations. Only then was the country's name and its current territory defined (Hanifi 2011). Despite the mainly ineffective military operations of the two Anglo-Afghan wars of 1839-1842 and 1880, Afghanistan was not immune to British influence during the nineteenth century. Abdur Rahman broke down internal resistance and built a reasonably strong state throughout his reign (1880-1901), thanks to foreign subsidies and, more broadly, the country's inclusion into colonial markets as a fringe of global capitalism (Hanifi 2011). Far from being isolated again after the third Anglo-Afghan war in 1919, the country established an unique transnational environment in which it was strongly connected with adjacent regions and with the growth of Muslim modernism in India. Furthermore, as an independent country, Afghanistan provided a place of "projected idealism" (Green 2011, 483) for many Muslims involved in anti-colonial activities across South Asia and the Middle East (Monsutti 2013, 271).

More specific, Afghanistan has appeared unconquerable from Alexander the Great in 330 BC to the British Empire in the nineteenth century to the Soviet invasion of the 1970s. Against this backdrop, the immense struggle that the US faces in attempting to "construct a new order" in Afghanistan is something that prior "empires" have failed to do. "The lessons from former empires provide a sharp lesson," he demonstrates. Wadsworth (Wadsworth, 2010, 148).

Afghanistan was a part of numerous different empires ruled by outsiders and the hub of a few of its own. Its contemporary incarnation dates back to the nineteenth century, when the region of Afghanistan became embroiled in a great power conflict between British India and czarist Russia, which included two wars with the British. Even though a civil war occurred in 1929, Afghanistan remained peaceful and neutral during the first and second world wars (Barfield 2010, 1).

However, in the mid-twentieth century, Afghanistan was transformed into a battleground for the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union, culminating in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and its withdrawal ten years later. Afghanistan became a failed state, neglected by the rest of the world, due to the civil conflict erupted in the 1990s. It resurfaced on the world stage at the turn of the twenty-first century when radical Muslim Jihadists plotted the 9/11 attack against the United States from there, prompting a US invasion in retaliation. In the face of an Islamist insurgency, a new Afghan administration has tried to bring stability to the country since then (Barfield 2010, 1).

Afghanistan is frequently referred to as a crossroads. It has been categorised as one of the least peaceful countries in the world, with one of the highest infant mortality rates and one of the lowest life expectancy rates in the world, according to development metrics. Afghanistan, while being a poor and war-torn country, is far from insignificant. The global consequences of its polity, economy and social crises appear to correspond to the country's central location on the Mercator projection. During the nineteenth century, the Afghan state was at the centre of the Great Game, a geopolitical contest between the British and Russian empires for control in West and Central Asia. The terrible struggle waged in the 1980s between the Soviet-supported Afghan central government and the resistance, backed by the West, had a part in the latter years of the Cold War. It might be considered another chapter in the region's quest for superpower supremacy. Recent events, including the intervention of the US-led international coalition and the toppling of the Taliban in late 2001, have had worldwide consequences. The Afghan conflict is one of the worst humanitarian tragedies in modern history, in addition to its geostrategic importance (Monsutti 2013, 270).

Traditional accounts of the country's contemporary plight emphasise tradition's tenacity in the face of modernity, tribalism and ethnic affiliations' endurance, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, international terrorism, drug trafficking, and corruption. However, these theories tend to mimic the normative norms of peace- and nation-building that have inspired the international community's reconstruction effort since 2001 and the paradigm of modernisation theory, with its predictable stages of advancement. What role may anthropology play in an environment so saturated by a desire for instant policy-relevant knowledge with its heritage of ethnography based on long-term immersion and a critique of Eurocentrism? Is there still room for the sense of locality and extended fieldwork that distinguishes anthropological scholarship from other types of knowledge production in a society that has been profoundly and irreversibly transformed by the long-term presence of foreign and aid organisations, where almost everyone - man or woman, adult or child, rich or poor - has been displaced? (Monsutti 2013, 270).

Regardless of the country's history and present economic, political, religious, and cultural linkages beyond its borders, the traditional image of an inward-looking nation continues. Nonetheless, today's Afghan situation cannot be explained in terms of a fight between two external forces, as it was during the colonial period and the Cold War. Although it is a formal democracy with a president and parliament, the country is almost entirely reliant on foreign aid for its survival and the provision of basic social services. In Afghanistan, however, the moral and political advantages of human rights and democracy are arguably more passionately debated. It may thus be a useful vantage point from which to disrupt modernity's telos, an arena for diverse moralities where

social and political processes common elsewhere in Asia, Africa, and Latin America - such as massive population displacement, political violence, external interventions, and humanitarian aid - can be observed in a heightened form (Monsutti 2013, 270).

Power dynamics saturate the Afghan milieu, which cannot be explained solely in terms of tribal customs or alien norms imposed on local communities. Any description of Afghanistan as an open political arena with deep - and often deadly - clashes over social and political contracts must go beyond the dichotomy between the opportunistic embrace of Western models and passionate rejection of them (Monsutti 2013, 276).

The country's changing social organisation and power structures can be placed in a long-term perspective. Recurring patterns may be seen in the three Anglo-Afghan wars, the Soviet war, and the ensuing internecine power struggle, which could help regarding a better understanding of the current situation. However, it is vital to remember that Afghan society's legitimacy and power balance were irreversibly altered in the nineteenth century, when Kabul's rulers galvanised rural and tribal groups to militarily resist the British, undermining the centre's long-term authority (Barfield 2010). In some ways, Afghanistan's "unruliness" might be thought of as a historical outcome of the colonial encounter. Given the high number of Afghans residing outside their homeland today, recent research has focused on migration both within the region and, especially, to the West (Monsutti 2013, 278).

One of the fundamental concerns US and UK policymakers have to face is why the Taliban resurfaced in Afghanistan as a serious insurgency in late 2005, some years after it had been destroyed and the country's occupation had begun. The re-emergence of the Taliban is now widely blamed on the United States, which is said to have been preoccupied with the war in Iraq and failed to provide appropriate resources to the campaign in Afghanistan. Is this, however, correct? Is it possible to criticise the US for ignoring Afghanistan or doing too little to prevent a Taliban resurgence? Is Afghanistan, a case of US overreach, in which the US attempted too much social engineering in a country known to be hostile to outside influence? At least some of the blame for the deterioration of Afghanistan's security should go on the United States. Despite its reputation as the "Graveyard of Empires," claiming that Afghanistan would be lost was never a predetermined conclusion (Boyle 2010, 808).

Except for the tough warriors who served as speed bumps on the route of conquest or more recently earned a reputation for making the land ungovernable, all this focus on war and visiting invaders overshadows the country's population. As a result, Afghanistan remains the nebulous

backdrop in a long-running international drama while others hold the speaking parts. It appears that the Afghans furnish merely an unvarying, turbaned chorus in this play (Barfield 2010, 2).

5. International Relations Theory

This research on the domestic and foreign factors have been decisive for the development in Afghanistan and the strengthening of the Taliban. It draws on policy findings and policy limitations in international relations, political science and history. It is beyond doubt that the takeover by the Taliban developed into a lot of changes and challenges worldwide, more so in culturally diverse countries. The strengthening of the Taliban raises many questions for policy analysis. It includes inquiries on the consequences of the “new normal” on the entire country and its individuals and on adopting corrections policies that cater to the needs of all genders and children and older persons (Bryman, 2012).

5.1 Classical Realism

It is useful to follow Hans Morgenthau's Classical Realism and apply his theory accordingly. Morgenthau defines his international relations as a theory of world politics. Broadly speaking, the primary interest contains raw physical power. International relations, like domestic relations, require no less than a comprehensive sociological system to describe them as a whole. Short of an overall design, any theoretical effort will inevitably focus on selected aspects of power in international politics. Theories of international relations may be as diverse as the intellectual interests of scholars. Morgenthau adds, however, that at any given time in history, one perspective is always present (Ghazi 1965, 222).

All nations are viewed as political actors pursuing their own goals, defined in power (Morgenthau, 1962c, 11). According to the author, the desire for power is an "all-pervading truth that is of the very essence of human existence "(Morgenthau, 1962b, 312).

This research aims to look at Afghanistan's violent strife through Realism's key notions. A power imbalance, according to Realism, arises when the distinction between internal order and foreign disorder dissolves. In such a situation, the central authority loses its legitimacy, and people begin to reclaim the liberty that was formerly granted to it for the sake of security. The same dynamics occurred in Afghanistan; people have lost faith in their governments (Azadany 2016, 401).

Data must be gathered to create a logical theory for Realism, and a "rational sketch" must be completed. This outline should be based on perceiving the scenario through the eyes of a leader

who is faced with a decision and must make one (Samples 2011, 18). Assuming the leader acts rationally, it is possible to forecast which of several sensible options he will choose. Looking back in history, we can see the steps taken by earlier statesmen. Realism holds that "statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power, and history bears out that notion." (Morgenthau 1985, 5). The second premise is based on Morgenthau's idea that politics is a power struggle in international and domestic domains. A theory of international politics faces the same challenges as a general political theory (Ghazi 1965, 223). Morgenthau's fourth premise, "Political realism is cognisant of the moral significance of political action" (Morgenthau 1985, 12), states that a realist filters moral principles through interest, may explain how the US continued to assist the Afghan government despite his administration's incompetence and corruption (Samples 2011, 21). "He thinks in terms of interest defined as power," according to Morgenthau's sixth principle. (Morgenthau 1985, 12) would be using force against al Qaeda to achieve and protect US national goals within Afghanistan in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks (Samples 2011, 24).

Furthermore, I want to take a realistic perspective on Afghanistan's current situation and provide a practical alternative. The desire for power and the desire to dominate, according to Realism, is a fundamental component of human nature. The negative notion of human nature, which is thought to be short, ugly, and harsh, provides a clear explanation for key elements of international politics like competitiveness, fear, and conflict. As states have to amass power, state officials must evaluate rationally numerous methods for the state to survive in a hostile environment. It is important to note, however, that Realism is not immoral; rather, it is moral because it fosters an ethical-political society. The outside state is in a condition of anarchy in its ties with other states (Dunne&Schmidt 2011, 86).

Although these tests are primarily concerned with using military force, they are closely related to Morgenthau's theory of Realism as it applies to national interests and power (Samples 2011, 26). Statism, Survival, and Self-help are three basic parts of Realism as a dominant theory. Statism refers to the notion that states, neither transnational organizations nor non-state actors, are the primary actors at the international level. The state should be self-governing. The state's legitimacy as a key actor is based on the collective will of people willing to give up their liberty in exchange for protection. States must explore ideas contributing to their survival in a chaotic international climate. Survival is the primary national interest of any state. States must collect power to survive in this unstable global system without overarching authority (Dunne& Schmidt 2011, 93). As a result, management in the context of survival refers to military, political, and economic advancements (Dunne&Schmidt 2011, 94).

Self-help is the final aspect of Realism, which refers to the principle of action in anarchical systems. Because there is no higher authority in the international system above states, states must rely on themselves for security rather than any global agency or non-state player. Self-help is the only way to achieve security. According to Realism, one state's search for security is a source of insecurity for another. As a result, governments continue to threaten one another by simply outperforming them in developing more advanced military weapons, maintaining a more stable political system, and so on. To keep the balance of power, certain states may transcend the power of others; weak states establish coalitions in which the power of their newly formed alliance equals the power of the strong states, increasing the security of all (Dunne&Schmidt 2011, 95).

With these key notions of realism theory in mind, I would like to look at some of the most recent developments in Afghanistan's history so that I might apply the concept mentioned above (Azadany 2016, 404). I want to use the Realism theory discussed above in the Afghan situation. Realism maintains when a state's sovereign authority crumbles. The disputes between states, according to Realism, because the international order is anarchic, and each state craves more power and security. People are less willing to give up their liberty when there is no sovereign authority to which they have already given up their freedom in exchange for protection. Instead, individuals seek a group with whom they share some characteristics, values, or philosophies, and the state divides people along ethnic, religious, and political lines (Dunne & Schmidt 2011, 88). The fall of the Soviet-backed Afghan communist administration in 1992 marked the end of the country's autonomous authority. The Mujahedin's¹⁴ and Taliban's reigns were marked by constant violence exacerbated by ethnic and religious divisions. Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks were divided into political and ethical factions, each with low power and security. The anarchic atmosphere of the international system is identical to the home condition of constant strife and violence.

In the same way, governments want power and security in the international system, and the Afghan people desired more energy during the intra-state struggle to ensure their safety. The people of Afghanistan are looking for protection. As a result, a realist would say that during a civil war such as in Afghanistan, different factions within the state will compete for control to obtain a sense of security (Saikal 2010, 40). The concept of the Afghan Government posed the idea of competition for power. Nevertheless, they failed to facilitate the peaceful transition of power from one lawful authority to another (Ruttig & Qanne, 2014).

¹⁴ Mujahedin someone who practices jihad.

According to a realist, separation or split are the best solution for Afghanistan and other comparable civil wars (Dunne & Schmidt 2011, 88). From a realistic standpoint, the political agreement reached not only peace and sustainability but is increasing the chasms between the country's many factions. Realists believe that establishing a central authority will end in domestic anarchy. In recent decades when the Taliban's cruel rule was formed, the tension is considerable. This insecure and distrustful atmosphere might suppress other power rivals and has exacerbated the country's disarray and disorder (Barfield 2010, 207). A realist might argue that when Afghanistan's legitimate authority, people regained their freedom to purchase security (Dunne & Schmidt 2011, 88).

The prevailing view of international relations, Realism, sees the state as the primary actor in the global system. Individuals reclaim the liberty they had previously given up to the state for protection in such a chaotic setting as Afghanistan. Individuals rally around ethnic, religious, and social lines to seek power and security now that the state has lost its authority. The mobilization of Afghans along ethnic lines fostered rivalry for power and security among the many factions, similar to the competition among nations in the anarchic international system. As a result, during the civil war in Afghanistan, the domestic sphere was distrustful, and this distrust has persisted since the Taliban took power. As mistrust between multi-ethnic groups has continued, a realist would propose separation as the fundamental medicine for restoring order to the domestic sphere (Azadany 2016, 407).

Nevertheless, the realism theory's characteristics prohibit it from being used to examine the situation in Afghanistan. Realism expressly includes reporting relations and, as a result, international conflict. However, that is not applicable because the war did not entail combat between the United States and Afghanistan. Instead, the conflict occurred between the Taliban regime and the US. The realist model can not illustrate this highly contested battle. Another feature that contradicts Realism as a suitable conceptual framework to explain the Afghan war is the reality that the US overthrew the Taliban administration. Finally, authenticity cannot answer why the US and its partner countries left Afghanistan 20 years later (Bird/Marshall 2011, 37).

6. Methodology

A major issue concerning the application of qualitative methodologies, such as interviews, is the rise of the Taliban and the generally difficult situation in the country. It is equally difficult to conduct qualitative research as it is a sensitive and unfolding issue.

The study focuses on the change of power in Afghanistan in 2021 and the developing role of the Taliban regime, and on the specific impact from outside on selected countries, e.g., Pakistan, Russia and the US. This specificity of contexts and local perspectives make qualitative methods more suitable for answering the research questions. A qualitative methodology is, therefore, more appropriate because the goal of the study is not to provide a representative image of the new systems in Afghanistan, but, to develop an understanding of internal political dynamics within Afghanistan and an idea of relatedness of situations among the mentioned countries and the nature of the relationship among the countries of the region, as well as the United States.

The strengthening of the Taliban and the role of Afghanistan is surrounded by misinformation and uncertainty since not much has been researched about the new governmental system, yet. No specific cross-country studies focus on how the take-over of power has affected the global context (Creswell 2003, 22). However, other empirical works focus on the new system inside the country. Thus, this study merits a qualitative methodology. It will be carried out with an inductive approach using literature research, interview, and qualitative content analysis as data gathering methods. I am limited to these methods since the crisis has impracticably rendered travelling to the research field. Data and information collection are especially crucial to evaluating responses of different governments to the mentioned matter (Creswell 2003, 22). As for the inquiry strategy, my study shall employ a comparative research design. This design will allow me to interpret the effects using comparison logic (Bryman, 2012).

Furthermore, the comparative design can aid in analysing and interpreting data as it provides an ideal tool for organising, comparison and contrasting data. This will serve the purpose of efficiency without sacrificing the integrity of the study. The unit of analysis in the country and the subunit is the corrections system of each state. In sum, as qualitative research, patterns and generalisation emerge from data. The findings, then, must be appreciated within their contexts: national, regional, and global (Bryman, 2012).

The aim of reviewing the existing literature is to summarise the current state of the prevailing situation in Afghanistan. To be more precise, the following questions are aimed to be answered by revising the available desk literature:

- **What has changed since the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan? How does this change manifest itself? What could lead to limitations and challenges? What is the role of women under the Taliban?**
- What is the domestic context of Afghanistan and Pakistan? Which role does Pakistan play? What is the political and economic context of Pakistan?

- What role did Russia play in Afghanistan? What role played the US in Afghanistan? Why did the USA withdraw from Afghanistan? Which part plays China, Germany, the EU and India?
- Do we see a repeating order? What are possible and further developments?

6.1 Expert Interviews

I conducted ten interviews with international and national experts who have special knowledge about Afghanistan, some of whom have already worked and lived in the corresponding region. Most of them work for international organisations and are engaged in development cooperation. They provide supplemental data to the research. Besides, they are experts because of their central role in interacting with Afghan nationals and being nationals themselves. They are valuable for both their technical and process knowledge. The former pertains to the understanding of how the system works. An interview can immediately provide needed information. The interviews have been carried out in a face-to-face set-up throughout MS Teams. The time of the interview ranged from half an hour to an hour. The interview allowed high flexibility in the flow of questions covered in the interview. I prepared several questions but tried to keep the interview as natural as possible just like a personal face-to-face conversation. In the following, I will present the addressed questions:

- **Personal Information:** What is your unique background (education)? How long have you been working with Afghanistan, and what is your exact job title/description?
- **Strengthening the Taliban:** Do you feel that Afghanistan has changed since the Taliban? How does this change manifest itself? What could lead to limitations and challenges and be the new nature of the Afghan regime? What is the role of women under the Taliban?
- **Domestic Context:** What is the domestic context of Afghanistan and Pakistan? Which role does Pakistan play? What is the political and economic context of Pakistan?
- **International Context:** What role played Russia in Afghanistan? What role played the US in Afghanistan? Why did the USA withdraw from Afghanistan? Which part plays China, Germany, the EU and India?
- Do we see a repeating order? What are possible and further developments?
- Is Afghanistan a Graveyard of Empires?

Participant	Occupation	Gender	Age	Position	Country	Interview Duration
Participant 1	Medical Doctor	male	50-60	national Expert	Afghanistan	01:12:33
Participant 2	Mechanical Engineer	male	40-50	national Expert	Afghanistan	01:05:52
Participant 3	Business Administrator & Accountant	male	40-50	national Expert	Afghanistan	51:38
Participant 4	InS Director (GIZ)	male	50-60	international Expert	Germany	48:58
Participant 5	Political Economist	male	60-70	international Expert	Germany	47:59
Participant 6	Political Scientist	male	30-40	international Expert	UK	42:30
Participant 7	Police Officer	male	50-60	international Expert	UK	42:28
Participant 8	Computer Scientist	female	30-40	national Expert	Afghanistan	42:06
Participant 9	Mechanical Engineer	male	40-50	national Expert	Afghanistan	40:15
Participant 10	Physician	male	50-60	international Expert	Egypt	26:00

Tabel 1. Interview Participants

6.2 Inductive Approach

I would like to collect and select various sources that may serve me as a road map throughout my inductive approach. One of the outputs of this study should be a policy brief. To produce such a policy brief, I would like to pore over existing literature (academic and non-academic) and relevant documents related to the topic. These include:

1. Official documents are derived from states like, e.g. the US and Germany.
2. Academic studies
3. Digital Papers
4. Mass media, and others
5. Interviews

A heterogeneous set of data can be derived from documents, making its review and analysis a good method for social research (Bryman, 2012).

In order to evaluate my ten interviews according to the qualitative approach, I have generated an inductive categorization and created five main Codes and six Sub-Codes:

1. Historical Background
2. Domestic Context
 - 2.1 Afghanistan and Pakistan

3. International Context
 - 3.1 Afghanistan and Russia
 - 3.2 Afghanistan and the US
 - 3.3 Role of China and the EU
4. Role of the Taliban
 - 4.1 Repeated Order
 - 4.2 Challenges and Limitations
5. Afghanistan - Graveyard of Empires
6. Future Developments in Afghanistan

In the following section, I will present the outcomes of my research. I've summarised the essential points, compared them, and replicated them where needed. Beginning with the historical context, participant one noted that Afghanistan's past is centered on its people, who regard themselves as brave and hardworking. The title “Afghanistan Graveyard of Empires” refers to Afghanistan's geographical position. When Alexander the Great came or when the Arabs came, the Afghans had to battle and defend their land. Also, when the soldiers of the US arrived 20 years ago, Afghans had to fight the Taliban. Foreign countries have been attacking Afghanistan for hundreds of years, and despite various kings and government changes, the country has always had to battle. Furthermore, when outsiders arrived in Afghanistan in the last century, such as the British, Russians, and Americans, Afghanistan had to endure the occupation of forces and other countries battling among themselves. Participant two remarked that Afghanistan's history has always been fascinating. The Afghan people are brave. Afghanistan is in a strategic location that connects various countries. Afghanistan is inextricably linked to the big powers that compete with one another. And there was partial stability at times, but there were also civil wars. Afghans are not that dissimilar to folks from other regions of the world. So we must ask why they have suffered so frequently from the influence of empires and huge forces. These actions directly impact people who do not have the right to defend themselves. In the case of Russia, it was the empire that decided to retreat. Participant three claims that Afghanistan is a country that has been through a lot in terms of warfare, geographical reconfiguration, and territory loss. Out of Iran's approach, several Afghan tribal factions developed a national movement in the 16th and 17th centuries. Afghanistan did not exist at the time, but Iran took these areas and governed Kandahar. As a result, a nationwide movement has emerged. Ahmad Shah Baba is tied to modern Afghanistan because he served in Nader Shah's army and Iran. Then, in the 1740s, Nader Schah arrived in Afghanistan and began his first drive to build the modern state of

Afghanistan. After establishing themselves in India, the English started destabilising Afghanistan in the early nineteenth century. Afghanistan, as we know it today, first appeared in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Ahmed Shah Baba, a visionary, established a very modern state; he was well-informed, knowledgeable, and educated compared to others in the period.

I shall begin with the connection with Pakistan when discussing Afghanistan's domestic background. Regarding Participant One, Pakistan was the first country to challenge the Taliban after communism crumbled in Afghanistan in 2001. Afghans had friendly contacts with the Taliban and desired to network with them. The dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan began in 1893 when Afghanistan and the British signed the Durand Line Agreement. After fighting the British and Afghanistan, Pakistan established a line and split the Pashtuns into two groups. Participant one, three, and nine acknowledged the Durand Line and its significance during my interviews. When the British left India in 1947, it was partitioned into two countries, one administered by India and the other by Pakistan. Pakistan once sponsored many Afghan groups, as well as the Mujahedin, during the Russian invasion. Participants two and three point out that Pakistan has a higher population than Afghanistan. The Afghan government maintains cordial relations not only with Pakistan but also with its neighbours. Unfortunately, the structures and culture of economic development are not as established among Afghans. There was a surge in economic activity, but Pakistan is not to blame. As a result, we must consider what will happen in the region. How many people will be killed? How many people will go hungry? How many men, women, and children will be affected? Politicians must begin to exercise caution. Afghanistan and Pakistan are shown as the older brother and younger sister. Pakistan abandons Afghanistan to fend for itself. Unfortunately, the region's mentality must be modified. There is a regional perspective among Pakistani politicians that if Pakistan and Afghanistan have good economic links, it will impact Pakistan and India and the entire region. Three references to modern themes and states participated, implying that Pakistan may never have been genuinely interested in a politically stable, developed, and democratic Afghanistan. In terms of Afghanistan, Pakistan will always play a double game. During Afghanistan's democratic period, Pakistan supported the Taliban. However, supposed that the Taliban want a good government system and work for the country and the people. In that case, Pakistan will find another way to create challenges and issues for the Taliban administration. Their strategy, policy, and approach to Afghanistan all had negative aims. The Afghan Taliban are adamant that Pakistan is neither an ally nor a neighbour. We can notice some criticism and, most likely, a lack of Afghan trust in Pakistan. However, we cannot predict how strong their relationship would evolve without considering participant four's opinion. Pakistan has always recognised strategic depth in

Afghanistan to fight an Indian onslaught possibly. We cannot yet assess the significance of Pakistan's imprinting function; this is theoretical. Some assumptions could not be substantiated. Participant five explains that Pakistan is in a shaky situation and has allied with China and is getting significant Chinese investment. However, it is unclear whether China's investment will pay off. There could also be a reorientation toward the United States, but it's difficult to predict how things will unfold in the future. Because of all the transport products and the border as a primary evacuation route, Afghanistan continues to rely on Pakistan. The region remains weak, with increasing poverty, misery, and insecurity. Participant six claims that the experience of being an Afghan refugee in Pakistan may be difficult for many people, and participant eight claims that Pakistan has always had influence and intervened in Afghanistan. In the event of an evacuation, Pakistan received contributions from international communities to aid in the evacuation of Afghans. Participant eight also discussed the evacuation process, stating that in the event of an evacuation, Pakistan will get cash from foreign communities to facilitate the evacuation process in Afghanistan and that they will provide free treatment to sufferers. Regarding participant nine, Pakistan has received international cooperation for the evacuation procedure, particularly for Afghans. This benefited them as well, particularly the market. Pakistan expressed willingness to participate in the evacuation procedure because it would help them and improve their country's income. According to participant ten, people travel to Pakistan because they are fluent in the language and culture. As a result, the majority of them prefer to flee to Pakistan. People are running to Iran in the north because there is a direct route from Afghanistan to Iran. However, most of them prefer to travel to Pakistan because it is close to the south and east provinces. Participant seven also addresses the issue of the great game and wonders if it still exists. Pakistan may be deliberately fueling the fire that has generated Afghanistan's insecurity. Its geopolitical regional strategic location, as well as its resources and commercial routes, may aid Pakistan in destabilising that. Participant nine mentions the Afghanistan-Pakistan business cooperation. Afghanistan is dependent on Pakistani goods as the Ashraf Ghani¹⁵ government built many tunnels and airlines in Afghanistan. The Taliban have also received assistance from Pakistan's intelligence service.

Regarding the international context, participant One claims that Iran is a big country with influence in Afghanistan. When the Taliban toppled, and NATO and America arrived in Afghanistan for the first time, Iran saw it as a red flag. Later, Iran assisted the Taliban on several occasions, including against NATO and the US. Iran had its pawns in Afghanistan and the previous

¹⁵ Ashraf Ghani from 2014 to 2021 President of Afghanistan from 2014 to 2021.

administration. Furthermore, Russia followed up in Afghanistan, sending troops there for over ten years to gain control. Russia has had a negative experience with Afghanistan because the invasion was costly and lasted until 1989. Moreover, both Russia and Iran are concerned about US authority in Afghanistan. Because Afghanistan lacked expertise, the US imposed several regulations on its development. They lost a lot in their country, both politically and militarily, due to the US's failure in Afghanistan. The US invested billions of dollars in building a military apparatus in Afghanistan, yet, it resulted in almost nothing after 20 years. The United States played a significant role in the reform process and the Afghan discourse. It is unclear whether the international community will recognise the Taliban as an independent administration. Participant one is confident that 50 % of UN countries will soon realise the Taliban's authority. They may allow the Taliban government to invest the \$9 billion cash that the Americans have frozen. If they release this money, it will help Afghanistan's economy. America still has a huge impact on the future, and they will decide whether to support the Taliban or cause them issues in the future. According to participant two, the younger generation calmly disagreed with the older communist "brainwashed" generation and how the Russians defined it. They couldn't agree on the decision-making capacity of millions of individuals neither. They had a private sector that managed to survive, including investors and business people, and there was room for progress. The Soviet Union's withdrawal was abrupt, but manufacturing, the army, the police sector, intelligence, agriculture, and education, to name a few sectors, were heavily reliant on Russian expertise. Afghanistan was like a toddler and incapable of taking care of itself. Afghanistan still required expertise, such as technological understanding, military technology knowledge, and knowledge in several other sectors. Afghanistan has many people who were educated in Russia and returned to Afghanistan to help with infrastructure and security. And the same circumstance occurred immediately before the regime's collapse, supported by the United States.

In the context of the international relation with Russia, participants three, recounts how Russia ruled Afghanistan in the 18th and 19th centuries. They had the task of incorporating Afghanistan into their empire because of its strategic location. As a result, they could reach the waters and the Indian sea, allowing them to have access to the sea and an easy commercial and commerce route. Some may perceive Russia as a befuddled participant, unsure of what they want or whether they have the political will and resources to accomplish their objectives in Afghanistan. Russia merely wanted to come to Afghanistan at the start to eliminate the threat that Al-Qaeda was offering at the moment. Participant five also recalls Russia's invasion of Afghanistan in 1984. Military battles and devastation have been atrocious. But, in general, the issue was with the entire

region. Concerning participant eight, Russia's objective was to remain. Russia may have fled because the Afghan civil war was taking too long. Another significant factor was Afghanistan's lack of basic infrastructure, as well as the number of societal problems. Russia has accomplished much, but they have concluded that it cannot continue. Participant four adds that the Russian invasion of Afghanistan has been adequately documented historically. Surprisingly, the Soviet army was unable to seize the country. Many military tactical errors were committed at the time, which, strangely, have been repeated over and over again. NATO did the same mistakes again, and even high-ranking military officers have stated legitimately that it gives the Russians tremendous delight to see even the best-equipped NATO repeat the same mistakes and ultimately fail to win in Afghanistan. Just like the Russians did at the time, which undervalued traditional social, religious, and folk relationships. Because of the country's strong nature, heavily governed by various tribes or clans, they only tried a formal central administration. Russia then sparked widespread decentralised unrest. It is vital to note that this is not a traditional frontal war, but several guerrilla-style nests of dissent have emerged. Furthermore, because of the mountain ranges that run through the nation, Afghanistan has an extremely tough topography and unusual meteorological constellations, with very harsh and snowy winters and typically very dry and scorching summers. This is, of course, an extremely exhausting constellation for both material and people. According to participant six, Afghanistan was primarily exploited as a security testing ground. Security and defence corporations primarily operated there to test new technology and advertise themselves. Afghanistan provided an opportunity for the Russians to capitalise on the mistakes made by the Americans by acting as a buffer zone. The battle between China, Russia, and the United States is undoubtedly being played out in Pakistan. According to participant seven, competent Russian people influenced Afghanistan and trained Afghans. Participant nine claims that there are many distinctions between Russian and American soldiers since they invented many different essential things in Afghanistan. The Americans fought the structures, and there is little question that Russia was unaware that it would confront such formidable barriers in Afghanistan. Russia backs the government and provides equipment to the Afghan army. According to participant ten, one of the key reasons the US went to Afghanistan was to be present as Afghanistan is placed between Pakistan, China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and India. This is an issue of location, of geography. As a result, the United States stayed for over two decades.

When discussing the world context and the roles of China and the EU, participant one asserts that China's economy is critical. Afghanistan and its neighbours are all anti-US. Thus, China wants to limit and weaken US control in Afghanistan, but their economy is more important to them.

China may have an impact on Afghanistan, particularly in the economic sector. It is also critical for India to have a cordial relationship between the Taliban regime and Pakistan. If they do not, India may be forced to take a more aggressive posture against the Taliban. Most people are aware that Pakistan backs the Taliban and that Pakistan will keep an eye on the situation. Most European countries want good future relations with the Afghan people and the Afghan government. European governments have stated that if they accept the future Taliban rule, they will pursue good relations with Afghans one day. Europe will not seek significant economic or political influence. The majority of their enthusiasm will be for Afghanistan's development and people. Also, the governments of Pakistan and China strive to exert influence in areas such as human rights, women's rights, and media. Their impact could also help Afghanistan. On the one hand, participant three sees China's posture in Afghanistan as solely political; they want to demonstrate to the US that they will take up whatever they leave. Participant nine, on the other hand, indicated that China has never been directly involved in the political game in Afghanistan and has never attempted to enter the country. Perhaps out of fear of Russia or other countries. Some speculate that China is interested in Afghanistan's subterranean assets. They are entirely focused on their financial interests; not a single person interested in Afghanistan will be distracted by a larger claim. The Taliban may regard China as a friend, but they should not be in Afghanistan since they treat the community horribly and use old ideas to escape Chinese sanctions. There is no incentive for China under the Taliban, and there is little hope for the relationship.

Germany can be considered a friend because the Germans created roads and invented the electric power game. However, Germany has not done enough for the Afghan people since signing the Doha accord, which gave democracy and governance to Afghanistan. However, many people expected that Germany would support Afghanistan in terms of cooperation and long-term friendship. It provided stability to Afghanistan's previous government. In recent times, the Afghan people have felt let down owing to a lack of political backing and because Germany has not questioned the US over its actions and withdrawal. Nonetheless, participant 9 points out that Germany greatly contributed to and aided Afghanistan in many ways, including establishing a framework for the country and assisting individuals to stand independently. Participant four also attributes China with a relatively important role; the fact that the new Taliban commanders travelled to Beijing first was undoubtedly no coincidence and it had a lot of symbolic power. China is interested in preventing radical Islamic currents from growing and invading its territory, which is why it has a vested interest in keeping Afghanistan under control. Furthermore, there will almost certainly be a humanitarian re-engagement. At the time, diplomatic constellations are extremely

cautious. In past years, development cooperation in Afghanistan has been practiced. There were always agreements between the donor community and the Afghan government to demonstrate specific results, which then released further sums of money, so to speak, and made new measures possible. A monitoring system, for example, is required to establish whether the new administration is following its promises. A policy of extremely incremental steps may be feasible, implying that we must proceed cautiously. Is a trusting relationship even possible, or will it be let down? And how can a Taliban government guarantee people's safety on the ground? Can they maintain the airport's logistical options open? If so, in a hopeful scenario, we can become more involved in the humanitarian area ourselves in the longer term, rather than just through EU or multilateral means. So, in the long run, you must wait and see. I believe that everyone in Afghanistan has realised that you can't plan anything in the long run. Participant six also brought up China's new Belt and Road Initiative, which had appeared limited until recent meetings. China has invested in several vital institutions, and they may also be interested in Afghanistan. The EU and the US had far more clout in the previous Afghan government. Their endeavours concentrated on migration, marking a significant policy approach divergence. Regarding participant number seven, the EU is in a quandary on how to engage Afghanistan. They could provide humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, participant ten indicated that the EU refuses to communicate with the Taliban until they give a proper administration and some stability. Also taken into account are gender concerns, which the Taliban has yet to settle. As a result, the EU suspends practically all of its assistance, except humanitarian aid.

Taking the Context of Afghanistan and the US into account, many people were shocked by the US withdrawal and political activity. Participant ten addresses why the US withdrew from Afghanistan, knowing that the Taliban remained in the back. Participant ten believes that the US should have informed the Afghan people earlier and supported them by instructing them on how to conduct the takeover. During the last two weeks before the take-over of the Taliban in Kabul, you could see how quickly the Taliban conquered each province before the political change. The US left early on August 15th, two hours after the news that the Taliban had taken over Kabul. Considering the participants' two points of view and the relationship between Afghanistan and the US, the west's retreat was a big loss for Afghanistan. The question is, why did the US depart and allow the Taliban to take over? It could be about the rivalry between the United States and Russia. Why should the US continue to spend in Afghanistan when it already has close ties with Ukraine? Regarding participant seven, Biden's choice in April 2021 will demonstrate impending disasters to the public and the difference was noticeable. The US had fully disengaged, leaving a massive void. Ultimately,

the political decision was made very swiftly, resulting in a policy disaster. "Occupying Afghanistan is extremely easy, but sustaining and managing Afghanistan is quite difficult, if not impossible," says participant nine. This is true for Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Entering Afghanistan is simple, but it comes at a high cost regarding dignity, money, and soldiers. In Afghanistan, poor living conditions exist, even below the poverty line, due to the lack of funds, and a lack of educational opportunities. Behind the scenes, the US does not have a strong relationship with the Taliban and does not equip the Taliban, who fight alongside ISIS. The US is unwilling to help Afghanistan prosper and feed itself. Participant five describes how the United States invaded Afghanistan after 9/11 and needed to blow off some steam. They proceeded from village to hamlet hunting for Taliban fighters but also killed many innocent people. Today, one would argue that they should have done things differently because they fell into an emotional trap. It was an impossible endeavour to construct a nation and a state. Building democracy and an economy was difficult. You simply must recognise that there is no viable answer. But, according to Kissinger, realism is the first step toward realpolitik. Participant six points out that the failure signal was ignored for too long. As a result, the United States needed to draw a line someplace to avoid the whole debate about endless wars and so on. The Americans undoubtedly played a part in destabilising the Russian-backed rule by supporting the Mujahedin and giving them the military mindset required to defeat the Soviets. They made extensive use of political expediency. The eventual effect was that the Americans were primarily concerned with their interests, as any other serious foreign policy manoeuvre would be. They may have misjudged the impact of these initiatives before attempting to become active in state formation. However, it appears that they will withdraw totally. Most of them seem to use the rhetoric of wiping their hands clean of the situation in Afghanistan. The US intended to make a mark in Central Asia, or at the very least in Afghanistan. And it appears they are not interested in furthering their support for the Afghan people. Participant four states that the primary objective of the United States was most likely domestic. In terms of military tactics, the motivation stems from the usual domestic political grounds of too many losses, too much money, and too low a possibility of success. Therefore, it has most likely been a relatively serious economic consideration. What can we gain, and what might we lose? We can only conjecture what impact, for example, the awarding of specific licenses to Chinese corporations has. As a result, there were persistent reports that the tiny raw material bases, which Afghanistan had at the time, had been assigned to Chinese firms. And as a result, the United States' economic interests became diminished. Afghanistan has most likely lost geostrategic significance, and other trouble spots have emerged worldwide, where the US will undoubtedly wish to keep some military manoeuvrability. Participant eight is convinced that

Afghanistan has never been a focus of attention or a threat to multiple countries. Although the US went in to fight Al-Qaida, the US and Russia came to the same conclusion. They invested a lot of money in land and institutions like schools, which were then bombed. The United States provided military and police assistance to Afghanistan. Afghanistan was also helped with education, good government, the economy, and agriculture programs. As a result, the United States has exerted considerable influence and participation in Afghanistan over the last two decades.

Presenting the role of the Taliban, participant one talks about the further developments for the current regime in Afghanistan and how the central government might develop. It is also important to bring peace to Afghanistan. The Taliban government firstly needs to accept some of the requests by the international society. The Taliban regime needs a clear structure in Afghanistan and a good monitoring system. Further actions against corruption are required, and funding sources for Afghanistan need to be structured and monitored. For participant two, the first big thing that needs to be changed is the economic system, which hugely impacts society. People have less access to food and lower purchasing power, which leads to the worst impact on daily life. A further diverse effect was that Afghanistan lost its partially democratic regime. It was like stepping back 30 years and giving the decision-making power of over 30 million people to a government accepting and confessing that they were part of the explosions in the criminal attacks. They may call it political armed forces, but anyone picking a gun or thinking of it as a proper government tool is recognised for committing a crime. If you are the opposition, peaceful means should be used. This has been practiced in the world in many other places. Why a criminal group? Why a religiously extremist group? Afghanistan should have enforced the rule of law and looked at the suffering of the economy and society. The regime needs to save and support children, handle money accordingly, and improve and modernise the education system. It isn't easy to get the schools open for the girls. They are only allowed to enter elementary school, and women are no longer allowed to attend work. Nearly half of the women population is banned from education, impacting women's rights and the economy. Since the Taliban took over, it has led to a violent environment and scared people. They need to use the rule of law instead of a forceful approach to maintain security. In the 1990s, the Taliban announced the execution of criminals on the radio and T.V. They compared and handled it, like watching a football game. That led to the diminishing of kidnapping, theft and scary people. It was like going 1000 years back in time. Now, what has changed? It is not like that today, but we must apply international law to avoid such criminal acts. Every single person with only the power of the arm forgets that knowledge and education are essential. But those people need guidance. How can you have a class of students who have to study by themselves without the teacher? This will lead to

a very challenging condition. Participant four states that a regional distinction must be made again. The time around 2017-19 was already the timeframe when the Taliban gained land, and they had already taken relatively large areas in the country, at least already massively contested areas. So that means even then, there were already land responsibilities of the Taliban. In principle, at that time, there were already relatively many areas, mainly large cities, where the official government power still existed, mostly divided with corresponding warlords or regional princes, who then still pulled their wires in the background, or where deals dominated the country and where the government had the corresponding control. Speaking so, big cities have certainly not changed much. The Taliban have no political and economic agenda. There is no investment flow; and the international capital flow is completely frozen. Afghanistan has relatively few trade opportunities, and there is massive oppression of women. Education and advancement opportunities are strongly defined by tribal and religious affiliation. Participant five asked himself, what has changed since the Taliban came to power? The country has been cut off from its most important sources of funding. The extent to which this is relevant is sometimes disputed. U.N. estimates range from a 30 % drop in gross national product to the greatest economic catastrophe. The Taliban are, in principle, completely overwhelmed by the government takeover and live in their parallel world. They seem frightened by their military success and are now trying to cope with the new situation and gain experience. For the time being, they will remain in power, but they have a big problem finding their place in the world economy. Each country is trying its way to cope with this positioning. The government is in free fall and overwhelmed with many factors. The theory is that the country does not produce enough for a stable social entity. There is a need for state and nation-building. And if you read History, it is not completely out of the question that a few million people will starve to death this coming winter. Unfortunately, this will not affect the Taliban's claim to rule. And the West, by and large, is tired of deploying in Afghanistan. The Taliban, of course, are also partly to blame, but they blame it on Allah's will (Inshallah). And the West cannot jump over its shadow and legitimise the Taliban. The evaluation of the Taliban is, in principle, an asymmetric balance in the world public. But how the world public positions itself is a very big problem. Therefore, we should ask ourselves, what are the Taliban's next steps? What has changed? What will be the perception in the world public of the Taliban? The Taliban have modernised a bit, but they still depend on foreign countries. Participant Seven also states that the Taliban are keen to engage with the international community to receive money and support. Participant nine points out that nowadays, people are hopeless and leaving Afghanistan. It is not only because of the Taliban but because a variation of several difficult

problems is arising. It seems like there is no bright future for them once again. After the comeback of the Taliban and the collapse of the old regime, the Afghan people worry about their future.

Regarding the created code „Repeated Order“ in Afghanistan, participant five starts with a quote: History repeats itself according to Karl Marx, but it has rhythm. It was obvious to every visitor that the regime had no legitimacy among the people. There is realpolitik again; you have to accept that. That's the real balance of power. However, when it comes to history, you go from one extreme to another and then, in hindsight, you see the red line. Participant two sees some similarities; we recognised challenges, corruption, explosions and people who lost their lives during both times. Nowadays, many things need to be improved, rather than bringing an extremist regime into power. Additionally, participant three states that Afghanistan has a lot of work to do before becoming a strong, united, committed nation. The Taliban are making the same mistakes as 20 years ago. They had ruled Afghanistan for several years then, and they never invited a political party or regime into power. Even moderate leaders never asked them to conferences. Some assume that many countries are never sincere in bringing true efforts to make the Taliban part of the political process to become a more peaceful movement in drawing a democratic Afghanistan. History will again repeat itself. The Taliban need to be politically active and politically sensitive, if they want a brighter and political future in Afghanistan. In that case, they might have difficulty delivering if they do not bring all people together, even if they would have a moderate Islamic Afghanistan. Pakistan, Iran, China, US and Russia will not allow the Taliban to sit in. Several are not very positive about the future, particularly with how the Taliban is dealing with this situation. They're not doing enough; to have a stable Afghanistan, they could do much more. They could give a lot of confidence to the people, but they're not going to, and they will probably collapse again. Talking about a repeated order participant, one sees some differences. Nowadays, most T.V. and radio channels are still working, compared to the last takeover of the regime. But it is not sure if they'll continue to do so. Participant six is also not exactly in the same order since the context is different. The decimation that we saw out of Kabul and other cities in the context of the civil war meant that the Taliban took over something that was zero; there was not a lot that had been done in 20 years. Some things were done but weren't proportionate. The Taliban were different before. They were isolationists and unwilling to engage. Whereas now it seems like they kind of opened up a little bit more. There's some willingness to be different, but there is also a lack of responsibility from the Americans and the Russians. Also, for participant eight, the time has changed since the last takeover of the Taliban. Especially the social situation has changed in Afghanistan. The trust structures were destroyed, and people had no choice but to accept them. The Taliban also don't want to repeat their

actions from 1996 to 2000. To participant ten, the government is different now and invokes another ideology and policies. The Taliban want international support, but it is not sure if they will continue to keep their promises. Have the official order in Afghanistan maybe never change much? For Participant four, that is part of the theory for this country that because of the tribal relations and the religious relevance of the different ethnic streams, there have always been certain constellations that were more important than official political constellations and that the people in Afghanistan are now moving further in these constellations and ultimately also adapt a bit in Afghanistan. This is not a classic compromise, but there are always deals. This could be used to set a preview framework for a state imprint, and it is assumed that the Taliban will have the same difficulties. That would suggest a little bit that now the occupying powers are also going through a collapse process. So that the US, as a so-called superpower, has gotten a bloody nose, one can already state. From the overall constellation, the military operation must be considered a failure, but not the humanitarian and political mechanism. The many opportunities that existed contributed to a significant improvement in the population's well-being. Infant mortality has been significantly reduced, women's rights have been strengthened considerably, and certain things will remain. In that sense, that is certainly outside of the military intervention. And ultimately, the attack was also driven by certain values; if you look at nation-building, which was set as a vision for Afghanistan at that time, wanted to create a democracy according to western understanding and shape an experience of the state in Afghanistan, which of course reflects western values accordingly. Some of these values have been preserved. In this respect, there is a great potential for failure in an intervention in Afghanistan, which cannot be denied.

Talking about the challenges and limitations of the Taliban, participant two points out real limitations when discussing challenges and constraints for the Taliban. How can somebody who only knows religion be an economist? How can they make a sovereign state? How can they define the rule of law? How can they recruit different international recognition, even if they acquire it? There are such limitations; they have so many because they cannot be economists, experts of law, especially the law acceptable worldwide, and they cannot have a modern state. They cannot arrange economic activities because they have no clue what science and technology mean for a better economy. They will remain dependent on the money and support channels they are receiving now and whichever channel support them. The largest challenge would be that they won't be able to make the partially good economy and economic activities for the people, not only Afghans but whoever lives or wants to live and work in that region. To participate there, the Taliban have to act, which might speak for their intentions. They need to have an internal acceptance if they want to

have a future for Afghanistan. The Taliban have to figure out what kind of government they want and how to establish a fully representative government for the entire fractions in any group of Afghanistan. The Taliban needs to act, and they have to work first to receive a level of acceptance within the afghan communities, to have a long-term political future. They have to think about their ideology and what government regime and structure they want to put in place. Every Afghan will see themselves represented in their designs. The Taliban need to look for internal acceptance first by communicating with people, engaging with them and telling people what political systems and ideology they want to put in place for Afghanistan. No women are politically visible right now, and that might not change easily. There might not be a woman or a high-profile woman in leadership roles. It is very doubtful that the Taliban will have a couple of female ministers. But, women must have a more active role in society. Participant four sees the introduction of Sharia law as the sole law that can be considered highly critical. Previously, attempts were made to harmonise Sharia law with general rule and to marry its legal philosophy to a new specific direction, as it were. And now, turning everything back to Sharia law is a massive step backwards for large parts of the country. What is also often misrepresented in western media is that the Taliban act as a monolithic political bloc. That is an absolute misconception. The Taliban are, first of all, a movement with many different financial flows. And we have always felt that in the other regions, for example, there were communication possibilities with the Taliban before the collapse of the old regime. In the end, the Taliban don't have a political plan, and the country's fragility has not diminished. Even with fewer classic bombings and armed conflicts at the moment, the country's instability can be assessed as higher than before. The obvious development which would be important is that the marginalisation of the role of women is being pushed further and further. Other scenarios are also conceivable but unlikely. It is also possible that western pressure will ultimately lead to either actual concessions, for example, continuing to allow access to education for at least younger girls, or perhaps keeping access to universities open, even if only to certain areas or to certain fields. This has a very important symbolic character. For participants five and six, the primary limitation will be the economic model and the financing part. A key strategy has to be implemented. They do not have access to dollars and the international economy right now. It's very difficult for Afghanistan to open up to the world and function fully. That might be one of the key challenges they will be facing. We don't know if the international community will ever accept Afghanistan.

Furthermore, a clear policy is needed to accept the role of women, especially in education. They should be able to continue their education till 18 and to the university level. If the international community were serious about guaranteeing women's education, they would have to

finance schooling. Because the Taliban and the state essentially are not capable of it. But women in the workplace still seem to be a problem. There appears to be no clear policy about it yet. But, it won't be a liberal regime since the Taliban are quite conservative. For participant seven, limitations are not just in terms of their capacity. Given history, the Taliban were tolerated for a great length of time. If the economy stays the way it is and the emerging humanitarian crisis, you will have a very unhappy and unsettled country. Behind that are the concerns that it will collapse into a civil war. Perhaps it's not as violent as it was, but there's still a lot of violence. Participant eight sees the biggest challenges for the Taliban with the international communities and the world stage since they will not recognise them. Focusing only on the support of Afghanistan, nothing might change. Afghanistan has always been a country that has been dependent on foreign aid and mainly funds that have been used in Afghanistan. Everything came from the outside, even infrastructure and money. The biggest challenge for the Taliban is that they do not have any source of income, and they do not have any fund support. Another challenge the Taliban face is that most of their soldiers are illiterate and don't know how to behave with locals and as civilians. The Taliban have first tried to gain people's trust; that's the most important thing. It is not quite sure if they can implement it. Furthermore, the economy has gone down to zero. For example, in 2013, 65 % of the people in Afghanistan lived in poverty, and after the withdrawal of international communities, it started to get serious and went up to 98 %. These are challenges that the Taliban are facing at the moment. The Taliban don't know how to rule and govern a country; they just know how to fight and fire a gun. How will they establish a government with all the norms and standards that might be necessary?

Furthermore, the term "Graveyard of Empires" will be elaborated. For participant nine, the term "Graveyard of Empires" can be used. But it might not be such a good expression for the Americans or the British. There is no doubt that Afghanistan is a graveyard for all the empires that invaded Afghanistan in the last decades. Occupying Afghanistan is very easy, but keeping and maintaining Afghanistan is quite difficult. We could ask ourselves why the Americans haven't learned from the Russian experience. Entering the country, you plan to support the Afghan people but not change the religion and culture. Participant two starts with Nehru, a historian of India; he defined Afghanistan as Bee's house to the British empire. If you look from the perspective of a traditional Afghan, they see themselves as brave. But, mostly, it was the competition of the empires themselves, which lead to their end. Participant three, who sees himself as an Afghan by heart, also sees Afghanistan as a graveyard of empires - looking at what Afghanistan did to the British in the 19th and 20th century as well as to the Russians and the US. But, Afghanistan has been the one that suffered. Afghanistan is not the graveyard of any emperor; Afghanistan is the graveyard of Afghans

themselves, as thousands have been killed. The Afghan people have been the ones who suffered and have been the victims. When we look at history, we can say that history repeats itself. A lot of powers invaded Afghanistan to make it part of their own. Pakistan would like to make Afghanistan a fifth province, but they've never been able to accomplish it. According to participant one and the nature of the people of Afghanistan, we can use the term "Graveyard of Empires". According to the history we must remember that it was a different case with Alexander the Great and the Arabs. But, Afghanistan was the first place the British failed to fully invade. When foreigners come to Afghanistan, they're competitive with each other, which might be one reason most of the empires failed and used the term for it. Participant seven explains that the term showed up in several articles and books. It goes back to the military conflict and how you can't win over Afghanistan. Whichever way to dress it, huge international forces lost the war and got beaten. It comes with losing people all the time. The Afghans were supported massively by the international community with strategic communications. Also, the Taliban manifested itself in the end. Participant six states that the term is bandied about quite a lot. It's not everyone's favourite term and every context is slightly different. For example, the American empire was already in decline before this. The American military was in a way different; elements and it was already defeated in other contexts. Afghanistan is a tough terrain for people to be fighting militarily. It's also a country that has not had a lot of investment, and there are many missed opportunities there. For participant eight, Afghanistan has been the "Graveyard of Empires", but not in a positive sense. It is because of its critical geographical location. When Russia was fighting in the civil war, at the end of the day, Russia decided to withdraw from Afghanistan. It seems like everything gets critical in Afghanistan. Participant five would further change the term "Graveyard of Empires" and rename it "Graveyard of Development" since development is all over the state. Furthermore, regarding participant seven, history helps us learn, and not many people win a fight in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has not had one centralised democracy, as we in the West try to make it. Afghanistan includes many little factions, little areas, different ethnicities, and different tribes. So it doesn't lend itself to a central government. But, the international community always wanted to impose a standard western democracy in Afghanistan.

Looking at future developments in Afghanistan and considering the current situation, the regime change might not positively impact Afghanistan, according to participant one. Educated people and experts are leaving the country due to economic and financial reasons, which might lead to the regime's collapse. Maybe not in the short term, but the long run. This will be a big challenge for the Taliban. The Taliban government will need support in the development process from the international society to build a good environment for people who might come to Afghanistan. They

need to accept human and women's rights and stabilise the economic situation. Also, there is a huge brain drain for participants six and seven, especially from the European perspective on Afghanistan. There are a lot of competent people who are leaving the country. Unfortunately, it seems like many of those people would struggle, especially in a European context, to find meaningful and decent work without exploitation. For participant seven, one of the key strategic aims particularly involves the EU by stabilising, supporting, and investing in the development of Afghanistan. People are being evacuated with the support of European countries and the US. On the horizon, there's a difficulty for all in Europe concerning how to deal with the evacuated refugees. How do you integrate the refugees into the community? For participant three, those who stay in Afghanistan are damaged financially and mentally, and the country is no longer a place to live. People lose hope and positivity and are dissatisfied and need assistance, but conflict may easily erupt throughout the country. The Taliban need to have a central government and no war in Afghanistan. If they want to persist in Afghanistan, they must change and accept the international society's suggestions to receive support. The Taliban need to open up and find a way of working together and prevailing good relations with other countries. For participant two, today's way of economic pressure is not the right way to go. The Taliban regime should use different approaches and the international stage should pressure the Taliban government to keep the suffering of the people to a minimum. They must find a way of consensus between the Taliban regime and the international community with the non-violent rule of law in Afghanistan. For participant four, Afghanistan will retain a very unstable character for a relatively long time, which will essentially be characterised by the extent to which the Taliban exercise real control over the country and whether classic state control is possible. In parallel, further flight movements will certainly still take place. If, for example, the foreseeable famine will come over the winter, this can lead to dramatic humanitarian conditions, and the international community of states will certainly intervene. It remains to be seen whether there will be development cooperation again. That depends on various factors. It is remarkable that, of course, many of the Islamic states have very much ducked out of the current process. You don't hear anything from Saudi Arabia or very little from the United Arab Emirates. Iran, at most, is commenting on the refugee movements and fears that the real radical forces of a terrorist nature could regain a foothold in Afghanistan. These actors could also play a certain role in shaping the situation. For example, Saudi Arabia is not insignificant covetous and always connected with self-interests. Russia is also very attentive and is watching the interaction with China, as no one has another interest in a permanently troubled Afghanistan. Participant five refers to Pakistan, which has already taken in many Afghans, and so has Iran to some extent. However, Iran's capacity is

extremely limited, and it is a geopolitical game between the simple possibility of helping migrants from Afghanistan in Iran now. The people are merely chess pieces somewhere in the geopolitical game and are scarified fast. We always think that we are more democratic and better. But we can remember the Irish famine and Holodomor in the 1930s in the Soviet Union. But, Uzbekistan closes its borders and does not accept refugees. It is taking over the Taliban by military means, the way Venezuela did, and it was done in Syria and Botswana. The best-case scenario would be if the Taliban managed to find a compromise with the national community. However, this also depends on 80 % of the national assembly to find solutions to subsidise further state-building in a way acceptable to the Taliban. Of course, the Taliban will have to jump over their shadows, but unfortunately, the odds are against them. For participant six, the best case would be acceptable for the Taliban and the government's recognition, reopening diplomatic links, and opening up of the bank accounts. Furthermore, targeted sanctions against individuals would have to stop. The worst-case scenario is that the Taliban continues to use this kind of leverage. People continue to flee, and the country will continue to suffer. Agriculture is one of the main economic activities that are happening at least. One of the key questions might be what is going to happen next? Participant eight predicts a very dark future for Afghanistan. They might not be changing to the positive side, but more to the negative side. Even in the previous regime, women only had rights in the five major parts of Afghanistan, Kabul, Masar-e Sharif, Herat, and somehow Jalalabad and central Bamiyan province. But if you compare that time or that regime with today, there are no rights, no honor, and no dignity for women in Afghanistan.

7. The Domestic Context of Afghanistan

7.1 Role of the Taliban

The Taliban took Kabul in August 2021, four months after the US government announced its decision to remove its final troops from Afghanistan, and the Afghan government disintegrated almost instantly. The United States initiated the war in Afghanistan to destroy the Taliban administration twenty years ago, but it failed in its post-war efforts to rebuild the country. The Afghan administration monopolised international aid and created a massive corruption cartel (Ji-Hyang 2021, 1). The Afghan government's downfall was precipitated by extensive corruption and societal distrust. Domestic discontent had reached a breaking point, and explosive internal forces barely contained them. The omens of impending doom were difficult to spot in the opaque Afghan society due to a lack of an accurate understanding of public sentiment. The United States, NATO's

Resolute Support Mission (RSM)¹⁶, the Afghan government and citizens, and even the Taliban astonished by the rapid collapse (Ji-Hyang 2021, 1).

The Taliban promised inclusive administration, no retaliation against former state officials, and no harbouring international terrorist organisations ahead of their return to power in Afghanistan. Growing political unrest has shown shaky organisational cohesion and leadership control. Following Kabul's collapse, al-Qaeda and Islamic State (IS)¹⁷ fighters from across the Middle East and Central Asia are said to have flocked to Afghanistan, considering it as a haven. In a context where these Jihadist factions are fighting each other, the Taliban leadership is succumbing to the pressures of sub-organisations that use internet media and are more militant and extremist in their outlook (Ji-Hyang 2021, 2).

The Taliban represent a religious view opposed to what opinion-makers in the United States and Europe refer to as "our values and way of life." The concept of a difference, is frequently misconstrued and has to be reinterpreted. Critics are correct in pointing out the challenges in distinguishing amongst Taliban groups when the distinction is predicated on the assumption that the Taliban interpret or utilize religion differently. The idea that "differences" refer to the fact that it is possible to distinguish between the various Taliban activists who are fighting for a variety of reasons that have nothing to do with Al-"global Qaida's jihadist ideology" or even the desire to seize power is a more helpful understanding, and one that can contribute to de-escalating the growing violence. Many people are frustrated with the lack of progress in their localities due to the American bombing, which has caused widespread devastation (Sheikh 2009, 1).

While Taliban activists may not deserve to be considered moderate in a theological sense, they are fighting for local concerns that can and should be addressed by means other than armed force (Sheikh 2009, 2).

In perspective, the Taliban's seizure of Kabul in the summer of 2021 was foreseeable. Since then, analysts and commentators have portrayed the Taliban's comeback from power as a historical inevitability, including former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Such views appear to be based on the assumption that Afghans are too tribal and conservative to embrace democracy and equality, that governmental systems are endemically corrupt, and that the nation is too mountainous and huge to

¹⁶ Resolute Support Mission (RSM) was a NATO mission from 1 January 2015 to 11 September 2021 to train, advise and support the Afghan security forces.

¹⁷ Islamic State (IS) is a Salafist militia with thousands of members that has been terrorising since 2003 and was a Jihadist "state-building project" declared as a "caliphate".

be properly guarded by a foreign army. If this set of assumptions is correct, we already know what will happen next: The Taliban will remain in power (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 1).

As a post-conflict country, Afghanistan has a 51 % risk of returning to violence in the following five years. This is because, structurally, war is more likely to arise in nations that have just emerged from armed conflict. Afghanistan exemplifies the workings of the "Violence trap" with its recurring cycles of contention since the 1970s. Violent resistance against the Taliban regime is likely to come from three key sources following their power grab in August 2021: first, the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan, led by Ahmed Massoud and Amrullah Saleh (comprising approximately 8000 fighters today), has committed to a campaign of violent resistance against the Taliban starting in the spring of 2022. Second, despite the relative calm witnessed in recent weeks, the Islamic State has carried out 18 strikes since the Taliban took control and will almost certainly continue its campaign. Finally, as former police and military people stay jobless, new and previously unknown groups are forming, adding to the pool of potential resistance fighters.

Afghanistan's complicated geology and hilly terrain, which provides huge regions of potential hideouts and limits the Taliban's ability to clamp down on their opponents, exacerbate the prospect of a violent insurgency emerging from all three sources (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 3).

These dynamics are exacerbated because the danger of war recurrence is highest in low-income countries. Afghanistan is Asia's least developed country, ranking 169th out of 189 countries on the United Nations' Human Development Index. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) projects that 97 % of Afghanistan's population might fall below the international poverty line by mid-2022 due to the EU and other donors' suspension of non-humanitarian aid to Afghanistan in response to the Taliban's seizure of power. Unfortunately, climate change threatens to exacerbate this precarious economic scenario. 80 % of Afghans rely on agriculture for their living. This sector is likely to be struck severely by both droughts and floods. The frequency of such incidents is expected to increase dramatically, making Afghanistan the fifth most vulnerable country in the world to natural disasters. However, its utilisation was restricted under Afghanistan's previous regimes due to insecurity, corruption, and a lack of infrastructure (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 3).

Uncertainty also stems from public support for the Taliban has steadily declined over the last 15 years. This shift in perception can be attributed to the fact that, unlike in 1996, the Taliban are no longer regarded as bringing order to a divided and conflict-torn Afghanistan; instead, they are blamed for the current state of disorder and volatility. Between 8 800 to 10 000 civilians were killed or injured every year in the three years following Kabul's fall. The Taliban were the main perpetrators of the violence, with more casualties than any other fighting group. It's also unclear if

the Taliban leadership, which includes many of the same personalities as under the group's dominance in the 1990s, would be able to connect with a much broader and younger audience. Since 1996, the Afghan population has more than doubled and is expected to reach 43 million by 2025. Additionally, Afghanistan has the resources to break out from the cycle of poverty and violence. However, doing so would necessitate its political leadership to ensure internal stability for at least two decades, as that is the time required to create the infrastructure needed to tap Afghanistan's vast lithium deposits (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 3).

While internal Taliban cohesiveness is important for regime consolidation, the realities of government, rather than warfare, will test the group's unity. Those ready to make power-sharing compromises versus hardliners, Pashto versus non-Pashto, and the younger versus the older are just a few of the divisions. The difficulties of governing in the current situation are numerous: Afghanistan has lost 75 % of its budget, which comes from international donors, and assets overseas remain blocked. Even if the Taliban's unity does not shatter as a result of internal strife, it will at the very least complicate the massive task of running the collapsing Afghan state, further weakening the Taliban's domestic credibility and increasing the claims of their rivals (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 4).

Finally, Taliban authority will be contingent on the group's ability to secure foreign backing, particularly from Pakistan and Iran. Both are likely to exert a moderating impact on the system, which might lead to a degree of stability and, as a result, encourage investment, such as from China. Until now, China has been concerned about extremist organisations training in Afghanistan and targeting its personnel and missions in Pakistan, as has happened in the past several years. Reducing this danger would pave the way for closer ties with China. At the same time, Russia has similar concerns about extremist organisations in the North Caucasus. Due to its isolation and present concentration on its conflict with Ukraine, it is unlikely to emerge as a helpful partner to Kabul anytime soon (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 4).

The combination of these major unknown elements has led to a point where there are no evident future outcomes. In these circumstances, scenarios are valuable tools for understanding the interconnections between the many strands of uncertainty, identifying potential knock-on impacts, and guiding policy decisions. Whilst concerns of time and space lead us to propose two alternatives, and this should not be mistaken for a binary choice of future possibilities. Scenarios illustrate interdependencies and the potential repercussions of crucial decisions rather than forecast the future (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 4).

The Taliban may follow a forceful policy in which they make no ideological compromises. While such an approach would ensure the Taliban's internal cohesion, it would also present several challenges, the most significant of which is security. If the Taliban cannot maintain public order and manage conflict, they will be unable to stabilise the economy and form critical relationships with their geostrategic partners. Because of their ideological fanaticism, the Taliban will have to resort to a significant expansion of their security apparatus to maintain stability. Territorial control is significantly more intensive in terms of necessary manpower than territorial conquest. Therefore, such an approach would provide several difficulties. While the Taliban are thought to have 75.000 fighters now, they would need to increase their army to over 195.000 warriors to attain the numbers commonly stated as being required to protect a country the size of Afghanistan. The Taliban would have to incorporate former police and military personnel into their armed forces. But, this would strain the budget, which has already been reduced by half. The matter of ideology would loom big once more in this situation since it would require the Taliban to allow the return of officers who had previously served for the former government and, therefore, actively battled to repress the Taliban until August 2021, when the Taliban seized control (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 4).

Even though it is reasonable to assume that at this stage of Afghanistan's steadily worsening humanitarian crisis, income will matter more than values to the vast majority of officers and troops, the issue of convictions remains a roadblock, as it undermines not only staffing but also cohesion in general. Furthermore, expanding the Taliban's security infrastructure becomes a viable option only if the Taliban can quickly get financial assistance. This is because the regime has no feasible alternatives for generating revenue: with the international opium market saturated, increasing opium cultivation and production, which has been one of the Taliban's main sources of revenue for the past two decades, would not result in a significant increase in income. Critical minerals such as lithium or copper will not emerge as a source of revenue in the foreseeable future because Afghanistan lacks the mining and transportation infrastructure required to transform its massive natural riches into economic boons (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 5).

Embracing ideological concessions by the Taliban would be a more durable road to regime consolidation. This would begin with the regime negotiating political bargains with opponents like the National Resistance Front, as well as a gradual shift toward forming an inclusive political framework that includes representatives from all sectors of Afghan society. Besides, the Taliban would need to loosen restrictions on women's participation in public life. While taking this path would not solve all of the regime's difficulties, it would greatly diminish public hostility to the Taliban's authority. As a result, the Taliban would be free to concentrate on extremist organisations

that threaten their control and their connections with China, Iran, Russia, and Europe. It's possible that extreme organisations' resistance would grow even stronger. Ideological compromises would support a narrative that portrays the Taliban as not being sufficiently dedicated to building an Islamic state. This would also push the Taliban's most radical sections, which are still committed to harsh policies and resist essential compromises, or new institutions advocating a radical political agenda (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 5).

It's likely that the Taliban would confront a lesser insurgency than in the 'Civil war, reloaded' scenario, implying that their need to beef up security and, hence, their financial requirements would be less severe. Given a softer stance on ideology, this might re-open financial channels from international donors like the EU and attract investment. However, before China seeks to expand its lithium mining rights or link Afghanistan to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a branch of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in which Beijing has invested billions in the development of Pakistan's infrastructure, the Taliban must maintain a sufficient level of stability. One way to keep ISKP¹⁸ in control is to ensure that Afghan security personnel are paid well enough to discourage them from pursuing alternate affiliations. In addition to prioritising cash buyouts and allegiances, the Taliban will need to keep technocrats in the nation who can continue service delivery. While the suspension of aid has left Afghan government officials underpaid for months, the Taliban will need to combine developing a more inclusive political system with delivering public goods to secure the Afghan public's consent, if not outright support. Rather than relying on force and ideology, such performance-based legitimacy (based on the suppression of crime, conflict, and corruption alongside the delivery of public services) would pave the way for a more stable regime consolidation. However, as the preceding analysis indicates, this 'best case scenario is far from a simple decision for the Taliban administration (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 6).

Afghanistan is likely to devolve into violence, but this is not a certain conclusion. Indeed, we believe that reaching the EU's standards would provide the Taliban with the best chance of regime stability while improving the Afghan people's living conditions. However, recent indications, such as security sweeps and pursuing those who oppose their authority, imply that the Taliban may choose the ideological road. In light of these factors, the EU in Afghanistan is effectively confronted with a "wicked problem". While its policy may finally be validated by the Afghan population's open rejection of the Taliban government, it would come at a huge human cost. Afghanistan would also become a destabilising influence in the EU's wider eastern neighbourhood,

¹⁸ The Islamic State - Khorasan Province is an affiliate of the militant group Islamic State.

including Central Asia, as well as a major source of migration to Europe and a breeding ground for extremist organisations. Given this forecast, supporting circumstances that would put Afghanistan on a path to relative peace is a top priority for the international community. Still, it will ultimately depend on the Taliban regime's willingness to compromise (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 6).

We may suppose that the Taliban would be unable to expand their security system to the scale or speed required to maintain acceptable security levels. Such a flaw is likely to spark an insurgency, with radical organisations focusing on the Afghan population and Chinese employees and representatives in Pakistan. It might also lead to increased extremist groups seeking to destabilise Russia or Europe. As a result, ties with Iran, Pakistan, China, and Russia would deteriorate, undermining Chinese investments. As a result, the Taliban rule would be in terrible financial and economic problems.

Furthermore, they will be unprepared to deal with natural catastrophes such as droughts and floods, which are expected to become more common in the next decade due to climate change. As a result, more Afghans may be compelled to leave the country. As a result of this scenario, Afghanistan would gradually descend into the state of civil conflict it experienced in the 1990s when the Taliban controlled around two-thirds of Afghan land. Al-Qaeda took sanctuary in the area because of these circumstances. In the 2020s, things would be different in that ISKP and others would not be able to operate from Afghanistan without the government's consent — but they would still be able to work from Afghanistan (Dreikhausen & Gaub 2022, 5).

7.2 Afghanistan and Pakistan

Pakistan and Afghanistan are neighbours with a long and eventful history. Despite this, the political, historical, and cultural links that run across their border bind them together. Instability and bloodshed in one country have wreaked havoc on the other. Afghanistan's security, political stability, and economic development have declined, with few signs of change. Furthermore, people of similar ethnic backgrounds live on both sides of the border (Center 2009, 25).

The Taliban are highly active along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, influencing nations' affairs. Pakistan was accused of hosting Afghan enemies (1979-1989) (Akhtar 2008, 49). Following the fall of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan became more fragmented and split internally. Afghanistan received diplomatic and material backing from Pakistan. Pakistan opted to support the United States' anti-terrorist stance, effectively declaring war on the Taliban. Pakistan's goal is for stability in Afghanistan (Akhtar 2008, 49). It is a general belief that conflict is everywhere. It may be extremely difficult for post-conflict cultures to recover from war cycles, like Afghanistan's post-

Taliban rule scenario in the twenty-first century. Fighting in this country is no longer restricted to domestic turmoil; it has been internationalised due to its neighbours' destabilisation and stabilisation initiatives. Afghanistan has never been peaceful; it has been a conflicted state ruled by warrior factions for decades. Due to its geopolitical location, trans-ethnic inhabitants, and rivalry with its neighbours create a complicated scenario (Akhtar 2008, 49).

The typical Pakistani is frequently compelled to choose between what is perceived as resistance and resisting a strict interpretation of Sharia law. As of now, it appears that an increasing number of people are opting to support the resistance movement. In the case of Pakistan, the challenge is to release the Pakistani people from this bind to make their struggle against a cocktail of extremism, crime, and reductionist religious interpretations more effective (Sheikh 2009, 10).

Also, tensions between the two countries are nothing new; they have existed for decades. Water resources, the Durand Line, which has been the border between the two republics since 1896, and, of course, the ramifications of the war in Afghanistan, which began in 1978 and continues in some form to this day, are among the difficulties (Yellinek 2017, 2).

The Taliban administration refuses to recognise the Durand Line as a legitimate boundary with Pakistan. In a series of border events that began in December, local Afghan Taliban fighters tore down portions of the fence erected by Pakistan along the Durand Line, separating Afghanistan and Pakistan (Mills 2022, 3).

The Pakistani Taliban's intensifying internal campaign will almost certainly force the Pakistani military to resume cross-border operations into Afghanistan, where the Pakistani Taliban have safe-havens. The Taliban have minimal capacity to stop Pakistan from fencing the Durand Line. However, Pakistan's continued cross-border operations imply that border tensions may worsen over time (Mills 2022, 4).

The spillover of insurgent activities from Pakistan to Afghanistan, which has been a major challenge for US, NATO, and ISAF forces in Afghanistan, appears to require an outreach strategy based on this divide. Taliban-affiliated factions in Pakistan find common causes with the Afghan Taliban, who share a Pashtun ethnicity and adhere to the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence. Taliban alliances have also been identified, bridging the Taliban's traditional ethnic and sectarian divisions; some Taliban groups have found common cause with Punjabi militants, foreign Salafi militants from Al-Qaida, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), with whom the "original" Taliban share neither culture, ethnicity, nor religious school of thought (Sheikh 2009, 2).

They are giving context regarding the fact why it is critical for the United States and Coalition partners to extend this debate by disaggregating the Pakistani Taliban and going into

negotiations or peace agreements with Taliban groups within Pakistan. Despite the significant differences, the major Pakistani Taliban groups, their disparities, and the dynamics of resistance have led to their joining forces. When the Afghan Taliban fled to Pakistan in 2001, they settled in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), and the province of Baluchistan close across the border (Sheikh 2009, 2).

As the US began drone operations in Pakistani tribal regions to remove Taliban-affiliated and Al-Qaida commanders, Pakistani Taliban groups have been urged to unite under a unified resistance slogan (Sheikh 2009, 7).

Since US, NATO, and ISAF¹⁹ forces entered Afghanistan, new Taliban associated organisations have emerged, and pre-existing religious movements have become "talibanized." To bring the "only-Afghanistan" focused militants back together with the "also-Pakistan" oriented terrorists. Peace treaties and conversations with the Taliban are conceivable in Pakistan, albeit they are not usually as long-lasting as first imagined. The main incentives behind the Pakistani government's negotiation approach since the 2004 deal with Taliban Commander Nek Muhammad have been to prevent the Pakistani Taliban from forming alliances with foreign fighters affiliated with Al-Qaida and IMU, to avoid the Pakistani Taliban from targeting Pakistani security forces and to prevent the formation of parallel administrations such as the Taliban Sharia courts and police. Critics claim that the short-term peace agreements only offer the militants a pause and a chance to regroup. Nevertheless, as Pakistani analysts have noted, they provide vital breathing room for innocent Pakistanis and minimise violence and civic deaths for a limited time. The agreements were also beneficial in the fight against Uzbek extremists, and they have helped reduce bloodshed in Pakistan regularly (Sheikh 2009, 8).

Because of NATO's operational unreliability, the Taliban expanded their numbers and established a 'shadow government' across the country. Similarly, America's putative partner, Pakistan, has engaged in subversion activities aimed at making the US and the Karzai government's job in Afghanistan more difficult. Pakistan has continued to enable the Taliban to operate out of Quetta and has sponsored Islamist groups linked to the insurgency to weaken the Afghan government and throw India off balance. Pakistan has essentially attempted to play both sides of the battle, providing intelligence and undertaking military operations against extremists in border areas while undercutting the United States by keeping Afghanistan weak and unpredictable. Fighting the Taliban will necessitate a regional strategy, with the United States confronting Pakistan about its

¹⁹ The International Security Assistance Force was a NATO-led security and reconstruction mission.

sponsorship of extremist networks. The mission's success or failure in Afghanistan has less to do with resources and more with intent. Because it wanted to govern Afghanistan rather than develop it, the US-led mission displayed the same hypocrisies and internal inconsistencies as the British and Soviet imperial missions. With this objective - the natural attitude of empire - the US was doomed to fail in Afghanistan, just like its forefathers. Returning to the 1979 Soviet invasion, showing how the Soviets intervened to support their protégé, the Afghan communists in the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, but ended up strengthening Islamist forces who used religion as a rallying cry to mobilise the population for the country's defence. A simple but dismal lesson can be drawn from the British and Soviet experiences: efforts to impose order in Afghanistan that ignore local political interests and the need for long-term development are certain to fail. It was more of a 'hearts and minds' approach that aimed to buy off the population with aid and development since such attempts are guided by the imperial power's strategic goals rather than the Afghan people's interests (Boyle 2010, 809).

However, as other commentators have pointed out, Pakistan's military has had security reasons to maintain excellent connections with possible Islamist proxy fighters dating back to the country's inception and geographical location between India and Afghanistan. First, from the perspective of the Pakistani military, religious nationalism/Islamism is critical in combating ethnic pressure from Pashtun groups that refuse to recognise the Durand Line or aspire to an independent Pashtunistan. The Pakistani army is also interested in preventing the Taliban movement from becoming a Pashtun-only movement (Sheikh 2009, 8).

After losing sites in Afghanistan as a result of Operation Enduring Freedom, the worldwide al Qaeda organization relocated to Pakistan, where it regrouped and rearmed with the help of its massive support network. While attempts to reconstruct and stabilise Afghanistan began, the Taliban and other resistance organisations were able to revive, magnify, and continue their operations against coalition forces and the Afghan civilians with the help of al Qaeda and other jihadist networks. Opposition organisations were able to smuggle operatives and supplies from Pakistan, recruit and train militants, and launch and direct operations from that country (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 209).

Pakistan has spent the last two decades trying to expand its influence in Afghanistan with the help of various armed organisations, including the Taliban. Pakistan's interest in Afghanistan stems from a desire to safeguard its western flank's territorial integrity. The Durand Line, which separates the two nations, is a colonial relic that creates an artificial divide between tribes' hostile to Pakistan's national interests. After the terrorist events of September 11th, 2001, the US required help

in the area and engaged Pakistan as an ally in the fight against terror. The Pakistani military was seen as capable of dealing with the situation in the North-West Frontier and Baluchistan regions, where rebels have previously organised offensive operations in Afghanistan. At first, President Pervez Musharraf's efforts to curb militant groups, enforce order, and reform radical madrassas that had served as extremist recruiting centres appeared to be successful; thousands of Pakistani regular and paramilitary troops deployed to the country's border region conducted unprecedented counterterrorism campaigns. Although these operations partially successfully combated al Qaeda and non-Pakistani terrorists, they were ineffective in restraining the Taliban (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 223).

Even though top US officials hailed Pakistan for assistance, questions about Islamabad's primary objectives remained. Pakistan's track record in combating Islamist extremism has been inconsistent, with the country tolerating Taliban militants operating from its soil. The Taliban maintained control over training camps, staging locations, recruiting centres, and safe havens in Pakistan. Technical and operational aid from transnational extremists based in the border areas and ethnic and political support from Pakistan's Pashtun population benefitted a substantial chunk of the Afghan insurgency's political and military leadership. Some have blamed Pakistan's indecisiveness in dealing with the Taliban on domestic political upheaval, alleging that it has prompted Islamabad to cut back its efforts against the terrorists. However, allegations continued to suggest that parts of Pakistan's primary intelligence agency and military forces were assisting the Taliban and other extremist organisations as a matter of policy; this assistance may have included providing Taliban offensives with training and fire support. Some in the Pakistani government may have sympathised with the jihad against the US and other Western forces, while others may have desired to maintain a Pakistani presence in Afghanistan. Pakistan's ineffectiveness in combating militants who use its territory as a haven to regroup and spread their influence across borders has contributed directly to Afghanistan's instability. It remains the biggest external hurdle to defeating the rebels (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 224).

The border region with modern-day Pakistan, for instance, is and has always been a region accessible to the outside world, populated by a diverse range of individuals who have been mobile, crossing borders regularly for political or economic reasons (Marsden & Hopkins 2011). Historians and anthropologists have challenged the notion of Afghanistan being intellectually and economically isolated in light of this pattern of cross-border contacts and mobility (Monsutti 2013, 272). Pakistan will continue to be a key partner for China's grand agenda in and beyond Afghanistan in the long run (Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies 2014, 12).

8. The International Context of Afghanistan

8.1 Afghanistan and Russia

This chapter will examine Russia's changing attitudes towards Afghanistan, which was once the epicentre of terrorist threats and is still the landlocked crossroads between Central and South Asia. It will first analyse Afghanistan's role in Russian tactics since 2001 and then look at Russia's current possibilities as US and NATO missions in the nation wind down. When NATO soldiers are about to leave Afghanistan, Russia sees itself as the natural and historical primary power and reclaims its prior position. Russia's immediate goals are mostly defensive and security-related. Still, its long-term goal is to expand its influence beyond Central Asia and challenge China's hegemony in traditional Russian spheres of power and South Asia (Tarzi 2021, 6).

The Soviets began by repeating the British mistake of placing an unpopular "emir" on the Afghan "throne." The operation was characterised by ruthless efficiency: Hafizullah Amin was assassinated in unexplained circumstances, Kabul was secured, and the Soviets installed Babrak Karmal as the Afghan government's leader. The Soviets' enthusiastic assumption that they would be in and out of Afghanistan practically before anybody noticed appeared to be right. According to the Kremlin, President Jimmy Carter was too distracted by the Iranian hostage situation to think about Afghanistan (Bearden 2001, 19).

In December 1979, Soviet forces launched a conventional attack on Kabul and other important locations in Afghanistan, intending to install a stable, pro-Soviet government and quell an insurgency (Cassidy 2003,1).

By 1985, the Soviet 40th Army had expanded from a small expeditionary force to a large occupying force of roughly 120.000 men distributed around the country at garrisons. On the other hand, the Afghan resistance rose in tandem with the Soviet soldiers. The mujahideen had over 250.000 full- or part-time fighters in the field by the mid-1980s, even though they and the civilian population had suffered horrendous losses, plus a million more were driven into internal and external exile. The Soviet forces were also beginning to suffer (Bearden 2001, 21). Soviet aviation tactics had been honed by 1985, and the mujahideen suffered increasing fatalities as the Soviet fleet grew (Bearden 2001, 21). After nearly 14.000 deaths, Soviet forces withdrew almost ten years later, leaving behind a shaky pro-Soviet administration and a continuous civil war (Cassidy 2003,1).

The Soviet Union acknowledged having roughly 15.000 men killed in battle, several hundred thousand wounded, and tens of thousands dying by illness during ten years of conflict. Although the real figures may be higher, they are not worth arguing. The Soviets faced a

catastrophe following Gromov's departure, while the Afghans faced a national calamity (Bearden 2001, 23).

Under President Vladimir Putin, the Russian Federation has security and economic interests in Afghanistan that will last much beyond the withdrawal of American-led coalition forces. These fears come from Russia's long history of war and trade in Central Asia and Afghanistan, which dates back to the Imperial and Soviet periods and culminates in the Soviet Union's tragic conflict in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989 (Stoner 2015, 398). Since the United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001, Russia has been less directly involved in military operations. Still, it has assisted the United States in establishing the Northern Transportation Route and acted as a guarantor of NATO forces' access to key military bases in Central Asia. Russia has not acted in good faith. The Russian government is primarily concerned with maintaining Afghan stability, with a secondary concern for economic development and restricting narcotics trafficking out of Afghanistan into Central Asia and subsequently into Russia. Afghanistan provides Russia a strategic platform against India and Pakistan (Stoner 2015, 398).

Russia has returned to Afghanistan thirty years after withdrawing in 1989. The Soviet Union's reluctant invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and subsequent humiliation and loss a decade later, left Russia with a psychological scar known as the "Afghanistan syndrome," which still influences Russia's political and military elites when it comes to the use of force overseas. Internal security requirements and the security-stability nexus in the Cis-Oxus states of Central Asia, i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, have influenced Russian policies in the region since the fall of the Soviet Union. On the one hand, are terrorist threats from Central Asian Islamist organisations such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)²⁰, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, Hezb al-Tahrir²¹, and the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP); on the other hand, is the presence of NATO and an aggressive China. These things directly threaten Russian national security (Tarzi 2021, 5).

8.2 Afghanistan and the US

The United States' participation in Afghanistan has had a complicated history and aided insurgents against the Soviet occupation in the 1980s. After the Soviets left in the 1990s, the Taliban rose to

²⁰ Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) is a militant Islamist organisation from Uzbekistan that operates in the Afghan-Pakistan border area.

²¹ Hezb al-Tahrir is a transnational Islamist movement founded in the early 1950s by the Palestinian Islamic religious scholar Taqī ad-Dīn an-Nabhānī.

power, imposing brutal rule and creating a haven for Al-Qaeda²² to plot and carry out the 9/11 attacks. Since before and after 9/11, notable US and foreign leaders have played key roles in Afghanistan (Wadsworth 2010, 149). In reaction to those heinous assaults, the US sent soldiers to Afghanistan in 2001, where they effectively pushed out Al Qaeda and the Taliban administration, clearing the path for elections (Way 2020, 2).

The war in Afghanistan, which began on October 7, 2001, with such clarity of purpose and widespread support, has ironically left US policymakers and the public with more questions than answers over 18 years later. What was the reason for the withdrawal of US and coalition forces? Is it possible for the Afghan government and military to function without a US-led military presence and ongoing donor support? Recent discussions between the US government and the Taliban have only added to the number of issues that policymakers must address, whether a peace deal is possible, and if so, what it means for the future of the US role in Afghanistan as well as for Afghans (Sopko 2019, 27).

The United States is exclusively interested in its strategic objectives in Afghanistan and is willing to disregard or marginalise local and international parties who get in the way. The United States has established an Afghan administration that is neither compliant nor compatible with its strategic objectives. The US refusal to commit significant resources to the operation and its evident intention to leave as quickly as possible appear to contradict Marsden's assertion that the US seeks a long-term presence in Afghanistan as a deterrent to future Chinese expansionism. At the same time, there are clear parallels between Afghanistan's British, Soviet, and American occupations. Aid in the service of 'hearts and minds' counterinsurgency techniques - which invariably fails because the foreign power's strategic objectives undermine the humanitarian mission - requires closer examination. However, their track record is spotty, and his research leaves the question of whether such a noble governmental intervention has ever occurred. Mixed objectives are the norm, not the exception, in interventions, and no state would intervene in such a complex and dangerous country as Afghanistan unless it had clear strategic goals. 'To offer help to win hearts and minds is therefore futile' means that any attempt at a 'hearts and minds' counterinsurgency strategy is guaranteed to fail. However, such a conclusion is overstated because certain 'hearts and minds' techniques have worked, and all counterinsurgencies have put their interests ahead of local ones. It may not be feasible to get it right in Afghanistan, but it is far too soon to conclude that the mission's nature contains the seeds of its demise (Boyle 2010, 810).

²² Al-Qaeda is a loose, globally operating terrorist network of mostly Sunni Islamist organisations, which since 1993 has been.

Former president Barack Obama was correct in narrowing down the fundamental purpose of the US military mission in Afghanistan when he introduced his "Afpak" policy in March 2009. He clarified the major objective for the US involvement in Afghanistan in the first place: not nation-building, democracy export, or ideology, but to track down the masterminds of September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks on the US. The next stage for the US and the Coalition was to narrow down the Taliban opponent or "de-talibanise" those Pakistani organisations that started with a different goal than opposing foreign soldiers. The military presence in Afghanistan will continue to develop new generations of Taliban as long as the US and the Coalition do not implement a strategy of difference toward the Taliban organisations. Diplomats must put themselves in the role for which they have been trained. The United States and the Coalition's key goal is to avoid increased mobilisation around the Taliban's armed groups and to reduce the motivations for potential Pakistani recruits to adopt the road of militancy. This problem can only be overcome by a massive shift in signals and attitudes based on a concern for local grievances and development rather than huge military hardware. This will not be an easy undertaking, given how much the US and the nations that support it have been tarnished by the two most recent conflicts (Sheikh 2009, 9).

The coming US withdrawal from Afghanistan reflects the goals of the three administrations before the Biden administration to end the US role as liberator, policeman, and funder of this split and riven country, which it joined in the aftermath of the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks. The primary goals of the American effort in Afghanistan were accomplished, with Al-Qaeda being attacked and the Taliban regime being deposed (Schweitzer and Eran 2021, 1). Still, the US failed to prevent the Taliban from reclaiming control. The US has promised to retaliate if it is attacked on its soil again, but Afghanistan's neighbours are concerned about the future, given the vacuum created by the withdrawal. Moreover, the story that the Taliban and Al-Qaeda will spread about the fundamentalist Islamic "Muqawama" (resistance) against a superpower could inspire other organisations in many countries, particularly in the Middle East. Israel and its western allies should be prepared for the prospect that Afghanistan may once again become a hub for global terrorism and a model to be emulated (Schweitzer and Eran 2021, 1).

The US invasion of Afghanistan had several immediate goals:

- Removing Al-Qaeda from the country and dealing it a fatal blow.
- Uprooting the radical-fundamentalist Taliban regime from Afghanistan, under whose auspices Al-Qaeda operated.
- Assisting in the establishment of a democratic and liberal alternative government.

These accomplishments aimed to deter terrorist organisations and their sympathisers from carrying out other mass-casualty attacks in the United States. But, it was important that these goals were met promptly (Schweitzer and Eran 2021, 2). Al-Qaeda was dealt a major setback when it was deposed and pushed into exile in Pakistan and Iran. The Taliban were driven out of their strongholds in its core cities and ceased to rule. A new administration led by Hamid Karzai was appointed. Moreover, open elections for the legislative assembly were held for the first time. The United States demonstrated its strength and willingness to harshly punish those who dared to attack it on its land (Schweitzer and Eran 2021, 2).

The US wanted to keep a low profile in Afghanistan but failed to anticipate that the Taliban would resurface to oppose the new government. The Coalition's reliance on warlords who had been thrown out of power by the Taliban has hastened the Taliban's resurgence. The injustices perpetrated by coalition-aligned Afghans, whether political, economic or merely violent, drove many disgruntled Afghans into the arms of the resurgent Taliban. Nearly two decades later, Afghan security forces are still unable to maintain themselves without the help of the US. The US and its coalition allies continue to spend billions on assistance up to their withdrawal (Sopko 2019, 32).

Because of the rushed timeframe imposed by Washington, US forces did not have enough time to effectively educate their Afghan counterparts before the Coalition stopped offensive operations and left Afghan forces to fend for themselves (Sopko 2019, 36).

The US military commitment began with Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), an Afghanistan counterterrorism effort focused on locating and destroying Taliban and al Qaeda bases. Special Operations Forces (SOF) and CIA personnel mingled with Northern Alliance fighters upon entering the country to acquire intelligence and support the joint American-British air operation. The Taliban ceded control of Afghanistan's land within a few months, maybe faster than expected. Some thought deploying an international peacekeeping force across the country was critical to guarantee long-term stability. In contrast, others claimed that the US's sustained counterterrorism role outweighed its necessity to participate in nation-building. As part of ISAF's mandate, they preferred to limit the peacekeeping mission to Kabul. Given its existing and upcoming warfighting commitments, the US judged that the latter option termed a "low footprint," was the most advantageous. In 2002, the US sent three conventional brigades to Afghanistan, comprised of troops, airmen, helicopter assault crews, and close air support (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 210).

These soldiers did not perform direct peacekeeping duties; instead, they worked with foreign peacekeepers to monitor and engage Taliban and al Qaeda terrorists in counterterrorism operations.

The US administration hoped to avoid the large-scale opposition the Soviets faced in the 1980s. It also "ultimately felt that limited numbers of ground soldiers and airpower, working with Afghan forces, would be sufficient to establish stability." The importance of the early "low footprint" strategy cannot be emphasised. By mid-2002, the US had just 8,000 troops in Afghanistan, a nation with a population of 30 million and a government and security forces that had been destroyed the year before. The decisions made in 2002 ensured that the number of soldiers in Afghanistan (the US and later NATO) would be kept low for around three years. Because of the small number of soldiers, the ISAF's capacity to provide security in the Kabul region was limited. Except for a small presence in some of the main Afghan cities, there was little capacity to offer protection elsewhere in the nation. The failure to adequately safeguard the country played a major role in the rise of anarchy and the Taliban's comeback. As the US committed increasing resources to prepare for and fight the war in Iraq in 2002 and 2003, equipment and personnel crucial to the counterterrorism mission in Afghanistan declined, impeding the capacity to maintain the shift to stable operations. However, the United States' inability to adequately resource the Afghan endeavour was not primarily due to the demands of the Iraq war. In 2003, the United States employed a similar tactic to Iraq. The issue wasn't a lack of resources but rather a reluctance to execute stable operations. According to the Pentagon, the Pentagon continues to "consider the situation in Afghanistan as one of counterterrorism, not counterinsurgency, and execute operations accordingly" (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 211).

Late in 2003, the newly appointed US ambassador to Afghanistan collaborated with the commander of US forces to finalise an updated, comprehensive military plan for the country's deployment. The concept envisioned a transition from counterterrorism operations to nation-building by focusing on demilitarising militias and undermining warlords. As a consequence of this new approach, two regional command centres were formed in the country's south and east, with one brigade allocated to a territory-wide area of operations. US forces were entrusted with guarding and defending the population and providing a more integrated military presence with residents. "The US and other coalition troops were recast", according to the new plan. In 2002–2004, however, the minimal number of US forces in Afghanistan rendered providing security for the populace outside a few large towns untenable (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 212).

At least some of the blame for the deterioration of Afghanistan's security should go on the United States. Despite its reputation as the "Graveyard of Empires," claiming that Afghanistan

would be lost was never a predetermined conclusion. The United States was to blame for allowing the Taliban to regroup and restart the war in Afghanistan by using a "too little, too late" approach. One miscalculation and bad performance by local Afghan troops and their international allies demonstrated that the Bush administration's 2001 'light footprint' approach did not give enough police personnel to maintain basic protection for the population outside the big cities. As a result, there was no effective law and order, particularly in the country's remote rural areas. The Taliban operated outside the reach of NATO and the Karzai government, which was mostly limited to Kabul. As the United States focused on its counterterrorism operation against Al-Qaeda, efforts to build an indigenous law enforcement capacity stalled. The Afghan national police forces were under-trained, first by the German government and then by DynCorp, a private military organisation based in the United States. Even today, the Afghan police have a persistent culture of corruption and underperformance, making them an especially vulnerable and appealing target for the Taliban. The Afghan National Army was more capable but lacked an autonomous budget and a small number of soldiers. The weaknesses of the Afghan security forces, rising corruption levels in the Karzai government, and stalled development in the country's rural areas alienated a large portion of the population, allowing the Taliban to quietly regain strength and resume operations against NATO. External parties such as NATO, Pakistan, and the United States are also being blamed. Not only did delegating reconstruction missions to major European governments to fail, but many NATO soldiers dispatched to Afghanistan were so under-resourced that they could not effectively combat the Taliban (Boyle 2010, 808).

9. Summary

Afghanistan's history has always been fascinating. In my research, I tried to illustrate and analyse the role and the strengthening of the Taliban. In particular, I examined the domestic relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan. I have also taken into account the international connection. In this context, the influence of Russia and the USA as the prior states and China, the EU, and India as sub-states. Even before the regime change, millions of inhabitants suffered under rough conditions, especially women and girls were mistreated in their relationships in the previous years. This, in particular, is a matter of the heart of mine. As a result of the measures executed by the Taliban, governments worldwide have seen an alarming spike in allegations of violence, strict restrictions against women and a severe limitation in own decision-making and, e.g. access to education. Daily, violence is one of the main concerns residents face.

We can see, that Afghanistan is a country that has been through a lot in terms of wars, geographical reconfiguration, and territory loss and it was always critical to maintaining peace. Since the Taliban took over the country, every Afghan has suffered also economically and the whole society was negatively affected. Afghanistan still has a lot of work to do before it can be considered a strong, cohesive, and devoted nation.

10. Conclusion

Despite various attempts to keep the Taliban from power, the issue prevails, resulting in devastating consequences. Yet, reasons and potential solutions are poorly understood and insufficiently studied up to this point as there is no previous research on the current state of the art. This research reveals new opportunities for more powerful and innovative channels. It is further evaluated how the Taliban regime responds to the international involvement and which of the solutions provide the best practice to counteract the impacts of the Taliban. Therefore, this research investigates various approaches through a literature review and interviews with national and international experts. The empirical strategy entails pluralism of methodologies to provide holistic and comprehensive research and close the existing research gap. The study aims to provide policy recommendations, which is substantial due to the ongoing effects of the strengthening of the Taliban.

Furthermore, potential threats are arising from the mentioned matter. Due to lacking research concerning the new position of Afghanistan, this research takes a closer look at how to handle and interact with the afghan new government from the global context.

The results presented might indicate how to counteract the negative impacts of the Taliban regime. Moreover, prospective approaches, solutions and policy recommendations are given to implement the stated suggestions and support the civil population in Afghanistan. According to the findings of the interviews, some participants are optimistic about Afghanistan's future, while others are pessimistic. Nonetheless, all participants agree that the Taliban government would encounter constraints and obstacles owing to a lack of experience and external support sooner or later.

Additionally, most participants believe that the country's overall situation will worsen. Whether it is a lack of outside assistance, such as financial support, or a lack of broad government acknowledgement, the Taliban will find significant hurdles in gaining recognition from the international world. This is because of their government's policy. Human rights and women's rights, in particular, are key concerns, as is the lack of access to education, particularly for women. A weak economy may result in a labour shortage and even starvation. As a result, it is even more critical for the Taliban to adapt and seek outside support. In this regard, both the international and domestic

contexts are relevant. Pakistan has been a crucial pillar, particularly in terms of refugee assistance. However, both countries have a long history and many issues that must be addressed for the relationship to continue functioning.

Furthermore, it is fascinating to observe how the international setting evolves—specifically, ties with the United States, China, and Europe. At the moment, it appears that the Taliban will place a major emphasis on China, as seen by the first state visit to Beijing. Other countries are more likely to assist in the field of humanitarian relief.

Nonetheless, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, in particular, was a major factor in the Taliban's growth. In this context, we might now use the term "Graveyard of Empires," to which some interview participants agreed, and others did not. Afghanistan has historically appealed to outside countries due to its strategic location. However, it should be noted that the invasion of Afghanistan will encounter various challenges. Whether geographical, cultural, or domestic. It has been demonstrated that the British, Russians, and US have all failed to conquer Afghanistan. It remains to be seen how the situation will evolve.

10.1 Policy Findings

The following chapter aims to clearly outline what makes the research conducted and its findings special and relevant for policy decisions shortly. The conducted research on the role of the Taliban deals with the domestic and international context of Afghanistan, which is a relatively new field of study that is not yet fully present. Furthermore, there is limited evidence on how the role of the Taliban regime will develop shortly. However, it is important to know how other states can tackle the issue to evaluate the negative impact, which this research explores. Answering this research question also sheds new light on the complex relationship with other nations.

Moreover, only very few studies have previously examined the mentioned matter. Hence, this study poses a new geopolitical contribution. Regarding the research methodology, this study attempts to utilise the qualitative data sources in existence, which are generally lacking due to the difficult situation in the country.

The findings of this study are of immediate and crucial importance for several reasons. First, the Taliban regime is an ongoing matter that will have long-lasting impacts on the situation in Afghanistan. According to the findings, other nations might substantially minimise the negative effects and reduce the risk and negative outcomes. The part of domestic and international relations are other areas that need more exploration now than ever, given the present circumstances. Another finding is that we need effective women's political and social empowerment measures and a tool to

promote gender equality. Several exacerbated barriers include poverty, security concerns, cultural and religious taboos, political participation, public voice, and social control. We need access to education for girls and women in all country areas and information concerning human rights and health services. Furthermore, it should be possible to report any incidence and help victims anonymously.

The strengthening of the Taliban has exacerbated the situation in Afghanistan. Thus, states had to find ways to address existing and new issues like stay-at-home orders and mobility restrictions imposed by the new government. Therefore, the following chapter will give concrete recommendations. Afghanistan occupies a unique geographical location. The country is strategically positioned in the region's economic, cultural, and geopolitical hubs. It is strategically located at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia, and it has the potential to serve as the principal gateway connecting all three regions. Pakistan and Afghanistan's geoeconomic, geostrategic, and geopolitical situations are historic and will continue to be so in the future, particularly for Russia, China, and the US (Khan & Shirazi, 2021).

Few would deny that governmental stability and civilian security would long-term impact Afghanistan's transformation into a frontier market. Stability and security are required for economic expansion, according to international precedent. NATO has "spent" billions of dollars and a decade of blood, sweat, and tears on the peace and security of Afghanistan. However, this Stone Age nation's primary economic expansion has been a military-styled personnel complex.

The Afghan government and ANSF may benefit from vigorous and independent media as a political and economic watchdog. That is, assuming a financial structure that allows an engaged public to pay for and support a free and vibrant press's role in holding the country's leaders accountable. Only 28% of the population aged 15 and up can read and write, making selling newspapers a significant task. Because just 29 % of the population lives in cities, television and sophisticated digital connections are difficult to come by (Hummel/Freeland/Craft/Mckellips 2012, 664).

In Afghanistan, the free press is pretty much what it says on the tin. The people are left with few sources of information, notably government media such as Radio Television Afghanistan because there is no economic system to fund news coverage and delivery (RTA). Government-sponsored press, as in any frontier or growing territory, is far from objective. A strong corps of public affairs officers within the various ranks of the ANSF might serve a dual purpose if properly educated. Afghan public affairs professionals, for starters, would be able to establish a communication link between security personnel and the broader people. Second, public affairs officers would be able to supply pre-packaged articles and instructions to a burgeoning free press,

allowing the general people access to information that security forces in a border conflict region might not normally provide. But the task is even more difficult: training uneducated soldiers and police officers to be public affairs officers, teaching them how to use modern media tools and communications equipment, and then empowering them to uncover and report the truth, no matter where it leads (Hummel/Freeland/Craft/Mckellips 2012, 665).

Increased insecurity severely influenced Afghanistan's economy, which hindered commerce, investment, and other economic activities. The challenge of establishing government institutions to help the private sector was exacerbated by insecurity. The United States' announcement of a military drawdown and the ensuing expectation of dramatic aid cuts deepened existing economic uncertainty and pessimism, encouraging Afghans to profit from the coalition presence while they still could -a factor that has had a long-term impact on the success of all of the coalition's assistance programs (Sopko 2019, 32).

The infusion of billions of dollars further into the Afghan economy by international donors guided by the US, combined with the Afghan government's restricted ability to spend funds, poor donor oversight and contracting practices, and built-in institutional incentives to spend money, has quickly increased the risk of corruption. The US and its allies spent much too much, far too fast, in a far too tiny economy, with far too little monitoring. At the same time, donors chastise Afghanistan for being the world's sixth most corrupt country, according to Transparency International. The broad consensus among development economists is that a country's economy can absorb 15 to 45 % of its gross domestic product in foreign help (GDP) (Sopko 2019, 32).

However, anti-corruption operations have been a higher priority for US military and civilian organisations in Afghanistan in recent years, and the legacy of those early days remains an almost impossible task. But, money cannot fix all of the world's problems. In regions where it is spent, governments must be aware of the working environment and guarantee that appropriate controls and oversight bodies are in place to protect it (Sopko 2019, 35).

In the particular instance of Afghanistan, strategic decisions were made to use a "light footprint." Still, while the stated reason was to empower the Afghan people to take control of their futures, the reality was that much of the decision was influenced by the international community's desire for labour and a resource-light approach. The focus of the conflict shifted to operations in the lack of a comprehensive stabilisation plan, with each operational authority left to its own devices. Across the country, performance was uneven, with many military commanders focusing on direct action rather than population-centric metrics. This is true for both the original special forces-led operation and the extended conventional US and NATO role: attempting to eliminate Taliban and al

Qaeda members by engaging the enemy rather than the civilians (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 230).

In development, there was a parallel to the inclination for direct action. While the international world lauded the notion of an Afghan-led development approach, the money used to fund real projects went to international players rather than Afghans. As a result of avoiding any long-term aid plans, the money was used mostly on short-impact projects and other temporary remedies. These efforts have mostly failed to improve support for the existing quo, which is pro-government and coalition-based. Similarly, military commanders in the field were usually in charge of executing governance-related assistance below the national level (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 231).

Many of the stabilisation strategy's shortcomings may be traced back to a misunderstanding of Afghanistan's intricacies. This failure goes from the highest levels of government to the tiniest villages and explains why numerous coalition initiatives have had surprising results. Coalition troops failed to comprehend the power dynamics in Kabul, including the divides among technocrats, Pashtun royalists, and minority warlords, as well as the negotiation procedures between them. Overestimating the national government's capabilities and stability led to disillusionment, which was exacerbated by a well-documented misunderstanding of the power balance between the centre and the periphery. Coalition troops coped by seizing increased power and responsibility and cutting out the Afghan government at all levels while also attempting to establish the notion of a legitimate nation-state by giving coalition initiatives an "Afghan face." On the other hand, Afghans are intensely aware of who genuinely approves and performs the task, regardless of who gets credit for it (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 232).

Foreign personnel made decisions regarding the use of force or funding based on preconceptions about what should work rather than genuine experience because they couldn't foresee how Afghans would react to any of their efforts and couldn't tell who was friend or foe. This explains why quick-impact development programs continue to exist despite evidence that they failed to gain support for the real government. Similarly, coalition troops misjudged the extent of resistance they would encounter in the hinterlands. They assumed that most Afghans despised the Taliban administration and that removing residual insurgents would be relatively easy (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 233).

There is a lack of sustained focus. The absence of persistent emphasis on Afghanistan was a third major factor in the stabilisation effort's failure. As a result, the international world set in motion the formation of an undeveloped administration in Kabul, then immediately moved on to

other matters (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 234).

Security is the primary prerequisite for stabilization, and maintaining whatever degree of security has been established will be the first responder in any transition. Security is generally considered a facilitator for development and governance mandates; a relatively stable security environment improves the likelihood that such initiatives will acquire traction (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 234).

To be effective in a development strategy, we must reconsider the notion that charity infrastructure contributions are a viable method of appeasement. Certain initiatives succeed while others fail, and we need more studies to figure out why. A better understanding of the population is needed if a lack of awareness of the people is part of the problem, then a way to better comprehend the many communities of interest needs to be established. Even though modern counterinsurgency theory and practice are based on winning public support for the counterinsurgency endeavour, we have poor knowledge of what the Afghan people truly need or desire. According to Americans and Europeans, government institutions exist to identify and address the needs and wishes of the people. This makes it difficult for us to comprehend an environment that is resistive to institutions, such as Afghanistan. We lack an institutional framework for systematically developing knowledge of people's wants and aspirations. Our efforts to create one have been thwarted at every point by the same lack of comprehension. This paradox may be seen in security, development, and governance (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 237).

Above important, coalition troops must maintain their commitment to ensuring a long-term transition from counterinsurgency to stable operations in Afghanistan. Rather than succumbing to strategic narcolepsy, we must demonstrate a long-term commitment to that country's development (Rabasa, Gordon, Chalk, Grant, McMahon, Pezard, Reilly, Ucko, Zimmerman 2022, 238).

However, there are lessons to be learned from the so-called "Graveyard of Empires" that may be applied not just to current and future efforts in Afghanistan but also future stability and rebuilding efforts in other parts of the world. History contradicts the notion that we will never undertake another stabilisation or rebuilding operation in a failing or unstable state. While we've heard that assertion after every major attempt since Vietnam, there's always a new issue to deal with. Conflicts everywhere drag America and its allies in, no matter how much we wish they would not do it. The international reaction to these circumstances has been diverse, but the issues that these present crises will not go away. It would be a dereliction of duty not to draw lessons from nearly 20 years of commitment in Afghanistan, where more than 2.200 Americans have perished.

Although I cannot precisely answer that question, I am confident that we will be if we do not learn from our country's first 18 years in Afghanistan. Moreover, personnel from government agencies have played a key role in Afghanistan, both current and former (Sopko 2019, 29).

All parties agreed that the Afghan issue threatens regional security, stability, and peace and that regional cooperation and consultation are needed to assist Afghanistan in achieving independence, peace, and stability (Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies 2014, 11).

To restore Afghanistan's peace and security, the Afghan government and the US must work together. Afghan political stability has always influenced the security situation in South Asia, West Asia, and Central Asia. Both Washington and Kabul must recognise the relevance of Afghanistan's domestic challenges to regional security (Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies 2014, 10).

10.2 Policy Recommendation

Based on my findings, I hope to derive some policy implications. It is essential to start collecting valid data points on how the situation in Afghanistan will develop soon. Furthermore, we need to analyse the impact of particular conditions and patterns, such as differences on the demographics level of education for women and focus on the least participating groups. As well as finding a way to avoid harassment, threats and violence - potentially by involving state intervention. Likewise, it is worth noting that states need to find common ground on interacting with the Taliban regimes and might potentially reduce the number of incarcerations.

Looking at future developments in Afghanistan and considering the current situation, the ten above mentioned interviews presented some insightful policy recommendations in light of potential developments in Afghanistan and the existing scenario.

The Taliban regime will require foreign society's assistance in developing a welcoming environment for visitors to Afghanistan. They must accept human and women's rights and fix the economy. One of the primary strategic goals could be to include the EU in stabilising, supporting, and investing in Afghanistan's growth.

Furthermore, the Taliban require a central government and an end to the war in Afghanistan. If they want to stay in Afghanistan, they must adapt and embrace the ideas of the international community. The Taliban must loosen up and find a way to collaborate while maintaining good relations with other countries.

Additionally, the Taliban administration should take new measures, and the international community should pressure the Taliban leadership to reduce people's suffering. They must find a

means to agree with the Taliban regime and the international community on the nonviolent rule of law in Afghanistan.

The best-case scenario would be for the Taliban and the government to recognise each other, reopen diplomatic relations, and create bank accounts. Additionally, targeted sanctions against individuals would be prohibited.

Moreover, a clear policy is required to acknowledge women's roles, particularly in education. They should be permitted to continue their education until they reach the age of 18 and then to the university level.

11. Bibliography

- Adams, Gordon. "Afghanistan and Pakistan: The Graveyard for US Foreign Policy Planning?" Stimson Center, 2009.
- Agarwal, Rajeev. "Post Afghanistan 2014: Options for India and Iran." Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2014.
- Akhtar, Aasim Sajjad. "The New Great Game in Afghanistan and Pakistan." *Economic and Political Weekly* 44, no. 1 (2009): 36–40.
- Akhtar, Nasreen. "PAKISTAN, AFGHANISTAN, AND THE TALIBAN." *International Journal on World Peace* 25, no. 4 (2008): 49–73.
- Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project. "The US-Taliban Peace Deal: 10 Weeks On." Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2020.
- Athul, A. "US and Afghanistan: BSA and Taliban Negotiations." Edited by Rajeshwari Krishnamurthy. *Afghanistan 2014: BSA, Internal Security, Taliban & Indian Strategy*. Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2014.
- Azadany, Amanullah Haidary. "How Would a Realist Explain the Civil War in Afghanistan?." European Scientific Journal, 2016.
- Barak, Michael. "Afghanistan in the Shadow of the US and NATO Withdrawal." International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), 2021.
- Barfield, Thomas. „Problems in establishing legitimacy in Afghanistan.“ *Iran. Stud.* 37 (2004): 263-93.
- Barfield, Thomas. "Afghanistan a Cultural and Political History." Princeton University Press, 2010.
- Bearden, Milton. "Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires." *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 6 (2001): 17–30.
- Bell, Arvid, and Cornelius Friesendorf. "Ziel Verfehlt: Die Mitverantwortung Der NATO Für Zivile Opfer in Afghanistan." Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, 2014.
- Bryman, A. "Social Research Methods." Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Boyle, Michael J. "Review of In the graveyard of empires: America's war in Afghanistan; Afghanistan: aid, armies and empires, by S. G. Jones & P. Marsden." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 86, no. 3 (2010): 808–10.
- Bride, Tim, and Alex Marshall. "Afghanistan - How the West Lost Its Way." Yale University Press, 2011.
- Bubna, Mayank. "Afghanistan: Talking to Taliban." Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2009.

Buzan, Barry and Ole Waever. "Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security." Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Canyon, Deon, and Srini Sitaraman. "China's Global Security Aspirations with Afghanistan and the Taliban." Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2020.

Cassidy, Robert M. "RUSSIA IN AFGHANISTAN AND CHECHNYA: MILITARY STRATEGIC CULTURE AND THE PARADOXES OF ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT." Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2003.

Cohen, Ariel. "HOW THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN WILL AFFECT RUSSIA AND EURASIA." Edited by Stephen J. Blank. *CENTRAL ASIA AFTER 2014*. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2013.

Constantino, Zachary. "The India-Pakistan Rivalry in Afghanistan." US Institute of Peace, 2020.

Cordesman, Anthony H. "Afghanistan: 'Peace' as the Vietnamization of a U.S. Withdrawal?" Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2020.

Creswell, John. "RESEARCH DESIGN: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches." SAGE Publications, 2003. [https:// www.unafei.or.jp/publications/pdf/RS_No53/No53_02Contents.pdf](https://www.unafei.or.jp/publications/pdf/RS_No53/No53_02Contents.pdf)

Derksen, Deedee. "Options for Reintegrating Taliban Fighters in an Afghan Peace Process." US Institute of Peace, 2019.

Dodge, Toby. "Intervention and Dreams of Exogenous Statebuilding: The Application of Liberal Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq." *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 5 (2013): 1189–1212.

Dreikhausen, Viola Fee, and Florence Gaub. "TALIBAN IN OR OUT?: Afghanistan in 2025." European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), 2022.

Dunne, T., & Schmidt, B. Realism. In J. Baylis, S. Smith , & P. Owens, "*The Globalization of World Politics*." Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Dummett, Michael. "Realism." *Synthese* 52, no. 1 (1982): 55–112.

Elias, Barbara. "America's Missing Leverage in Afghanistan and Pakistan: A Structural Analysis." *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 8 (2013): 1392–1408.

Friesendorf, Cornelius. "Gefährliche Gemengelage: Polizei, Militär Und Probleme Der Sicherheitssektorreform in Afghanistan." Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, 2009.

Ghazi, Alghosaibi. "The Theory of International Relations: Hans J. Morgenthau and His Critics." *Background* 8, no. 4 (1965): 221–56.

Green, Nile. "The trans-border traffic of Afghan modernism: Afghanistan and the Indian „Urdusphere.“ *Comp. Stud. Soc. Hist.* 53 (2011):479-508.

Hanifi, Shah Mahmoud. "Connecting Histories in Afghanistan : Market Relations and State Formation on a Colonial Frontier." Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2011.

Hummel, Christopher K., Maritza Freeland, Eric Craft, and Paul McKellips. "Employing Immersion Theory as a Public Affairs Instructional Tool in Frontier Conflict Regions." *Journal of Public Affairs Education* 18, no. 4 (2012): 661–81.

Jackson, Ashley. "Perspectives on Peace from Taliban Areas of Afghanistan." US Institute of Peace, 2019.

Jeganaathan, J. "Afghanistan: When India and China Touch Base." Edited by Rajeshwari Krishnamurthy. *Afghanistan 2014: BSA, Internal Security, Taliban & Indian Strategy*. Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2014.

Jones, Seth G. "“War and Peace in Afghanistan.”" Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2020.

Ji-Hyang, Jang. "The Return of the Taliban and the Revival of Jihadist Extremism." Asan Institute for Policy Studies, 2021.

Kapstein, Ethan B. "Aid and Stabilization in Afghanistan: What Do the Data Say?" US Institute of Peace, 2017.

Khan, Ayesha. "US POLICY IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: Antidoteto Insurgency." *The World Today* 65, no. 1 (2009): 8–10.

Khan, Imran, and Safdar Ali Shirazi. "GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF AFGHANISTAN FOR PAKISTAN" *Pakistan Geographical Review*, 2021.

Khalatbari, Babak, and Janna Kazim. "Afghanistan and Pakistan – A PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM?" Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2010.

Krickus, Richard J. "THE AFGHANISTAN QUESTION AND THE RESET IN U.S.-RUSSIAN RELATIONS." Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2011.

Kunze, Thomas, and Leonardo Salvador. "Der Feind Meines Feindes.: Russische Interessen in Afghanistan." Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2021.

Laruelle, Marlène. "Russia's Strategies in Afghanistan and Their Consequences for NATO." NATO Defense College, 2011.

Leede, Seran de. "Afghan Women and the Taliban: An Exploratory Assessment." International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2014.

Leiter, Brian. "Classical Realism." *Philosophical Issues* 11 (2001): 244–67.

Lewis, David G., and Anisheh Bassiri Tabrizi, eds. "Regional Powers and the Afghanistan Conflict: Key Dynamics and Fault-Lines." *Regional Powers and Post-NATO Afghanistan*. NATO Defense College, 2021.

Lyon, Rod, and Will Clegg. "Afghanistan and Pakistan." *Changing Pace: ASPI's Strategic Assessment 2011*. Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2011.

Maley, William. "The Foreign Policy of the Taliban." Council on Foreign Relations, 2000.

Marsden M, and BD Hopkins. „Fragments of the Afghan Frontier.“ New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2011.

McNally, Lauren, and Paul Bucala. "THE TALIBAN RESURGENT: THREATS TO AFGHANISTAN'S SECURITY." *THE TALIBAN RESURGENT: THREATS TO AFGHANISTAN'S SECURITY*. Institute for the Study of War, 2015.

Mills, Peter. "Afghanistan-in-Review: January 3 – January 25, 2022: Taliban Government Responds to Uzbek Taliban Revolt in Faryab Province." Institute for the Study of War, 2022.

Monsutti, Alessandro. "Anthropologizing Afghanistan: Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42 (2013): 269–85.

Morgenthau, Hans. "REALISM IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS." *Naval War College Review* 10, no. 5 (1958): 1–15.

Morgenthau, Hans J. "The Nature and Limits of a Theory of International Relations." in William T.R. Fox, editor. *Theoretical Aspects of International Relations*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press (1959): 15-28.

Morgenthau, Hans J. "Politics Among Nations." New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960a.

Morgenthau, Hans J. "The Purpose of American Politics." New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960b.

Morgenthau, Hans J. "The Decline of Democratic Politics." Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962.

Morgenthau, Hans J. "The Decline of Democratic Politics: The Escape from Power." Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962b.

Morgenthau, Hans J. "The Decline of Democratic Politics: The Intellectual and Moral Dilemma of Politics." Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962c.

Morgenthau, Hans J. "Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace." New York: Knopf, 1978.

Morgenthau, Hans J. "Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace." 6th ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.

Moskalenko, Vladimir, and Petr Topychkanov. "RUSSIA AND PAKISTAN: Shared Challenges and Common Opportunities." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2014.

NARAYANAN, SRIPATHI. "PAKISTAN & AFGHANISTAN: UNDERSTANDING ISLAMABAD'S POLICIES AND STRATEGIES." Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2010.

Pandya, Amit. "Afghanistan and Pakistan: More Realism Needed to Prevent US Failure." Edited by Ellen Laipson, Nancy Langer, and Alison Yost. *Innovative Ideas for Global Security*. Stimson Center, 2009.

Pavlik, Melissa, and Tom Hart. "The World According to the Taliban: New Data on Afghanistan." Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2019.

Rabasa, Angel, John Gordon, Peter Chalk, Audra K. Grant, K. Scott McMahon, Stephanie Pezard, Caroline Reilly, David Ucko, and S. Rebecca Zimmerman. "Afghanistan." In *From Insurgency to Stability: Volume II: Insights from Selected Case Studies*, 205–40. RAND Corporation, 2011.

Robotham, Christopher, and Sascha Röder. "Die Bundeswehr in Afghanistan: Analysen an Den Grenzen Des Heimatdiskurses." In *Heimatdiskurs: Wie Die Auslandseinsätze Der Bundeswehr Deutschland Verändern*, edited by Michael Daxner and Hannah Neumann, 201–42. Transcript Verlag, 2012.

Ruttig, T., & Qanne, E. "After the Election is Before the Elections: The Dilemma with the 2015 Parliamentary vote date." Afghanistan Analysis Network, 2014. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/after-the-election-is-before-the-election-the-dilemma-with-the-2015-parliamentary-vote-date/>

SAALMAN, LORA, ed. "Exploring Security Engagement with Pakistan and Afghanistan." *China—Russia Relations and Regional Dynamics: From Pivots to Peripheral Diplomacy*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2017.

Saikal, Amin. "Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival." Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010.

Samples, Michael E. "Applying Realism Theory in Afghanistan." National Defense University, 2011.

Saxena, Chayanika. "The American Exit, the Fall of Afghanistan and the Indian Dilemmas." *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 13, no. 4 (2021): 8–13.

Schetter, Conrad. "Kleine Geschichte Afghanistans." C.H. Beck, 2017.

Schweitzer, Yoram, and Oded Eran. "The US Withdrawal from Afghanistan Portends a Vacuum and Uncertain Future." Institute for National Security Studies, 2021.

Sheikh, Ali T. "The New Political Thinking: Gorbachev's Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan." *Asian Survey* 28, no. 11 (1988): 1170–87.

Sheikh, Mona Kanwal. "Disaggregating the Pakistani Taliban: Does the Good, the Bad and the Ugly Taliban Distinction Represent a Failed Policy?" Danish Institute for International Studies, 2009.

Sheikh, Mona Kanwal, and Amina Khan. "DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE AFGHAN TALIBAN." PROSPECTS OF A SETTLEMENT WITH THE AFGHAN TALIBAN: Exit, Peace and Governance from the Taliban Perspective. Danish Institute for International Studies, 2019.

SIDDIQA, AYESHA. "AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN." Edited by Isaac Kfir and Georgia Grice. *COUNTERTERRORISM YEARBOOK 2019*. Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2019.

Smith, Scott S. "Service Delivery in Taliban-Influenced Areas of Afghanistan." US Institute of Peace, 2020.

Stoner, Kathryn. "Russia's 21st Century Interests in Afghanistan: Resetting the Bear Trap." *Asian Survey* 55, no. 2 (2015): 398–419.

Sopko, John F. "Afghanistan Reconstruction: Lessons from the Long War." *PRISM* 8, no. 2 (2019): 26–39.

SOUTH ASIA CENTER. "Afghanistan and US Security." Atlantic Council, 2015.

Simon, Steven. Review of Can the Right War Be Won? Defining American Interests in Afghanistan, by SETH G. JONES and DAVID KILCULLEN. *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 4 (2009): 130–37.

Taliaferro, Jeffrey W. "Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited." *International Security* 25, no. 3 (2000): 128–61.

Third Way. "2020 Country Brief: Afghanistan." Third Way, 2020.

Tarzi, Amin. "The Return of Russia in Afghanistan." Edited by Chloé Berger and Cynthia Salloum. *Russia in NATO's South: Expansionist Strategy or Defensive Posture?* NATO Defense College, 2021.

Watkins, Andrew. "Causes of and Constraints on Taliban Fragmentation." *Taliban Fragmentation: FACT, FICTION, AND FUTURE*. US Institute of Peace, 2020.

Williams, Michael C. "Why Ideas Matter in International Relations: Hans Morgenthau, Classical Realism, and the Moral Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 58, no. 4 (2004): 633–65.

Yellinek, Roie. "Pakistan, Afghanistan, and In Between." Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, 2017.

Yusuf, Moeed. "Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations: The Prospect of Reviving Taliban Talks." US Institute of Peace, 2015.

Wadsworth, Douglas J., and Seth G. Jones. "Review of In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan." *Naval War College Review* 63, no. 2 (2010): 148–49.

Watkins, Andrew. "Causes of and Constraints on Taliban Fragmentation." *Taliban Fragmentation: FACT, FICTION, AND FUTURE*. US Institute of Peace, 2020.

12. Pledge of Honesty

„On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.“

MAREIKE WIEDERHOLD

10.06.22

Name Signature Date (in capital letters)

13. Annex

13.1 Interview Transcript

Speaker 1: Now it works so we can start. Thank you for your patience again. And really I really appreciate that you also take the time for doing the interview with me. I really appreciate that. At first for me it would be quite interesting if you maybe can tell me something about your personal background. So what you learned, what you did before and your relationship to Afghanistan, that would be great.

Speaker 2: Yeah. Okay. I'm from the east part of Afghanistan from province which have a border with Pakistan. I was born in this province and then I studied my primary school in my province. But third grade afterward our family moved. It was the time when the Russians had an invasion to Afghanistan to the capital of Afghanistan. So I completed the schools in Kabul and also after the entry exam I admit it to Kabul Medical University and I studied at Kabul Medical University and completed the class for eight semester after that the Communist region it was collapsed and the Mujahedin in 1992 they captured Kabul and then there was an internal fighting sort of in Afghanistan and our University and everything was close. And we also lost everything personally and my family. We lost everything that we had in Afghanistan. Then most of my relatives, they were living in Pakistan as a refugee. I also internal fighting after one month after the collapse of Communist regime during the time of the Mujahedin I am to Pakistan as well. And then me, my mother and my brother. At that time I was single. So we stayed in Pakistan and then after two years because situation not possible to come to Afghanistan to complete my University again at 94 I came back to Afghanistan. At that time the fighting was reduced and there was a possibility to study to complete my University. Then I came in 1994 to Afghanistan and completed my University and graduated from medical University. And then I had a job in one of the hospitals. Again the Mujahedin government collapsed by Taliban and the Taliban captured Kabul. So there was no chance. Again I went to Pakistan. And I said that it was 1996 and then again my family was in Pakistan. So I stayed for four years in Pakistan. I work in clinics and also in the meantime I work with a nongovernmental organization as a medical officer at the first and that was for me to enter to that Ministry of the management level. And then again in 1999 during the time of Taliban there was a chance for me. I came to Afghanistan and joined the children US as a former officer at that time and later on team leader. So I work with Save the children US. That time when I was working with the save the children US what happened and also 9/11 happened. And then I work with the children till 2002 and from October 2002 for the first time I joined GIZ and it was an emergency projects emergency health project and I work as a touring and also technical administrative for this health project. And from 2007 or 2009 I work with GIZ with another project. They call it Integrated drug prevention and treatment projects. Okay. And we added some rehabilitation program and my expected was in the direct treatment and rehabilitation. So I had a lot of courses and trainings in this field and my last position with this project was a project coordinator and later on the project was close due to the lack of fund and I joined international service at the International Service country officer as a national project manager. And later on there was another project health project of GIZ strengthening provincial HIV program which was providing support for HIV treatment of HIV patients and also prevention of HIV to a different community and also residential program. And this project was also lost in 2015 and my last position was a team leader for this project and then for one year I joined UNDP as a officer and from October 2016 again when GIZ got this TCPH Health Project first project in 2016 and they requested me and they asked me if I would like to join them because I had a relation with the Ministry of Public Health and also in the health area I had relations. So they asked me if I can join GIZ again as a project manager with the integration service and also for TCPH projects. Then I joined because I liked GIZ very much because most of my parties I got from GIZ and I like the environment of working with GIZ so I prefer to work with GIZ.. So I joined against and with them.

Speaker 1: Okay, perfect. Thank you so much. Really interesting. This is really highly interesting because also regarding your background it's quite diverse and very interesting. Thank you so much. For me, it would be now also quite interesting. For example your daily tasks at the moment?

Speaker 2: The job description that I had before the collapse of government, like the country coordinator like before it was Christina and it was mostly like administrative issue managing at the office and also acquisition of the projects and some other stuff and also 50% with the TCPH project. So project has a lot of activities beside the team leader and also the team leader of the projects. There was a lot of other activities like management of the non key experts but also financing of the projects and some other things. These were the things that you're doing and now you know after the change by the Taliban working remotely and again now my main task is like these days like managing the InS office here because I'm there most of the time you are working from home and also during this time, there was a lot of reports to be prepared and also financial issues for the projects and also for the Ins office. In these days, I was busy with these tasks and also with the family. I'm busy with my family. I have a big family. We are living together with my brother. We have a house here and my brother is living here, so busy with kids and supporting them at school because their schools are open till grade six. I also, I was at home and also, uh, uh, but, but nothing is specific like before, because after the collapse, a collapse of government everything's, what's changed and we are not like, uh, uh, we don't have like a regular life that we had before of that. Um, uh, I cannot plan regularly. What I can do that like for the next week, because you don't know what will be happen. So this is the change that I'm busy.

Speaker 1: Yeah. But it, but it's great and good that you have such a big family. I think it's always nice to have to have a big family and support. That's that's really great. Perfect. Thank you so much. Um, may I also ask what you maybe just, just keep it maybe short, um, what you learned in school or what is for you quite significant when it comes to the historical background of Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: The history of Afghanistan, that what we learned in school, like they told us when we were in the school that the people of Afghanistan, they, they initially they are brave and they are very hard working people. You also mentioned like Afghanistan graveyard of empires, it's a natural that people are like this. I think maybe one of the reasons would be like I said, one of the thing, it said like, uh, from geographical location of Afghanistan, because of the area of the people and, uh, living at the mountains. So the area, that people are very hard. Uh, so, uh, uh, and also another thing is that people of Afghanistan, uh, they, they are religious. For example, before Islam, uh, there was a different religious in Afghanistan. When the Alexander, the great that they come to the west, like to India to Afghanistan and so the people of Afghanistan had, they had, they had fight with them and also before Islam. Um, uh, when that, when the Arabs, when the Arabs set in, in, in Afghanistan and, uh, I think it was in 7th century, uh, so, uh, that people in Afghanistan, they fight with them for so many years, but when they become Muslims, they are, they were very strict and, and they're, uh, they are religious. And, um, also when the Chinese came, they also invited Afghanistan so, uh, uh, the people of Afghanistan, they fight with them a lot and they make a lot of problems. Actually, he was able to capture all of the grandson and all of, uh, most,

some other countries, but the people of Afghanistan, they make a lot of, uh, problem for him. That is the thing then, uh, uh, about the history and also, uh, uh, when foreigners, they are coming to a Afghanistan said that, uh, people became unity between themselves. Um, uh, like a, we have experience in this 20 years, and now this said 20 years later, Uh, the American was here and only the Taliban was fighting, but another part, which was with the government and they had a lot of problems, uh, among themselves. And then, uh, but then when, uh, someone is coming to Afghanistan, the foreign country said they are starting and fighting with them. And, uh, and lasted a 300 years, around 40 kings, uh, or presidents that changed. And then most of them, were killed by another, uh, uh, king, uh, and they were fighting with each other. Uh, but when the foreigners arriving to Afghanistan in the last 50 years when the British, they come to Afghanistan. Especially the first time when the fighting started, which are located in the area to the east, south and also southeast and the west of Afghanistan and later on then, um, how can I say uh, uh, they started the fighting against occupation and then the other people are also the joining with them. And also in the last century, we have a experience where, uh, with the Russia and also, uh, and this introduced. But when they occupied, the troops and they left the country again, they're stopping, fighting between each other.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. I would like to ask you, um, how do you feel that Afghanistan has changed since the Taliban came to power and also how they change manifest itself?

Speaker 2: I think there is possibilities, but if it's a challenge for that. I like, um, you also mentioned in your questions uh, type of, uh, to two type of things. One is internal and another, like, except for in general, um, Uh, I think said the important things to further development or for the changes for the current regime in Afghanistan. So it is like, uh, uh, to have a central government. And, uh, also, um, that's the important thing, uh, actually peace also, uh, the important thing is, uh, to have a peace in Afghanistan it's like, um, uh, central government, uh, like, uh, uh, the government can control all of the provinces and, um, that this is a very important, uh, because the last time. And also another important thing is like that people should be with the government. If the people are not with the government, if the government do not have the support of the people, it will be collapsed. And we have experienced for a long time, like, especially in the last 40 years, when the communists regime come into power at the people who are not with them, so they didn't have the support of the people. So it was collapsed. Later on, when the Mujahadin came to power, so they did a lot of wrong things. So they also collapsed. And then the Taliban and that also we have experience for that for the last 20 years. Um, and the day that much actually at the beginning that people, uh, uh, supported the government, uh, by later, but later on the people did not have support. We have that experience now for the last election, which was, which was done in Afghanistan. So I think three-years back, uh, we, uh, you know, that's, um, the population of Afghanistan around 35 million people. And from them, like 1.7 million people took part in the election, if we compare it, it will be, uh, uh, I don't know if we, it will be like 4% or 5% of the population they took part in the election. And from this, uh, 1.7% or 1.9, uh, people who participated in the election, uh, the president Ghani, he had, um, uh, uh, like, uh, at, uh, so 700,000 people voted for him and he won the elections. If we compare it like a 25,000 to 25 million people. So 700,000 thousand people, they elected the president, it's been 2% of the people elected, uh, which is very less. And then, uh, and, uh, the people did not support the government. Uh, and also it's not possible for the, any government for that and any where in the world, except for the North Korea to have hundred percent population that they have to take part in the election or, uh, uh, all the people, uh, that take part in that, uh, uh, and that election, but the majority of the people that are taking part in that in the election, and they are selecting. So I think in Afghanistan the government do not have any support from the people. And also it is important for the Taliban. Now we have, um, uh, the Taliban have, uh, uh, uh, central government and previous, uh, central government in previous, uh, government that during the time of Ghani, if the central government, they wanted to, they want to replace any governor on the commander of the provinces. So they, they didn't have the authority to do it. So they were making a lot of problem with that. But now we see the time of the Taliban. But this person can be replaced with another person. Now we have a piece. It's one of the points for the change. **We have a central government it's another point for the change.** And also we have all enforcement which can be done. Uh, it is like a dictatorial or everything. Only it's law enforcement. It can be for example, that that dollar price was raised and to expect. And when the Taliban government or the central bank mentioned, if, if the people are the mafia who are involved in the rise of the dollar, if we capture them, we, they, we will deal with them with a criminal and suddenly the price of, uh, the dollar was reduced because it's the type of law enforcement here. Uh, but they need to do some other things as well. Like, um, they need to, uh, uh, they need for the experts. It's good. They have a central governments there, the pieces, the of Afghanistan, they can control the territorial integrity. And also, uh, the law enforcement is now possible for that. Uh, and we have no war here in Afghanistan. **But the important thing is, which is need for change. They need to use the experts, the experts, which are important because these people, they can not anything, um, uh, like, uh, they can be like that. Uh, they can be like, uh, a minister for everything necessarily of, uh, like a technical, uh, ministries or, um, aligned ministries, or everything.** So they cannot like that. They have to involve, uh, the experts, um, uh, for, uh, for. Um, for the change or the, for the dialogue with Afghanistan. So another thing is like, um, uh, uh, they need to, uh, uh, do a look like a, uh, uh, system to, uh, to use that, uh, intelligent sources in Afghanistan, they're like a customs and also the mines and some other things, and also daily to have, uh, like a good, uh, systems for their money, which is coming from outside Afghanistan, that perhaps like in that last government, um, in last governments, that then when he was coming to Afghanistan and the government of Afghanistan, they, they didn't have any control on that. Uh, like, um, like five years before we had the PRT, they call it provincial rehabilitation teams. For example, if there are the allies, the NATO allies, uh, it can the NATO Alliance country and they were supporting one of the provinces. So all of the money was, uh, using by, by this, uh, uh, Alliance when PRT are eventually habit changing. So that, and then in this case, uh, most of them, like a construction firms, uh, they, they receiving the money and the money was not utilised very well. Uh, the construction works dated. Uh, it was, it was not a good, I saw that the output of the reasons was not good. So there will be, there should be a system for that, if it wasn't the previous government or in the Taliban one who want to have, uh, want to, uh, bring a change. So, uh, they, they need to have, uh, a system for that. I think for the important things for a change, it was the internal, um, uh, uh, internal reason for that. The thing is like. Um, uh, uh, like international, uh, a, uh, need to consider, uh, all of them, most of it, not, not, uh, I cannot say all of them, uh, most of them request, which is, uh, uh, done by the, by the international society, like a woman, right? Like a human rights, education for the woman and also some other things. Um, there are, so these are the, uh, uh, important things. And they have to do it, especially about that woman, because we have a lot of, uh, uh, the government did a lot of things during that last 20 years, especially for the woman, but now it's not possible. For example, if I'm a senior year in Afghanistan, I have like a six daughters, if they are not allowing to, to follow my doctors to educate. So I will not support them. I will not support them, because I have a, uh, what I want for my boys. I will, uh, wanted the same thing for my daughter. So, if I have to leave the country, leave the country. So same like me, the other people as well. Um, uh, **they have to accept some of the requests by the, by the, uh, international society.** What I am saying. Because maybe some of the things they are requesting, it will not be a physical. For example, the people who work will fight with them with the Taliban. Or Taliban will fight with the people in during 20 years, how it is possible. Like accept all of them and the girl, it is, it is my opinion. And I think it's not only my opinion is generally like this, for example, in Germany that the government changed. And now all of

them in this change. But the good thing is that system will remain here. Or if we hear the election in the US, if the Republican are in the power. When the democratic party, they come in power. So all of them serving the democratic party are vice versa. One of the main reasons for the collapse of the previous government of Afghanistan was because they distribute it, uh, that the ministries or the, or the powerful, uh, positions, according to the tracks and according to the party. And they will not thinking this person will expect or not. So they are, uh, they were assigning him as a minister, for example, like, uh, one of the big warlord as a minister for electricity, energy and water. So what he can do as expertise on, and if they wanted to hire someone or assign someone, if it is a different party, he should be like technical person from this party. Not. like a person who did not have it. The same it's need to be done by the Taliban, in this case it will be if they, uh, so when I come back to the internal, but I mean the external, for example, what, now the society wants, that they ask him like, to also accept, um, uh, to give, uh, a part in the government for this, uh, uh, people who are, uh, opposite of the Taliban. Um, you know, so most of them are the warlords and the people, they don't like it. They, they don't like it, but the Taliban have to selected the people who've who the expert people, even from, from, from distant tribes now, um, now most of the Talibans and during the 20 years, uh, uh, the Taliban, they fought to, uh, this, uh, previous government, they are from Pashtun tribes. And that's the, uh, in the most of that, uh, positions that these, uh, uh, one of the days. But they cannot represent all of the Pashtun, all of the persons are not Taliban, the Taliban or Pashtun. Not all of the Pashtun are Taliban and a lot are against them. They need to have an expert. And, um, uh, what, uh, uh, in this, uh, the situation like the international donors, uh, international society they want from Taliban, uh, some of the, uh, requests, uh, they are not there won't be acceptable for the Taliban. Like they see governments to all of them, people that should be included. Yes, they should be included, but we based, it, it shouldn't be based on that expertise. Not like again, to bring a warlord or a commander to make it as a ministry of health minister of health, a warlord, and to bring it to ministry of, uh, mines or transport. Now, and also the potential donors, um, uh, when they are, uh, in this times, uh, uh, when, uh, if they really want to take part in the development of Afghanistan or to bring changes in Afghanistan. They also need to change the way of support for Afghanistan and not like, uh, uh, before, uh, they did. Um, that, uh, they need to, uh, have a, uh, a structure for that. Like how to, uh, support them also to **have a good monitoring system**, uh, like in the past, uh, they didn't have any good monitoring system for the using of money. There was corruption, but no, any action on that. And then, uh, I gave them reports, uh, followed by uh, in this projects in the district, uh, province was a corruption, was that from \$10 million, 5 million was a, um, uh, expenditure and data was not used. So, but it was limited only to the reports. There should be like a good monitoring. So by the international society, and also, uh, uh, good monitoring system or, uh, the money. So it is very important, uh, for the development and also, uh, uh, they also need to support the government. Uh, then the supporting should not be, uh, from the different China's. Like I, uh, like I mentioned to you before, uh, there was a difference, um, uh, funding sources and funding China, or, um, maybe utilising of the money you want to, uh, was, which was supporting to the government of Afghanistan. I don't know that it was supporting and also another was supporting by these international donors here, like USA and these people. And another was by the, um, the, by the military. There should be a unique system. And also, uh, uh, but the important thing is like if the money is coming to Afghanistan, it should be structured and also the monitoring system.

Speaker 1: Okay. I see. Um, and also, what do you think might be some limitations and challenges also for the Taliban that might arise in the near future? Because maybe for example, they don't have that much knowledge when it comes to how to rule a country and how to do governmental things.

Speaker 2: That's a big challenge, and also one of them very important challenges for the Taliban is like the most of the countries that they are not identifying them as a, as a, as a government. And it's also a big challenge is for them. And then, for sure, uh, if, uh, uh, that I, that other governments said, uh, like the United nations. They are not identifying them, uh, as a government, a big challenge for them. But some things like also a question for me, for example, most of the countries, they have embassies in Afghanistan. Like India, Pakistan, China and also even this western countries, me, they have some relation communication going on. They are not defining that. Uh, but, uh, anyway, I'm not a politician that's all then in general for our country, there should be like a, uh, some criteria that what, uh, what the United nations, According to United nations, there should be a government. There should be, uh, you know, uh, also the law enforcement should be in the country and also integrity should be. And then these things are for the amplification of the country, to a lot of countries and the work to maybe the human rights is not considered in this countries and then against it, they are identified. So, uh, **not an identification of the Taliban is one of the big challenges, uh, for them.** And if they are identified by the, by the entire nation society. And another big challenge is, not using all the experts in the environment to better their government and also do not have a good plan for the usage of internal sources, uh, in Afghanistan. So all of these things can be done by experts. **Another challenge here for Taliban is, um, this, uh, a woman rights, especially the woman rights.** This is also a big challenge.

Speaker 1: Yeah, it was my next question actually, as a, what do you think the role of women in the Taliban, how they will change? Yeah, it would be also interesting.

Speaker 2: Um, it's very important. One is like, uh, uh, one is like a rule of them, a woman, because the woman is 50% of the society. Because some of that, some of that, yeah, activities of some of that things, which is related to, to that woman at the, it's got to be done by men. Our society that, uh, uh, uh, most, uh, uh, during that, uh, 40 years war, we have a lot of widows here in Afghanistan. Take care of them and provide a job opportunity for them, and peaceful, uh, job and workplaces for them. That can be done by a woman. Also it's one thing and another thing is education for the women. Because we can not make like, a 50% women and 50% men, uh, maybe from this, uh, like 20% we'll need for our education. So we can not like a 20% of that population of Afghanistan without any education in the school. So it will be not only challenges, it should be one criteria for the identification of the Taliban.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Thank you very much. Um, what do you think maybe still the evacuation process is still ongoing and also quite a lot of people are leaving the country by their own. What do you think might lead this for the country? Because I think also a lot of educational people are leaving the country. What do you think might have that for impact for Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Yeah, it's a it's well, considering the current situation, uh, it will not have a good impact for Afghanistan. Because, uh, uh, all of the people educated people and people who are experts, they leave the country. And again, it will be a big challenge for the Taliban. And I cannot, I, I can see it. It's not that like a plus point or good point. This expresses that there. And the only thing is, um, the Taliban in the future want to establish a government with some developments They need to ask these people. But these people to come to Afghanistan to take part in the development of Afghanistan. That only can be done by considering the international societies request and also to make an environment for these people to come to Afghanistan. To have the humans rights, to have the women rights. Also to have a stabilised economical situation in the country. Um, but generally, uh, these experts leaving Afghanistan is not a good point. And again as I mentioned, like, people are living there in the country are not happy with the Taliban. This will also be a reason for the collapse, maybe not in the short note, but in the longer time. It will be a reason for them if they will not use the expert.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Um, okay, perfect. Therefore, I would like not come to the domestic context of Afghanistan. Therefore I think Pakistan also at the moment when it comes to the evacuation plays quite a big role and also in the historical background. Um, what do you think is actually now the role from Pakistan, for example, also politically, economically, and which role that's Pakistan played with Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Yeah. So Pakistan is a country is doing like a dual role, not only with glasses on and off 20 years, they did the bus, uh, that like, um, the first time of the Taliban from 1996 or 1980, I think it's all 1986 and 1990. So until 2001 and, uh, the first government who had the fight with the Taliban government, that was Pakistan. But then that the Taliban in every, in every, at time, uh, for them and their, uh, country, uh, benefit or it's very important they compare, uh, compared to, uh, to the other countries, um, like, um, where I'm from, uh, 19, uh, 1979 when the Russia entered to Afghanistan. Uh, they asked for this majority party and they supported them and said, uh, supported them and they send them to Afghanistan for fighting. It's not like a, because of the Islam, um, uh, the, uh, support them or some people in the country. And then the collapse of communism regime, the first country to fight the Taliban was Pakistan. They had a good relation with the Taliban that they were trying to convince the other countries to network with them. But then after the 9/11, when the American and wanting to come to Afghanistan and not to come to Afghanistan. The Taliban also support, America. US and the NATO and give like, uh, uh, base for Americans to come to Pakistan and, uh, they were against the Taliban. And then the government of the Taliban was collapsed at, uh, at that time. Uh, and, uh, after that, um, uh, at Europe, uh, the problem between Afghanistan and Pakistan is, uh, it's from 1893. When the, uh, when that Agreement of Durand line, you hear about it was signed and I between the kingdom of Afghanistan and also the British, uh. At that time, India and the current parts of Pakistan, they were all under the, uh, British. So there, they, uh, after that, uh, difference fightings with the British and Afghanistan. So they, they make a line and they divided in two, in two blocks. And this line was, uh, passing, could be in Pashtun tribes. And, um, it was done by the British, because as I mentioned before that, and most of the times this Pashtun tribes were fighting with the foreigners to make them divide. And when in 1947, um, now when, uh, when the British left, uh, Indian continent and then, uh, you know and the Indian continent that was divided by two countries, which was ruled by India. And also another part, which was most of them were Muslim. Uh, they created Pakistan, they created Pakistan and this, uh, uh, actually, uh, I haven't seen it, but they said, this Durand line will be 400 years. Yeah. So they give them, well, you have this 400 years. It means if it's in 1893, it was one of the 19, sorry. In 1893, it was till 1993. So that when the. The two, uh, government was established, uh, by British, the India and one was, uh, like at the Pakistan at this, uh, uh, part of, uh, Afghanistan was divided by British in 1893. This part was, um, uh, Pakistan country. And the Pakistan was the worry about the immediate effect. I've Afghanistan have a strong government, a strong government that in the long time, and maybe after the pass past a hundred years from this, that Durand Agreement. For this reason they don't want it, uh, to have, uh, like a, uh, uh, strong government. From every perspective economical, from political and also from the military point. So then I think that Pakistan, if they have a dilution in Afghanistan, or if, uh, in nowadays, if they want the other countries to, uh, identify the Pakistan all of them is for their benefits. And during that time from the last, after the establish Pakistan said they wanted to interfere in Afghanistan, uh, by supporting of, uh, of, uh, different, uh, groups, uh, um, like, uh, uh, even before the invasion of communist Russia in Afghanistan, uh, they also supporting some groups. And also during that, uh, Russian invasion, they supported Mujahedin. And during the Mujahedin, they supported, uh, Taliban. And, uh, also, uh, during, after the Taliban, they are supported this NATO, uh, uh, generally and all of these things the Pakistan, uh, uh, they, uh, they want the benefit of their countries, uh, uh, nowadays, uh, they, uh, in media or, uh, generally they want to support Afghanistan. All of them will be for their benefit, like to have a transit, a good transit with that, uh, has central Asia countries and also, uh, to have a government with Afghanistan to have, uh, their control.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. Um, so, so really insightful. And also I would like it to have some further questions regarding the international context. So, because we saw, we had the Brits, we had Russia and we had the US in Afghanistan. So therefore I'd like to ask, um, what role Russia and later also the US played in the international context, uh, in Afghanistan, which kind of role?

Speaker 2: Okay. So, uh, another country which, uh, uh, also have an influence in Afghanistan is Iran. And also, because, um, well, the last time of the Taliban, there was a big clash between Iran and Taliban. Uh, but, um, uh, and, but, uh, when the, after the collapse of Taliban and for the first time, uh, when the NATO and America there come to Afghanistan, it was also a risk, or a red light for the Iran. So they, uh, they later, eh, in some cases that we hear, they will support the Taliban, they will supporting Taliban, uh, about that, uh, uh, uh, against that the NATO, or the US so the Iran have also, they have their own puppets in Afghanistan and the government of, uh, Afghanistan. And then, uh, in the, in the last government I mean. And, uh, about, uh, that, that Russia, I, I, I think that, uh, them, that Russia, uh, uh, also, uh, uh, will have, uh, uh, a following in Afghanistan because, uh, they are on of the Countries they had that they had, they had that, uh, they wanted to have a rule in Afghanistan and even they sent their soldiers to Afghanistan for 10 years. And, uh, and also that Russia, they don't have a good experience from Afghanistan, because it was a very costly for them when they invaded Afghanistan from 1929, till 1989. Uh, so, um, but, uh, one of the similarity between the Russia and Iran is both of them are worry about the rule of US in Afghanistan. I'm not sure, but we hear that during that last government at the even, Russia was also supporting some group of Taliban because they will fight, uh, against, uh, uh, against the US and, um, uh, uh, uh, and current situation uh, I think said they US, they have a lot of rules, uh, for the development of Afghanistan and, because, uh, you know, they US, uh, uh, they don't have a good experience in Afghanistan. They lost a lot of things in the country from political view and also from the military perspective, like it was a big failure of US in Afghanistan, like a they spent, uh, uh, billions of money and Afghanistan and, uh, like, um, uh, they, they built, uh, uh, uh, they built uh, the military system in Afghanistan, they supported the military and also some other things, but after 20 years at this, it was, uh nothing's and now we have nothing now, like, uh, like we don't have any military forces now. Uh, so it was a big failure for Afghanistan, sorry for US. And, um, that, uh, from other points, uh, the US, uh, they, they, they have a big role in the change, or in the dialogue of Afghanistan because, uh, they have a big economical, uh, uh, strong economical country in the world and also nowadays see what the EU is saying. Uh, the other, uh, uh, uh, like, uh, let's we see a reality, uh, what American are saying, the same as, uh, at the other countries in the world, they are also, uh, doing, uh, according to what Americans are saying, for example, if the American today, or right now, they see that we are, uh, the accepting or identifying the government of Taliban. I'm sure that 50% of the countries in the UN and the United nations tomorrow, they will accept. They will let them that the government of Taliban and also, uh, uh, nowadays like a \$9 billion, which is a freed by the American, uh, if they also release this money, it will have at some point, which will be one other point for them, uh, to the development of Afghanistan. So, uh, American have a very big, uh, uh, impact, uh, for the future of. Uh, if they support the Taliban, or make a problem for them in the future.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Um, what from you also quite interesting, for example, what role does China, um, Europe and India played with Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Yeah. China, uh, I think for China, the important for them, the important thing is their economy. Uh, you know that Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries, all of them are, most of them are against the US so, uh, China wants to, uh, reduce, uh, now the rule of, uh, the US also in Afghanistan, but, uh, for them the important thing is their economy. So, uh, uh, the China we'll

do, uh, we'll have a rule in Afghanistan, especially in that, uh, economy, uh, economy aspects, uh, like, um, uh, finding the mindset and some other things in Afghanistan, and another things they've tried to reduce the rule of, uh, US in Afghanistan. For India the important thing is that the relation, uh, of, uh, of the relation of that Taliban and Pakistan, maybe they will be very, uh, strict or, uh, will see, uh, the situations because they, you know, all of, uh, especially in Afghanistan all of the people are saying, or it's a, it's not the reality that the Pakistan, they support it, they support the Taliban. And that you had leaders that they are staying in Pakistan's the family of the leaders who are staying in Pakistan. Uh, even their camps, training camps up at it was in Pakistan. Even the head of Al-Qaeda. He was seen in Pakistan, he was killed in Pakistan. So, uh, uh, all the people, it's clear for most of the people that, that Taliban is supporting, uh, by Pakistan. So the Pakistan and India, they, they are enemies of each other. So the Pakistan way, I think it will monitor the situation. And then, and they will try, they will try to have a route in Afghanistan in the future, but, uh, how, uh, they will have, uh, it's gonna be known later on uh, uh, uh, how it's going to be because of they actually want to have a good influence in Afghanistan because of the Pakistan. I think most of the Europe's countries, uh, uh, they will follow most, I think not all of them are developed. They will follow what's the, uh, the rule of you is because, uh, they are all in one Alliance, like, uh, NATO Alliance. So what, uh, their decision will be seen. But most, um, now of that, uh, European countries, uh, they, they are willing, they are, they want to have a good, uh, relation with the people in Afghanistan. And also with the government of Afghanistan, if there, uh, if, um, you know, for the future. If they accept that future government, if it is Taliban or the Taliban want to change it, that type of origins. Um, now that the European countries said, uh, uh, they will have one day, they will want to have a good relation with the Afghans with the countries. They will not have open countries, according to my perspective. They will not, um, have, uh, wanted to have a lot of influence from the economy point of view, our, our, uh, some political point of view. And, uh, but most of, uh, their willingness will be like, uh, for the development of Afghanistan, for the people of Afghanistan. So I called it my personal perspective that I have, uh, uh, from different countries in these 20 years, like most of the European countries, they support a lot of Afghanistan even the European Union. Uh, they support like the project, which was supported, uh, by USAID, uh, or the project, which was supported by the European Union. The project, which was supported by that UN center and all the US organisations. And most of the European unions, uh, uh, countries, European unions catches, uh, they want to, uh, to support, uh, Afghanistan and also the people off of Afghanistan. Or Pakistan or China and their government, but also for sure, they want to have some influence, but from the specific thing, which is for the benefit of Afghanistan, like for the human rights, for the woman rights for the media and some other things later, but not like. Their influence will be for the wellbeing of the people in Afghanistan.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Thank you. And yeah, now I just have a few more questions. Um, we also talked about Russia and the United States having an influence on Afghanistan and also now the Taliban being, um, on power again. Do you think it's like a repeating order or like history repeats itself?

Speaker 2: Uh, I don't think so. It will be like, uh, like what was that like 20 years back. Because, uh, yeah, uh, uh, actually after the collapse of the communist regime Afghanistan there was internal fighting. And as I mentioned before, at that time I was in the university. And even when I was immigrated to Pakistan and the all in all of the provinces, there are a lot of fighting between the different Mujahedin group, which they, they fight together, uh, against Russia. But they, when the, the, this government was collapsed, there was no any fights. It is one of the points. Like we will not go to the back and I, I I'm optimist about it. And another think is there's like that this Taliban is the Taliban is also, uh, now might change? For the time before the first time they captured Afghanistan, because at that time that Al-Qaeda was here in Afghanistan and I'm not sure maybe they're still there. They also have influence on Taliban. And also, uh, when the Taliban at that time, the Taliban did not catch it all of Afghanistan. They captured 90% of Afghanistan and 10% of Afghanistan was not captured by the Taliban and there was fighting against them and a part of this reason, uh, they said, we will do these things when we have a control order of Afghanistan. For example, the woman rights are the woman who work outside, uh, uh, in government organisations. They, they would allow him at that time to, uh, for the woman to work. But for the girls in one school was not, uh, all of Afghanistan back, in the previous time of Taliban. But this time, we can see, uh, that, that, uh, the change, for example, they were against, uh, uh, Russia or US, but now they are saying, they are asking from other countries to fight them, but they are allowed, they are allowed for girls to go to school even until grade six. And also the woman and at the ministries, especially the ministry of public health. Uh, uh, they were working and also for the media. Uh, I remember at that time there was one only one, which was the radio of the Taliban and there was no TV. Now it's still, uh, uh, most of the TVs. The time of Radio and the previous government is still they functioning. Um, now they, they, uh, they changed, but I'm not sure it will be, uh, continued, or if they want to have some tech or, uh, to be identified by the international government. But, uh, I hope it will, uh, it will not, uh, uh, go like that for, uh, for 20 years back.

Speaker 1: But, so what do you think might be maybe possible or further development now, looking at the future of Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Uh, I also, uh, I already mentioned this fight, uh, for the future, you know, with, uh, with, uh, uh, Taliban regime is a chance for them to do that. Like they have a central government. There is no war in Afghanistan. There is no enforcement in Afghanistan, uh, that they have a territorial integrity or their control over Afghanistan. But it is not only that things, uh, for the development of it. If they want, uh, to be in Afghanistan, they have to change everything is since they also have to change. Like to accept what is most of that suggestions by that international society for that there are other difficulties and also support and also, uh, to, to use, uh, the experts, the experts, if the nation or international experts, they have to use it in their government and they must not have aggravate all of their positions their, uh, and that the government, and, uh, they need to open and have way for, for the expert to come to Afghanistan or to work with them. And also in, uh, in them, uh, important positions, um, especially the technical positions that they need to utilise, uh, the experts. They need to have good relations. They need to have a good relations with neighbouring countries. They need to, uh, be independent, uh, from, uh, from, from neighbourhood countries, especially from Pakistan, they need to change, uh, the human systems. Uh, they, uh, like what they are suggesting now will not be acceptable for them.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. One last question. Um, you already talked also about the term graveyard of empires, which I also mentioned in my research questions. Um, what are your thoughts about the term? Would you agree, or would you not?

Speaker 2: It just the most, let's say graveyard, uh, uh, of empires, uh, in the past. According to the nature of the people of Afghanistan, we can use it. Um, uh, and according to the history that we see. I haven't much read the history of the other countries. I don't know, maybe there are some other countries which are also graveyard. But according to the history this term was given to Afghanistan, but not by the people of Afghanistan. It was given by the other person. But we remember, like actually from Alexander the great was not that, um, a graveyard, but anyway, when the, the troops of Alexander the great was stop in Afghanistan for the first time. And also the same, uh, uh, uh, like, uh, uh, Afghanistan was not the graveyard for the arabs. Right. But they make a lot of problems. Uh, but for other countries like in that 18 or 19 centuries for the British, I, I can use, I can say this is from my perspective. Afghanistan was like, uh, the first place where, uh, uh, when the British was, uh, uh, uh, was failed to capture Afghanistan. Like, um, I think it was 19th century. It was in 1843, when the first Anglo-Afghan war started. And, um, uh, another was, uh, also in the 19th century and the last one was in, uh, in the 20th century. So it was the first, some of the first place, uh, for the British empire. Uh, they,

they were failure to capture all of the Afghanistan and there are also, uh, for the Russia. Uh, again the 20 century for the Russia. It was also, I can say Russia was not a empire, but it was a big country at that time only Russia was, uh, uh, like, uh, 15 countries. Now they are 15 independent countries and also there was a Warsaw pact. So all of them, and you can get, it does seem like NATO, uh, I cannot say that that the Afghan some or the Mujahedin, which was fight, uh, fight against Russia at that time will be the reason for, uh, for, uh, for them, uh, collapse of, uh, uh, Warsaw pact, but it could be one of the reasons it could be one of the reasons which was, uh, done in the lasted decade of, uh, the 20 century. Since, uh, 300 years, there is a fighting in Afghanistan and these things. When the foreigners are coming to Afghanistan that, again, people they're a competitive with each other. And so, uh, thats the reason most of the empires, when the had a trip in Afghanistan, so the people have to fight against them and they become weak and thats the reason they using the term for.

Speaker 1: Okay, perfect. Yeah, that's already actually it, um, once again, thank you so much for your really insightful and, um, personal views on all the topics. Uh, it was really interesting. And also for taking the time since I know you also have quite a lot to do, and yeah, I totally understand that it's really a stressful time at the moment. Um, and therefore I really appreciated that you took the time and, and said everything honestly. Um, yeah, that was really great. Thank you so much.

13.2 Interview Transcript

Speaker 1: Perfect. Okay. And for me, um, at the beginning, it would be quite good to know maybe about your personal background. So what's you learned what you did before? Maybe you can tell me something about that.

Speaker 2: Yeah. I was born in Kabul, but my father comes from a province called Ghazni it's somewhere in the central Afghanistan. And I was grown up in Kabul and until the eight grade of school until 15, 16 years old, uh, we really didn't feel, I as a child really didn't feel what the word meant. I didn't feel my difficulties of the living, but beyond that, uh, when, uh, the Russians and then these so called Mujahideen people started interfering and shooting missiles and, and, uh, there was civil war in Afghanistan. The civil war became more and more. Then I also experienced like those that at the beginning missiles and those things, but, uh, before going to those talks and then in the eight grade of eight, um, um, uh, after that, the the war started, and then it was civil war for almost three or four years. Very, very, very, um, strong, civil war. And we were not able to go to school at all times, but some days we went in somethings we even at home. And then eventually when it was the 12th grade of school, um, it was more or less calm and I had the opportunity to prepare for the entrance examination of the university and at grade 11 and 12 when I was 18 and 19 years old I got, uh, um, uh, I passed, I got a mark that allowed me to go to engineering faculty and I studied engineering faculty at Kabul university. And my field was, my field of education is mechanical engineering. And then after that, um, when I graduated, I, I, my, my marks allowed me to apply for becoming an assistant professor. Um, and then for one year after that, after I graduated, um, I was 24 or 25 years old. I was the assistant professor, and then I passed to the to, uh, to, and they call it the, we call it lecture. It's not a professor. It's also not an associate professor. We call it lecture, but at least my probation, probationary period was over and I was accepted as a teacher at university. And I taught there for four years, uh, at Kabul university and at the same time, I also entered the world of the development, because the salary at university was so low and it was of course not enough to make a living. And hat was exactly the time when, uh, the Taliban disappeared and the Western backed government came in place 2002 around 2002. And then I taught at university for four years until 2006 in the scholarship, um, from the Japanese government, um, which I always appreciate. And then when I went to Japan, Tokyo, uh, I studied in Tokyo university of agriculture and technology. The technology section mechanical systems engineering. And there was, where also my wife joined me and from Kabul and our sons were born in Tokyo at the same time. At the same time I was doing my masters and then they come two years of master, six years of six months of language, two years of masters and three years of PhD. So five years in six months and 2012, and I graduated, then I went back to Kabul with huge enthusiasm to do transfer the knowledge, uh, from Tokyo to Afghanistan and to do some. I would really, we worked hard and we did whatever we could do at the same time. I kept teaching at university. Um, and I also applied for jobs in the development sector for the same reason. When I went back from Tokyo, I had zero money in my pocket, but then I had, I luckily was able to, to buy a house, buy an apartment and built another house. And then unfortunately it was the time that, uh, I had to leave. Unfortunately, that then our destination is now Germany.

Speaker 1: Okay, perfect. Yeah, that sounds really interesting. Thank you so much. Um, maybe, do you have some things that are quite remarkable for you? Um, when it comes to the historical background of Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Yeah. I mean, the history of Afghanistan has always been an interesting one for us also in, in the school, we usually study how brave the Afghan people are. But I mean, after it was the, yeah, the school time in this school, children leave when the youth are given the thought to think that the nation is very brave. Yeah. That's true. It's brave. But later on, when you do other sites at easy, you find out that it's, the braveness is not only localised at all the people. I mean, probably somehow they have past challenges. I mean, uh, for the historical background, do you expect me to say my opinion about the?

Speaker 1: Yeah, sure, sure. It's totally up to you. Just feel free, whatever you would like to say.

Speaker 2: I wouldn't say, you know, every, in my opinion, my personal opinion and every weak country uh, like Afghanistan, I mean, in terms of population, in terms of geographical complexity, in terms of access to technology, in terms of ownership of technology, uh, in terms of being well connected, we are not well-connected because of the mountainous area. **And also because we are, Afghanistan is located in a, in a, in a, in an, almost a central place that connects the yeah, the, the, the sea from India, with Russia and in India, you know, the British empire was there. So somehow Afghanistan was in the middle of the, uh, that the large powers who competed among themselves. And there were partly stability at sometimes in other times there were civil wars or vigour wars, but all of them.** In my opinion in Afghanistan, if you look at the intellectuals and they usually blame the people in that region. We said, because we were bad, so it was some of, most of them say, because we are Afghans they do not, or they're not good friends to the empires. That's why a partial stability never continues. **But I think, you know, in my opinion that we Afghans are not so different from the people in other parts of the world. So why they have been suffering it's because sometimes one large, one empire or one large power decides in some way and those decisions directly affect the, the people who do not have the right to choose to defend themselves. And that's the, I mean, I, I, there are also people in Afghanistan who really think, yeah, it was the Afghans who defeated the British empire until the 12th and the grade of, I mean, until I went to university, I also thought so maybe like at a very general Afghan, but later you, when you look at the history, you really see that, well, it was the empire itself who decided to pour back in the same.** And the same for example, if you look at Russia Soviet union, it was no one in Afghanistan to defeat even the, uh, the, the, the West backed power, uh, small groups. It were not a big thing to the Russian empire, but then it was a decision by themselves who put back, even if after those days, the people who thought they will need the support of a big power. It didn't want them to pull back. Even today, today I, as a, as one of those people uh, who, who invested a lot, our time over mind, our, the knowledge we transferred from outside, no one wanted the recent largest power to pull back. I mean, we also didn't want to, I mean, the people these intellectuals didn't want the, the soldiers of the other

countries to, to, to die in Afghanistan. Fine. But at least the logistical support in the continuation of a regime that was more or less stable and more or less, which wasn't huge achievement. But unfortunately what it means, we don't lose hope, we still think there are people who will always try your best, and if there is a chance we need again, do it. Um, yeah, we hope that some day the suffer is over. So yeah, this is my general view.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Thank you. Yeah, hopefully. Okay. Um, now I would go over to also the role of the Taliban. So what do you think changed since the Taliban took over? How did the change manifest itself? Yeah.

Speaker 2: Yeah. Um, the, the **first big thing that changed that hugely impacted the society was the economical.** You know, what happened in my opinion, every single, uh, investor every single person who had some saving. And if you were the government or authorities, if they were the businessmen, if they were the people like me, worked in, had the slightly better salary in spent in Afghanistan, they are now out and there's not a good market in, in, in the, in the degree of the suffering of the people has increased. They have less access to food, lower power of purchasing. This is the first in the huge, uh, the worst impact on the daily life. Then if you, um, yeah and in my opinion, the second, uh, diverse effect was the fact that we lost our partially democratic regime. Yes, the the regime was corrupt. We accept, that's true. It was not acceptable, but it was also not, it is also not acceptable to step back like 30 years back and to give the decision-making power of over 30 million people to a regime that literally accept and confess that they were part of the explosions in the criminal attacks. They may call it, I don't know, political armed forces for whatever, but to me, anyone picking a gun or anyone thinking a tool is recognised government is committing the crime. They are not like opposition armed or anything. If you are the opposition, you should use the peaceful tools. This has been practiced in the world in many other places. Why a criminal group? What I would say religiously extremist group. Have given the tools, have given the power of making decision for 30, over 35 million people. **This is a huge question. So this is the second thing that we lost, democratic region. We should have improved, we should have kick out those corrupt people. We should have enforced the rule of law,** but, um, and then, then, you know, I mean, if you look at the first part economic loss, now we have more children who don't have food. You need to have some pictures of some people that I don't know, a save the children, or to get money from the taxpayer that doesn't solve the problem. And also the second was a democratic, I mean partly democratic and then, yeah, of course, uh, the educational system, I mean, we had the educational system uh, trying to modernise it. I mean, the, the religion was part of that is, should be because Afghanistan is a religious country and Muslim country, but it can't happen that you have like 90% religious subjects and only 10% or no science. It's not because I am a scientist. It's not, don't say it. Because science is directly connected to economy. And then when we should get money from the outside as donation, shouldn't people, not only in Afghanistan, but everywhere after that, what they can do like themselves in order to have a better power of party. So the educational system, in my opinion is the third. Um, and, and yeah, if you go further, there may be of course other, other parts, we did the women women's rights. Women's rights. Yeah. Yeah. Looking at the, from the perspective of the Europe and America, because of course, women and many are on equal rights. Most media focus only on the women's rights, but not only women's rights, but also the men's rights are violated now. **Now, you see that it's so difficult to get the, this schools open for the girls and the girls, I don't know, in some regions, they go to universities and others, they don't, but I know that my sister nowadays is not allowed to go to work.** And then my mother is already retired, that doesn't affect her. Um, uh, yeah, and like my sister, maybe hundreds, but half of the population almost is, is banned from education from going to work, which is, again, again, it impacts not only the women rights, this women's rights directly impacts the economy. So if that mean again, it's economical loss and the loss of the basic rights of humans. Um, and this is, this is, these are the main four sectors that very instantly come into my mind that have been severely adversely affected. Uh, in 1995, they came once in until 2001, they were there. Uh, we had the same situation, but one thing was better. **But yeah, I mean, it was good that wherever the Taliban dominated, there was no more insecurity. There was no more theft. There was no more, uh, kidnapping. Because of course, the way they punished, I cannot agree. It was very violent and that was the reason why the people were so scared. I think they could use, I mean, the rule of law instead of violence and still keep the security, but they have their own interpretation from the Sharia and they did. And the good part was that there was security, but again, the bad part was that violence could not be accepted.** For example, the executed people and roundups, they, they, they, they, they give the rights to the victim's family in a way that, for example, when they, when someone killed someone else, it was a crime and then the criminal was captured and then they announced to all in 1990s, announced in radio and TV that the tomorrow two or three or five, uh, criminals will be executed in hands of the victim's family. So everyone who wants to watch, they should come to the place where football is played in the biggest stage. And then they, and then, and then people, children, you and people in went there. I mean, it's difficult for other people to be aware that it's the violence in it. I mean, uneducated are not educated or, and some children, people, they went to watch it. And then the interpretation, the interpretation of Taliban was that if everybody watches it, they wouldn't tell the story to others. And then nobody will have the courage to kill someone. I mean, we cannot agree with that. You, of course, especially as a, when you see the European laws, there are also other ways to prevent crime. There are much better, much better ways. So it was like we already were in 1000 years back when they were at 1990s. Now what has changed? Yeah. At those times, women also were not allowed to walk, but to go, to, to be, to, to appear without a Burka. Nowadays, they are allowed, this is a difference, which does not make a big difference in terms of economy and violence. But what has changed today? Now I hear stories from my friends, from my relatives in neighbours. There is theft in Kabul, people thought that the suicidal acts will go away. We see that the suicide attacks aren't there. So we don't have the capability to arrest those criminals. So insecurity is linked with the Taliban and, in, in I believe that now it is more secure than 2, 3, 4 or five months later in. I not only me, but I, and my friends. We think that every time a regime changes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 months at those decision-makers who have brought them in place, they arrange the situation in a way that many people think that, oh, it's okay. But later on it's different, because we are so, I personally are so hopeless that they may even be able to continue this partial secure situation in Afghanistan. If they are there, at least the people that will be more secure. But, but nobody knows what these larger powers and what the regional powers will decide later. What kind of interferences? I mean, in the past, the interferences were by deploying soldiers, but now the interferences of money, the interferences connections, spying in, they are competing among themselves and then the people in some region of the world, they are, they are suffering. So yeah. I feel the pain in my heart. Yeah, so a strong, I cannot stop talking. Maybe there are more things here, but please just stop me.

Speaker 1: I know. No, no, no, no, definitely not. And I totally understand that. It's, it's like a really, I think emotional topic for you and since you're really into it, so it's definitely fine. And no worries. Um, yeah, just maybe the next question would be, what do you think might be a rising challenges or limitations for the Taliban?

Speaker 2: Yeah. Well, there are really limitations. Right? How can somebody who only knows religion, be an economist? How he, or she, there are no she's. How can they make a sovereign state? How can they define a rule of law? How can they be recruit different international recognition, even if they acquire it? **I mean, there are such limitations, they have so many because they cannot be economist, uh, experts of law, especially the law that is not acceptable worldwide, and they cannot have a modern state. They**

cannot, they cannot arrange for economic activities in my opinion, because they have no clue what science and technology, uh, means for a better economy. They, they, will remain dependent on the money and on the support channels that they are receiving now and whichever channel that supports them, they will talk the words of that channel. So, I mean, the largest challenge would be for them that they might, in my opinion, they won't be able to make partially good economy and economic in arrange for economic activities for the people, not only Afghans, but who ever lives or wants to live and work in that region here.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Thank you. Um, and also maybe the point of now, quite a lot of people are immigrating, so leaving the country, what do you think could this actually have an impact for, for the whole country now?

Speaker 2: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely. You know, it's, it's like the, the in the past, we had a similar example, but that was totally different. Let me a little bit elaborate about the past, when, when it was, when the Soviet union, uh, deployed soldiers in Afghanistan, there was a policy we, I read in a book in American history and American historian wrote it. And there was a second policy from the west that drained, drained the brains. And those time, and also even now also we really have good brains, good, um, uh, professionals, good experts, they, they will not, they, they would, they just, they, they learned from inside and they also, some of them don't outside and they came to Afghanistan. And most of them went out of Afghanistan. And so that was a huge loss, uh, in terms of, uh, for the government, we didn't have private sector those days. Um, we had the limited private sector when the Russians came and then after the Russian occupation, the, the, the market economy, I would say, based on the private sector, uh, competition, and the companies became more and more suppressed, things became monopolised. And that, that was a communist way of thinking. And we already lost the private sector that we had prior to 1978. They were in fact suppressed in the invest. Investors also went out, the businessmen. But this time again, you know, we had, Afghanistan had more than 500, uh, medium, small and medium-sized private industries only in Herat, in the west of Afghanistan. In similarity, in Kabul, in Mazar, in Jalalabad, these main, main economic, uh, regions in Kandahar and separately, and many other places, small businessmen, small companies, who, who either produced something or, uh, they brought the most of the raw material from outside in and they assembled in whatever they could from, they could obtain from inside they did it, but it was a very good to start a very good start. Yeah the machinery we had to import that's true. So the Economic momentum was created despite the fact that the government authorities, uh, they expected the companies buying very many indirect ways to them to pay them in, in, in that was a huge challenge for the private sector in industry development. All those big investors already out in the small ones that are there. They are trying to survive somehow. I hope that they can survive and they can promote, even, even if the Taliban are there, because that is really important for the people. It gives a lot of jobs. Until when we, we should look for jobs in the, uh, development sector, or in the government, those private sector, have direct and indirect employment. And besides them look, we had very good economists who, I mean, I know, I know that, uh, you know what, one of the biggest challenges that I always told my students at university and I also in some talks with my colleagues I mentioned it, maybe I can share you when, uh, when a slide out of one of my presentations that can give you the bit that image. Imagine someone comes with the knowledge of the economy. I, I say that knowledge of economy, but I don't mean exactly only economies that business management. It could be vary of social and scientific sciences. Anything. Imagine someone came, uh, from, from, uh, someone studied economy at the university and now she, or he wants to get a job in a, in a place like Afghanistan. So where the knowledge is more needed. Is it, is the knowledge more needed in, uh, in non-government organisations where the, uh, graduate or the professional will only use debit credit of the donated money, or is it more useful to place him or her in a place in a company where they make the, uh, the profit and loss. I think we need those brains for the companies first, because an accountant, somebody with a knowledge of maybe one or two or three months of „Ausbildung“ can work, but what happened? An example. I was, I had the PhD from Japan and I needed a small research form at the corner of university with my glasses here and transferring the knowledge as much as I could to these students. And then these students go back to the factories and produce because we wanted to be independent, uh, in the long run from the imported machinery. But, but the government couldn't pay me enough and I have to work in the development sector. I mean, I enjoyed working with, uh, with GIZ and with other companies, but like me, you can find hundreds of examples. You can find medical doctors working ask translators for these military, because of course, you know, you need English and you need „Computer Kenntniss“, uh, to, to study medicine, to study, uh, medical college or engineering or economy or others. But then in the end of the day, you don't find a job in a company or in the, uh, in the ministry in Afghanistan where you can make laws or you can make like, you can plan for connection of, uh, private sector and law and government and, and did, uh, research institutions because you don't have place in the government. And then you work for a small NGO using your basic lowest English, computer knowledge that in very, very basic knowledge. I mean, it's appreciated that um, the world helps, but it's not right because the brain, the brains would already drain from the government and from the private sector. And because of the government was dominated by a number of very corrupt people. **They didn't want to invest time to think about it. So it's a similar situation. Every single person who has only the power of arm, forget that knowledge and education is a loss, is a huge loss.** Like, you know, because especially economically we know that there are people they will still study, they will still try to do something, but those people really, really need uh, guidance. How can you have a class of students to study by themselves without the teacher? So it's now a class of students without the teacher who conduct some studies and in a very challenging condition. And then we will see what will happen.

Speaker 1: Definitely. Thank you. Yeah. And now I would also like to come to the domestic context of Afghanistan and therefore I would like to take Pakistan into account. So what do you think, which role does Pakistan play and also maybe which political and also economical contexts?

Speaker 2: Yeah. Yeah. You know, um, when, if you look from the regular Afghans mind, given that they will always blame it on Pakistan, but what I think if imagine Afghanistan was focused on and Pakistan was Afghanistan. I think Afghanistan would not have been better to do much better than Pakistan, in my opinion. I mean, yeah, Pakistan is, has been much larger population than Afghanistan. They have developed knowledge long before Afghanistan and when it's difficult, I mean, judge, uh, it would be better that any Afghan government keeps the good relationship with the, not only with Pakistan, but also with neighbouring countries. Um, but at the same time, yeah. I mean, it is what happens when we have in our minds, you know, culturally, let me go to the history of Afghanistan and Pakistan to back history. The economic foundations, the system of government, the system of the economic government in law institutions in Pakistan, when much more affiliated with the previous, uh, in British empire, they worked a lot in India in, in that was inherited. Um, what happened that culture somehow, because of, because of some kind of agreement between the Russian empire of those, and the British empire, Afghanistan was kept like, as, as it is. The Russians said we want interfere, the British that we want interfere, but not much. But then unfortunately the institutions, the mentality of having economic development basically, it was not developed among Afghan peoples or I would say Afghan students, or nationwide, but these mentality was already in Pakistan, in India. So there was a momentum for economic activities. And what is unfortunate with it's unfortunate, but I don't blame Pakistan. I blame some politicians, um, who makes the wrong decisions. Sometimes politicians, they, they, they, they declare themselves as if they contribute for the national interests of a country. But in the end, yes, they may gain some money by, I would say by playing games with some larger, uh, holder of economy. Yes. They may gain some money. But then what will be the

outcome in the region besides me, how many people will die? How many people will go to hunger? How many will starve? How many women and children and men will it be affected? And then these politicians, I don't say Pakistan, but whoever they are, these politicians say that, oh, that's not our responsibility, we don't care. This is not our country. **They have to take care of themselves. But imagine if I'm a bigger brother or bigger sister** in my studies, like three years old in terms of mentality, how to deal with the child, how should my sister, who is three or four or five years old, has to take care of herself. Uh, tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, this five year old will be 18 and she will know what you did against her. Unfortunately, **this mentality needs to be implanted in the region** and when it will come I don't know. We have, uh, I have, I have, uh, unfortunately I didn't have, I don't have much time to, to watch a TV or to, to listen to radio, to discussions of some Pakistani related, not politicians, uh, political analysis. There are some very brave and very, very, um, I would say knowledge-full, uh, political analysts, political analysts who try to explain this to the politicians of Pakistan. But I think those politicians have the power and it will take time, of course, in every society until, until we really believe that mine when, when will be secured, and only when my neighbours or what, when my family, or when my friends are also at, when this is the problem unfortunately. And it's not only with the, with the regional powers, if you go to work the bigger powers, it's also, unfortunately the same. Imagine this, uh, put it back off the USA. Was it responsible? I don't, I don't blame the nation of the US, never, but this kind of pullback the same as the Russian, the Soviet Union. That again, I don't blame the nation of Russia. They did a lot for that for not only for Afghanistan, but for many people around the world, but is it wise **to leave the children halfway in between. Before reaching a goal.** I mean, yeah. So I would say, I would say there is it also, there is a general kind of general mentality developed in the region among the politicians of Pakistan to understand that they Pakistan and India to large populations in the world, if they have good economic relationships, that will also influence not only Pakistan and India, but also the whole region, the whole region. It's important.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Perfect. Now I would also like to come to the international context, you already said something about like Russia and the US um, first of all, do you think which role does our head Russia actually in Afghanistan also like the political, economic, military context?

Speaker 2: Right. The whole, they had, it was again, their role was, um, the impact, the economy, the rule of law, the educational sector. Um, everywhere, I mean, you and I, and maybe people of my generation, the new generation, but people of my generation, my friends, my classmates, we always disagreed very peacefully with our fathers who were brainwashed. I personally called my father that you, my father, I told my father that he is brainwashed by the communism. And I didn't agree with communism, uh, the way that the Russians defined it. I mean the Russian empire, the Soviet union defined it. Well, couldn't agree with that, but we could also not agree uh, that a government, or the decision-making power of millions of people, even to the hands of a conflict in group those days when a seven or eight conflict in Mujahideen groups, we didn't agree with. Yes. Maybe we kept that communist regime and we gradually improved it. And then no blood would have been, uh, would have been lost no more life would have been lost and nobody would maybe suffered. It's impossible to put it to zero, but there would have been less suffering. But let me tell you the story of my father. Then I go one generation back. My father was from the generation who was very, very pro uh, communism and socialist regime. But it was also in a way that in Afghanistan, it was not a pure communist regime. We also have the private sector that somehow kept itself. We had like investors, like businessmen and certainly it was a room for improvement for them, my father and the friends of my father they never want, I think in the beginning, they never thought that the Russian, Soviet Union would pullback, but suddenly they pulled back in, they left everything unattended and they believed that they needed the power of a larger, uh, uh, how do I say, like an empire, superpower, the superpower support. I mean, they said, yes, fine, if the Russian soldiers go back to Russia. Fine. But imagine our, um, um, factories, our army, our police sector, our intelligence, our agriculture, our education, whichever sector that you could think of. We're very, very dependent on Russian expertise. And it, we did it and Afghanistan was, **it was like a child state. The state couldn't take care of it by themselves.** They still needed the knowledge, technological knowledge and the knowledge in military technology, in every sector. We have so many people who got educated in Russia who came back and they thought that, yes, the soldiers go back fine. But at least, even if they paid it as a loan, you didn't want our radar system to be destroyed. We didn't want the army to be destroyed or the police, not because not because they wanted to attack other countries, but they want, because they needed these infrastructure for keeping security type. You might, in those days, um, a commander, uh, I remember that commanders in war, they had the right to, to, to oppose what the president says. The president's second in the commander of the war said, no, this is not allowed. We have to do it in a very professional way to keep the loss of lives and injuries to a minimum or to no injury. And the same situation came just before the collapse of this regime, unfortunately, um, the regime backed by the USA. We have a lot of minds, we have a lot of professionals who work very good.

Speaker 1: Yeah, maybe would it be possible to elaborate more on the role of the US and also, why do you think they withdraw and also like the political, economic and also military? So it seems like a bit similar to what happened with Russia and now I'm maybe a bit more elaborating on the US as well.

Speaker 2: Well, yeah. Uh, in my opinion that I also sometimes speak with my wife, we discuss. You know, um, I would say at the beginning that it was a huge loss for, I don't say Afghanistan very much, because then I only think I am an Afghan, but we work for the humans wherever they are. We work for the nature. We would work whatever is good for this universe. But it was a huge loss for the Afghan, for Afghanistan that the west pulled back, this is the first statement that I make. And I think why they left and then the second question, why be allowed the Taliban to come? Why they left? Um, um, I think still there is the competition, the competition between America, USA and the Russian, especially from America towards Russia. Um, still goes on. It is going in my opinion and one thing that I, maybe I'm wrong, I don't know if I'm correct, but they, uh, the, the US is already having very close connections with the Ukraine. **And if they are all in Ukraine** without the need of 50 blind soldiers, without the need of, uh, investing so much, why should they keeping Afghanistan, why they should pay \$4 billion per year to the army of Afghanistan. And I think this is the first and the money comes second, because the US still thinks they have the largest. The US politicians thing, they are the superpower, whatever they want, they can do. The money is not important so much for them when they want about their strategic objectives and the money comes the second. So why to spend on Afghanistan and even worse than that, I mean, it was fine. Pull back fine, with less \$4 billion came more than three Billions went on corruption sector on corruption market. Why not paying 1 billion as a loan to the people whose children will let them pay and keep that trust factor that you started, that you built for them. And everybody appreciated it and you don't want to say that Afghans soldiers died, foreign soldiers, a lot of soldiers, um, unfortunately. It was the system, the regime came in and went on with, by the blood of our international friends. And now it's, it's, it's, it's gone, but anyway, and then it comes to the money, the money side, but then the question why to keep it in the hands of an extremist group, unfortunately I think maybe I'm wrong is because to show. But look, we are still following you. We're still doing something that irritates. In Afghanistan we have approval on irritation here We say an extremist group bordering Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan is an invitation to the, this part of the Russia. This is my way of thinking, maybe I am wrong. I don't know.

Speaker 1: Like I said, there is no right or wrong. Okay. But, but do you think there's just like, like they saying, like history repeats itself now when we're looking like the Taliban taking over again and then the US withdraw, Russia withdraw. Do you think like the order is repeating itself?

Speaker 2: Is repeated, Yeah. I mean, at the time when, uh, our fathers were, uh, my father educated, educated in Russia, he has a specialist degree in Orthopädie. And I know that he worked harder than my generation because with, with the with the salary of. 20 times less than we got from the development sector. Not only him, but the people of that generation. And there were many people who didn't believe that Afghanistan the communist regime should be there forever. They thought, we need them, we need this support. Later on without any suffering or with less suffering we can improve it. And now it was the same. Imagine if Russians didn't leave Afghanistan, what have been like Tajikistan at least, imagine. Do we hear news, that the people die in Tajikistan because of explosion? No. Yes, the economy is weak. Yes, there are no economic activities. There are challenges, but people are living and then the same thing happens now. **Yeah, there were challenges, there were corruption. There was corruption due to that. Uh, there were explosions, people lost lives. Um, but still, I mean, it was something, it was something that should've been improved rather than, uh, giving the decisions, uh, rather than bringing an extremist regime in power.**

Speaker 1: So, um, what do you actually think because of my research question, I mentioned the term graveyard of empires also like, um, in, in relation to the Brits, to the Russian, to the US do you think it is applicable or not?

Speaker 2: I mean, this is an interesting topic. Yeah. Uh, you know, what, Nehro he was a historian of India. Nehro at the time of British empire, he was in prison. Then he wrote a book to his daughter. He defined Afghanistan as a, uh, you know, Bee's house to the British empire. I mean, um, if you look at, if, if you, I mean this, from the perspective of, uh, a traditional Afghan, if we read your topic, then we say, oh, we were brave and retarded a graveyard. **But I would say, I would say no. I mean, I wouldn't say no, it's not only Afghans. Mostly it was the competition of the empires themselves.** I mean, in my opinion your topic is correct and I have one reason, maybe this reason is also important for you. Look, if you look at many countries around the world, if there was a French occupation, today all the people that speak, almost all the people speak French. If it is an English occupation, almost all the people speak English. And similarly that Tajikistan almost all the people speak Russian. So, so in here in Afghanistan, every empire came, before they dominated all the country, then they disappeared somehow for something. So I think this is this, you can give this answer also, if they ask. Why you would call it like this, because none of these empires were able to convert this region, um, entirely. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, yeah, if you go to, even to, yeah, let's say we're talking about the new empires, not the empires of, uh, romance or Arabic. Yeah. Talking about the British, Russian and the American also.

Speaker 1: So what do you think might be possible or further developments that will happen in Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Yeah. Yeah. This was like, we discussed them when I was staying in Kabul. I remember there was almost a similar discussion. Um, I was, I mean, there is, in my opinion, that is, that is, uh, a way maybe also, uh, expired place back later was also there, um, imagine if, if now the west we mainly the USA, without keeping the economic pressure, pressure where only the people were suffering. **Today's way of economic pressure is not the right way. Like America says, we don't give you the money because you don't allow the girls to go to school. This is not right. They should use different approaches. They should pressure the Taliban government, but how they can keep the suffering of the people minimum. This is a big question,** but they have to solve because they have decided so, these politicians. I mean, if there isn't a kind of consensus between the Taliban regime and the international community. And then, um, I would say, non-violent rule of law in Afghanistan, is established and then the government is fine under the regime of Taliban. Um, but we now know it is a reality, we cannot say anything. And then, the investments, the foreign investment starts on mining sector, it's a first, um, hope the first source of hope for economic development. And besides that again, the private sector, um, revives in Afghanistan. I mean, the one thing that is different from the time of the Russian occupation? Um, I mean, I would say is that the. Taliban do not have like specific policies against the private sector investment. So there's private sector investment in that foreign investment on the mining sector. And what if they money if, if, if the first day they, they adjust themselves in that the expectations of the European Union and the US. We, when we discussed last time with colleagues, um, we said like, uh, uh, use the word Gulf states like a Gulf state and government, but yeah, it would be slightly different because in the culture of Afghanistan, it is, it would be hard even for the people, it would be hard to accept that one Mine is given to a leader, like the „Scheich" of Arabs. They have a Mine and owned by them. I think it's like, not so sure. But in Afghanistan, even during the Taliban time, uh, it never happened in a way that a Mine was given to a leader of the Taliban or to a government leader. It was, it was like that. So this, this culture, in my opinion, will be kept because the people want acceptance to give a Mine to someone. And then that would be the national money and national economy will hopefully, uh, boost. This is the way, but I hope they can adjust.

Speaker 1: Okay. Perfect. Thank you. And maybe one last question, because now I just talked for my research paper about the prior, um, countries, which had impact on Afghanistan. And now I would like to ask you also about the role maybe of China, uh, Germany and the EU. Um, do you think they also had an impact on Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Um, yes, of course. You know, that that you know, Europe and America, they are good economic friends, uh, and also in many aspects, culturally, historically they have very good ties. Um, and with that American interference in Afghanistan, Europe also contributed a lot, um, militarily. Um, that's true. Yeah. And the European Union as a strong as, as the USA. China I personally didn't see any, any major role of China in these changes. Um, I can tell you, you know, when Afghanistan we had a king until 19 70, 1974/3. You can look at the books. Let me briefly explain it to you. Yeah. In 1919, it was the third Afghan, Anglo-Afghan war. England already had decided to give independence to Afghanistan somehow and then Afghanistan declaring war, and then the independence was acquired. But then yeah why did the interference of the british empire still continued. And then the, the, the person who wanted to finish the kingdom in 1919, he only remained in power for one, two or three years. Uh, he was the person who brought independence and then he was kicked out by someone, someone who had no clue about politics, who had no background of being empowered. Um, but then the cousin of this person, uh, comes in and takes the government in maybe 1928 or 29, something like that. And then the kingdom was restored from 1928 to 29 until 1970. Yeah. Uh, he was a general of the army of the previous king of the king who brought the, uh, uh, independence. And then he, he became the king, his name was Nadir Shah. And Nadir Shah was assassinated, terrorised, but by, by some, some of his soldiers and then his son became the king and the son continuously, he was a king for over 35 years. People say forty years, maybe form 1930/35 until 1974/73. Then Zahir Schah traveled to Russia and met Breschnew. My father told me that Breschnew told Zahir Schah that if he's happy or if he's not happy, the Russia will come. Zahir Schah had a cousin, they discussed to end the kingdom and capture the power. Zahir Schah, he made a coup and he said, the kingdom is over. And he said, now the political parties can have freedom. And then in those political parties, one of those political parties, they were like 10 or 12. One of them was backed by China. So one faction was supported by China. And then, you know, during the fight of the Mujahideen, I think China also sold some weaponry to the Mujahideen, to fight against the Russian backed government. Or

maybe, I don't know, maybe Pakistan purchased it and then gave it to Mujahideen. And then we, we, as, as a children, we said, oh, China is selling weapon to the Mujahideen, no that is not a good country.

Speaker 1: Perfect. Thank you so much. Yeah, that's also actually it, um, really amazing what you told and really fruitful and insightful information, definitely. I, I just really appreciate it. And thank you so much for taking the time again.

Speaker 2: And I hope it helps.

13.3 Interview Transcript

Speaker 1: Okay. Perfect. Thank you. Um, so for me, it would be also quite interesting in the beginning. Maybe if you can tell me a bit about your personal background and what you learned before and what is your relationship with Afghanistan? So maybe tell me a bit about yourself. That would be great. Yeah, thank you.

Speaker 2: Um, let me start, you know, uh, with saying, **I feel that I'm an Afghan, you know,**

I'm proud, I like to be an Afghan, uh, yes, it has a lot of challenges in that, it has a lot of. Pain with it attached to, you know, in a lot of, uh, uh, grievances and things like that. But, but I, I am an Afghan by let's say, uh, you know, my father's, father's, father's, father's. Uh, then we've never been, you know, outside Afghanistan. Um, so I'm a pure Afghan. Uh, I was six months old when my father had to migrate to Pakistan because of the Russian, uh, invasion of Afghanistan. It was, let's say, uh, probably 1979, 1978. Uh, in 1978 August, I was born and so probably January 1979 is when we migrated to Pakistan. I was six months old. When we returned back to Afghanistan, this was, uh, the beginning of, uh, the new era for Afghanistan. The democratic Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was being, uh, established after the, uh, agreement, you know, um, which was hosted by Gerhard Schröder the previous chancellor from Germany. So on those 23 years, I lived in Pakistan. Um, uh, I did my schooling there, my university there, I studied business administration and I studied accounting and things like that there. And I returned in 2002, the beginning of 2002. And in June, 2002, I joined a work. Let's say I started working for GIZ and here we are today, it continues to be a, you know, very proud relationship, uh, with GIZ worldwide. Work-wise also, uh, you know, when I return to Afghanistan, I felt that my studies in business administration and accounting probably did not give me a good understanding of, you know, um, why Afghanistan, has to go through all these, uh, pains in, you know, collapses if were to stand up again and then collapses and things like that. So I decided to study light political science. And, uh, as a second, uh, faculty as a second bachelor degree, and I was able to, you know, with, uh, with, with, uh, uh, uh, jobs with GIZ, with travels and things like that, I was only able to finish this in 2020, actually. So this, uh, field, uh, gives me a very good understanding of the history of Afghanistan and what role the powers, the major powers, the neighbouring powers and those faraway like Russia and things like that. There's America, USA meat by the, by the powers far away, um, you know, what they have played, you know, uh, in, in what they have caused us. So, um, I think, I think being an Afghan, uh, proud of who, who likes, you know, the history and, uh, uh, being, uh, you know, you know, uh, only one citizenship holder. I'm still not, I still do not possess a second, uh, nationality, um, uh, you know, I believe in a, I am in a good shape to say it. I know what would have gone Afghanistan. And I knew about Afghan history and, uh, hopefully, uh, you know, this, uh, promises that I could in a way, give you some insights that will be useful for your thesis.

Speaker 1: Yeah, definitely. Thank you so much. You also talked about the historical background of Afghanistan. Maybe. Can you tell me a bit more of what you learned in school or what, you know, some maybe important points.

Speaker 2: You know, uh, we, we have been a country. Uh, we have been a nation that has been going to a lot of, uh, um, changes in a lot of, uh, um, let's say fights in a lot of, uh, um, uh, geographical, you know, reshaping in losing territory coming back. But what I like about our history is actually when, uh, in the 17th century, 16th century, Uh, Mirwais Khan, uh, we call him Mirwais Baba. Uh, the, the, the elder from Kandahar, uh, started to regroup the different, Afghan. Uh, let's say, uh, the different Afghans powers, tribal powers, at the time into some sort of national movement out a good game from Iran. Uh, let's say at the time, Afghanistan let's say did not exist in this current geography, but, uh, let's say these were taken by Iran and Kandahar out in these regions were ruled by, by, by the Iranian. So he started a national movement. Uh, we call it in our native Pashtun language, and, uh, asked to people, we cannot take you any more. What Iran is doing here. And we have to stand up, makes a force and you know, attacks out whatever is from Iran. And all, you said the forces in the government. They say the administrator, whatever that was, and uh, a small fight happens and then people are going, and then, uh, as soon after, of course, this is one major problem that we've had in Afghanistan, our own people for money, for whatever, you know, uh, costs internal fractions and damages and it is claimed that his own brother, uh, that Mirwais Khan, uh, own brother, uh, for whatever reasons for becoming, let's say, uh, and he did it himself or whatever. Uh, it is alleged that he kills, uh, the grandfather. And, uh, um, he becomes the king for some time and then again, Iran comes in, you know, takes us and, um, uh, um, uh, and then in, in, in 17th century, let's say, sorry, in 18th century, in 1723, it is the other name associated with the contemporary Afghanistan. That is that is Ahamd Schah Baba. He becomes, you knew a young military officer in Nader Schah's army and Iran. And once Nader Schah, years, probably 1740s, 1742/3 comes in. Uh, he comes to Afghanistan in and he starts initial, uh, you know, movement and, uh, establishes the contemporary Afghanistan with, with very larger territories with, uh, for example, you know, uh, towards the India, Kashmiri, Lahore, and you know, things like that. And then it is, uh, you know, uh, the English who start destabilise Afghanistan, uh, in the beginning of the 19th century, once they're established the food in India, if you somehow get through all of India, there's they worry the Afghanistan is becoming, modern State, you know, uh, again, internal fighting starts. So probably the history between the 17th century is very mixed. You cannot hear a lot about country that is called Afghanistan. We are, we are named differently whenever after, uh, uh, different names in different intervals sometimes. Uh, let's say our territories are taken by Iran in sometimes by others. Um, uh, but, but, but it is in the late 16th and 17th century and early 18th century, uh, that, you know, Afghanistan, the contemporary Afghanistan, that we know today. Although that we lost a lot of territory and although that is very small in, in, uh, geographically these days. Uh, but, but it's when the, the modern Afghanistan has been established. And I think, and I think it was Ahmed Schah Baba the visionary, uh, who had a very modern state at the time because of his time that he had spent in Iran in the, in the, uh, Royal, uh, things there he was an army officer for, for the Iranians at the time. Uh, and of course at that time, all even knowledge let's say, came from Europe to Turkey and then from Turkey to Iran. So he was compared to the other outcomes at the time, very well, you know, knowledgeable in really educated, and informed of what is happening in the world. And that's why he possessed the desire to have an Afghanistan, uh, to have a country for the Afghans in which would be called Afghan, uh, which will be called Afghanistan. It is probably, you know, uh, in to house our history before let's say, uh, Uh, end of 17th century and in, after the beginning of the 17th and, uh, yeah, hopefully I've answered your question.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, definitely. Thank you so much. And now I would like to come to the question. So what do you feel that Afghanistan has changed since the Taliban came to power and how did the change actually manifest itself?

Speaker 2: You men the current change.

Speaker 1: Right, right. Yeah.

Speaker 2: Uh, honestly speaking. Uh, and, and because you need this for an academic purpose, I would try to be as fact-full and as honestly as possible. It is now, uh, four months in, uh, uh, a little more than four months, actually, September, October, November, December. Yes, they'd have Taliban have taken the county. **Uh, economically every Afghan is suffering. Uh, this is true,** uh, including me as a, as somebody like me, who is highly well paid by GIZ, who has been, uh, let's say a working in earning for the last 20 years since the first day of the democratic Afghanistan that was established in 2001. And up to now, I'm still paid, uh, you know, by GIZ, even I'm seeing the effects of this, uh, change that financial effects of this change. There's also negative changes, uh, or negative effects of this under society. Which are to say, uh, uh, how do you call it out? Our psychology is affected. People, people believe that, you know, we've lost everything. People believe that we've lost, uh, our country let's say. They believe that we've lost, you know, our, our, I don't know, our whatever regime that we had in our, uh, for example our military and our army and police force and things like that. **But, uh, in terms of, you know, peace and in terms of security and in terms of uh, you know, uh, uh, positive change, positive things also that I can see, uh, for example, killings.** Yeah. In the last 15 years or 10 years, there has not been a single day in Afghanistan that hundreds and hundreds of people were not being guilty either side, you know, of the, of the conflict, either Taliban or the Afghan armed forces, for example, uh, an average basis 200, 300, 400 people were being killed, you know, in an interview, the president of Afghanistan, the last president, Ashraf Ghani. He, he mentioned it in the last 40 years or his first, uh, uh, let's say regime, uh, um, when he was at power, uh, more than 90,000 Afghans were killed, who were part of the, uh, police in Afghan national army and things like that. So a big positive for me, it's the fact that there are no killings now. Um, probably in the last four months, the Taliban have taken a power, probably hardly hundred people have been killed. **Yes. I know there are allegations that people are, you know, uh, uh, torture if people are killed, but honestly speaking, I, as an Afghan living still in Kabul moving at least, or traveling between six, seven uh, provinces.** And I've noticed that since the Taliban had taken over, **I have not seen anybody tortured by the Taliban. I have not seen anybody killed by the Taliban, and I have not heard anybody, uh, to have reported to me or to have told me,** uh, that the Taliban had came for example, knocked my door and did this and did that to me. I know there are some, you know, reports, it. So in terms of financial aspects of our lives, in terms of economic effects, that country has lost, probably everything that we had, our banking. If you has some savings, for example, in you in a bank account, you can not now access them. My father, he has worked for example, uh, for 40 years in whatever savings he had in the bank, he cannot now access them. He is allowed to withdraw 200 USD per week, which is hardly enough for his family and, you know, for his, uh, uh, younger sons and, you know, for, for, for the education and for the food and things like that. But in terms of peace, in terms of stability and in terms of, uh, you know, positive, uh, things, there are also positive aspects to this. And, um, uh, **I mean, honestly speaking. So, for example, for me in four people that I know the only effect has been the financial side, uh, people, you know, seem to become poor and, uh, they, they, they seem not to have enough food** and they seem, you know, that let's say, let me put it this way. The number of beggars, for example, at the street are improving. But on the other hand, everybody seems to be happy because there are no killings now, there are no fightings. Now there are no wars. Uh, now at least Afghanistan is going through a very, uh, you know, uh, calm, uh, time, calm times, uh, you know, because of this change that has happened.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. Um, what do you think might maybe lead to limitations and challenges for the Taliban?

Speaker 2: They have many. O think, first and very important for them is to have some sort of acceptance within the Afghani communities. I think there not being any attention to this, uh, yes, they are. They are, they are, uh, you know, doing some propaganda, uh, efforts at TV and things like that, but **they have to act, you now, they have to have, uh, actions that will speak for the intentions. For example, they have to have an internal acceptance. Let's say what they want for the future of Afghanistan. What sort of government they want, when will they establish a fully representative government for the entire fractions in any groups of Afghanistan, for example, within the will be election, for example, what they planned for or mean for good education.** I have a daughter who was the student in class 10, the first daughter. And I had dreams of, you know, uh, taking her to a medical university. So that she can become, uh, a doctor, but she has been sitting at home and I see that they're signs in question in her face, in her eyes, you know, that she does not speak to me, but she wants to know what is happening to her future. And, uh, if we can still, you know, look to accomplish her dream of becoming, you know, a doctor. **So, uh, you know, they have to speak, they have to act and they have to act first to receive a level of acceptance for themselves within the afghan communities, they must still live and they must get the confidence that there are Afghans. That what you know, to have a long term, let's say political future in Afghanistan, what their ideology is, what sorts of government regime and structure they want to put in place? What would be the constitution? Let's say with every Afghan will see himself or herself represented in their structures.** Let me tell you very honestly, from my province in Kandahar, we are one of the most populous provinces. We have like one million uh, population, but right now in the entire government that the Taliban is put in place. There is only one. High profile off the shelf from my province in this government. So how does you speak in way where people say that the majority of Taliban are Pashtun, and, and, you know, I also Pashtun, but I see myself represented in this. My region is not present. My people are not present. Um, my, my side of the country is not to represent it. So it is not only, you know, the ethnic groups, say the Tajiks, the Uzbeks, the Hazaras. It's also the communities. You know, let's say the Pashtuns, within the geographical directions, the east, the south and the west, for example. So I think the Taliban need to look for an internal acceptance first by communicating with people, by engaging with people and by telling us what kind of, you know, uh, political, uh, systems in ideology deal want to put in place, uh, for Afghanistan. I mean, um, you know, That's still a little silent at this of what is happening. And, uh, that is, uh, probably given, you know, some people are little negative, uh, say of frustrations. Uh, to be, um, you know, open.

Speaker 1: Um, yeah. Thank you so much. And you also were talking about your daughter and what happened. Um, what can you, or what do you think might also happen regarding the role of women under the Taliban? Do you think there are more changes will come?

Speaker 2: Okay, you know. Um, I see, for example, I was just yesterday collecting my passports. Uh, my family passports, uh, women are working in that department. Women are there in the education sector, for example, university teachers in schools, uh, for girls under the age of six Uh, woman doctors are working, woman police are working. There are women in, in other sectors. Uh, I've seen women in interior ministry in woman in the defence ministry and women in health ministry. Obviously. However, there are not politically, lets say there are, there are, uh, how do I say this? **There are no women in politically visible rules right now. And. I don't think that will change easily. I think there will not be a more woman or at least, you know, a high profile woman in leadership roles. If we expect that the Taliban will have a couple of, uh, female ministers or woman ministers, I doubt it. I don't think this will happen,** but what will happen is that women will have a more active role in the society. Uh, I also, uh, seriously, uh, belief in hope that the schools up to class 12 let's say or the high schools will resume Uh, next year Inshallah, they're working in a system. I have seen this and I have followed this, uh, with deep interest because of my own daughter. Um, you know, so, so this is happening Inshallah, but in terms of political roles in leadership roles and cabinet. Uh, I don't think that will, uh, allow women, uh, to have a, you know, a political rule. Like we headed the democratic, uh, Afghanistan. Uh, but, but, but **in terms of the**

participation form and yes, they will be part of the communities they have changed. I think the Taliban, since the last five-year government, their head some 20 years ago, 22 years ago, I think they believe that women should be educated. I think they believe. They need women doctors and they need woman police. They need woman teachers and things like that. But I, but I wouldn't, you know, uh, expect that they will give them senior positions in the government.

Speaker 1: Thank you. And also we still see evacuation. That's still ongoing and also quite a lot of people are still leaving the country by their own. Could you imagine, or what might this happened for Afghanistan? Um, what might it mean that quite a lot of people are leaving the country? What, um, yeah reasons will it have for Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Uh, of course, you know, it's not something, uh, good in it's something, uh, um, honestly speaking, uh, you know, that, uh, my case is a little strange. Also I have a bigger family, like kids. **But, but most of the Afghans are now leaving Afghanistan because of financial reasons.** Nobody right now, at least, for example, I feel very safe and very secure in Afghanistan. There is no, I don't think I will be persecuted for working. Uh, for ministry of agriculture, ministry of rural habilitation in development or for GIZ for that matter, I think, I think that that way, or from that aspect, people are now confident that this is not going to happen and the Taliban, probably believe in that, you know, uh, common, uh, ministry that they have provided to every Afghan. I think they believe it. And I think they trying. Yeah, she'll do the people that they believe in there right now, people that are leaving Afghanistan for financial purposes, there is no work. There is no job. People are not paid their salaries for example. And that's why, of course, uh, in the short term, and in the long run, this will have negative effects for Afghanistan. What if I, if I give an example in the last 20 years, a lot of, uh, capital investment, a lot of human investment lives, a lot of. human capacity was, was, was, uh, you know, created, uh, capacity building was happening. People, you know, uh, um, you know, received higher education in the country, out of the country in either world, uh, provided sponsorships and things like that. All of those people who were, let's say the catalyst or the engine behind the democratic Afghanistan are in a way now even, or if you live or are looking for options in four ways to leave the country, of course this will, uh, affect Afghanistan also, you know, uh, let's say the human. Well have gone. The capacities will have gone. So thereby, you know, it will take a lot of time to have some full-time working government machinery again, but it also has a negative impact of the common population. For example, in my home. We are like, six, seven brothers Alhamdulillah. And if I leave now, uh, my brother's also feeling, you know, bed affected by this because I was learning and I was supporting most of them. So if I now leave, for example, Afghanistan, uh, they, they, they lose their support also. So this also affect. Those who will stay in Afghanistan in many ways, not only financially, but, uh, they're also, you know, psychologically affected that Afghanistan is now not good for, for living. And, you know, so, so people lose the hope and that positivity. And, uh, yeah, I think it's bad that it's happening. I think, uh, you know, that Americans did this, uh, in a very disorganised way. Everybody, uh, believed in fear that they will be killed, which has never happened. And if people would have believed in, would have probably knowing that it, it will not be a very dangerous Afghanistan. The Taliban, as, as everybody, uh, anticipated probably not a lot would have lifted, you know, probably not a lot would have gone. They would have stayed. Uh, so yeah, you know, this is how, this is how I see this situation.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Now I will come to the domestic context of Afghanistan and we know that also Pakistan played a big role, also politically, economically. What do you think is the actual role off Afghanistan and Pakistan together?

Speaker 2: Honestly speaking, um, and Pakistan like other regional powers. Like India, for example, like China, for example, but probably more so **Pakistan, my, my personal opinion is that they are never interested in having a stable, uh, politically stable developed, you know, democratic Afghanistan.** And I think they feel this. If you have this for the, uh, issues, uh, that they have internally. They fear this because of the grit, you know, pan Afghanistan, pan Afghanis ideology, uh, that is still, you know, existing Afghans to lead the side of the border that you wouldn't like you say, the Pashtuns divided by the Durand line. So a Pakistan will always play double, uh, politics in double games, uh, in terms of Afghanistan, then they were supporting the Taliban probably, uh, during the democratic Afghanistan. But I'm sure now if the Taliban, uh, shown that they're interested to have a. good government system lets say to have, uh, to work for the country and the people. Pakistan will find another way to also, uh, you know, create, uh, problems and issues for the Taliban. So, you know, their, their strategy and their policy and their position towards Afghanistan is always, uh, of bad intentions to always, uh, negative. Like not to say to uh, to live peacefully, not allowing us to, you know, uh, there was, there is a video if you were in interested. Yesterday in my district, for example, the Taliban and the Pakistan army had a fight. And the fact that the Taliban captured quite a few things from them, the, the, the Pakistanis were, uh, probably entering our land and even the Taliban I know it, or at least some fractions in the Taliban, uh, believe strongly that Pakistan is not a good ally, but it's not, it's not a good neighbour and then today or tomorrow they will be the ones standing in front of Taliban if they decide, you know, to, uh, to put up a good government in, to work for the development. So I see this with a lot of negativity. I see the role with negativity and probably no Afghan trusts, uh, uh, Pakistan, if, if there is you know, somebody like me who lived, uh, all the, uh, 20 years of the democratic Afghanistan or whoever, I think not, not many Afghans trust Pakistan or see their role positively.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Okay, perfect. Now I would like to come to the international context. So first of all, and I will talk about Russia and the US. I'm starting. What do you think which role looking back Russia actually played in Afghanistan also, maybe politically, economically all to militarily?

Speaker 2: I think, I think Russia ruling Afghanistan started in the 18th and 19th century. When, uh, when, when, uh, the. Uh, British war try to invade Afghanistan, you know, and make it part of India and have, uh, uh, their own, uh, let's say a way of life in way of thinking here. And, uh, when we were fighting those three wars in 1940, in 1960 seventies, and then, uh, in, uh, 1742, I mean, he'd been, uh, uh, 1768. 1980 / 1990 even in those times Russia's involvement in Afghanistan started. And I think their involvement. Probably from the, from that time, pick two primary reasons. They're there. They wanted to somehow confront the British, you know, Afghanistan don't usually support our kings at the time to fight the British, but they were also confused. **They also had their missions of uh, making Afghanistan part of their territories so that they could reach, uh, let's say the waters, you know, the Indian sea, it probably, um, uh, have their own, you know, access to the, to the, to the sea and in here for easy and economic, uh, for easy economic and trade, uh, uh, activities.** So how I see Russia, I see Russia as a confused player. Um, and, and, and, in Afghan matter. First wanting to, uh, not allow the British, you know, and then later on, of course, in the 20th century that Americans, for example, to have a strong quality in Afghanistan, and the other hand, they also had their own intentions of coming here. In, uh, uh, you know, uh, invading Afghanistan. And so they, they could, you know, have their own, uh, whatever political ambitions that there were. So there were confused, there were talks of, uh, Russia and supporting the Taliban, uh, in the last ten years, five years, probably, but honestly speaking, uh, personally, I, I didn't see, you know, any proof. I didn't see that people would even say that there are Russian soldiers, uh, in Pakistan and in the border with Afghanistan, supporting the Taliban and things like that. So when I see, you know, the role **I see it a role of a confused player** who doesn't know what they want and who doesn't know, uh, you know, if they have, you know, the political will and if they have the sources. Uh, to pursue, uh, what they want in Afghanistan.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Okay, perfect. Now I would also like to talk about the role of, um, the US in Afghanistan. And what do you think, why did the US withdraw from Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Uh, you know, honestly speaking, I personally, I always believe that they use we leave one days either today, or, you know, I even thought this will happen in 2011 and in 2013. **I think, they wanted to come to Afghanistan simply because they wanted to, uh, let's say, uh, particularly in the beginning to eradicate the treat that was presented by, uh, Al-Qaeda at the time, the Taliban and Daish and things like that.** Towards, let's say the second decade of the presence in Afghanistan. Let's say it works, uh, 2014 and 15. And things like that. **I realised that Americans are not here to support Afghanistan. They are not here in establishing a democratic government in Afghanistan for us. They are only here to pursue their own political ambitions. Confronting the China from a close range, confronting the Russians from a closed range and confronting Iran. And to some extent, uh, find a solution for the atomic bombs and, uh, uh, weapons that Pakistan possess in that Americans are in a particularly afraid of,** uh, uh, the fact that those weapons, when they might fall, uh, to the ends of hard labor Islamic groups that are operating in, in, in Pakistan. So I think it was always at their minds. It was always at their cards. I think there were a lied to the Afghan nation that they would be here to support us until, you know, we are a democratically stable Afghanistan. I think the lied to be an old people. I think the lied to their own tax fair, uh, there were withdrawing probably. What, what, what is most, um, uh, painful is the way it, uh, right now, uh, there was this interview by our, uh, um, the security national security advisor, uh, I think with the BBC or CNN, where he said that, that the biggest regret that he has is that they never realised, that the Americans will definitely leave and we'll leave soon. And he said that they never clearly communicated their message. So, you know, with the withdrawal from America, I think they achieved what they want to achieve for their own, uh, benefits and for the benefits of their country and their people. Uh, for us Afghans, it is more the way. It is more the way that the, uh, withdrew, uh, you know, uh, making us unhappy it is not actually the, withdraw itself.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Um, also what for me would be important. What do you think, which role played China or Germany and the EU and also India?

Speaker 2: Um, I, you know, uh, China. Their role is entirely political. They want to show to the Americans, uh, that, you know, uh, we, we will, we will take over whatever you left. You spent, uh, billions and billions and billions of dollars, but it will be now us who will have the contracts and things like that. So, China, you know, I, I don't trust them. I think they're only interested in, um, uh, taking our, our, our, uh, underground, uh, assets that we have in, we have a plenty. I'm sure. Uh, you've heard about this. So, so they're only interested in, in that kind of, uh, uh, you know. **Entirely interested in their own financial benefits** in not, you know, a single, uh, uh, person interested in Afghanistan will be more in that of, um, uh, um, and the Afghans will be, uh, a primary example is for example, what China is doing to the whole Muslim community there. And as a Muslim mindset, for example, as an Afghan Muslim, I really feel that the Taliban, for example, would even be considering China as a friend. I believe they should not. They should have no place in Afghanistan because there, because they are treating, you know, our community very badly and even they use past the solution, you know, uh, um, you know, cycle of putting a lot of sanctions or some sanctions, at least China for their treatment. So there is, you know, enough ground in reasons, uh, for, for not a friendly relationship between China and Afghanistan anyway, under the Taliban regime. So, you know, for probably there is not a lot of hope and promise in terms of the relationship with, uh, with, um, uh, China. For Germany, um, I've always considered Germany as a sincere friend, uh, even during the democratic Afghanistan, we believe this end, uh, during the Taliban's previous, uh, regime, uh, if I've had this ambition, uh, this, this opinion, I should say. And, uh, for example, I was myself when I was. Uh, why I was studying in a Germany supported school in Pakistan. Uh, and then in a, in a high studies Institute that was established by German, supported Pakistan. And everybody seemed to like, you know what, Germany historically had done for Afghans. And, and, uh, in terms of, let's say, uh, the building, uh, work that the construction work, the building of few roads, for example, a dam, uh, an electricity power game was bit by Germans and things like that. So, uh, probably I had this discussion with, uh, you know, with the German workers. Also, we expected a lot from Germany, a lot more. Uh, in the 20 years that had, that had happened politically, when they US, for example, would make a mistake. When they're, for example, sign the treaty with the Taliban, the Doha agreement. I think we expected Germany to say, Hey, you know, this is wrong. This will, uh, will pave the way for the collapse of the democratic Afghanistan. So, you know, that political. Yeah, strong vocal support that we expected from Germany probably did not come. And that is, uh, you know, uh, uh, sort of paid fee that is remaining, but in terms of, you know, um, support in cooperation and the long-term relationship, even now when the german representative came to Afghanistan, or I think the ambassador came to Afghanistan to meet the Taliban. A lot of people were happy because they believed that Germany could play a role. I role it would, you know, uh, provide some sort of stability, political stability to the Taliban government, Afghanistan in nearby, you know, uh, other countries will also come. So in terms of Germany, you know, we always say this as a friend is sincere and who is not as much politically confused and, uh, you know, uh, having the own political agendas as the others. And, uh, we always believe that, uh, Germany's a friend and, uh, and then even hundreds years, probably 80, 90 years, uh, until the, until the times of king, a lot of uh, positive ideas are, you know, um, uh, shared about Germany, but, uh, yes, this, uh, 20 years we believed that Germany was in a position to tell the Americans, for example, when they would make a serious mistake or when they would, you know, put our, uh, structural or political, um, uh, you know, future or democracy, uh, our country. Doing some sort of, um, uh, agreement with the Taliban they Germany in the other countries could have spoken. It could have mentioned to the American state, what you are doing is not good and this was not happening. So probably we feel like maybe, you know, uh, led down by Germany from the political support that would have provided, which probably didn't cover.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Perfect. Um, now I would like to ask, because we saw the Brits, Russia, the United States all came to Afghanistan and left again. Um, also now the Taliban took over and, and govern the country. Do you think it's like a repeating order or like history repeats itself?

Speaker 2: Uh, honestly speaking. It's my personal opinion, but I think that Afghanistan has a lot of work to do before we could become a strong united in committed nation. The Taliban are making exactly the same mistakes. Getting to, uh, 20 years ago, mid, you know, uh, in 2001, the Taliban was let's say the force empower in Afghanistan. They have ruled Afghanistan for five, six years, let's say at the time. And they will never invite as a political party or as a regime that was in power at that time, even their let's say moderate leaders, for example, they will not invite them to the, uh, uh, uh, conference. And that is where even at the time uh, I had the opinion the Afghanistan will collapsed. Because at least half of the political leadership at the time was isolated. And then during the 20 years, no sincere, differ happened, you know, to bring Taliban, uh, to the work, to the, to the discussions. There were a lot of Shiraz and yes, there were ministries and yes the Americans were also talking. But I think that many countries are never sincere in bringing, uh, uh, true efforts, uh, to make Taliban part of the political process to become, to, you know, to become a peaceful movement in, in drawing the, uh, democratic Afghanistan. The second mistake Taliban are making now, again, they are giving the world communities a chance to create problems for them 10 years later, or 20 or 20 years later, for example, I'm sure you've heard that Americans have given, uh, an office in Washington, uh, to the Northern Alliance again, you know, they would be going there. They would, uh, uh, be receiving American support. So everybody's leaving Afghanistan. There will be, of course in 10 years time or in 20 years time, uh, the world leaders not happy with the Taliban. Uh, which Afghanistan certainly would be one, there would be

giving, uh, them resources, you know, weapons and money to fight against the Taliban. **And I think history will again, repeat itself. So it takes me to your, one of your previous questions that Taliban need to be, uh, politically, you know, uh, aware and politically active and politically sensitive. And they should realise that if there want to have a long-term, uh, future, uh, let's say political future in Afghanistan, and one to rule this country.** They must bring all of them together. There must not give the world a chance. Let's say, uh, to use those Afghans how left Afghanistan, particularly the leaders of the last 20 years of democratic Afghanistan. Uh, for example, to, to be there and then to be used again against the Taliban. So, you know, uh, if, if in sharp, I want to answer your question. **I think history will repeat itself. I think Taliban will find it very difficult extremely difficult, uh, to have a long-term political future. If they do not bring all people together, even if they would have a really moderate Islamic Afghanistan. Uh, Pakistan, Iran, China, US and Russia, they will not allow the Taliban to sit in.** They will, they will let them say either make Daish a big problem. They will either make the Northern Alliance a big problem. They would even, uh, again, uh, I don't know, our ex-army will be, uh, supported in given money to sources or whatever, you know, uh, forces that would be there and they will be coming in there will be fighting again. And, uh, if, if the word again wants, uh, Taliban will be again, you know, taken out of power and again, it will be killing. So, uh, I, I'm not entirely positive about the future, uh, particularly with how the Taliban are right now, dealing with this situation. They're just not doing enough, uh, to have a stable Afghanistan, uh, you know, uh, they, they could do a lot honestly. They could give a lot of confidence to the people, but they're not going to. So they're probably, uh, seeing their own, uh, collapse, you know, that might happen 2 years or 20 years later.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. And what do you think might also be possible for other developments or what might happen in the future with Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: I think the world will not, uh, want us or allow us to be peaceful. I think they have enough, uh, structures and processes in, uh, units to use, uh, to continue to have. Uh, risk less and, uh, you know, war, uh, having Afghanistan, or at least Afghanistan that will have continuous fighting, you know, uh, continuous issues. Daesh is there, I think, uh, Pakistan and the US and whoever that is there is supporting Daesh in, uh, this probably will become a big, big issue, uh, probably the next one or two years. That is one thing. The Northern Alliance, of course, uh, there were, uh, really benefiting from the democratic Afghanistan. They were making a lot of money out of it. Most of them were highly corrupt and they made billions of dollars. They have you know lost, uh, making power. So they will be finding ways to come back to Afghanistan and, uh, anybody who gives them weapons, you know, resources, probably a next, uh, 10 years, uh, they will becoming, uh, uh, you know, I, these regional powers that the proxy war between Pakistan and India, it will continue. I imagined, and it will continue to destabilise Afghanistan, uh, the regime in Iran, for instance, The unclear situation in central Asia, Tajikistan was focused on with their freedom movements and things like that. I think there is enough resources for all those who would want to be in a way involved in Afghanistan, you know, and to continue, uh, Afghanistan to, uh, have, uh, fighting in listlessness. There is enough that they can do. Uh, probably they do not even need to invest a lot of resources in this also because people are at least right now unhappy and, uh, they just want some support and probably the fighting could easily, uh, you know, the suffer indeed happen in the country.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. One last question, actually, because in my research question, I mentioning the term graveyard of empires. Do you think this term is applicable or not?

Speaker 2: As an Afghan, my heart says: Yes, Afghanistan is a graveyard of empires, uh, those who have conquered the worlds, but we've killed them. Look what we did to the British in, uh, the 19th century, in the 20th century. Look what we did to the Russians, to the UdSSR, the Soviet union, and in a way, look what has happened to America. For example, now into, into let's say to the NATO and things like that, when my mind speaks. We have been the sufferers, uh, nobody Afghanistan is not the graveyard of any emperor, Afghanistan is the graveyard of Afghans. We are, uh, killed in thousands. Uh, for example, if, if, if we wouldn't be happy or if the Taliban would be happy right now that they had defeated America, how many soldiers, how many American soldiers were killed. 4,000, maybe in the last 20 years compared to Afghans, how many? Probably 200,000, 300,000 Afghans, you know, so, uh, **Afghanistan is if, if my mind speaks and if the fact-full, uh, you know, uh, person in me speaks, it is not a graveyard of anybody. But it's the graveyard of Afghans. We have been the sufferers. We have been the victims and we have been receiving a lot of, uh, you know, uh, these, uh, uh, pains in these, uh, issues. But when my heart says, you know, with the history repeats itself. When I look at the history, yes. A lot of powers, uh, who came here, you know, to, uh, invaded Afghanistan, to make it a part of their own in, in the world and Pakistan in general, to make it a fifth province of Pakistan, for example, uh, they've never been able to accomplish their dreams.** So at least we continue to, at least by name or at least, you know, by some sort of reality uh, now because we have no foreign powers, we got at least a free Afghanistan, but, uh, uh, you know, in, in, in reality, uh, only Afghan suffered and Afghans are killed and only the graveyards is Afghanistan.

Speaker 1: Uh, Great. Thank you so much. Yeah, I really appreciate once again, that you took the time and, um, honestly answered my questions and it was really interesting to hear your opinion about everything and yeah, therefore I really appreciate it. And thank you so much. And yeah, and just once again, I'm really happy to hear that you're feeling better already. And also from my side, if you need some further support, please always feel free to reach out.

Speaker 2: Thank you, Mareike. Thank you very much. Uh, I hope you have a successful, uh, presentation. Your Thesis and I hope that you are successful in, uh, you know, pursuing your academic background. And, uh, I don't know. Hopefully if I'm in Germany, we could meet one day and have a nice discussion on this topic, you know? I wish you all the best for your future, wherever you are, whatever you do. Thank you very much. And hopefully this was helpful. If there is anything I could do, uh, just feel free and, you know, attend me and Inshallah I will be, I'll be there to see.

13.4 Interview Transcript

Speaker 1: Super vielen Dank genau für mich wäre es jetzt erstmal vielleicht interessant zu wissen zu Ihrem persönlichen Hintergrund was haben Sie vorher gemacht, was haben sie gelernt, genau und wie Sie stehen Sie in Verbindung mit Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Was habe ich gelernt? Ich habe Politikwissenschaft studiert und mich in meinem Studium schon sehr stark auf internationales und internationale Beziehungen, Fokus, Entwicklungszusammenarbeit konzentriert. Oft vor allem, was Praktika angingen, und hab deswegen auch meine Diplomarbeit über das Thema geschrieben und hab mich dann direkt nach dem Studium bei der GTZ beworben, für ein Praktikum erst mal und bin da über das Praktikum dann eingestiegen und hab dann als Gutachter bei der GTZ noch kurz gearbeitet und dann mit einem fest Vertrag und hab da unterschiedliche Stufen durchlaufen und 2017 bin ich als Landes Direktor der GIZ dann nach Afghanistan. Beziehungsweise. Der Start war tatsächlich nicht in Afghanistan, sondern in Dubai. Ich bin in der Relokierungs Phase damals eingestiegen. Nachdem im Mai der Anschlag auf die deutsche Botschaft in Kabul stattgefunden hat oder in der Nähe der deutschen Botschaft, war es notwendig, alle internationalen Mitarbeiterin Mitarbeiterin zuerst in

sicheren Platz zu bringen. Das war dann Dubai, und deswegen hat meine Tätigkeit als Landes Direktor in Dubai begonnen, und ich bin also bis Juni Vorort gewesen Juni 2019 und bin im September Oktober 2019 habe ich die Verantwortung abgegeben.

Speaker 1: Dürfte ich fragen, was dann genau ihre Aufgaben als Landes Direktor in Afghanistan. waren?

Speaker 2: Landes Direktoren tragen die Gesamtverantwortung für die Präsenz und die Aktivitäten der Organisation im Land. Zu dem Zeitpunkt, als ich begonnen habe, war Afghanistan das größte bilaterale Portfolio der GIZ weltweit ein sehr spannendes Portfolio mit. etwa 60 % BMZ Finanzierung 40% Prozent Auswärtiges Amt aus dem gemeinnützigen Bereich sind nicht wieder Grundfinanzierung, zudem noch plus ziemlich großes International Services Portfolio. Das größte der größte Mitarbeiterin Mitarbeiterstamm weltweit war in Afghanistan mit. Als ich angefangen hab, glaube ich, ich hab 1200 Leuten. und die waren untergebracht in sieben Standorten, das heißt man war also verantwortlich für sieben Standorte im Land verteilt. Die Aufteilung, wo die wesentlichen Aktivitäten stattfinden, war international getroffen worden. Da hat man das ja so nach solchen Speichen hatte man das ausgeteilt, und Deutschland hat hier die sogenannte Nord Speiche. Das heißt also unsere Aktivitäten waren im Wesentlichen im Norden des Landes Mazar el Sharif als größte Umsetzung Standort Feizabad, Taloqan. Wir werden später noch in Herat ein neues Büro aufgemacht im Westen des Landes, als der Norden immer unsicherer wurde es gab ursprünglich noch im Büro in Jalalabad, was dann nur noch von International Services genutzt wurde, bei ansonsten Jalalabad eigentlich auch zu gefährlich war für internationale ja und das war die Hauptverantwortung alles da entsprechend, im täglichen Verantwortungsbereich dann auch letztendlich umsetzen, steuern, managen, die die Portfolio Gestaltung mit Verantworten repräsentieren. Wir hatten relativ viele repräsentative Aufgaben. Ja und sonst die die Rolle eines Landes Direktors ist schon auch sehr wechselhaft oder sehr sehr vielfältig und sagen gerade in so einem fragilen kontext, wo natürlich viele Aspekte dann auch mit Sicherheitsfragen zusammenhängen, obwohl sie sich auch viel mit deutschen Akteuren entsprechend abstimmen müssen. Deutschland, bei der zweitgrößte zweitgrößte Akteur in Afghanistan, sowohl von den Truppen stellen, aber auch in den Entwicklungsgeldern. Das heißt also, es war eine nicht unerhebliche Verantwortung. Der KfW in Afghanistan. Da der KfW Landes Direktor nicht vor Ort sein durfte, haben wir auch teilweise die KfW Consultants mit betreut sicherheitstechnisch vollständig. Das Risk Management in Afghanistan, der gibt die GIZ hat die gesamte Umsetzung der deutschen staatlichen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit geschützt, das heißt also mit NGOs und teilweise eben auch die politischen Stiftung. Das war dann viel Abstimmungs Notwendigkeit einerseits mit den ganzen Akteuren da vor Ort. Dazu kam natürlich noch das nicht unerhebliche Polizei Contingent, was in Afghanistan tätig war von der deutschen Polizei und da die GIZ damals auch drei Polizei Projekte gemacht hat, war das relativ viel Koordinations Arbeit und natürlich immer die Abstimmung auch mit der Bundeswehr. mit der Botschaft

Speaker 1: Alles klar super, da ich meine Masterarbeit auch viel auf den politikwissenschaftlichen Aspekt eingehen möchte, sagt ihnen die Theorie des Realismus etwas?

Speaker 2: Jetzt nicht mit Bezug auf Afghanistan. Ansonsten, ja.

Speaker 1: Okay, okay, ja kein Problem, sonst hätte ich nämlich gefragt, in wie fern sie das auf Afghanistan bezogen hätten, aber ist auch nicht schlimm, kein Problem. Dann würde ich weiter mit der Frage machen. Was haben Sie denn für ein Gefühl? Was hat sich jetzt nach der Machtübernahme der Taliban in Afghanistan verändert oder wie äußert sich dieser Wandel?

Speaker 2: Ich glaube, dass sich grundsätzlich, dass man das auch noch mal regional unterscheiden muss. also die Zeit, die ich vor Ort waren 2017, 18, 19 war ja schon ne Zeit, in der die Landgewinne der Taliban und zumindest massiv umkämpfte Gebiete schon relativ große Flächen im Land eingenommen haben. Das heißt also auch damals gab es schon Land Verantwortlichkeiten der Taliban und da denke ich hat sich nicht, war es nicht viel geändert. bei der die Taliban die Faktor schon entsprechende Kontrolle hatten. **Sie müssen sich das eh so vorstellen, dass im Prinzip man eigentlich zu diesem Zeitpunkt schon relativ viele Inseln hatte, das waren vor allen Dingen die großen Städte, wo eben die offizielle Regierungsmacht noch existierte, meistens geteilt mit entsprechenden. Warlords oder Regionalfürsten, die dann ihre ihre Drähte im Hintergrund noch gezogen haben, oder wohin Deals das Land dominiert haben und da, wo die Regierung die entsprechende Kontrolle hatte, spricht also in den großen Städten hat sich sicherlich was, die hat sich sicherlich signifikant nicht viel verändert.** Natürlich, was die Freiheit, das Bewegen ist angeht. Ich bin selber nicht vor Ort, kann das nicht hundertprozentig beurteilen, aber was ich von Kollegen mit bekomme oder auch von Bekannten, die noch vor Ort sind, gibt es sehr viele Straßensperren, Die gab es vorher auch, aber die waren da zur Sicherheit gegeben. **Hier gibt es jetzt sehr viel Kontrolle, sehr viel checks. Die Taliban haben eigentlich keine politische Agenda. Sie haben keine wirtschaftliche Agenda, Das heißt also nach meiner Kenntnis liegen die wirtschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen nahe zu brach. Es fließen keine Investitionen entstanden. Der internationale Kapitalfluss ist komplett eingefroren. Sie haben relativ nicht Handels Möglichkeiten. Und natürlich die massive Unterdrückung der Frauen und jeglicher westlich orientierte Akteure, das jetzt TV Sender sind, ob das Radiosender sind. Die Meinungs Bildung ist aus meiner Sicht massiv dominiert und letztendlich natürlich vor allem auch Ausbildungs und Aufstiegsmöglichkeiten sind stark aufgrund von Stammes und religiöser Zugehörigkeit definiert.** Und das sind aus meiner Sicht schon Möglichkeiten, die sich vorher gegeben haben. Auch wenn das Regime sicherlich das, was die alte Regierung gestellt hat, auch in vielen Bereichen zu hinterfragen.

Speaker 1: Sie haben jetzt bereits einige Aspekte genannt wie politischen wirtschaftliche Agenda, die einfach fehlt. Könnten Sie sich vorstellen, was vielleicht noch weiter zu Einschränkungen oder Herausforderungen führen könnten? Jetzt, dass die Taliban am Regime sind.

Speaker 2: Naja, ich meine die die rechtlichen Aspekte sind natürlich dominant, also die **Einführung von Scharia Recht als alleiniges Recht erachte ich natürlich höchst kritisch.** Also die GIZ hat zu der Zeit, wo ich vor Ort waren, Rechtsstaatlichkeit Projekt durchgeführt und das wurde schon lange durchgeschnitten. Sehr großes Vorhaben, in dem auch versucht wurde, sozusagen die unterschiedlichen Rechtssysteme, also die Stammes rechtlichen Prozedere, dann ein westliches Rechtsverständnis mit Scharia Recht harmonisch zusammenzuführen und zu einem sozusagen neuen spezifischen Rechts seine Rechtsphilosophie auch zu vermählen fand ich ein sehr spannenden Ansatz. und jetzt das alles zum Beispielsweise auf Scharia Recht zurückzudrehen, ist natürlich ein massiver Rückschritt für für große Teile des Landes und was aus meiner Sicht auch letztendlich. in den westlichen Medien oft falsch dargestellt wird, ist, dass die Taliban als einen monolithischen politischen, politischen Block gibt. Das halte ich für eine absolute Fehleinschätzung. **Die Taliban sind erstmal eine Bewegung mit sehr vielen unterschiedlichen Strömungen, mit sehr vielen unterschiedlichen Finanzflüssen.** Und das haben wir in den in den unterschiedlichen Regionen ja immer schon gespürt, das ist da zum Beispiel auch zur Zeit vor dem Zusammenbruch des alten Regimes durchaus der Kommunikations Möglichkeiten mit Taliban gaben. Die hatten natürlich eine staatliche Einrichtung in Katar verortet, aber auch vor Ort wussten viele Leute, wer Taliban Unterstützer sind oder vielleicht sogar sich zur Taliban Gruppe zu gehörig führen. Und das war mal unkritisch, weil es dann natürlich auch sehr pragmatische Denker gibt und dann war das mal sehr kritischen weil es fundamentale Denker gibt, und ich denke, dass es genauso die Vielfältigkeit jetzt auch der unterschiedlichen Strömungen abbildet. Und da man letztendlich außer dem Sieg keine politische Agenda hat, ist das natürlich eine fatale Situation. **Das heißt, die Fragilität des Landes hat sich eigentlich nicht**

verringert. Auch mit momentan weniger klassische Bombenanschläge und kriegerische Auseinandersetzungen dokumentiert sind, erachte ich die Instabilität des Landes eigentlich als höher als vorher.

Speaker 1: Vielen Dank, Sie haben jetzt bereits auch schon die Rolle der Frau angesprochen, und wie wir gesehen haben, sind schon einige Einschränkungen vorgenommen worden. Was denken Sie? Wie könnte die Weiterentwicklung aussehen?

Speaker 2: Also die naheliegende Entwicklung ist es, das weitergedreht wird in diese Richtung entspricht also, dass die Marginalisierung der Rolle von Frauen immer weiter vorangetrieben wird. Andere Szenarien sind auch denkbar bei ihr unwahrscheinlich. Es kann auch sein, dass man da letztendlich auch wohl von westlichen Druck entweder tatsächlich Zugeständnisse macht, also zum Beispiel weiterhin Bildungszugang für zumindest jüngere Mädchen zulässt, Zugang zu Universitäten vielleicht offen hält, wenn auch zu bestimmten Bereichen nur oder zu bestimmten Feldern. und und gleichzeitig symbolischen Charakter hat und hier und da und dort meine Frau und irgendeine Rolle schlüpfen lässt auch, wenn das dann letztendlich gesteuert Rahmenbedingungen sind und und keine freie Enthaltung von Frau mehr.

Speaker 1: Vielen Dank, wir sind ja auch derzeit noch die Evakuierung, sind immer noch im Gange, viele auf eigene Faust, die über Landwege wirklich versuchen, das Land zu verlassen. Könnten Sie sich vorstellen, was auch das für Auswirkungen auf das Land haben wird, dass viele aus der Bildungsschicht jetzt aus dem Land fliehen?

Speaker 2: Gut. Also das Land ist ja eh schon ausgeblutet in mehreren Phasen. Man darf das glaube ich, auch nicht unterschätzen, dass die Großteile der der afghanischen Elite ja schon in den 70 ern bei dem Einmarsch der Russen das Land verlassen haben, das war die erste intellektuelle Ausblutung Phase, die zweite sicherlich, als die Taliban die Macht übernommen haben. zum ersten Mal und die kriegerischen Auseinandersetzungen der letzten Jahre haben mit Sicherheit auch dazu geführt viele, gerade intellektuelle, Eliten und auch Wirtschaft das Land verlassen. Das heißt also das ist keine. Dadurch entwickelt sich auch eine große Diaspora. und und das sind teilweise positive Entwicklung, weil dadurch natürlich Geldströme ins Land zurückfließen. Aber das ist natürlich auch Das erhöht natürlich auch die Attraktivität, das Land insgesamt zu verlassen. So Flucht aus Afghanistan jetzt zu der Situation 2017. Als ich ins Land kam, ging man davon aus, dass die rund um Afghanistan noch mal etwa zwei bis zweieinhalb Millionen Flüchtlinge in den Anrainerländern schon untergebracht waren, also im Iran und in Pakistan, vor allen Dingen, die vor den kriegerischen Auseinandersetzung geflohen sind. Die Flucht nach Europa ist keine Flucht armer Menschen. Eine Flucht nach Europa hat zum damaligen Zeitpunkt acht bis 10.000 Dollar gekostet. Man kann jetzt davon ausgehen, dass das aufgrund der gestiegenen Nachfrage so absurd das klingt, noch mal deutlich teurer geworden ist. Das heißt also, arme Leute können sich das überhaupt nicht leisten. Das heißt also, sie haben eine wirtschaftlich eine wirtschaftliche Mittelschicht, die das Land verlässt? Die wirtschaftliche Elite hat das Land schon verlassen. Und das ist natürlich ein weiteres Ausbluten, was zu ja sicherlich gravierenden Veränderungen der gesamten Struktur wirtschaftlich, kulturell, gesellschaftlich gehören wird.

Speaker 1: Danke schön. Pakistan wurde jetzt bereits auch schon angesprochen. Es ist eins der Länder, worauf ich mich auch ganz spezialisieren würde gerade, wenn es um den innenpolitischen Kontext geht. Wir sehen, dass viele Evakuierung oder auch wie gesagt, auf eigene Faust gerade über den Landweg nach Pakistan passieren. Was denken Sie, welche Rolle spielt oder spielte Pakistan auch mit Afghanistan in politischer und wirtschaftlicher Hinsicht?

Speaker 2: Immer eine wichtige. Wie stark diese Rolle ist, ist Spekulation, glaube ich, auch schwierig aus einem aus meiner Perspektive zu bewerten. Natürlich kenne ich die. unterschiedlichen Ansichten, dass es möglicherweise Interessen gibt, ein Pashtunistan zu gründen. Die strategische Tiefe, die Pakistan immer in Afghanistan gesehen hat, um möglicherweise einem indischen Angriff auch strategische Tiefe entgegenhalten zu können und natürlich auch die Rolle der Taliban, die stark vor allem des Haqqani-Netzwerk. aus Pakistan offensichtlich mit gefördert wurden. Wie wirklich signifikant die Prägung jetzt aus Pakistan ist kann ich nicht bewerten, das für mich spekulativ, da haben wir alle vor Ort ob das Militärs waren oder Geheimdienste unsere Annahmen gehabt, aber validieren konnte man das nicht.

Speaker 1: Vielen Dank jetzt nochmal zum internationalen Kontext, wir hatten gesehen die Briten, Russland, USA, ich würde jetzt gerne die Briten habe ich ein bisschen weils bis hin zu weit weg ist jetzt ausgeschlossen. Ich würde mich jetzt gerne lieber auf Russland und die USA konzentrieren, jetzt erst mal zu Russland. Was denken Sie Welche Rolle spielte Russland? Politisch, wirtschaftlich und auch militärisch mit den Kontext?

Speaker 2: Ja, gut, also die der Einmarsch in Afghanistan. ist ja, ist ja historisch denke ich, ausreichend beleuchtet worden. Ich finde interessanter natürlich erstens, dass die die sowjetische Armee es nicht geschafft hat das Land zu erobern, und damals natürlich auch letztendlich viele militär taktische Fehler gemacht wurden, die interessanterweise sich immer wieder wiederholt haben also die NATO hat das ja dann genauso wieder gemacht und ich kann das nicht beurteilen, ich bin kein Militär, aber selbst hochrangige Militärs haben Mir glaubwürdig versichert, dass es für die Russen eine große Genugtuung ist, selbst die hochgerüstete NATO die gleichen Fehler machen zu sehen und dann letztendlich auch in dem Land nicht gewinnen zu können, genauso wie die Russen das damals gemacht haben, auch die Russen haben, denke ich, die die traditionellen gesellschaftlichen und religiösen und auch völkischen Beziehungen unterschätzt, glaube ich. Und durch diese starke Prägung des Landes, die durch bestimmte Stämme oder oder Sippen sehr dominiert wird, hat man eben klassisch mit einer Zentralregierung versucht, damals im als im russischen Krieg. anzugehen. und das so funktioniert das nicht. Sie haben dann halt immer sehr starke dezentrale Unruheherde und lässt sich Natürlich ist es da halt kein klassischer Fronten Krieg und das ist, glaube ich noch mal wichtiger Aspekt Sie haben halt immer wieder Guerilla ähnliche Nester an Unruhen, die aufgekommen. Dazu haben sie eine sehr schwierige Topografie, natürlich durch die durch die entsprechenden. Gebirgszüge, die das Land durchziehen, und letztendlich interessante Wetter Konstellationen, sehr harten Wintern, sehr schneereiche Winter, oftmals sehr trockenen und heißen Sommern das ist natürlich für Material und Menschen unglaublich ermüdende Konstellationen.

Speaker 1: Jetzt noch mal zurückzukommen auf die USA. Was glauben Sie, warum hat die USA sich zurückgezogen? Meinen Sie es vielleicht auch was mit der Regierungs Regierungswechsel zu tun gehabt oder was könnten da die Gründe gewesen sein?

Speaker 2: Also ich glaube, dass die wesentliche Motivation innenpolitisch war. Ich glaube auch, dass die Motivation, was militärische Taktik angeht, da letztendlich die klassischen innen politischen Gründe zu viele Verluste, zu viel Geld, zu geringe Erfolgs Wahrscheinlichkeit und dann ist es letztendlich eine relativ nüchterne wirtschaftliche Abwägung wahrscheinlich gewesen. Was können wir da gewinnen, was kann man verlieren? Ich kann nur spekulieren, welche Rolle auch die Vergabung, die Vergabe nicht Vergabung, die Vergabe von bestimmten Rechten zum Beispiel chinesische Unternehmen bedeutet hat. Also, es gab immer wieder Gerüchte, in meiner Zeit schon, das natürlich die nicht unerheblichen Rohstoff Grundlagen, die Afghanistan hat damals eben auch an chinesische Unternehmen sehr stark vergeben wurden, wieder vergeben, das ist da Vergaben gegeben hat und das dann eben auch die wirtschaftliche Interessen der USA deutlich geringer geworden sind. Ich glaube auch, dass Afghanistan per se an

geostrategischen, an geostrategischer Relevanz verloren hat und andere Unruheherde weltweit aufgetreten sind, wo die USA sich sicherlich auch eine gewisse Manövrierfähigkeit ihrer militärischen Kapazitäten erhalten wollen.

Speaker 1: Sie hatten jetzt bereits China angesprochen. Glauben Sie, China spielt in den ganzen Kontext auch eine Rolle oder eher eine untergeordnete?

Speaker 2: Dass sie eine relativ signifikante Rolle spielen und dass die der neuen Taliban Führer sie ist es nach Peking gefahren sind, ist sicherlich kein Zufall gewesen. Sie wissen, welche Symbolkraft solche Besucher haben. Der neue deutsche Bundeskanzler hatte schon angekündigt, wo er hinfährt. etc.. **Das hat eine hohe Symbolkraft, und dass die Taliban als erstes nach China fahren, ist sicherlich schon auch als Zeichen zu verstehen.** Und gut, es gibt eine Grenze zu China. China hat ein großes Interesse daran zu verhindern, dass da sagen wir mal, zu radikale islamische Strömungen auch auf das eigene Staatsgebiet ein prasseln und deswegen gibt es, glaube ich, nicht unerhebliches Interesse, Afghanistan einigermaßen unter Kontrolle zu halten.

Speaker 1: Vielen Dank, was glauben Sie denn? Wie wird die weitere Entwicklung in Bezug auf die EU und Deutschland sein, werden sie sich heraushalten? Wird da vielleicht noch weiter geschaut wie man entsprechend vorgeht oder was denken Sie sind da die Entwicklung?

Speaker 2: Kurzfristig halte ich es für sehr wahrscheinlich, dass man zumindest humanitär sich wieder engagieren wird. Es gab auch erste, sehr zurückhaltende diplomatische Konstellationen, dem zumindest mal hochrangige Diplomaten inklusive das des deutschen Botschafters wieder in Kabul waren, wenn auch sehr **darauf Wert gelegt wurde, dass das hier keine Anerkennung oder irgendwas ist. Ich vermute, dass man das sehr stark mit angezogener Handbremse weiterfahren wird. Und auch Konditionalisieren wird.** Jetzt war die Konditionalisierung der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit in Afghanistan ja schon in den Jahren davor praktiziert worden es gab ja immer schon dann entsprechende Vereinbarung, zwischen der Geber Landschaft und der afghanischen Regierung bestimmte Erfolge nachzuweisen und die dann wieder sozusagen zusätzliche Geldbeträge freigestellt gelegt haben und neue Maßnahmen dann ermöglicht haben. Das wurde mehr schlecht als recht umgesetzt. Ich glaube, dass man so was sehr viel rigider machen wird und dann auch eine Art Monitoring System benötigt, inwiefern dann zum Beispiel sich auch die das neue Regime an tatsächliche Zusagen einhält. Wenn das möglich ist, **halte ich eine Politik der sehr kleinen Schritte für möglich, was bedeutet, dass man sehr langsam gucken wird. Ist ein gewisses Vertrauensverhältnis überhaupt möglich oder wird das, wird das enttäuscht? Und wie kann zum beispiel auch durch einen eine Taliban Regierung tatsächlich die Sicherheit von Menschen vor Ort gewährleistet werden?** Schaffen die es auch, die logistischen Möglichkeiten im Flughafen offen zu halten etc. zu bieten und wenn das möglich ist, denke ich, kann man bei einem optimistischen Szenario mittelfristig auch wieder anfangen, da im humanitären Bereich stärker selber tätig zu werden und nicht nur über EU oder multilaterale Mittel und langfristig muss man als abwarten. Ich glaube, dass in Afghanistan haben alle gelernt, dass man sowieso dann schlussendlich langfristig gar nichts planen.

Speaker 1: Das stimmt, sehr gut. Wir hatten wir gesagt, hatte bereits angesprochen mit den. Briten, Russland, USA, denken Sie und jetzt auch mit der Taliban, die wieder an die Macht gekommen ist. Denken Sie, das ist die Geschichte sich wiederholt, eine wiederkehrende Ordnung, könnte man davon sprechen.? Sie hatten auch Nato angesprochen

Speaker 2: Die erste Frage ist finde ich, **gab es vielleicht eine dauerhafte Ordnung unter der offiziellen, und die hat sich eigentlich nie groß verändert? Und das ist Teil meiner Theorie für dieses Land, das ist halt aufgrund der der Stammes Beziehungen der religiösen Relevanz der unterschiedlichen völkischen Ströme immer schon bestimmte Konstellationen gab, die eigentlich wichtiger waren als offizielle politische Konstellation.** Und ich denke, dass sich die Menschen in Afghanistan weiter hin jetzt momentan in diesen Konstellationen bewegen und sich letztendlich dann auch ein bisschen anpassen in Afghanistan ist ja immer die sie haben wir keine keine klassische Kompromissfindung, sondern **es gibt eigentlich immer Deals**, also machst du das, dann mache ich das. Damit können sie eigentlich einen Vorschauendenden Rahmen für eine staatliche Prägung setzen, und ich vermute, dass die Taliban die gleichen Schwierigkeiten haben werden.

Speaker 1: Vielen Dank, wie gesagt es gibt weder falsch noch richtig, aber sie sind entsprechend auf die frage eingegangen das ist schon mal sehr wichtig. Was jetzt für mich noch interessant wäre ich benutze ja in meiner Research Question den Term Graveyards of Empires. Das spaltet natürlich die Meinung auch immer etwas. Was sagen Sie denn dazu?

Speaker 2: Das würde ja ein bisschen suggerieren, dass jetzt die Besatzungsmächte dann auch quasi ein Kollabierungs Prozess daheim durchlaufen, also dass sich die USA als sogenannte Super Macht eine blutige Nase geholt haben, kann man schon konstatieren. Ich halte also jetzt gesamt. Von der Gesamt Konstellation muss man den **militärischen Einsatz aus meiner Sicht als gescheitert betrachten, den humanitären und politischen Mechanismus meines Erachtens nicht. Also ich glaube, dass wir schon mit vielen Möglichkeiten, die es gab, dazu beigetragen haben, dass es der Gesellschaft deutlich besser geht. Die Kindersterblichkeit wurde signifikant verringert, die Rechte der Frauen wurden signifikant gestärkt und bestimmte Dinge davon werden bestehen bleiben.** Insofern ist das sicherlich außerhalb der militärischen Intervention sind auch gute Dinge passiert, die erhalten bleiben werden. Und letztendlich war ja der der Angriff warum ist also hatte auch gewisse Werte getriebene Interessen, wenn sie sich das Nationbuilding angucken, was damals im Prinzip als als Vision für Afghanistan gesetzt wurde, wollte man ja ein westliche Demokratie oder eine Demokratie nach westlichem Verständnis kreieren und ein Staatsverständnis in Afghanistan prägen, was natürlich die westlichen Werte entsprechend abbildet, und ich denke, einige dieser Werte werden erhalten bleiben. **Insofern bleibt auch was da, aber das Interventionen in Afghanistan offenbar mit einem großen scheitert Potential verbunden sind, lässt sich nicht abstreiten. Also, insofern ist es eine spannende These. Müsste natürlich noch mal bewerten, wie stark tatsächlich das sich jetzt auch die intervenierenden Staaten auswirkt.** Meine Wahrnehmung ist, dass der NATO Einsatz, weil er von den Truppen stellen Ländern. der der eigenen Bevölkerung der Truppen stellen Länder als so wenig Sinn Haft angesehen wurde letztendlich doch trotz aller Dramatik die, die der Abzug da mit sich brachte, als gut geheißen wird.

Speaker 1: Ich finde es auch hochinteressant, wie wirklich Leute von jeglichem Hintergrund eine andere Ansicht haben, und deswegen finde ich das auch sehr spannend, entsprechend dann in meiner Thesis zu diskutieren und zu schauen genau an, dann kommt, was für mich jetzt noch wichtig wäre zu wissen oder interessant. Sie hatten jetzt bereits gesagt, dass Sie glauben, es läuft viel auf die humanitäre Hilfe aus, wenn jetzt über Afghanistan entsprechen. Was glauben Sie könnten denn mögliche weitere Entwicklung sein? Sowohl extern als auch intern? Also domestic als internationale Beziehungen mäßig auf Afghanistan bezogen, wie könnte sich das entsprechend entwickeln? Was denken Sie da?

Speaker 2: Ja, also ich glaube, dass es relativ lange noch jetzt ein sehr instabilen Charakter behalten wird, der im Wesentlichen auch dadurch geprägt sein wird, wie Strack die Taliban eigentlich wirklich die Kontrolle über das Land ausüben und einen ein klassisches staatliches Steuern überhaupt möglich ist. Und da, glaube ich, kann man Moment wenig konkrete Aussagen zu treffen. Parallel wird es sicherlich über die ich glaube das erst mal sehr weit weit reichende Fluchtbewegungen noch stattfinden werden. Gerade wenn jetzt zum Beispiel über den Winter die entsprechende, **schon vorhersehbare Hungersnot kommen wird**, wird es da, glaube ich, ganz dramatische humanitäre Konditionen geben und dann

werden sicherlich die, wird die internationale Staatengemeinschaft da intervenieren. Da bin ich relativ von überzeugt, dass man das schon erst mal die Bedienung von grundlegenden Bedürfnissen entsprechend ermöglichen wird. Ob es wieder zu einer klassischen, auf langfristige Wirkung ausgerichteten Entwicklungszusammenarbeit kommt, muss man abwarten. Das hängt von unterschiedlichen Faktoren ab. Ich bin da erst mal sicher, dass es ein Interesse geben wird, dort wieder tätig zu werden, auch Deutschland, auch um zu zeigen es war nicht alles umsonst. Aber das wird von sehr vielen Faktoren abhängen. **Ansonsten finde ich bemerkenswert, dass natürlich viele der islamischen Staaten, sich sehr stark bei dem jüngeren Prozess weggeduckt haben. Sie hören dazu gar nichts aus Saudi Arabien, sie hören ganz wenig aus den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten, Iran. äußert sich maximal eigentlich zu den Flüchtlingsbewegungen und zu Befürchtungen, dass das wirkliche radikale Kräfte terroristischer Art in Afghanistan wieder Fuß fassen könnten.** Ansonsten war meine Theorie, das vielleicht von diesen Akteuren auch eine gewisse gestaltende Rolle eingenommen werden könnte. Saudi Arabien zum Beispiel ist ja auch nicht unerheblicher begehrt immer mit mit mit Eigeninteressen verbunden ist natürlich auch nicht ungewöhnlich ist bei bei Entwicklungszusammenarbeit und da hätte ich zum Beispiel gedacht, dass sehr viel gestalten da und auch mit sehr viel mehr Struktur bildender Line eingegriffen wird und das macht mir ein bisschen Sorge, dass da gar nichts passiert. Ich denke, dass Russland das sehr, sehr aufmerksam beobachten wird in den Zusammenspiel auch mit China, weil ein unruhiges, ein dauerhaften, weiter unruhiges Afghanistan. Da hat keiner ein Interesse dran.

Speaker 1: Vielen Dank, sehr interessant, auf jeden Fall das was tatsächlich jetzt schon mit den Fragen Jetzt hätte ich vielleicht noch eine persönliche Frage, was denken Sie denn, wie sieht da die weitere Zusammenarbeit mit der GIZ aus? Glauben Sie, es wird weitergehen oder glauben Sie eher, dass es dann wird er auf humanitäre Hilfe ausläuft?

Speaker 2: Also erstens gerade jetzt auch durch meine Arbeit bei International Service zusammen ist, sag ich sowieso nie, nie also fundamental. Aussagen verbieten sich in dem Geschäft. Ich glaube schon, dass das möglich sein wird, da wieder zu arbeiten. Und wie gesagt, letztendlich muss man immer, glaube ich, bei solchen Ländern, von sehr vielen Negativ Szenarien ausgehen und von den Negativ Szenarien kann ein stabiles Taliban kann ein stabiles Afghanistan unter Taliban Führung das beste der Negativ Szenarien sein aus unterschiedlichen Motivation und ich glaube, das ist ein Pragmatismus, der sich momentan in Deutschland relativ stark entwickelt und der deswegen dazu führen könnte, dass man sagt na ja, selbst wenn das jetzt mit Werte getriebene Entwicklungszusammenarbeit nichts zu tun hat. Alleine da zum Beispiel jetzt relativ unverfängliche Beiträge zu leisten im Gesundheitssektor, im Agrarbereich, in der, in der gewissen Aspekten der Wirtschaftsförderung, in formeller Sektors Bildung möglicherweise, kann man sich schon vorstellen. Ich sehe, da das da eine deutlich durch die Ernüchterung eine deutliche pragmatische Blickweise entsteht, und das könnte letztendlich dazu führen, dass es vielleicht gar nicht mehr so fern ist, bis man da wieder anfängt, tätig zu werden. Die andere Frage, die damit zusammenhängt ist natürlich die Wer macht das denn dann? also je mehr auch die GIZ lokales Personal die Möglichkeit, nach Deutschland zu kommen, oder oder zumindest in die Nachbarländer zu vielen ermöglicht Was ich für richtig und wichtig halte, bedeutet natürlich auch, dass damit immer mehr Struktur und Wissen vor Ort verloren geht. Netzwerke etc. und das wird natürlich in mühsamer Prozess, sich das alles wieder neu aufzubauen, aber ich denke, den Weg wird man dann geben, man wird dann wahrscheinlich mit mit sehr viel mehr vom Verhältnis her, mit mehr internationalen Personal vor Ort tätig sein und weniger nationalen, als das möglicherweise in der Vergangenheit der Fall gewesen ist. um auch ja letztendlich der erst mal wieder Fuß zu fassen. .

Speaker 1: Ja vielen lieben Dank, dass sie sich wirklich nochmal die Zeit genommen haben, jetzt auch kurz vor Weihnachten noch mal, dass das so frontal alles geklappt hat. Hoch interessant, auf jeden Fall die Antworten Ich freue mich da entsprechend, das alles auszuwerten.

Speaker 2: Ich hab oft bis spät abends gegessen und dann bin ich abends immer durch die ganzen Häuser und habe überall das Licht ausgemacht, weil die überall das Licht angelassen haben, und dann habe ich zu meinem Assistenten gesagt auch ein Afghane, denk doch mal, wie viel Energie das verbraucht ihr seid so ein armes land und dann hunt ihr hier die Energie einfach so hin macht doch mal selber das Licht aus und da hat er gesagt Carsten wenn du jeden morgen wenn du aus dem Haus gehst, nicht weißt, ob du abends lebend zurückkommst, ist dir die Energie durch den Lichtschalter echt scheißegal und das ist so ein prägender Satz gewesen, wo ich immer wieder dran denke, das ist halt einfach ein unglaublicher Pragmatismus. Einigen sehr trauriger Pragmatismus, mit dem Afghanen mit jeglichen Schicksalsschläge umgehen und Pragmatismus ist noch positiv, wenn es negativ sehen ist es Fatalismus und das so dazwischen geht das immer so und mit dieser Haltung geprägt durch 40 Jahre Kriegszustand in ihrem Land. Es ist einfach auch sehr erschütternd und das sind die Menschen jetzt einfach wieder erneut sehr ernüchtert und fundamental enttäuscht,. Dann stürzen alle Hoffnungen zusammen, die man trotz dieser pragmatischen Blickweise dennoch hatte

13.5 Interview Transcript

Speaker 1 So und für mich, was interessant und wichtig wäre vielleicht, wenn du einfach kurz mit einem kleinen Überblick starten könntest zu deinem Hintergrund, was du vorher gemacht hast und da einfach vielleicht nicht erzählen könntest.

Speaker 2: Ich arbeite seit 30 Jahren in der internationalen Zusammenarbeit, habe gerade im Bildungsbereich und in den Nachfolgestaaten der Sowjetunion und mit Fokus auch auf Zentralasien und Afghanistan sowie Spezialisierung von Bildungs ganz allgemein mit Berufsbildung in speziell um mehrere Projekte und sieben EU Projekte gemanagt und mit von 14 tägigen Einsatz als Experte bis hin zu vier Jahren.

Speaker 1: Okay super. Darf ich fragen, was du vorher gelernt hast?

Speaker 2: Ich habe ein Studium der Politischen Ökonomie an der Staatlichen Universität Sankt Petersburg in Russland absolviert, 86 und dann auch dort promoviert und dann noch ein BA gemacht an der Open University in United Kingdom.

Speaker 1: Super, vielen Dank. Und jetzt meine Frage Wie lang arbeitest du denn schon mit Afghanistan oder in Afghanistan? Wann kamst du das erste Mal damit in Berührung?

Speaker 2 2015 war ich für ein Jahr ungefähr im Einsatz und ist es noch ein Jahr. Aber dadurch, dass das so weit ist, seit 20 Jahren natürlich im Mittelpunkt. Und das ist eins. Als ein Beispiel dafür, wie man versucht, die Probleme Entwicklungsprobleme insgesamt anzugehen. Und dafür ist es da der sichtbare Aspekt von vielen anderen Bemühungen.

Speaker 1 Und was waren deine genauen Aufgaben, als du in Afghanistan arbeitest?

Speaker 2 2015 war es ein Schreiben von Business Plänen für Berufsbildungsinstitutionen und Evaluierung von Bildungsinstitutionen und Erarbeitung von Strategien und Modernisierungs Plänen und jetzt als Beratung des Arbeitsministeriums zur Organisationsentwicklung und Humanressourcen development im allgemein.

Speaker 1: Alles klar. Sagt dir die Theorie des Realismus was?

Speaker 2: Nein, nein.

Speaker 1: Okay, kein Problem. Da machen wir da weiter. Super, dann würde ich schon mal direkt damit anfangen. Und zwar in Bezug auf die Taliban. Was würdest du sagen, hat sich nach der Machtübernahme der Taliban in Afghanistan geändert? Oder wie äußert sich dieser Wandel?

Speaker 2: Was sich geändert hat? Was hat sich geändert seit der Machtübernahme der Taliban? **Das Land ist abgeschnitten worden von seiner wichtigsten Finanzierungsquellen. Zu welchem Maße das jetzt relevant ist, ist teilweise umstritten. Die Schätzungen der UN gehen von 30 Prozent Rückgang des Bruttosozialproduktes bis hin zur größten Wirtschafts Katastrophe in der neuesten Zeit aus.** Wir haben eine duale Ökonomie gehabt in Afghanistan auch, wobei die natürliche Ökonomie im großen Maße, wobei die Moral, die rural regions übrigens prinzipiell kaum davon betroffen waren, die ganzen Subsidien und die ganze Geld ist in die U-Bahn geflossen, mit sehr guten Ergebnissen bei Bildung und Bildung, Demokratie und Gesundheitswesen. Und die sind alle hoch subventioniert vom Ausland gewesen. Und jetzt im Prinzip sind die im freien Fall der der ländliche Gegend ist much more resilience, viel widerstandsfähiger, aber aufgrund von Covid, Trockenheit, Überbevölkerung droht da im Prinzip eine der schlimmste aller schlimmsten Hungersnöte jetzt in der neuesten Zeit. Die Zahlen sind auch sehr ernüchternd und die Taliban sind vollkommen im Prinzip nur eine Miliz Gruppe mit 80.000 Mann. **Sie sind vollkommen überfordert mit der Regierungsübernahme, leben in ihrer eigenen Parallelwelt, sind selbst erschrocken über ihren Erfolg, über ihren militärischen Erfolg und versuchen sie nun, mit der neuen Situation zurechtzukommen, Erfahrung zu sammeln.** Sie werden an der Macht bleiben, weil sie natürlich viel stärker, sehr viel legitimer sind als das alte Regime, als das vom Westen gestützte Regime. Und sie sind viel legitimer. Sie sind viel mehr verwachsen. Sie geben ein. Sie sind nicht korrupt. Allerdings haben wir ein großes Problem. Afghanistan hat kein Geschäftsmodell. Alle Regionen, alle Länder in der Region haben sind an der Peripherie der Weltwirtschaft und haben große Probleme, ihren Platz in der Weltwirtschaft zu finden. Jedes Land versucht auf eigene Weise, mit dieser Positionierung zurechtzukommen. Das klappt mit. Auf alle Fälle nicht alle haben mehrere Lösungen gefunden, aber sind extrem fragil, sind unter Wasser, als würde man aus dem Immobiliensektor sagen, sind abhängig von anderen Sachen. Und für die Taliban ist das definitiv auch der Fall. Die sind und das Land ist abhängig. **Das Land ist im freien Fall sind überwältigt. Die letzten Sachen war das Pakistan beschimpfen dass die nicht den richtigen Islam haben, sozusagen in sich eine Tür offen lassen, dass im militärischen Kampf fortsetzen das, was sie können, wo Kapazitäten wurden, wo sie Kapazitäten haben. Aber das, was natürlich jetzt, was natürlich jetzt für den Wohlstand des Landes ist, natürlich vollkommen drittrangig ist. Allerdings das Land war immer schon in der International, also dass die Taliban wie seit zweihundert Jahren ist, das Land nicht von sich selbst regiert hat es produziert. Die These ist Das Land hat nicht produziert, nicht genug, um ein stabiles soziales Gebilde zu sein. Seit 250 Jahren,** seit der Beginn der Industrialisierung ist da eine Diskrepanz zwischen den vorhandenen Ressourcen und. Und den und die vorhandenen Ressourcen und den Notwendigkeiten für Staats und Nationenbildung. Und das wir das unausgeglichene Taliban haben dasselbe Problem. Man kann es jetzt in den Nachbarstaaten sehen Tadschikistan, wie das Problem an der Peripherie gelöst wird. Kirgistan und Pakistan sind bis zu 50 Prozent abhängig von Überweisungen aus dem Ausland. Pakistan ist das ähnlich der Fall. Pakistan ist auch extrem fragil und so weiter so.. Turkmenistan hat kann er gut exportieren, Erdgas exportieren. Usbekistan hat Erdgas und Erdöl und muss. Kasachstan hat auch die beste Entwicklung, kann aber auch Export kann, aber hat auch noch andere Einfluss und es gibt keine Rohstoffe exportieren kann, was auch ausgeschlossen ist für Afghanistan. **Dann habe ich im Prinzip kein Wirtschaftsmodell und meine die Bevölkerung hat sich in den letzten 20 Jahren verdoppelt. Und wenn man die Geschichte liest, ist das nicht vollkommen ausgeschlossen, dass ein paar Millionen Menschen verhungern jetzt in diesem kommenden Winter. Es wird den Herrschaftsanspruch der Taliban nicht beeinträchtigen. Traurig, wie das ist. Aber wir haben die Beispiele aus Venezuela. Wir haben die Beispiele aus Nordkorea, wo 10 15 Prozent davon verhungerten, ohne dass der und das nicht an den anderen Verhältnis was geändert hat. Und der Westen ist im Großen und Ganzen delegitimiert und auch müde vom Einsatz in Afghanistan, so dass da sehr widersprüchlich ist.** Ich habe jetzt gerade den Ausspruch gefunden vom ehemaligen Botschafter der USA, wir sollen keine Entwicklungshilfe machen. Nach Afghanistan wird es ein Aufwand, die Zukunft subventionieren und legitimieren. Und wenn es dann heißt, dass das, was da paar Millionen Menschen sterben, dann ist es eben ist nicht unsere Schuld. Was natürlich moralisch gibt es auch andere Meinungen, aber auf alle Fälle ist dieses wenn man den Spectrum angucken das. Wie wird Afghanistan heute gesehen? Ist das eine Seite des Spektrums, die so ein Ausbluten und Verhungern ist? Dann sind die Taliban, die natürlich auch mit Schuld tragen oder große Mitschuld tragen. Es ist eben dieser Inshallah, Allahs Wille. Es ist als würde man die Menschen verhungern. Man muss es eben so sein. Und der Westen sagt wir können das nicht, wir können doch nicht ohne einen Schatten springen und die Taliban legitimieren. Wenn das nicht unseren Entsprechen ist, dann müssen die Leute eben verhungern. Es gibt sehr große Bemühungen als der allgemeinen Gemeinschaft, aber es gibt auch erste Durchbrüche, dass man das Geld bereitstellt. Aber das Problem was dahinter steckt, ist ein sehr großes Problem. Es ist. **Soll der Staat jetzt unendliche Zeit subventioniert werden, nur weil viele Menschen kein Geschäftsmodell hatten, als könnten andere Länder kommen? Und da gibt es viele Länder in Subsahara-Afrika, die jetzt sagen könnten Ich will es auch subventioniert werden wie Afghanistan und ich spiele jetzt auch für Demokratie, deswegen schickt man ja ein paar Milliarden.** Das würde die Wirtschaftskraft von das Wirtschaft und den Konsum untermauern. Also ist zurzeit ist da sehr, sehr sehr sehr viel im Fluss und die Bewertung über Taliban wird ist im Prinzip ein asymmetrisches Gleichgewicht in der Weltöffentlichkeit. Und die Taliban, selbst wenn das so viel hängt von dem nicht ab. Wir müssen was die sind. Aber wie die Weltöffentlichkeit sich positioniert ist ein ganz großes Problem. Und deswegen was hat sich also die Frage zurückzukommen Was machen die Taliban? Was hat sich geändert? Also die entscheidende Frage ist **Wie ist die Wahrnehmung in der Weltöffentlichkeit über die Taliban? Die Taliban haben sich ein bisschen modernisiert, aber sie sind abhängig vom Ausland, abhängig vom Ausland. Das Land ist abhängig vom Ausland. Und wird abhängig vom Ausland sein.**

Speaker 1: Du hast ja auch bereits gesagt, dass es bei den Taliban auch schnell zu Überforderung kommen könnte. Wo siehst du vielleicht weitere Herausforderungen, die auf die Taliban zukommen könnten?

Speaker 2: Also Taliban sind eine militärische Organisation, die 20 Jahre lang ausgeharrt haben und dann Partisanen Gruppe, **die von ihrem Erfolg selbst überrascht sind. Aber natürlich haben sie keine Erfahrung beim Anleiten eines Staates, sind davon in jeder Hinsicht überfordert.** Sie sind in einer Parallelwelt. Zum Beispiel denken sie, dass jetzt ihre Idee einer Denkweise war, dass wenn die wir ergreifen die Macht und die USA führen die Finanzierung der der Weltöffentlichkeit für die Finanzierung des Landes fort, was natürlich nicht der Fall ist, dann die nächste Illusion ist, dass China jetzt anstelle von Amerika trifft. Das habe ich auch. Das Argument habe ich auch oft in Kabul gehört. Die Chinesen wollen machen, aber Chinesen sind da vorsichtig und sehen dann die eigenen Interessen in erster Linie. Und warum sollte ein anderes Land finden, was in Größenordnungen anderes Land subventioniert? Das war jetzt nach 9/11 war das ein Grund, dass die Weltöffentlichkeit da eingegangen ist? Aber der Grund ist weggefallen. **Aus aus vielen Sachen und keiner kann bereits und Umgebung starten und hatte das Geld da, das das Regime zu finanzieren. So also sind in jeder Hinsicht überfordert von dem Staat. Sie haben die militärische Macht. Sie haben. Sie haben das die Macht der Sachen. Sie sind auch legitimiert in Sachen, weil sie nicht korrupt sind, weil sie das spüren. Aber die gesamte, das was jetzt im**

urbanen Feld an modernen Institutionen aufgebaut wurde, das Feld räumen, wo auf das Level zurück, was der Staat finanzieren kann. Und das ist natürlich viel mehr an Einnahmen und wieder gucken, nach Tadschikistan, Kirgistan gucken. Das, was im oberen Sektor aufgebaut haben, das ist und lässt sich zurzeit alles nicht mehr finanzieren. Und das wird irgendwo schon den Exodus der Mittelschicht. Und das wird sich noch fortsetzen. Weil es gibt keine Arbeit mehr dafür. Es gab es 700 Journalistinnen in Kabul allein und natürlich weder gibt es Interesse an freier Berichterstattung. Noch ist freie Berichterstattung, hat irgendwas damit zu tun, damit den Hunger bekämpfen kann? Es ist ja jetzt eventuell noch ein Asset, dass darüber berichtet wird aus Kabul, dass man da sehr viele Informationen bekommt, dass man dann die Hilfeleistungen der nationalen Öffentlichkeit. Aber die Öffentlichkeit ist müde von Afghanistan, hat viel versucht, hat viel Geld ausgegeben und. Wird das nicht mathematisch fortsetzen. Andererseits ist das Risiko auch für die Weltregierung und viele Europäische Union ist man der Zukunft. Die Fernsehbilder kommen von verhungerten Afghanen die da, die da Fernsehbilder kommen, dann kann sich auch wieder die Wahrnehmung verändern, von der sich leben wir da in einer sehr prekären Situation und Vorhersagen sind schwer, besonders über die Zukunft, also die. Die Taliban sind extrem überfordert. Ein Szenario wäre das verhungern, wo man ein Drittel der Bevölkerung die Taliban an der Macht. Es wird einem mehr oder weniger mittelalterliches Regime, die da so wie in 2001 vor sich hin vor sich hin regieren und das Land auch weiter im Mittelalter lassen und nach Möglichkeiten das ausmacht. Jetzt sind sie ausgebrochen. Nach 20 Jahren haben wir wieder zurückgeworfen, wo wir in der Größenordnung das ist keine unrealistische Szene. Es ist kein vollkommen unrealistisches Szenario. Um in 20 Jahren hat sich die Welt verändert und die Taliban haben sie auch immer. **Aber Grundstrukturen, insbesondere das Fehlen eines wirtschaftlichen Modells, ist ein furchtbares Problem.**

Speaker 1: Ein weiteres großes Problem ist auch die Rolle der Frau. Wie siehst du da die weitere Entwicklung? Also wir haben ja gesehen, dass da viele Einschränkungen schon passiert sind. Siehst du da weiter folgende Entwicklungen, die noch folgen können?

Speaker 2: Die Freiheit der Frau ist sehr intakt ist. Es stand im Mittelpunkt auch für die Hilfsleistungen, wurde genutzt dafür, dass man die Mittel bereitstellt und Demokratie und Entwicklungshilfe leistet. Es war also Teil der Legitimierung von Hilfsleistungen in den jeweiligen Ländern, den USA und in Deutschland. Das kann man einfach mal das Spektrum aufzeigen. Kritiker sagen, diese Betonung auf Frauenrechte also erst mal, ist gut. Es zeigt dann dort zu viele gute Intentionen. Und es ist gut in der Wahrnehmung von den meisten Frauen, die darum was Gutes tun wollen. Das andere Spektrum ist, obwohl gesagt wird, dass die Frauen eben ein wichtiger Teil der Volkswirtschaft sind und man auf ein Teil der Volkswirtschaft verzichtet, dann ist das auch für die Produktivität und Leistung des Landes natürlich eine Einschränkung. Aber die nächste Meinung ist, dass Demokratie und Frauenrechte ein Wert an sich sind, für den es zu kämpfen gilt. Das größte Problem ist. Es gibt unterschiedliche Ansichten. Das gibt dann diese Ansicht wieder. Meine das Wichtigste, das man nicht zulässt, dass die Menschen verhungern, dass die Menschen überleben. Deswegen muss man immer Politik und Wirtschaft sehr verschieden abwägen. Und ich kann nur eins machen Ich kann nicht nur, ich kann nicht alles machen. Das ist. Wir sind nicht in einem Wunschland und ich muss irgendwo etwas machen. Fakt ist Frauenrechte waren ein wichtiges Sachen der der Mobilisierung von Mitteln für Afghanistan, für das Publikum in westlichen Staaten. Das war sehr attraktiv. Damit wurde konnten durch die Parlamente, durch die Prozesse, die Geld die ungeheuren Geldmengen mobilisiert werden. Jetzt haben sie einen wahnsinnigen Rückschritt erwiesen. Die Frau, die Rechte der Frauen wurden extrem beschnitten. Das ist extrem schlecht an sich. Schlecht ist wirtschaftlich schlecht, aber muss auch das gesamte Sachen sehen. Und da muss man auch sehen. Da gibt es auch die Meinung, dass der Fokus auf Menschenrechte und nicht auf wirtschaftliche Entwicklung, auf nachhaltige wirtschaftliche Entwicklung entsprechend den Bedingungen vor Ort, dass das natürlich dann zur heutigen Katastrophe geführt hat. Also wenn man jetzt vor 20 Jahren zielgerichtet Nation-Building wirtschaftliche Entwicklung investiert hätte, dann würde man nicht sagen, wenn man auf das Bevölkerungswachstum beschränkt hätte, dann hätte man zurzeit nicht 20 Millionen Menschen mehr, als die man dann als Mann ernähren kann, aus eigenen Kräften und hat Möglichkeiten, über die Frauen nachzudenken. Jetzt hat man 20 Jahre lang dafür sehr hart gekämpft und die Frauenrechte zu mobilisiert und hat einen furchtbaren Rückschlag erlitten. Man muss jetzt das rausfinden, was also da gibt es viele Lehren zu diskutieren, was aber was richtig ist, was falsch ist. Es ist keinesfalls eindeutig. Natürlich sind Frauenrechte ein Wert an sich und es ist auch wichtig, dass eine Gesellschaft die hat. Die Wahrnehmung von Frauenrechten hat sich heute, hat sich verändert sich auch ständig. Wo früher das nicht thematisiert wurde, ist das heute ein Thema. Allerdings, es ist längst nicht so eindeutig. Wir stehen heute alle vor einem Vakuum, worum es Pakistan in der Art und Weise schief gegangen. Und wir sind bei der Suche nach Lösungen und Schlussfolgerungen und lessons learned und ob das nun sich auch auf eine Neubewertung der Bedeutung von Frauenrechten aufgibt, lässt sich schlecht sagen. Ja, wie? Die Prioritäten sind man konkret abstrakt nicht beantworten. Alles ist wichtig. Aber es gibt ja noch. Wir haben ein furchtbares Desaster und wir haben ein furchtbares Desaster, das Menschen, Millionen Menschen überleben können. Und Frauenrechte ist erst recht auch zu überdenken. Und dass die Kinder und Männer von der Bevölkerung und die Hälfte der über 20 Jahre unter 20 Jahre jung ist, ist das ein furchtbares Sache ist sehr widersprüchlich und keineswegs eindeutig. Und deswegen gibt es auch die Meinung, dass die Fokussierung auf Frauen alleinige Fokus auf Frauenrechte ja teilweise das ist, was teilweise stattfindet. Dass das kontraproduktiv ist

Speaker 1: Okay, vielen Dank. Jetzt sehen wir auch derzeit, dass immer noch viel Evakuierungen stattfinden und auch wirklich einige Afghanen, die auf eigene Faust das Land verlassen. Wie siehst du da die Entwicklung? Was? Was denkst du, was dadurch passieren könnte?

Speaker 2: Also 2015 waren große Migrationswelle, aber auch da waren Afghanen, waren die zweitgrößte Gruppe nach Syrien. Alle haben gelernt, alle Länder machen ihre Grenzen zu. Situation ist extrem schlecht. Aber wer bis jetzt noch nicht rausgekommen ist, also für die urbane Mittelschicht ist, sage ich auch meinen Kollegen Arbeitskollegen erster Linie raus, raus, raus aus dem Land. Mittelfristig, langfristig kann das die Mittelschicht, die entstanden ist in den letzten 20 Jahren mit den vielen Subventionen aus dem Westen, die sehe ich keine Möglichkeit, dass das weiterhin der Fall ist. Deswegen jemand, der qualifiziert ist, der arbeiten kann, der arbeiten möchte, soll aus dem Land raus. Allerdings ist Situation eben so, dass die Länder ihre Grenzen zumachen. Europa macht Grenzen zu, Amerika macht seine Grenzen zu, so dass die Leute da teilweise in einer sehr unangenehmen Situation gefangen sind, so es nicht geschafft hat rauszukommen hat. Die Wahrscheinlichkeiten sinken. Es gibt da sehr, sehr viele Tragödien, sehr sehr viel Potential, was vernichtet wurde. Sie hat sehr viel Hoffnungen und Desillusionen. Es ist eine lose lose Situation für alle Beteiligten und das wird uns auch beschäftigen. Migration, ansonsten Migration ist natürlich eine Win win Situation. Ein Beispiel Die 4/5 Technologiefirmen, die von indischen von Managern geführt werden mit indischen Führungskräften, erwirtschaften ein größeres, eine größere Wirtschaftsleistung als Indien selbst. Also wenn man für Microsoft, Adobe als auch von den Jahren geführt worden, das ist ein zeigt einfach da drin, dass wir eine Arbeitsteilung haben, die sich auch nicht nach Nationalitäten richtet weltweit. Und natürlich wissen wir alle, dass inzwischen das Einkommen in erster Linie davon abhängt, wo ich geboren wurde, wo ich geboren wurde, nicht was ich tue, sondern wo ich geboren wurde. Und Migration ist damit der einfachste, der einfachste Art und Weise, Wohlstand zu verbessern. Aber die wir haben jetzt allgemein die den Umschwung von Demokratie, Liberalismus, Washington Consensus zu America first, strategische Autonomie der Europäischen Union, Türkei als Regionalmacht, Iran und so weiter und so fort, dass die Grenzen sind zu und die Pakistan hat Pakistan hat Millionen aufgenommen und Afghanen viereinhalb Millionen aufgenommen von

Iran oder mit noch teilweise auch vom IS Radikalen, was dann bis zu 10000 Afghanen nach Iran flüchten. Jeden Tag, jeden Tag. Es ist verständlich, dass es notwendig. Allerdings über die Aufnahmefähigkeit von Iran und Irak ist extrem begrenzt und es geht hier um ein geopolitisches Spiel zwischen der eine einfache Möglichkeit, dass man jetzt den den Migranten aus Afghanistan Migranten im Iran hilft. Allerdings ist man auch mit Iran verfeindet und keiner wird dafür. Geld gibt es also nicht, **dass die Menschen sind da irgendwo um den geopolitischen Spiel sind da die Menschen nur Schachfiguren, die man da schnell opfert. Aber es ist nicht das erste Mal. Wir denken immer unsere heutige Zeit ist vollkommen neu und vollkommen anders und wir sind demokratischer und besser.** Aber wir können uns an die irische Hungersnot erinnern und. Der Bevölkerung eine Million eine Million 1844, 46 gestorben sind und das Land gleichzeitig Lebensmittel exportiert hat. Ähnlich Holodomor in den 30er Jahren Sowjetunion exportiert Lebensmittel und sechs Millionen Menschen verhungern und so weiter und so fort, dass das Unangenehme ist, dass wir zurzeit wieder in so einer Situation sind, dass es keine guten Lösungen gibt und Migration massenweise Migration würde das verhindern. Allerdings ist das sehr schlecht. Aus Afghanistan nach Usbekistan, nach Tadschikistan ist es überfordert. Usbekistan macht die Grenzen zu, ist überfordert. Turkmenistan nimmt keine Flüchtlinge auf, um prinzipiell und also ist ein. Es ist die Übernahme der Taliban mit militärischen Mitteln, einem Suizid, so wie das Venezuela gemacht hat, so wie das Syrien gemacht hat, so wie das Botswana gemacht hat. Also es gibt in dieser Fälle, dass Staaten teilweise eben auch nicht vollkommen, aber doch zu erheblichen Verlusten führen. Das muss man einfach zur Kenntnis nehmen.

Speaker 1: Ja, alles klar. Super. Dann würde ich jetzt weiter noch fragen. Und zwar zu Pakistan. Ist ja auch einer der Haupt Evakuierung. Was mir wichtig wäre, da noch mal über den Domestic Kontext zu sprechen. Also welche Rolle spielt Pakistan mit Afghanistan? Welche politischen wirtschaftlichen Kontext

Speaker 2: Also Pakistan ist auch Teil von, Asien subsaharischen von diesem Ring von Staaten die fragil am Ende sind unter Wasser sind, im Prinzip mehr Ressourcen von der Weltöffentlichkeit absaugen oder sagen die Staaten sind mehr Ressourcen absaugen als sie selbst liefern können. Pakistan hat dem hat den Fehler seine Begründung Das ist ein sehr fragiler Staat ist und einer, der dort eine Rolle gespielt hat, auch in den ganzen Sachen, aber sozusagen ein Verbündeter der USA, gerade auch der Kalten und dem Kalten Krieg Szenario gegen Indien, das verbindet er mit der Sowjetunion war wurde es von USA unterstützt. Andererseits spielt es eine sehr kritische Doppelrolle, als dass es inzwischen auch Konsensus, dass ohne Pakistan die Taliban wieder überlebt hätten. Doch diese Masse hätten den den Sieg hätten erringen können. Also Pakistan hat indirekt. Indirekt und teilweise direkt Taliban unterstützt oder Pakistan gibt es keine Taliban-Herrschaft. Allerdings sind die Taliban auch nicht von den nicht von den Pakistan auch nicht direkt kontrolliert. Es ist einfach ein. Ein weiterer Faktor, der zu Instabilität, Instabilität und beiträgt, ein Faktor, wie nicht ganz zu vergessen, die hohe Bevölkerungszahl. Es gibt diese Dissertation über den Index. Wenn ich mehr als drei Prozent bin, ich mehr als drei Prozent Bevölkerungswachstum habe, dann ist die Anzahl der Kinder, die ich habe, und die Anzahl der Positionen. Die Anzahl der vorhandenen Arbeitsplätze sind so groß, dass die Konkurrenz einen kritischen, kritischen, einen kritischen Masse erreicht und wo dann einfach eine rationale Überlegung ist. Wenn ich einmal einer von zehn Söhnen oder einer von fünf Söhne in den Krieg schicke und der umkommt, dass die anderen vier dann genügend zu essen haben, eine Chance in ihrem Leben haben, das ist als alle Länder, die mit diesem hohen Wirkungs Wachstum sind, haben keine politische Stabilität, weil wir leben in einer Ökonomie, wo die Ressourcen Bedarf für das Lernen extrem hoch sind und mit diesem wird mit diesem hohen Bevölkerungswachstum kann ich nicht. Komm, ich kann mich nicht so recht. Pakistan ist derselben Situation, hat sich jetzt mit China verbündet, hat dort viele chinesischen Investitionen bekommen. Es ist unklar, ob sich diese vielen Investitionen aus China auszahlen, China hat viele Subventionen von Amerika bekommen. Es hat auch gleichzeitig die amerikanischen Revolution in Amerika, in Afghanistan extrem geschwächt. Es würde zu einer Umorientierung kommen. Die USA ziehen sich zurück aus dem ganzen Bereich, die durch. Sie würden sich selbst überlassen bleiben. Es gibt Möglichkeiten, dass dadurch ein Stabiler das Gleichgewicht finden. Aber wie das konkret aussieht, das lässt sich natürlich auch schlecht oder sehr schlecht sagen. Also von der Tiefe. Also Pakistan spielt eine sehr zweideutige Rolle. Man war auf sie angewiesen, weil die ganzen Transport Güter über Pakistan liefen. Deswegen hat man gnadenlos ausgenutzt. Aber es hat wieder zur Verbesserung von Pakistan noch zu Afghanistan geführt. Hat sich als ein weiterer Punkt erwiesen, der auch dazu geführt hat, dass die gesamte Region fragil bleibt und keiner keine Möglichkeiten gibt, aus dem Teufelskreis, aus Verarmung, Hoffnungslosigkeit, Instabilität auskommt und eine positive Dynamik kommt.

Speaker 1: Super, danke! So, dann kommen wir jetzt noch mal zum internationalen Kontext. Und zwar wäre da für mich erst mal wichtig. Welche Rolle hat Russland in Afghanistan gespielt? Auch noch mal in Hinblick auf den politischen, wirtschaftlichen Kontext und den militärischen Kontext.

Speaker 2: Also das war 84, Ja 84 sind sie rein gegangen. Das war also eine geopolitische Falle gewesen. Auch dass da Interessen zusammenprallten. USA, die USA provoziert und Russland ist eingefallen, man sieht sie im Prinzip von den Aufwendungen zerbrochen wurden. Ist Afghanistan wirklich ein Land gewesen, was da wirklich gelitten hat? Bis zu einer Million Toten gab es da wohl im Jahr, was uns schon an Genozid heranreicht. Aber sind besiegt worden und ein Prozent Bevölkerung ist ja auch gekommen. Militärische Auseinandersetzungen, die die sind furchtbar gewesen. Die Verwüstungen sind furchtbar gewesen. Im Bootstour Sektor haben sie allerdings auch wieder sehr viel investiert. Die Berufsschulen, die ich besuchen konnte, waren alle russischen Ursprungs und auch mit russischen Versionen aufgebaut. Und man hat 2015 2016, die ich besucht habe. Sie sind aber noch nicht den Stand erreicht gehabt in Berufsschule Sektor, den in den man hatte als 1989 weg ging. So das Problem. Es ist keine von Afghanistan ist ist keiner kann Sargnagel für ein paar Jahre, sondern Sargnagel für Entwicklung. Somit haben Sie versucht, in der Organisation haben gesucht hat alles nicht geklappt. Sie haben sich zurückgezogen, weil sie überfordert waren. Und noch ein weiterer Sargnagel war zur Implosion des Endes des Kommunismus und der Sowjetunion. Seitdem muss man sagen, haben sie Kapazitäten und beobachten diesen Raum mit doch mit guter und sehr gute Analyse. Sie haben Angst, dass der Islamismus auf den Zentralasien überspringt. Und da sie ja teilweise die Länder, die die Grenzsicherung in verschiedenen Ländern noch übernommen haben, also auch ihre Einflussphären betrachten, also die tadschikische afghanische Grenze wird also auch von Russland bewacht. Dann haben Sie ein Interesse, dass das friedlich abläuft. Sie haben da mitbestimmt, sie haben sich da gesehen, was da die USA sich in einem ziemlichen Morast begeben hat und versucht noch mal einige Akzente zu setzen, aber im Prinzip ist das Problem bei der ganzen Region, also sowohl von USA als auch von Russland. Es interessiert sich keiner. Alle haben wir noch paar Probleme. Man will keine Großmacht Spiel, weil man hat genug zu tun mit Cyber Neu Abkommen, Cyberkrieg, chinesische Bedrohung, Inflationsgefahren und so weiter und so fort. Die Zeit, dass man geopolitische Spiele gemacht hat in Afghanistan. Zurzeit ist das nicht mit den Zeitgeist und die ganze Region Zentralasien, die verschwindet irgendwo von vom Bildschirm. Die Aufmerksamkeit schwindet, Bedeutung schwindet, die Ressourcen, die dort investiert werden, schwinden. Und damit will man einfach nur Ruhe haben. Man findet sich ab. Und das würde ich auch sagen. Russland will Ruhe haben und ist dadurch auch passiv an einem stabilen Afghanistan interessiert. Man weiß aber auch aktiv Möglichkeiten und Möglichkeiten. Aktiv Das militärische Mittel bringt nichts, so dass man da auch hilflos ist. Aber im Prinzip das jetzt immer weniger und weniger vonstatten geht. Und wenn die Leute das selbst sich das aussuchen, dann muss es jetzt sein. Mit allen Konsequenzen.

Speaker 1: Ja, sondern jetzt auch noch mal die gleiche Frage sozusagen zu den USA und auch, wieso USA sich jetzt zurückgezogen hat. Das hat auch was mit dem Regierungswechsel zu tun gehabt, oder?

Speaker 2: Also die USA sind reingegangen nach 9/11 und man musste einfach irgendwo Dampf ablassen. Das habe ich auch gehört von Leuten. Wir sind damals von Dorf zu Dorf gegangen und haben Taliban-Kämpfer gesucht, weil die haben unsere Investmentbanker kaputt gemacht. Und da sind die Amerikaner ein bisschen nervös, wenn Leute, die mit ihrem Geld umwandeln, dass wenn sie umgebracht werden und gesagt haben, ich meine, das waren normale Bauern gewesen, die haben da 50 Dollar bekommen von den Taliban, um da irgendwas zu bewachen. Das waren keine Taliban gewesen, sondern ich habe Leute umgebracht, wo ich weiß, dass sie unschuldig sind. Also das war verständlich gewesen. Warum seit 2001 ist alternativlos, würde man heute sagen. Natürlich. Jetzt würde man heute sagen, das hätte man anders machen müssen. Aber das war damals normal. Man ist diese emotionale Falle reingeraten. Am Anfang wollte man ja auch gar nichts. War man sich klar gewesen, dass das eine Falle sein kann, eine Falle sein kann? und man hat bis heute hat man nicht klar gemacht, was man eigentlich in Afghanistan will, national oder nation building. Man hat das militärisch die Taliban sehr schnell besiegt, gab es Anfang von wenigen Tagen. Das kann man auch fragen Was macht man? Man kann da rausgehen, kann die Misere wieder kommen. Wenn man reingeht, muss man ein bisschen reingehen und muss richtig reingehen. Man muss nicht Nation-Building und State-Building machen. Das ist im Prinzip eine unmögliche Aufgabe. Die Leute sagen, es war also wirklich eine Situation, wo man heute sagen kann Ja, wir wissen bis heute nicht, was passiert ist, was man jetzt machen sollte. Man kann das vieles machen, aber dafür muss man, wenn man weiß, man kann trotzdem sehr gute Ideen entwickeln. Aber auch diese guten Ideen zu entwickeln, muss man Gelder bereitstellen. Um diese Gelder bereitzustellen, muss man seine eigenen und seine eigenen Wähler überzeugen, dass die Gelder bereitstellen müssen. Und dann muss man ihm sagen nach 9/11 war die Bereitschaft gewesen, auch Hunderte und tausende Milliarden dafür auszugeben, militärisch zu befriedigen. Es war kein Geld dafür gewesen, dass man sagt Ich baue jetzt innerhalb von 20 Mark jetzt einen Plan für 20 Jahre, dass ich den Leuten da Demokratie aufbauen, Wirtschaft, Aufbau und so weiter. Und diese Versuche, gab es auch. Die sind gescheitert, weil das Land eben so abgelegen ist und so bergig ist und keine Infrastruktur hat und keine Möglichkeit hat, sich einfach Arbeitseinheiten zu machen. Das ist eine prinzipielle Sache. Wie gehe ich mit der Kraft der Weltwirtschaft? Um meine 400 Jahre haben wir das Beispiel auch gehabt. Peripherie Russland war bis 2019 und 17 ein prosperierendes, schnell wachsendes Land gewesen, was viele gesagt haben, dass man es mit USA aufnehmen kann von Dynamik und Kraft. Ja, und dann war es auch an der Peripherie gewesen und man hat den Kommunismus bekommen für die nächsten 70 / 80 Jahre mit atomaren Bedrohung der Selbstvernichtung. So jetzt auch wieder dafür, dass die Gefahr besteht. Nicht man weiß nicht, was man machen, was man machen kann, man kriegt keinen Konsensus politischen Konsens und die Subventionierung. Warum sollte ich anstelle. Warum soll ich anstelle meiner Bildungssystem in Deutschland zu investieren? Das Bildungssystem in Afghanistan aufbauen? Das ist, krieg ich nicht durch. Also ich krieg aber durch meine eine Bedrohung ist. Frauenrechte kriege ich durch, was aber offensichtlich auch erklärt eine Lösung. Vielleicht ist es nur eine Lösung. Es ist einfach. Man muss einfach feststellen. **Man muss auch einfach mal akzeptieren, dass es keine Lösung gibt, wie man das möchte. Furchtbar, schlecht. Aber vielleicht ist dieser Realismus dann der erste Schritt à la Kissinger, würde man sagen Realpolitik wird ein Gleichgewicht aus Sorgen und Möglichkeiten gucken, dass sich Technologie ändert. Aber in Wirklichkeit zum Beispiel zum Beispiel in Afghanistan Wirtschaftsmodell.** Aber viele Bevölkerung wir haben. In Deutschland haben wir eine gute Wirtschaft, aber keine Auszubildenden mehr. Vielleicht gibt es jetzt ja mit der Verbreitung von Artificial Intelligence etc. Es gibt es da eine Nische, wo jetzt semi-skilled wird, Leute gefragt werden vom Weltmarkt. Eine Idee ist, im moment ist es nicht zu sehen, sieht man nicht das, was anders ist. Eine Idee. In China ist Gaming für Geld schon ein Massenphänomen, was die ganzen zahlen, weil sie sich auch auf Leiter sind. Eine Größenordnung, Leute, die mit professionellem Gaming, indem sie da irgendwelche Sachen machen und das verkaufen können, ein Wirtschaftsmodell bekommen, was in Tadschikistan oder in Afghanistan macht. Dann kann man vielleicht Sachen Nischen finden auf dem Weltmarkt, die diesen Teufelskreislauf aus vielen herrschaftlicher Entwicklung, Fehler, Möglichkeit, wirtschaftliche Entwicklung, geringere geringe Effizienz von Investitionen sowohl von einheimischen Unternehmen als auch von ausländischen Kapital, dass man diesen Teufelskreis durchbrechen kann. Und im Moment würde ich sage es ist negativ, heutzutage ändert sich alles schnell.

Speaker 1: Ja, alles klar. Würdest du sagen, man könnte sagen, die Geschichte wiederholt sich selbst? Wir haben eine wiederkehrende Ordnung mit der Taliban. Dass wir das wie gesagt, das hatten wir bereits und es ist einfach wieder wiederkehrend, sozusagen.

Speaker 2: Das ist definitiv, weil die Geschichte wiederholt sich nach Karl Marx, aber sie hat Rhythmus. Ja, natürlich. Und das war eigentlich in Kabul ankommt, wo das unwiderruflich gewesen. **Der König ist nackt, der König hat keine Kleider, er hat keine Kleidung. Die Sicherheitsmaßnahmen, die waren einfach pervers, nicht nachhaltig. Es war für jeden Besucher war das auffällig, dass das Regime nicht keine Legitimierung im Volk hat.** Und es war es auch nie reflektiert. Wir haben die Diskussion auch in Deutschland gehabt, meine 2010. Käßmann hat gesagt Nichts ist gut in Afghanistan. Ich kann mich an den an die Reports, an die an Bundestag noch erinnern, an den Afghanistan Report, an den Bundestag noch erinnern, wo regelmäßig Bericht erstattet wurde über den Fortschritt. Und dann habe ich da gesagt Mach mit dem du mit deinen Betroffenen das jetzt einfach mal Schluss sein. Es ist alles nicht da. Das kann alles nicht wahr sein. Die Wahrheit verbiegt. Und dann hat der Bundestag keinen Druck mehr eingefordert. Also da war es ist ein Problem mit der Demokratie und mit unserem Wirtschaftsmodell. Ist das, dass wir uns da extrem selbst belogen haben und alle mitschuldig gemacht und in der Logik rein gekommen sind, dass jemand aus dem war, wo wir es verstanden haben. Wir sind alle nicht rausgekommen, so einer. Dann war das Argument gewesen, dass wenn wir jetzt nicht über Frauenrechte reden, dann kriegen wir das Geld nicht. Dann, dann wird es noch schlechter. Aber vielleicht hat man den Mut sagen können. 2010 allerdings für Deutschland gab es da auch nur bestimmten, nur bestimmten begrenzten Spielraum. Denn Deutschland hat im Irakkrieg nicht mitgemacht mit ihren Partnern USA. Und das war es also politisch unmöglich gewesen, nicht in Afghanistan auch mitzumachen. Da gibt es wieder, da muss man einfach sagen Es gibt Realpolitik. Muss man akzeptieren. Das sind die realen Kräfteverhältnisse. Und natürlich werden die USA den wären wir alle den Preis tragen. Allerdings, wenn es so Geschichte man geht von einem Extrem zum anderen und dann im Nachhinein sieht man dann die rote Linie und sagt Das ist die fortschrittliche Politik. Von Erfolg zu Erfolgsgarant, unserer Wirklichkeit sind da aber furchtbare Bedingungen und die sind immer extrem. Ich weiß es auch nicht. **Aber vielleicht ist das Positive an Afghanistan, dass da viele lernen jetzt, dass da viele Diskussionen geben und man das nächste Mal das realistischer angeht.**

Speaker 1: Wie stehst du denn zu dem Begriff Graveyard of Empires? Wir hatten die Briten, wir hatten Russland, wir hatten die USA. Alle, die versucht haben, wirklich in Afghanistan sozusagen sich zu etablieren, aber es nicht geschafft haben.

Speaker 2: Graveyard of Development würde ich das umbenennen. Development überall ist der Staat als Staatsgebiet hat er nicht, das produziert einfach nicht die Mittel vom Staat aufrecht zu erhalten. Deswegen ist es extrem einfach reinzugehen und das Land zu beherrschen. Es hat keine abstrakte Struktur. Hauptgrund ist Geografie. Muss man weder Politik noch Kultur, noch Mentalität, noch Religion, spielt alles keine Rolle. Länder mit einer ähnlichen Biografie haben ähnliche Probleme vom Balkan und von

Balkanisierung etc. angeht Balkanisierung und Afrikas dasselbe so ja deswegen. Man kommt schnell rein, man kommt einfach nicht raus, weil die auf. Man kann das nicht ständig subventionieren und das ist einfach zurzeit ein Problem, die wir global haben. Wir wissen nicht, wie wir mit der Peripherie umgehen können. Das Wachstum ist hoch in Afrika. Dasselbe Problem in Afrika Instabilität, sinkende Pro-Kopf-Einkommen, sinkendes Elend mit modernen wieder der modernen Medizin können wir die Leute haben. Wir sind der Gesundheitszustand, die Lebenserwartung extrem gestiegen. Handy ist sind auch für diese Länder erschwinglich geworden. Ich habe damals einen Supercomputer in der Hand gehabt. Konnektivität zu der gesamten Welt, aber ich habe keine Leistung von mir. Vor einigen Jahren Supercomputer war. Ich habe plötzlich die gesamten Informationen der Welt, aber ich habe keine internen Struktur. Ich habe keine Möglichkeit, positiv, indem ich in die Weltwirtschaft einzudringen. Und damit habe ich ein furchtbares Problem und produziere Unsicherheit, Armut, Missstand, autoritäre Strukturen und so weiter und so fort. Und Graveyards of Empires und das es gibt da viel mehr Macht romantischen gibt an romantische Sachen als ein wirklich furchtbares Problem. Graveyard of Development noch mal kurz sagen zu können, dass sie keine Erläuterung, kein Geschäftsmodell haben. 60 / 70 prozent also erstmal Sie können sich keine Communitys exportieren, weil sie nicht wahrhaben. Und auch manche sagen, man sagt in 2, 3, 2 Trillionen 2 Milliarden an Rohstoffen, aber Kongo hat 14 Milliarden und ist einfacher zu erreichen. Man müsste jetzt von Afghanistan eine Straßenbahn Eisenbahn bauen. Das kostet alles mehr als es bringt. Also Rohstoffe kann Afghanistan nicht exportieren. 60 / 70 prozent des Handels der letzten 30 / 40 Jahre ist Integration in Global Value Chains. Globale Wertschöpfungsketten hat Afghanistan keine Möglichkeit mehr. Chinas damit reich geworden ist, konnten sich integrieren, weil sie die Hilfe hatten, weil sie die Küsten hatten, weil sie alle USA hatten etc. pp. Afghanistan hat das nicht so. Es gibt keine zurzeit keine Möglichkeit anders als ich. Alle wollen ein Handy haben, Handy brauche ich exportieren und ich kriege oder ich machen Krieg und erde dadurch erobert und kriege eine Bauökonomie. Aber ich habe auch noch nie geschafft. Aber auch nicht in Afghanistan. Ich muss mal was exportieren und das was exportieren kann ja Opium kann ich exportieren. Was kann ich gegen die, die die Teppiche kaufen? Vor Jahren war die schön gewesen, aber das Kultur gewesen. Aber heutzutage ist das eben alles herausbekommen. Was kann ich noch exportieren? Schaffe, klappt alles wo ich hin gucke, weil die USA, die hat in den 2010er Jahren da Untersuchungen gemacht und Milliarden in die Landwirtschaft eingeflossen. Es hat was gebracht, aber es hat nichts gebracht, dass da ein Return, ein zufriedener Return of Investment kam und hat sich kein Kreislauf ergeben, sich selbst beschleunigt, sondern war von Subventionen abhängig. Also ich kann mit viel Subventionen dort die Nahrung,, die Nahrungsmittelproduktion steigern. Aber ich kriege wieder nicht genug Mehrwert, um das was eigentlich selbst Beschleuniger, Prozesse usw. wie in der normalen Marktwirtschaft.

Speaker 1: Ja, alles klar. Ja und könntest du dir vorstellen oder wie? Wie siehst du die mögliche Weiterentwicklung in Afghanistan? Wie könnte es weiter vorangehen?

Speaker 2: Es ist also das schlechteste Szenario. Worst case Szenario. Es verhungern zehn Millionen Menschen und dann haben wir wieder ein Gleichgewicht zwischen der Lebensmittelproduktion und den Geschäften. Und das wird nicht so, dass einige für unwahrscheinlich, weil die nationale und internationale Kommission nicht reinkommt. Doch reinkommt aufgrund der 700 Journalistinnen, die darüber berichten und die, die übrig geblieben sind. Das wird nicht reinkommen. Es ist auch andere Länder nicht passiert, also dass Menschen zu ernähren. **Es kostet 300 Dollar pro Jahr. Es ist nichts. Es ist unfassbar. Was alle westliche Bürger für Starbucks Kaffee ausgibt, ist nichts und das rettet Menschenleben. Also irgendwie wird man das man sicher. Aber es ist ein großes Fragezeichen. Aber Afghanistan braucht weiteren. So ist als der Staat nicht selbstständig lebensfähig ist, braucht weiter Subventionen und es wird. Davon abhängen, ob in den kommenden Jahren die internationale Community einen Weg findet, wie man nachhaltig den Staat subventionieren kann, umgehen kann mit ihm kann man das nicht.** Wenn man das nicht kann, hat man das Szenario Nordkorea und das schaffen wir auch nicht mit eigenen Atombomben zu bauen. Das schaffen sie nicht. Das haben sie nicht die sophisticated. Migrationsströme als Erpressungspotential wahrscheinlich auch nicht. **Bestes Szenario ist Die Taliban schaffen sich doch irgendwo einen Kompromiss zu finden mit der nationalen Community, sodass dieser Prozess, dass man sich Ausgleich sucht, dass er sich irgendwie findet.** Allerdings die Taliban, das hängt zu 80 prozent von nationalen community ab, ob die Mechanismen Institutionen mit Lösungen findet, wie man. Den weiteren Staatsaufbau subventionieren kann in Art und Weise, das auch von einer von den Taliban akzeptiert wird. Natürlich müssen die Taliban über ihren eigenen Schatten springen dafür und die Karten stehen dafür schlecht, weil sie sind jetzt legitimiert und haben 20 Jahre gekämpft. Und sie können auch. Die wären auch politisch überleben und von ihrem Machtanspruch überleben, wenn sie nur das Hälfte mitbekommen. Es ist einfach ein Teufelskreis.

Speaker 1: Sehr gut der von mir mal 5 Minuten. Ich glaube es ist besser, wenn du dich noch mal auf das EU Gespräch vorbereitet. Dann machen wir hier den besten Schluss Und dann kannst du dich mal ein bisschen vorbereiten und dann trotzdem noch mal ganz vielen lieben Dank, dass du dir die Zeit genommen hast. Ich weiß es wirklich sehr zu schätzen. Genau und genau. Und ich drücke die Daumen fürs Gespräch. Schauen wir mal, was wieder bei rumkommt. Und genau, wir hören uns auf jeden Fall. Wirklich hochinteressant auch, was du da wirklich erzählt hast. Hochinteressant. Vielen lieben Dank. Ich weiß es sehr zu schätzen. Alles klar. Super. Danke dir. Schönen Tag noch.

13.6 Interview Transcript

Speaker 1: Perfect. And therefore for me, it would be quiet, um, good to know. Maybe if you can tell me something about your personal background and what you learned before. Um, and yeah, just to get a bit into the topic. Yeah.

Speaker 2: Okay. Um, yeah, so I, I started, I guess, in terms of, um, if you want to have that as a background, my academic background, explicit social policy. Um, I studied that at the school of economics and political science. Um, my background really focused then on social protection, but I tried to look more at how social protection, um, could be something that was looked at as not just a national regime, um, and how, you know, the impact of people in coming up or who might be migrating into the UK, might they be impacted, uh, and then also looking at international social policy and comparing different welfare regimes. Um, so that was one, one aspect of that. Um, then I, about 10 years after I did my undergrad, I did my graduate degree, um, in, uh, labor, social movements and history. So then looking at labor protection, um, and I've really tried to kind of combine this view of understanding labor history and labor protections. Um, and then I'm sending social movements with also social protections. So, um, that was kind of giving me a different aspects of, um, the work, when it comes to human resources. Um, so really looking at, um, you know, skills development as maybe being, um, one of the best ways that people can find a meaningful way into the world of work, um, and also be retrained when necessary. Um, so I've become more and more interested in the future of work. Um, and what that might look. Um, but also looking at examples of how different constellations of actors, whether it's the state or whether it's, um, trade unions, or even trade unions together with the connectors, like companies as well too, can, um, support workers to be better fit into the changing world, um, that we're seeing as well too. And really what, what effects that might have, um, also looking at precarity and, uh, and in formality at work. So, um, I spent maybe the past 10 plus years I'm working on that skillset and projects. Um, meaning, uh, looking at apprenticeships, um, in Egypt mainly, um, where I'm from. Um, but also looking, uh, now in Afghanistan was my first

international posting. And, and trying to kind of also bring a little bit of a comparative lens when it comes to work-based learning. So obviously comparing, um, you know, apprenticeships in the German language, uh, speaking countries, um, to those outside of that context and how it doesn't does not work and how apprenticeships that are based on the dual system. Um, you know, and, and the experience of that can, can be applied in other contexts, uh, with varying degrees of success. Um, and yeah. Um, I look at also just the, um, the, the, the, the way the different countries in different economic models also have, um, you know, quite different approaches towards corporate training. Um, so that's that in a nutshell.

Speaker 1: Okay. Perfect. Thank you so much. Um, so how long have you actually been working in Afghanistan already? And what are your daily tasks?

Speaker 2: Okay. Well, I, I began working in Afghanistan actually in November of last year. Um, and then as you know, we had the evacuation in August, so a little less than a year. Um, and then obviously coming and going, um, so not permanently based in Afghanistan. Um, and then we had these rotations, but obviously because there were certain periods in which either the project was postponed. Um, because of the no cost extension from the EU delegation being postponed or because of, um, the security restrictions in terms of returning, uh, or because of COVID restrictions. That meant that I wasn't there as much as I could have been, um, so a little, definitely less than, than, um, the four week, two week rotation. So we should have been doing over the past year.

Speaker 1: Okay. So, and that's also like the first time you actually came in contact with Afghanistan and, okay. Perfect. Thank you so much. Okay, great. Thank you so much. Um, just regarding political science, do you heard of the term theory of realism before.

Speaker 2: You want to elaborate a little bit more?

Speaker 1: Yeah. That's tough because actually for me, the question would be how would you apply Afghanistan to it? But then we skipped the question. That's no problem at all. Okay. Okay. Perfect. Then now we come into the question. Um, do you feel that Afghanistan has changed since the Taliban came to power and maybe how does the change manifests itself?

Speaker 2: So, I mean, I think right now, what we, what we're seeing is, um, you know, the effect of some of the real politics that, that, um, that the, of the U S and some of its allies as well too, have been imposing on the Taliban and trying to discipline the Taliban. Um, I think that's the, uh, the situation before was, you know, we had a kleptocratic government that was, that was running a show. I'm not really eating the people. There was trillions that were spent. Um, you can see the effects in terms of. Um, and what, uh, what I think was, was, um, telling was the fact that, you know, when, when the 80% to eight budget that was finance by external donors was, was shut off. Um, obviously the natural consequences, the economy collapses. Um, and so I think that that's really the consequence that we're looking at now. Um, I think people are less concerned with the security situation than they thought they might be. And that's what I, what I seem to see, um, and read. But, um, but the concern is, you know, like, um, and I don't consider the Taliban to be a revolutionary movement, um, in any way, but I think that this counter-revolutionary attempts that are being made are basically pushing, um, pushing the country related to the brick. Um, when I read that 98% of people are not getting enough, uh, nutritional needs in terms of food. Um, because of the current context, that's, um, that's manmade, right? These are political choices, um, that, uh, that, that the international community have chosen, um, for Afghanistan. And they're not disciplining, these are not target sanctions, uh, which they could have imposed, which they've done before, for example, with Russia and with other states as well too. Um, they they've, they've chosen this more prude. Uh, approach. So unfortunately this is the results. I think that, um, it's all about and have, have not really had a chance to govern. Um, and we won't, we won't know what that would be like. Um, I think it's quite clear that they're not the same Taliban that took over, um, in 19 96, 97. Um, and I think that we, um, we are basically going to be, um, seeing, uh, you know, Uh, maybe greater instability over the next, maybe coming period. Yup.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Um, what do you think might be limitations or challenges that might arise for Taliban?

Speaker 2: Well, let me say, I think the primary limitation right now is, is finance, right state financing. I mean, if they, their strategy seems at the beginning when they were taking over, um, you know, the, the, the key strategic locations for them was really like looking at the, um, the border crossings. Right. And that's how they kind of, um, really, really tightened the news on the governments and then came to, to the capital. Um, so right before they hit the provincial capitals, they started kind of hitting the border posts, to collect the tax revenue. Um, from the border crossings. Um, and so I think they still have that source of revenue, but not having access to, to, um, to basically dollars and to, to, to the international, um, you know, economy right now, it's very difficult for Afghanistan having been opened up to the world to be able to function. Um, so I think that that's one of the key challenges that they're going to be facing right now is how, um, in an integrated world to be, uh, you know, um, in isolation, I don't think they wish to be in isolation either. I think that's quite clear. Um, so they're, they're, they're going to be jumping through hoops to do that. And then I think that there's, I'm never going to be that recognition. I think that's always going to be used against them. Um, so. Yeah, frankly speaking, I'm not quite sure whether they will, um, whether the international community will come around to accepting, um, Afghanistan as, as it is right now. Um, and there will be, um, greater instability as a result of that, I think. Um, yeah, it's, it's, it's likely to be, um, similar to attempts, I think in, in some of the, um, some of the central African states as well, to where they might have been. Um, governments that were not necessarily in favour of a Western interests and then constant attempts to be stabilised, uh, the government. And, um, and as a result, leaving the country, um, well, worse off than, than, than, than what it was before.

Speaker 1: So I'm like, we already saw like changes in the world of women under the Taliban. Do you think, um, how will this further develop?

Speaker 2: Yeah. I mean, I think that, that, that is something that it's, that's maybe the only key outcome that seems to be this pressure, um, is that there has been this gradual shift from the television in terms of accepting the role of women in education, for example. So like the, the piecemeal, I would say provincial level of acceptance of women, um, you know, Um, and not a clear policy also with, uh, with relation to the women, um, being able to continue their education till the age of 18. And sometimes it isn't, some problems is also to university level. Um, but always this distinction of, you know, like the requirement of having an older male teacher, um, you know, like, or, or in some exceptional cases, somehow a women as well. Um, this may be hard to come by and also like separate facilities for, for boys and girls. Um, you know, and, and this is also very difficult in a country as poor as Afghanistan, um, you know, where, where there are not the financial resources for that. I think that is a huge limiting factor. So if the international community was serious about guaranteeing, um, the education of women, then they would have to basically finance schooling. Um, because the Taliban and the state essentially are not, are not capable or not, not don't have the means to do so. Uh, that could be, that could be a potential avenue for that. But, um, in terms of women in the workplace, I think that that's still continues to be a problem. Um, you know, like, um, an issue that the Taliban have not addressed. Um, and, and there seems to be no clear policy yet that I've seen. I know that in some cases, um, some of our former colleagues, their relatives were, um, young women who were working in

NGOs or banks and some other institutions, they were able to work, uh, in Kabul, um, at least, um, so I'm not quite sure what it, what it would be like for women traveling across the city as well, too. And women working in other areas. **Um, we've heard different kinds of stories as well too. It doesn't seem to be somewhat consistency yet. Um, but, um, but longer-term yeah. Um, I'm not, I I'm not quiet, I don't think it will be the most. It won't be a liberal regime. Yeah, definitely. It's quite conservative. Um, but is it more conservative than Saudi Arabia. Probably not much more. Yeah. Um, and so that, that's the kind of thinking also, like on what, what standard are we basing it against? Yeah, I think that's also a critical question.**

Speaker 1: Perfect. Thank you so much. Um, now we also see like the evacuation is still ongoing and also people just like immigrating by themselves to other countries. Um, do you think this also might have an impact later on, on Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Yeah, I think it already has. Um, there's a huge brain drain. Um, and I think that that has a massive consequence. So, um, I, I know from our discussions with colleagues, uh, that's, you know, there there's a lot of competent people who are leaving, um, choosing to leave, um, feeling that there's a need for them to leave. Um, and then we've also heard from them that there are basically, uh, many people who have no. Um, **have no cause also necessarily to be, to be leaving except the economic situation and then a perception that there is, um, uh, fear.** Um, but, uh, but you know, like there's, um, they're, they're not, you know, um, they're not like , they probably would not be, um, classes, people who are seriously up on under risk, you know, um, they're not a minority group. Um, they, they had no affiliation with the government, um, their, their normal citizens. Um, so, you know, it's, it's not an immediate risk to them versus anybody else. Right. Um, but, um, but obviously the economic situation is causing a lot of people to choose, um, a better life or hope for that as well, too. Um, unfortunately it seems like a lot of those people are also, um, would really struggle, especially in a European contract, uh, context, find to find meaningful work and decent work, um, without being horribly exploited. Um, so that's, um, that's to do with basically their level of qualification, um, and, uh, and experience, you know, work, experience the court. Um, so that's, that's the information that I've received from other colleagues who were in Kabul, um, who were seeing people, for example, at the passport office, uh, camped out for days, you know, like this kind of stuff, and then hearing what they were like. So that's, that's kind of the assessment that I get from that. Um, but again, anecdotal, uh, Yeah. Um, but I mean, aside from that, I think, I mean, I was reading about people who were, for example, owners of businesses who basically are shutting up, uh, their businesses, uh, and, uh, not, not really finding the means to be able to, to pay, uh, employees and support. So. Uh, more capital flights so that people who were potentially before are able to invest in the entry or at least hopeful that they could continue their businesses. Um, the, those will not continue. Um, so, um, they're there the longer that this. This pressure kind of comes from, from abroad, um, in terms of, you know, access to finance, um, and, uh, and then isolation like that for longer than I think it will be difficult for those people to continue their businesses. And that will have an impact on the rest of the economy because, you know, where would those people be employed?

Speaker 1: Thank you. Um, now I'd like to come to the domestic context, so to Afghanistan, Pakistan, which will actually does Pakistan play. Since we already saw, like when it comes to evacuation, Pakistan, one was one of the main countries, um, coming through the land route and also like in history. Um, and also maybe like political and economical, um, context. What would you say?

Speaker 2: Well, I mean, I have to be honest, I'm not an Afghanistan experts and I wasn't before. Um, so in terms of history of the context, that's not something that I can necessarily speak to, but I mean, um, The situation that at least I observed, um, was that we definitely saw that as being the closest route. Also geographically it's like Kabul was closer, um, to the Pakistan border, um, than it is, um, to, to any other border from what I understand as well, too. So it made sense that people were traveling from, from the highest populated center to, to, to Pakistan. Um, rather than to, for example, Iran, which I believe will be the majority of other, you know, migrants would be heading in that direction. Um, so, I mean, you, you had, you know, like a lot of people traveling or trying to attempt to go to Iran as well, too from Herat and so forth. Um, but, uh, um, I think that one of the challenges that people faced, um, was basically that, uh, you know, they, the, the, the experience of being an Afghan refugee in Pakistan before was, was, was very challenging for a lot of people. Um, and so. Um, you know, there's that experience, but, um, but it's it's yeah, it's, it's difficult. I think also linguistically there's, there's some, some shared background and the same with Iran. Um, so there's, there's an ability for, for people at least to find some relation. Um, whereas with, I think, um, you know, with the exception of people who were ethnic Uzbek or Tajiks, uh, they, they wouldn't really feel at home. Um, if they were to go to those areas, although I know at least one colleague, for example, who had gone to Tajikistan, right. Um, and fled when he felt directly under threatened him and his family did evacuate, um, there.

Speaker 1: Perfect. Thank you. And now I would like to come to the international collect context. So what do you think maybe since Russia, um, we already talked about it, um, took over, um, and left the country again. What do you think would maybe at this point, a political economic, and also military context?

Speaker 2: Yeah. I mean, I think that with, with, **with Russia, it's clear that there's still this. I know there's still the lens that people are looking at it through. And what you're talking about, the great game being played again, you know, like looking at how, um, how the, uh, the Afghan space can be used as a buffer. Right. Um, also, you know, we know that's been the security context Afghanistan was used, um, as a, as a security experimentation playground, basically. Um, a lot of the big, um, Um, security and defence firms were basically operating there to try out the new technology and use that as a marketing space. Um, so I think Afghanistan in terms of the Russians was an opportunity for them to kind of capitalise on the mistakes that the Americans made. Um, but also maybe use that buffer zone, but for some, for them to play a little bit as well, um, at least that's what I saw with, with, um, the Moscow conferences or discussions that happened, Uh, prior to the Taliban taking over, uh, versus the Doha discussions and the attempt to try to bring the discussions to Turkey. Um, those were all backed by the U S um, you saw the eagerness with which, you know, the Taliban and others went to Moscow. I think that, that, um, you know, gives you an indication that they tried to be, um, you know, counterweight and, and, um, at least rival some of that, that, that power there, there were ready and willing also to, to use, um, the former Soviet republics, I think as well. Um, as a bulwark against that, and they use that whole discussion against countering extremism in the region, um, you know, by supporting the military and Tajikistan, um, these kinds of, of buildups that they're showing in these border regions as well too, is, is, um, something that I think they're, they're, they're applying quite heavily, quite, quite well. I mean, they, they did things that I think that were similar with, um, with Azerbaijan and, uh, and, and I think that that's kind of some of the same dynamics that are being played. Um, so yeah, it's, it's, it's their, their, their background, but I think there's the competition between China, Russia and the U S that's definitely being played on in Pakistan. Of course. Perfect.**

Speaker 1: Thank you. Um, so now coming to a bit more current situation regarding the US, why do you think the United States withdraw from Afghanistan and also which role did they actually play?

Speaker 2: Which role did they play in the past 20 years? Or?

Speaker 1: Yeah and also like in the, like, like before we were threatened political, economical context and militarily?

Speaker 2: I mean, I think, um, so I, my, my, my assessment of why they pulled out was just that, um, you know, it became eventually something that, that wouldn't, they wouldn't be able to continue to, to, to afford domestically, um, in terms of their domestic politics. I don't think it really had much to do, um, with, uh, You know, the, uh, the, uh, the, the cost, although the cost was a factor you don't like, I think it has to do. Um, how this was being played out, that nobody could win this war. Um, and it was a sign of failure for too long. Um, so they need it to draw the line somewhere. Um, and then the whole discussion that was building up about forever wars and so forth. Uh, this is not something that was tenable and it was a win for, for any president who could claim to end the war, um, on some form of positive. So I think that that's what they were trying to go for there. Um, rather than trying to actually kind of, um, conclude the war somehow. However, uh, I think that there's, there's a lot that the Americans have to, to answer for 'em when it comes to the past 40 plus years. Definitely. Um, and even prior to that, you know, like I think that it, um, the uh, the Americans definitely played a role in undermining, um, the Russian, um, supported regime, um, and in the eighties, um, you know, not just in terms of financing, um, through the CIA, um, the Mujahedin. Uh, and providing them with, uh, with the military mindset and so forth that they needed, um, in order to, to beat the Soviets. But I think it was also kind of something that they, um, that they, that they didn't really plan for a longer-term as well. Um, and they, um, they, they used, I think a lot of political expediency, um, rather than thinking about, you know, how does this, how might this come back to. Um, so I think that the results at the end of the day was that the Americans were primarily focused on, um, their own interests, obviously like any other real foreign policy play would. Um, but I think that they, um, the underestimated, what kind of effects these kinds of interventions may have, whether it was, um, you know, the CIA supporting, uh, You know, the, the, in which had even before, or, um, the, the counter offensive, um, I guess the Taliban in 2001. Um, and then trying to, to, to get involved in state building, um, with a, with a very narrow lens on like light and lean and governance, um, this is kind of a disaster, um, and it gives an indication of how poorly that that model kind of could work. Um, so good, good, um, case in point in terms of, uh, uh, Uh, a model for, for how badly that kind of way of running government could actually function when you start from basically zero. So no, um, but it seems like, yeah, they're going to completely withdraw. And, and there, even in some of the models that they were showing for, um, I think there was, um, the, the, the Congress commissioned some studies back in May, I think, or earlier than May April, um, when they wanted some, um, some, some views on what could be the potential scenarios for the Americans to withdraw. Um, the, I think it was the, um, some, some, uh, collection of different actors, um, who were somehow affiliated to, um, to, to the state department at the time, um, presented this, this paper, um, that developed these different scenarios. And, uh, you know, most of them seem to invoke the language of wiping their hands clean, um, and washing their hands, clean up of the situation in Afghanistan. Um, and that seems to be the approach that they're very much taking now, um, this whole, you know, um, horizon attacks and so forth to try and attack, um, dash like, um, this means that they really want to kind of leave, leave the footprint that they had in central Asia behind, um, or at least in Afghanistan behind. And it seems like they are not too keen on, um, on actually supporting the Afghan people, uh, beyond that point.

Speaker 1: Yeah, thank you. Um, what do you think that China on also Germany and the EU played a big role on, since I think the U S and Russia and the Brits as well, had quite a major role in it. Um, what do you think about the other countries?

Speaker 2: I think from, from what I was reading about China, um, cause I was kind of interested to see if there was any link between this new belt and road initiative and, um, and, and you know, like what what's happening now. Um, um, uh, basically that, that seemed to be really limited, um, up until, uh, the current discussions that are taking place now. Um, so what I was trying to say was there's, there's one action, um, corridor as well to where the, the Chinese didn't have an interest. It's a very narrow space in which they could have had some connection between, um, you know, the, the. The belt and road initiative, and what's being done in Pakistan to support that as well. Um, and linking Afghanistan into that. I think that there was very little done in that, in that pathway, from what I understood, um, up until basically the spring of last year. Um, and I think that where this year, sorry. Um, and, uh, I think that, that, you know, may change going forward. I think there seems to be an interest from the Chinese, uh, You know, I know that there was some investment in, in, um, in certain, you know, key institutions in, um, from Chinese aid. Um, I remember when we were talking about TEVT as well, too, we went to the, um, the new TEVT authority and it's right next to, it was a whole big building that was basically built by the Chinese government as well, too. So there was, um, there was a state aid, um, being channeled directly, uh, Um, you know, and so there, there was this relationship, um, it, uh, it didn't seem on the scale of things that I'd seen. For example, in Ethiopia, um, you know, where there's very clearly, you know, like a strong relationship between China and the Ethiopian states, um, that didn't seem to be the case. Um, it definitely seemed that the EU and the US um, had a much stronger role in the government with the former Afghan government. Um, but, um, yeah, I think that's with, um, with, with regards to the EU's role, um, that the EU definitely, um, was following the same line as I think the Americans, um, I didn't see much distinction to be honest, uh, It didn't really appear to me that there was, you know, Maybe, maybe the key difference that I noticed, at least in terms of policy approaches, obviously our project was focusing on migration. Um, so I tended to kind of listen in a little bit more attentively when I would see something about this. I never saw the Americans talking about it, uh, migration, for example. And I think that for the EU have that mattered a lot more, obviously because of the 2016 and the way that, you know, the. The apparent threat of this migratory wave had and the legacy of that on EU policy. So that seems to kind of have been one of the critical kind of differences that I noticed. But aside from this, I think that it's, um, it wasn't, wasn't significantly, um, different in terms of a major policy approach towards kind of liberalising the economy. Um, uh, Um, really kind of focusing on securitisation and, and these kinds of main key areas, um, and really focusing, you know, on, on counter extremism, um, policy rather than, um, you know, really, really I would feel like sincere stake holding efforts.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Okay. Great. Um, so now, since we already talked about the role of Taliban and also what happened with Russia and the US um, do you think we might say that history repeats itself and we have like a repeating order again?

Speaker 2: Um, I mean, I think that it's, it's not exactly the same. Yeah. I think the context is different. Um, And I think that's in this case as well. Um, uh, the context before, you know, like, um, when, when the Taliban assumed power, it was in the context of the, of a civil war between different factions, right. Um, those factions don't exist that constellation of actors, um, all those, all those old worlds. You know, not really, not really engaged anymore. They're too old. They're children who are trying to take over as well to adapt. And they're not the, they're not really that, uh, they're not really able to command, um, you know, militia in the same way. Um, as before. **So I think it's a very different context. And I think the decimation also that we saw out of Kabul and other cities that happened in the context of the civil war basically meant that the Taliban took over something that was basically zero, you know, almost, um, you know, it was so many years of civil war in this context, there, there was building, I mean, I say that there was not a lot that was done in 20 years. There are some things that were done, but it wasn't proportionate. Right. Um, versus the amount that that was the amount of investment in terms of dollars, um, that, that nominally went in to the country. Um, so I think that that, that kind of gives you a sense that things are different, but also the context now was also imposed externally, um, by sanctions. And, um, and then that basically. We'll create a different context. Also, the intent, I think, of the Taliban is different before it was very much isolationist, unwilling to engage. At least that's the impression that I got, um, you**

know, from, from the little that I know. Um, whereas now it seems like they, um, the time that they spent in Qatar seemed to kind of open them up, um, a little bit more, at least at some factions within the Taliban, because there are also one United front, um, you know, at the Politburo bureau level. Um, so I think that there's, there's, there's, um, there's some willingness to be different, so I think, but, uh, but we'll see how much that really, that really kind of is, is the case. Um, but yeah, I think there's also just kind of, um, a lack of responsibility coming from the Americans there. So I don't think that the shock of the defeat hasn't really suck in sunken for the Americans in the same way that did for the Russians. Uh, And I think that for the Russians, they, um, they also were from what I understood as well too, they were applying still, um, like a cold war logic to the war in Afghanistan, and I'm using tanks and so forth as well too. And that was something that they also tried to apply in other country countries set up in Africa, um, you know, like in Angola and so forth. Um, and, and the result is, um, is basically that this was, you know, um, a defeat to that military logic. Um, whereas for the U S I don't think that they've accepted that this is a defeat for their counterinsurgency type logic. I think it's not really comparable in that way also. Um, but, um, yeah, at least the way that it seems to have played out as just the evacuation was a bit of a mess, um, that seems to be the only kind of thing there.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Thank you. Um, in my research question, I mentioned the term graveyard of empires. And do you think it's applicable or not?

Speaker 2: Um, so I saw that and I've heard that term bandied about so much. Um, I am not a fan of the term. I'll be honest with you to be honest, that is not my favourite term. Um, because I think that, you know, like I mentioned, I think every context is slightly different. Um, and I think the, for example, the American empire right now was already in decline prior to this. I think that's not. Um, the case, I mean, I mean, that could be why also this is, this is a partly an evidence of this, I guess, but, um, but from my perspective, like it's, it's, um, it's not the death knell for American civilisation. I mean, you, you saw similar things. I was seen as well, too with, um, with the evacuation, from. Vietnam. You know, like, um, and the way that the American, um, military was in a way or different elements of it were defeated in other contexts as well. Like whether that was even, like I mentioned Angola, um, and I've been listening to things about some how the Cuban military defeated, basically the south African men, CIA backed troops in, uh, Angola. Um, there's, there's incidents of this happening for, for quite a while. Um, and I think that there's just a lot of hubris happening with the American empire. Um, but, um, but obviously, you know, like it's, um, it's a term that's used, right. Um, it's a tough terrain for people to be fighting militarily. Um, and, and, and honestly, it's also a country that has not had a lot of investment and there's a lot of missed opportunity there. So I think that that was an opportunity, um, that was that that things could have used differently and they chose in a way not to, um, as did many elites as well, too, who were there. Um, but, um, But, yeah, I don't know if it's directly, um, the term I tend to not use the phrase.

Speaker 1: Yeah. That's what I tried to discuss in my research paper as well. And also someone gave the advice to just call it graveyard of developments and empires, but yeah,

Speaker 2: He used to love that phrase of empires. Yeah. I mean, for me, it's kind of like one of those things, like clash of civilisations, you know, like it's one of those kinds of terms, um, that I think, you know, are, are unfortunate. Um, but, um, that's my take.

Speaker 1: Yeah, no. Perfect. Thank you so much for your openness and that you have been really honest with me. That's quite important for me. And therefore, I wouldn't have just one last question. Um, what do you think might be possible or further developments when it comes to Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: I mean, I think a lot of that really depends. Um, but I think if, um, I mean, look, there's examples of countries that are still managed to survive under sanctions. Um, you know, um, but that requires a strong stakes, um, you know, like whether that's Cuba or whether that's Vietnam or whether that's, you know, like Syria or whether that's Iraq. Well, Iraq is an example of how it can, can not work actually. Um, and, uh, and, and, um, so there, there in Iran probably is the closest neighbour. Um, but again, these are, these are countries that you don't manage to create, uh, or had before also like their, their own way managing other alternative related. Um, and then access to finance is really critical because without that, they're not going to be able to, to, to build an economy. Um, and then, you know, without that, they won't be able to feed their people. Um, really like, uh, that that's like, that's a core issue. They, they won't be able to survive on humanitarian assistance. Um, and there's even the question now of whether, whether, um, humanitarian assistance should continue to Afghanistan, considering that even after the Geneva conferences there was donor fatigue. Um, so I feel like that's something that's, that's horrible. Um, you know, like, I, I really feel like this just lack of responsibility is, is really, really, you know, I don't understand how some of these actors can, can sleep at night, but I guess they don't care anyway. Um, but yeah, the, the, um, it's, it's quite difficult, um, to see that, um, And, um, **I think that, you know, in the best case, um, you know, there would be an acceptance that the Taliban won the fight, um, the recognition of the government, um, and, um, you know, reopening of diplomatic links, um, and opening up of the bank accounts. And then, um, investment closed being allowed to try and contain, um, the Taliban. And then targeted sanctions against individuals to try and leverage relationships there if they want it to. Because like I said, they've done this before with Russia. Um, you know, like if they wanted to target things against a particular regime, they could. Um, but, uh, but targeting, uh, on mass people is, is punitive, uh, such a blunt instrument. Um, so I think that that's part of. Part of the things that, um, that could chase, that would be the only real positive outcome that I could see. Um, the worst case scenarios again is that, um, they, they continue to use this. Um, from my point of view, at least they continue to use this kind of leverage that they have, um, to try and hope that there's some type of meaningful counterinsurgency.** Um, I think the French were trying to support this option as well, too. Um, and, uh, this, uh, you know, rekindling of the, the, uh, the tantric resistance type you don't like towards, uh, towards the Taliban, which, which would be fine, um, to a certain extent, but the problem is that that's very disabling and investment does not like, um, such instability. Right. Uh, and, and then, um, and then at the end of the day, um, you know, if they keep on getting caught in these cycles more, um, at the end of the day, you'll just continue with more migration. Uh, people continue to flee. Um, and, um, and, and the country will continue to suffer. I'm already on, like, you have desertification happening on a massive scale of the very little agricultural land that's available. And agriculture is one of the main activities or economic activities that are happening at least for, you know, just, you know, um, you know, just, uh, just a minimal kind of, of subsistence agriculture that was happening. Um, not to mention kind of the basic commodities that were being exported, like saffron and stuff like this as well, too. So, um, you know, it's going to be, it's going to be really a challenge going forward if that's the, that's the approach they take. Um, and it doesn't mean that the, um, those alternative power plays, um, we'll, we'll generate a more representative democracy anyway. Um, because like I mentioned in the beginning, like, um, I think that the government before that was supported fully by the international community. Um, it was highly kleptocratic. Um, and, uh, and, and really kind of the, the fact that you had all this money being funnelled back basically to US security contractors and to firms that were offshore or outside of Afghanistan gives you an indication that, um, that there was no real it's just from some of these elites to maintain, um, you know, uh, investment priorities in Afghanistan. Um, it was minimal versus what, what could have been, uh, So, yeah, I think, um, think that that's, that's kind of, one of the key questions is what happens next. But I think that, yeah,

the longer that they drag that out, though, the worse it will be for people in that fear that they're going to go probably down that, that worst case route, just to apply the pressure.

Speaker 1: Okay. Great. Thank you so much. I really appreciate your honest opinion and also that you took the time. Um, that are actually all questions I have and yeah, once again, thank you so much. Um, hopefully to see you soon again, maybe with something else and right. I wish you all the best.

Speaker 2: Thanks all the best to you and your career. Best of luck also with your, with your thesis. Well, I'll be interested to hear about it later.

13.7 Interview Transcript

Speaker 1: Okay. Perfect. Okay. Then, um, for me it would be actually quite interesting, um, regarding some, maybe introductory from your side, if you can talk about your personal background and what you did beforehand, and maybe start with the question yet?

Speaker 2: Okay. Uh, um, I was a police officer for 31 years in the UK and in the UK you can do 30 years police service and then you, uh, you retire. But clearly because I joined when I was young, I was too young to retire really. Uh, I, I felt that it was so my time in the police service was mainly, um, involved in investigation and also intelligence management and, um, called third policing, sort of the non-public facing stuff. Uh, and, uh, I progressed through the ranks and eventually ended up as a detective chief superintendent. So I had some strategic responsibilities, um, management responsibilities, and obviously some operational responsibilities as well. So I ended up at a fairly senior level just to give you a bit of context around that in the police force that I was in at the time, there are over 6,000 staff in all needed. In terms of numbers. The top 1% of those numbers were in the rank that I was in and above. So it was, was fairly senior. Um, and when I left, um, I was lucky enough to walk straight into a job where I went to Kosovo, um, doing some similar stuff to what I was doing in Afghanistan subsequently. So I worked in Kosovo with the Kosovo police, uh, as an advisor to their department of organised crime. Um, and then after a couple of years in Kosovo, um, I took the opportunity and apply for a position in Afghanistan. So originally I went to Afghanistan in September, 2012. Um, And I worked with the EU police machinery there, which was sort of the CSDP mission, which I'm sure you're aware of. So I was there on the end of 2015, and then, uh, I moved to a UK from the bilateral similar to what we were doing in GIZ on behalf of the EU, except that was with a consultancy company delivering on behalf of the DFID, which is the department of the UK. Yeah, which has now the FCDO, uh, towards the end of 2018, I moved over to GIZ, and I was involved in the first iteration TAIPA. Uh, so I joined that project as an advisor. Um, and again, that ended. After we'd been evacuated basically from green village, after the attack, the project kind of die on its feet, put it, it came down to natural conclusion and there was a gap, uh, and GIZ asked me to go back to the TAIPA project as the team leader. So I was on TAIPA for a year, from the beginning of September, 2020, when, till the 15th of August, when the Taliban took over. So that's kind of in a nutshell.

Speaker 1: Okay. Yeah. Quite good. Perfect. Thank you so much. Maybe, can you talk a bit more about what were your exact tasks when you worked for GIZ in Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Yeah, certainly when, uh, my first stone started with GIZ, uh, on the EU SPR uh, I was employed as an advisor. Uh, to the general directorate of international cooperation within the ministry of interior. Um, I had responsibility for sort of coordinating international aid and international activity support activity within the MoI. Uh, and the main point at that time for GIZ. I said, um, the EU was, of course the EU looking to take over the chair of the IPC process, which is the process and structure through which all of the international coordination is managed through the ministry. So I was, I was employed as an advisor and in that regard, and in that first iteration of the project and after the attack on green village. The former leader was injured in that attack. Uh, And take over as a team leader, but I took over on the ground with Paul working remotely in the background. Um, and it kind of evolved from there that after the USPR all finished, and then the EU decided that they wanted to do another single award to GIZ for the next decoration, which is TAIPA Um, GIZ had asked me if I would take over as team leader, which I did.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. You said you like started to work with Afghanistan 2012 when I'm not mistaken. Um, have you been in another contact with Afghanistan before? Do you know something about the background? And when was the first time that you get in touch with Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: I mean, the reason I chose Afghanistan is that, when I was a police officer, a number of opportunities for the EU police mission in Afghanistan. In for me, the timing was just never, right. You know, so it didn't move ever when I was a serving police officer. So to a certain extent was a little bit of unfinished business, but it was something that I always wanted it to see myself doing, because it is probably one of the most extreme deployments for. For a non-military person, you know? And so I, it was a bit of unfinished business. And then when I saw the opportunity to, to apply as a retired police officer, I did.

Speaker 1: Okay. Perfect. Um, do you think maybe just from your opinion and do you, what, what, what changed after the Taliban came to power? Um, so after the 15th of August, um, so what were you feeling? How does this change manifest itself?

Speaker 2: Well, I have an opinion on that. I think it's there for all to see anyway, isn't it, you know, I mean already, I think the time I was shocked that they took over so quickly and they didn't want to end it as quickly as it did. So they themselves, I think, are quite open and saying that they're not, **they were not prepared for that. Uh, and they were not prepared or not capable of governing the country. And as a sole entity, you know, because they are in mind prior to that, all the talk would be about a inclusive sort of government, you know, including people from the former of government, so on and so forth. So all of the Taliban, and I think they'd been caught short in that respect and so much that they cannot manage. They don't have that capacity and they don't have the skills. The previous history in their approach to sort of managing people. Um, so I think that's, that's really self-evident uh, and of course what's happened since, as you've seen, is, you know, in the international community have turned the top off and we have this, uh, emerging humanitarian crisis, um, which is fairly tragic. I think. Regardless of what what's gone on in the security state, then the fact that the people we work with or the entities that we work with in the security sector of all that is gone you know, the, the, the big issue for me is the American emerging, uh, humanitarian crisis. And that, that slower rules of women's and girls' rights, particularly around education and the right of word and freedom of movement and so on. So. And you get the, I get the impression reading about this that's going forward is that the **Taliban are keen to engage with the international community so that the cups turned that on for the money.** Um, so what they're doing in terms of limiting women's rights and girls' rights is really being good, gradually invested. So it's not as perhaps as sick as it was last time round, but that thing they're slowly, slowly eroding the rights of women and girls. Close to administrative women to face, um, which no longer exists as, as I'm sure you know, and run over women in the common government.**

Speaker 1: Perfect. Yeah, this was actually also the next question regarding the role of women and the Taliban. Um, yeah, since I think it's also like, yeah, well, really tough topic. You know, you said also like, um, you're seeing the problem of Taliban managing like the whole government and the whole country. Do you see other limitations or challenges that might arise?

Speaker 2: limitations for them? So not just terms of their capacity, you know, but, uh, the width of the country. Given the history, you know, tolerate the Taliban for any great length of time. If the economy stays the way it is and the emerging humanitarian crisis, which we all hope it doesn't happen. But as long as, you know, refers to that, along with the issues about health, you know, so you're going to have a very unhappy and unsettled country. Um, and I think one of the fears that you see in the background, when you do some reading about this is. Behind that is the concerns that it will just collapse into a civil war. Um, you know, and then I think you add to that mix, um, you know, we have ISIS, uh, you know, chorus, ISIS whatever the label does, whatever, you know, I'm talking about you haven't them now present enough kind of stuff, you know? So young enough to Afghanistan I don't think there's even more unstable than when the Taliban took over the first time, you know, so you have the end and I still left that to, to get rid of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban all those years ago. And we have the Taliban, which is burgeoning it's stronger. I think that it pops. It was, uh, Al-Qaeda was clearly still there, uh, you know, with key positions in the government. And then behind that you have the presence of ISIS you know, who, as you, as you'll see are fighting a ton apart now, as we speak, you know, so the violence is still going on. Perhaps it's not as violent as it was, but there's still a lot of violence. And suddenly as I'm reading, there's a lot of attacks on, on the minority has our community. So it's a, it's a very. All the time on the set with the environment possible. So in this time around.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Um, do you see maybe what might happen since we now at the moment have still ongoing evacuations and people immigrating to other countries? Um, do you see and, do you have any imagination what could happen to, or how it will go on regarding the evacuation process and also immigration of citizens?

Speaker 2: Just hit that button. Step one of the key strategic aims really in particularly the EU and all that couldn't be as involved in the EU. And that was the British at that time, when we were you post to prevent mass migration in Europe, you know, by stabilising Afghanistan, supporting up Afghanistan and investing in its development, um, which is a perfectly honorable thing to do. Yeah, but what we have now in the space of 11 days when they started taking provincial capitals and the collapse that, on the 15th of August, this mass Exodus of people who are being evacuated by various of the European countries, and the US of course, because of their working relationship that it was putting reasonably. You know, the perception quite rightly that they were in danger, their lives are in danger. So you have people who've gone out through various schemes, legitimately taken out by them. They couldn't release, but then you've got those who are trying to get out through them. See, you know, the sort of the classic inwards for want of a better phrase, you know, who would try and make it to wherever they wanted to be, whether it be Germany, whether it be the UK or elsewhere in Europe, you know, to those countries by illegal means. **And you're going to understand, like the one that didn't put, they would go through that more black, illegal, then those people that would be taken out and evaluated. So I think there's a. There's a, on the horizon. There's a difficulty for us all in Europe, uh, in relation to how to do, to deal with the people who we have evaluated to have gone through a legitimate process, to be with us now and our countries, how are we going to be holding them? Are we going to be settled? And now we've got to go integrated into the communities and it's quite clear. And I could be now the UK that that's proving very difficult.** You know, there's a lot of the Afghan or most of them, Afghan refugees. So the UK took out. I've still in hotel accommodation, and they're likely to be in hotel accommodation. Well, many, many months before they're, they're reintegrated into various communities. And I know that Germany, like the little I know about the German process, you know, you do see the beginning. Your refugees into the community is a little bit quicker and what the UK are, you know, so that's the, I think the European perspective, the other perspective for Afghan Afghanistan as a country is it's a brain drain. **You know, there are a lot of people who have worked in government and institutions. For example, a lot of professional people are there to be taught as teachers or whatever. Who are fleeing that could be, or what is see is perfectly legitimate reasons to the fear for their lives and the fear, the fear retribution from the Taliban, uh, put their leaving if you'd find behind, you know, which again impacts on the country, on the economy and the cross, or that could be going forward.** So that's such a difficult, difficult situation.

Speaker 1: Definitely. Yeah, that's true. So maybe now, just coming to the domestic context, I'm also like also evacuation regarding Pakistan, because it seems like to be one of the first routes which are chosen. Therefore, I would like to ask, what do you think, which role actually Pakistan played, um, or still plays, um, with Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Well, you know, the great game continues. Doesn't it? You know, Pakistan have, if keeps so many people off against so many different people over the years. And you know, you suspect that if continues now, you know, because it's to their advantage to have Afghanistan unstable, um, you know, they, they supported the Taliban throughout, um, you know, But when they're happy financially with sort of safe havens trading establishments or whatever, but it supported them throughout, you know, um, and at the same time they then take Afghan refugees in, you know, and they seem to welcome under the port with us and through the borders, you know, and I know there's some difficulties of that worse than difficulties of the borders. Uh, and we extended. And if that's still the case or not, you know, but you have like a standard. Playing a very explicit game is I see it, you know, and so much in the fuelling the fire did it cool if caused the, uh, instability in Afghanistan you know, and, and that part of this problem, you know, and that like, geo-political sort of regional sort and strategic spot in Afghanistan sits, you know, with its resources, with its trade points and so on and so forth, you know, it, it helps Pakistan destabilise that.

Speaker 1: Perfect. Thank you so much. I'm now just coming to the international context. Um, so, for me, my research question is like the graveyard of empires. Therefore I would like to focus on Russia and the US especially as primary source. Um, and therefore I would like to ask you, so would you say which political and economic context, and also like military context that Russia played in Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Well, I mean the Russian, uh, as I read it, it was to suppress Islam. Because they were concerned about their borders in the north and central Asia. And now even today manifests itself because you have a lot of in the MoI where we have a lot of people who are in senior positions who are being, it's being. Claimed bashes, communists, you know, sort of therefore they are pagans, you know, so you have the Russian influence skill that people have been trained by the Russians. And despite what that training may have may or may not have been, you know, that has manifested itself in front of me, in the ministry. And in there you can tell who are the former Russian. Afghans, you know, because broadly speaking in one more professional, um, you know, it's against the, you know, the other famous from the north who are a little more than canisters, you know? So you could see that you could see that we should influence throughout, you know, certainly in the security sector around I lived. And even after all these years, it's still there.

Speaker 1: Perfect. Thank you. Now, just coming to the US. Yes. Since the Withdraw is quiet, yeah, not, not that long ago. And also therefore I would like to ask also about the politic and not economic and ultimately context. So since, yeah, it's actually not that long ago that yeah, the US withdraw?

Speaker 2: Uh, yeah. If you asking me to talk about the more recent times us times and what we did talk about that, I mean, this is my opinion, and I know you're going to anonymise this, how you say it anyway. I think what we, what history will give us in the fullness of time is, uh, the decision by Biden in April will prove to people of the biggest foreign policy, disasters, decisions, ever take. Because a lot of what we spoke about earlier, you know, and then give him one day the whole sort of the whole purpose of us being

there, NATO and the US, you know, that was done in a matter of weeks from some, his decision in April. And the change that I saw was palpable, you know, having it. It team of 60 NATO, US advisors working in the MoI in various levels and departments after Biden's decision within the space of three days, they disengaged and then Michigan wants to pipe up and go minimum. So they disengaged completely with us as internationals and the MoI. As they come apart and beneficiaries. So there was a huge vacuum left straight away, which was very upsetting for, for their ministry. And I dare say for the ministry of defence as well, you know, so that, that was quite apparent undergrads faded away, you know? So I think that political decision, I wouldn't say there was in haste, but it was, it was, it was taking very quickly in the end. And I think it will manifest itself as if our policy disaster. And the reason I say that is, you know, not just because of what happened in the subsequent time between April and the 15th of August, that's there for a sort of see, but I think, you know, take that forward the humanitarian side of this, um, you know, the health side of it within Afghanistan, you know, so all the people stuff, the softer sort of putting in of course, you know, the, the big issue is sort of threats to. The homeland as the Americans call it. Yeah, no, I think we've seen attack whether it's Europe, whether it's in the state, but I think there will be some serious security implications coming out of this as well, as well as what we're seeing now in terms of humanitarian stuff and health.

Speaker 1: Okay. Perfect. And do you would like also to elaborate on the, maybe the role of China? I wrote down China, Germany, EU and India.

Speaker 2: Well, people tend to forget the China borders Afghanistan, you know, and when you see the Chinese, you know, what they did in Africa, for example, and need and what they wanted to do. And in Afghanistan the minerals and the, you know, the assets, uh, you know, it's one thing, getting it out of the ground and transport. So there's a, there's a huge investment piece there, which the Chinese seemed invested in, you know, to put that new conflict up with the Northern borders. Yeah. Former UdSSR or, you know, sort of how will that work be able to have fit? And then of course you have the issue now, uh, with the weakness, you know, and the way the Chinese are like feeding their Chinese Muslim community. So I think that will play a part as well. You know, so perhaps the Chinese won't be able to walk. The way that are in where you perhaps anticipated. If I, you know, and support the trade routes, which didn't want to get through to the ports, I think it is in Pakistan or around there somewhere and then on, on lets, you know? **And so for them, it's all, it's all commercially, you know, what they don't want to be doing is fighting, you know, what they want, does it cover us in the business, but I think their approach to the you will, will perhaps. Not necessarily stop that, but I think it would make it so much more difficult for them to be operating effectively and acceptingly in Afghanistan.**

Speaker 1: Okay. Um, some opinions about Germany, the EU?

Speaker 2: Um, well EU, as I read it at the moment I get a lot of the single states. If your legs are sitting on their hands, you know, This they've got is huge dilemma, how do I engage? You know, they don't want to say support. Um, that made that quite clear. It was on the project. Um, but they're still trying to work on everyone, engage, um, you know, whether or not be in humanitarian aid, which I think they, they may well have contributed to the new UN fund and in relation to humanitarian aid. So they they're looking to put that donor money in there. It's supposed to fund, bilateral pieces of work, like TAIPA and the health project and so on and so forth. So I think the, see that is a safer option in terms of investing their European taxpayers money. So that gives them a little bit of a buffer. I've read several times in these four weeks today. They want to set up camp again in, in Kabul, you know, with, uh, at delegation, you know, I'm also reading and show you out that lots of the EU individual companies or under that companies are wanting the Navy, how they a collective of embassies together and, you know, put, I think the whole issue with security and who's going to provide that. And who's going to look after them will improve probably money because I think the idea for a lot of people in nationals, you know, the term. Again, so there that compound, if it's in EU delegation and finds, it's guarded by Taliban, as opposed to what used to be the Afghan public protection force. I think there's a bit of an issue in there for them to come to terms with that, you know, there'll be some huge security concerns. So before we even get there, whether it be Germany or the UK, I think there's a lot of practical stuff for them to work their way through, not just the, the higher level political position about how do we engage as they call it, you know? So I think they they've got some difficulties on both fronts, you know, and then if we just bring that back down, Does it work that we were involved with them with TAIPA and the ministry of interior and the other administered interior. It was from the economy network. You know, he's a sanctioned terrorist, uh, and there's also a \$5 million above and beyond his head by the FBI. You know? So the idea of us wanting into the minister to worked with him on behalf of the EU is fanciful, but really it's just not going to happen. You know? So there's some political. That you've written to be done in terms of how they at the engage, but there's a lot of practical issues as well for them to work through in terms of security of their own sites. And also if you do engage how we knew, how would you distinguish between who you engage with? You know, do you allow that they allow me to engage with the assumption tourist. And then for example, they will engage with the minister of health. So there's, there's some big dilemmas there, you know, for them to work their way through. And that's not going to be solved anytime, but I'm not saying it's going to take a long time, but I don't think it will be. It's not so many in books who overnight, particularly with bureaucracy, like the EU.

Speaker 1: That's true. Yeah. And do you think that India still plays a significant role when it comes to Afghanistan and the relationship?

Speaker 2: Well, one thing that I heard the other week when I was talking to some of the Afghans working for GIZ is that they will be disappointed with India because India has stop issuing visas, you know, so. Afghanistan have had a lot of support from India on the face of it over the years. I think when push came to shove, I think the Afghans, I just spoke were a little bit disappointed with the Indian position, but I haven't seen a lot of, since all this happened is much in the news about what in his position is, you know, because again, they were sat in Kabul Basically basically defined their proxy war with Pakistan, you know? So whereas the Taliban would sort as, sorry, Pakistan would support the Taliban, whether it be resources, training, money and so on. India would doing the same with Afghanistan, you know, but where do you sit now and where they see them themselves within Kabul and what remains for them in Afghanistan? I'm not sure.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Okay. Now we already talked about the role of Taliban. So since we already had this scenario, do you think it's like a repeating order? So history repeats itself. What are your thoughts about it?

Speaker 2: I just tend to repeat itself a bit in Afghanistan kind of stuff. Isn't it? You know, you were kind enough to start your, your international section with Russia, but you know, if we look back to history, you know, the brits have been there as well. **So, you know, his feeders, so they help us learn, you know, and, and I think it goes to show that there's not many people win a fight in Afghanistan, you know, so the military side of it is a great indicator, you know, that Afghanistan cause of what it is, you know, it's not, it couldn't mean it's going to be taken. Because it's not one centralised democracy, the way that we in the west to try to make it, you know, it's lots of little factions, lots of little areas, different ethnicities, different tribes, you know? So it doesn't lend itself to a centrally run or government degree that perhaps. The US and NATO envisaged. And then those early days, you know, so straight away is it is an international community. We were up killed it, you know, and, you know, we basically, I don't think we knew what the ground truth was. You know, I don't think it was enough. Another thing that even in his sudden been**

there for nine years, I don't think it was enough understanding by international. By the international community, you know, so this coming in and imposing Western standard democracy in a country, which for the little bit of research you could have worked out, doesn't really lend itself to, that was a big mistake, you know, and again, just pinning that down that were ground level. You know what I've seen, time and time again, advisors, particularly military US aid or advisors has come in for their six months. And I think they're going to change things like that. So they'll give them the American, the German, the French, the Italian version of what a particular policy is, but they're really thinking it through it if Afghanistan needs this. And if you do, if they do need it, you know, maybe you could ask them a little bit about it, you know, and then contextualise it sort of fits their needs, you know? No good just going in and giving them it, the German or an English policy on whatever to see you can't implement that, because that's. The Mol in **particular is in the state it's in, because the Afghans being sort of polite, we'll just take the policy and say, thank you very much.** And then put it on the ballot or the rest of them. And then adviser will go away after six months thinking he or she she's done a great job, but they don't think, you know, so I've seen a lot of that. You know, I think it's important to have a development head on when you, when you, when you were with people in that, context, you know, you've got to understand what the issues are or the problems on and get that, get that into complex to, to divert them **the solution that they require, not what you require.**

Speaker 1: Yeah. You already mentioned like the Brits. I although thought about just taking them in, but I think historically looking it maybe was too broad for the master thesis. That's why I thought leaving them out. So, um, yeah. And also coming back to that point regarding graveyard of empires, we have the Brits, we had the Russia, we had the US what do you think about this term? Yeah, it, or is it more just like something else behind it?

Speaker 2: But I think it's the term, isn't it as been cloned in a number of articles, in a number of books and it's, it's stuck. And again, it just goes back to military conflict, you know, because his feed tells us, Ooh, while you don't win in Afghanistan, you know, and this time it's taken 20 years, you know, and I don't think. Like, I'll give this again. **I don't think whichever way to dressed it up, you know, by the Americans or by NATO, our by us as Europeans, you know, we lost, we lost the war, you know, and we need to be big enough to say that and claim the long game, then they beat.** A huge international force know, and it's not just, I mean, that huge amount about sort of military operations or tonics by any way, shape or form I wouldn't profess to, but you know, this whole idea of just fogging villages. Yeah. And it just losing people all the time, you know, in terms of, you know, the international community comes despised, you know, which just helps the Taliban grow and grow and growth. Um, and what would the other, the other thing I found, and then we're going off on tangents. He put these stupid, according to see, um, the other thing I found again on a practical level, you know what I know you want my sort of practical experience as well as not pontificating, you know, on a practical level. What we did see for a number of years was, was at the Taliban. Before better its strategic communications. Then the Afghans were better. The Afghans were supported massively by international community for strategic communications and messaging. Um, Taliban were far better, far, far better, and now manifested itself in the end where the troops in the military and the police were just on a back of a phone call collapsing and handing their weapons and all that. So, yeah, not many minutes in Afghanistan when it comes to finding.

Speaker 1: Okay, great. So, um, one last question from my side would be, um, maybe just from your personal perspective again, how would you predict the possible further developments in Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Yeah, that's a really good question. It's tough. I think there's a shorter term and a longer term answer. And then I think the shorter term, the future's very bright, you know, and again, we've touched on their, their health and the humanitarian stuff. There's going to be a lot of pain in the short term, you know, and then again, It's different tangling, isn't it? The politics and the more humanitarian based approach, you know, because clearly that the politics at this point in time do not want to sort of let the top off, um, open it up completely. Okay. To find out a sense of money, the world banned in this last week or so over the last few days for humanitarian aid, but, you know, doubt this timeliness. The politics of it, or the engagement with the Taliban and the Taliban approach to human rights, women's rights, children's girl's rights and so on, you know, in their approach to law and order in, you know, the way that the deal is law and order and justice and so on and so forth. All the things that the west tried to distill enough kind of standard terms. Their approach to democracy over the last 20 years or so they've all sort of fallen by the wayside since the 15th of August. **So, you know, the consequences of that is this alone lack of political engagement and effective. That is what we're seeing with the emerging humanitarian and health crisis. Um, and I think in the short term, there will be a lot of suffering. Quite a bit of death, um, you know, across there, you know, and people starving to death and dying because there's a winter, but I think going forward longer term, I do think that there will have to be, it doesn't have to be, but I think it will be some engagement, um, with the Taliban.** Um, simply because if I've kind of stand strategic position, you know, where it is, you know, All of it, everybody, the US, Europe, they all need to have a bit of skin in that game, you know, sort of walk away and leave it to the Russians, the Chinese, Pakistan, Iraq around it will be in palatable. And I think it will be a mistake. Politically, something longer term will be an engagement because we've got to maintain and invest in maintain a view on that particular part of the world. Lots of reasons, not really security, but I do think in the short term, I think will be some sort of quick.

Speaker 1: Thank you then. Maybe just one last question. Just personally question from my side. Um, not regarding my research paper, but do you think there was one situation maybe just positive or negative, which were in your time in Afghanistan that maybe just still stuck in your head?

Speaker 2: I mean, there's lots of positives, you know? I mean, there are lots of positives because you, it costs all the gigs up to work in Afghanistan, whether with the EU police mission, with the UK bilateral, or laterally with GIZ, and then he used for the admissions. You know, there have been some, some successes, you know, and some individuals where you've you feel that you've helped. Build some capacity of their own, giving them an opportunity, you know, and, and suddenly all of those little successes don't seem to measure who did the big success. We all want it, unfortunately, you know, so on a personal level, there are lots of sort of anecdotes, you know, we've, we've all helped with and supported, you know, seen them move on independent positions and, you know, seeing them through. So of to the security sector over there on the downside. Um, you know, the, the inefficiency of the government, you know, when I say inefficient and being kind, when I really mean to say is the competency of the, the former of government, you know, it was self serving, uh, you know, corrupt there for their own ends. To serve themselves and their families and their associates is against the company. I think, you know, we've, we've all witnessed that over the years. And then probably, this is just sort of highlighted it when things have come to that they had that they have, you know, when they're going, going away with \$160 million, not suppose anybody will ever know, we all have a view on that. You know what that level of. That level of international don't have money, taxpayers, money, your money, my money, you know, it wasn't put to good use. It was wasted and stolen and rambles and rambles partly put alongside that. You know, also a lot of the blame for that, my view sits with the international community, you know, the way that money wasn't managed wasn't properly distributed wasn't government property. You know, there was no sort of measure against outcomes, lots of outputs, lots of inputs outputs much, not much in the way of outcomes and impacts, you know. The

fact that we lost. We took off the boat. We definitely that in terms of the way the money was, was managed for it, be like that trust fund, the log or the trust fund through the UN or whatever, you know, a lot of project money vendor, the US money getting from the rest of this was mismanaged biases, internationals, uh, and not afforded the Afghans, the opportunity to steal that money. So I find that. I think you very sad on all sides.

Speaker 1: Okay. That's actually it. Um, just once again, I really appreciate that you took the time and the really insightful answers and opinions. Um, uh, yeah, I really appreciate that, thank you so much. Um, yeah. I reach out to you and, um, till then I wish you and your family all the best, and I hope to see you around and take care.

13.8 Interview Transcript

Speaker 1: Perfect. Okay. So first of all, for me, it would be quite interesting to know a bit about your personal background, what you learned before and how it was your relationship with Afghanistan and yeah. Therefore it would be great if you can tell me a bit about you personally.

Speaker 2: Uh, yeah, I have started school. Uh, 2001, right. And then I finished my school in 2012 and, uh, uh, I started studying computer science in, uh, one of the universities in Kabul for one year. I continued to study there and then I got a scholarship, I went to India and I completed my bachelor degrees, a bachelor degree in computer science and applications. Uh, from, uh, the international university, uh, the city of Punir. And, uh, after going back to Afghanistan, I, I just, uh, right after going back to Afghanistan I joined GIZ in October, 2018, and since then I was working with GIZ, then. Um, yeah, I have done computer science, but I was working in administration and finance, but I had a lot of my personal projects based on computer science.

Speaker 1: Okay. Okay, perfect. Thank you so much. And may I ask what, where you're actually, I would say daily task with GIZ ?

Speaker 2: Uh, daily task, I said, all this finance related, uh, pensions, like booking booking of invoice. And then I was, uh, trained for multitasking, I was in the procurement section and administration finance and all this like basic administration and, um procurement.

Speaker 1: Perfect. Thank you so much. Okay. Um, maybe, can you tell me what you actually know about the historical background of Afghanistan, just from your personal point of view and what you learned in school, maybe?

Speaker 2: Uh, yeah, from the, uh, what we have learned in school, uh, we, we mostly focused, focused on the recent story of Afghanistan a lot, not a very long history of, as you know, we have a long history of 5,000 years. So we really don't know much about that. And, uh, we have started learning mostly from, uh, 300 year, uh, years back, like when Ahmad Shah Baba started drilling in Afghanistan, he, he was actually, uh, one of the soldiers. So, uh, someone called Nadir Shah in Iran and they, he was, uh, the, uh, leader of another assurance, um, uh, military in the Khoroson province, a previous name for Afghanistan. So he was there. And then, uh, after, uh, sometimes he just announced his own government. The country, recent country that is now called Afghanistan. And, uh, and, uh, after that, uh, it was a chain of, uh, his, uh, like, uh, son and then his grandson and going so, so on. And they were rolling in Afghanistan the worst part didn't, uh, the history of Afghanistan we saw in school. It was like, Uh, a brother was being killed by another brother for just to, uh, gain the power or to gain the, uh, like, uh, uh, government authority. So. And then, uh, it, it, this Ahmad Shah Baba, but he was Pashtun. You know, that in Afghanistan we have different ethnic groups and communities. So it was, uh, he was Pashtun. And, and then, uh, Baraksai, uh it's Baraksai Pashtun, after, uh, seven to eight generation of his, uh, like, uh, uh, son and then up to seven generation. Uh, there was a change from Baraksai to Sadozai, uh, Sadozai was another group of Pashtun in Afghanistan and they came into power. And, uh, in both of this, Pashtun groups, No problem with them was that, uh, they were just killing each other because of power. And then, uh, then, uh, great Britain came in Afghanistan and then the Russia come in Afghanistan and the civil war that that's recently happened in the last 50 years in Afghanistan. Brief.

Speaker 1: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. I think it is quite a long story, but yeah. And let's create. Yeah. Um, then I would like to come directly to the question of the Taliban. So what do you think, what do you feel what changed in Afghanistan since the Taliban took over and maybe also what changed and manifest itself and therefore, yeah, what happened?

Speaker 2: Okay. So, uh, what is changing in Afghanistan is the. Mostly if it effected, uh, party's economy because the economy has gone down so much down and, uh, like two, three days back, there was a report that, uh, out of a hundred people in Afghanistan, only two people have a basic food to eat at night. So then they. Of the rest 98 people do not have a proper food to eat at night. So the economy is in a very bad situation right now. And, uh, you have seen the security as well. The security has not been as much changed after the Taliban took over the country, because there were a lot of bombs. There were attacks. They were fights. There were war, a civil war, internal war because the Taliban one wanted to be, get the power, but now they are in their ruling there, but still there bombs and like a lot of unsafety and security. Um, mostly. The target of this attacks or, uh, share people in Afghanistan, they can be a Hazara communities. And now there's all attacks that are happening in Afghanistan or in the, either in the east part of Kabul. So, or, uh, in the areas that are, uh, that, uh, Shaam Muslim are living. And this is the very worst. And another problem is that. Uh, their target killing and, uh, like people are just hidden living, and it's not broadcast. It's not shown in the media, like, uh, previous officers from government. And there are some people who had collaboration with international communities, although some of them are being just, uh, killed or lost or, uh, yeah. And, uh, um, Yeah, these are the biggest changes that has happened. And, uh, obviously that people are more, uh, hopeless and people are more frustrated and yeah.

Speaker 1: Yeah. So what do you think might lead to limitations and also maybe challenges for the Taliban regime?

Speaker 2: For the Taliban regime, the biggest challenges that the international communities and the world, they will not recognise them as a, as a government in the, in the region. It's like, uh, maybe focused on can support, support them. But we just, with the support of Afghanistan, nothing will change. Like Afghanistan has always been a country who has been. **Uh, dependent on the, uh, foreign aid, their main fund, that the main. Um, mainly that is being used in Afghanistan. It was coming from outside, even in international communities who have gone or who has been to Afghanistan they worked on the mental infrastructure, of Afghanistan, the money from outside and spend it there right now in this, uh, fund is not coming from a foreign countries. The biggest challenge for Taliban is that they do not have any source of income. They do not have, uh, any like, uh, fund support. This is the biggest challenge for them. And, uh, another challenge that they are facing at the moment is that they're all of their soldiers are all of their, uh, military. Like if I call it the one military, all of them are illiterate and. Then they don't know how to behave with the locals. They don't know how to behave as civilians. And, um, in some parts they are just behaving as they were behaving in the year 2000 and before 2009, 1996 to 2000. Yeah. It's uh, like they have to, uh, gain people's trust. That's the most important thing, and I'm not sure whether they can do it or not. And the economy I already discussed about it, the economy has gone down to zero. For example, in 2013. There was 65%, uh, poverty in Afghanistan. And after, uh, after the, uh, talk of withdrawal of international communities got a bit serious and in 2018, this figure raise to 55% and now it has rested, I mean, 98%. So these are the challenges that they're facing. Yep. And also like the Taliban don't know how to rule a**

country and how to govern, uh, Uh, you like you see there, uh, uh, the history, uh, they have been in the mountains. **They just, uh, they just know how to fight. They just know how to fire a gun, not more than this, how they can, uh, govern a country, how they, how they will establish a country with all the norms and standards.** It's some big, big challenge.

Speaker 1: Yeah. And also what for me is quite important. What do you think will also regarding the role of woman under Taliban? Um, we also saw quite a lot of restrictions. What do you think will further happen.

Speaker 2: Uh, considering, uh, dilemmas behaviour in during their, uh, previous government as well. And right now also because the schools are closed for girls universities are closed and even the universities which were open, they just separated the boys and girls, male and female students. And then. They have strictly announced that, uh, women should stay at home because our, uh, soldiers, they don't know how to behave with them. And then until we announced a regulation for women, you stay at home. And at that, that regulation has never been announced since last, it has been four months right now, but they have not announced anything. So I don't think so. They are. Ready to accept women in the society. They, it, I don't think so. They, they accept women and empower in government. Like, uh, uh, there was a case that, uh, a doctor was beaten because, um, he was treating a male patient. A female doctor was bitten because he was treating a male patient. So for them it's, um, Uh, it's the idea that the women should stay at home or better if they're working outside, they should work in a, in a totally female dominated area. So, um, I'm a little bit concerned about the future of women and the Taliban.

Speaker 1: But still I'm, like you said, women are allowed to attend the university? They are separate from the man, but they're allowed at the moment to go to University?

Speaker 2: No. For a few days many university were closed again. And the moment schools were open for boys, not for girls, but universities for just few days, universities were open and again, universities closed, at the moment, uh, no functioning universities around. Yeah. And also another challenge that Taliban is facing at the moment is that all the, all people who were scholars, uh, all people who had, uh, they, uh, than Phd's and Masters leaving. So they're leaving Afghanistan, they're hardly people, hardly people who are literate and people who are scholars and leaving Afghanistan, no one wants to no one wants to stay there. Within the Taliban, they're not people who have studied or there are, most of them are in illiterate.. How can they keep their universities or schools open?

Speaker 1: No, that's actually, it was my next question. Like quite a lot of people, like not emigrating and leaving the country. What do you think. This course for, for the Taliban regime or for Afghanistan itself, since quite a lot of people are leaving right now?

Speaker 2: It's like history is just getting repeated. Uh, when the great Britain mentored Afghanistan the same thing happened for few few years. They, they weren't there, there was a language of improvement in Afghanistan. **Some people, they went to universities, people who studied and then. Um, the civil war started. Great Britain they left and they took all the minds and the people who had a and done something or literate people. They took them out. And again, after a few years Russia come and then this same story repeated. Then now also. But this is the biggest challenge Afghanistan is losing some minds from the people who are, uh, who can do something good for Afghanistan. They're, they're all leaving.** Uh, for example, during this, uh, last 20 years because, uh, international communities have done a lot in Afghanistan and there were people who had a back in, uh, year, 2000, there were, uh, At roughly around 1 million students and this, the students were sitting in religious, uh, training centres and schools, not in a normal school system. And then, uh, in 2012, there were more than 7 million students. And out of the 7 million students, 3000 were female students. And, uh, somewhere around 900, 9,900 students were studying abroad all of this, this people, they went back to Afghanistan. They were working for the betterment of against them, but not all of them were leaving. So this is. This is a quite big challenge for a Taliban to build up a government. Even if they, they are later recognised by the international communities.

Speaker 1: Um, now we come to like the domestic context and also likely role between Afghanistan and Pakistan. So we also saw like now Pakistan putting, I would say one of the major roles when it comes to the evacuation route of land and also like historically, and looking back, and also regarding the role of Taliban and also like the pashtun, and so, um, maybe also like political and economic context, which you see, which role does Pakistan play or played?

Speaker 1: Um, before, um, I don't know whether I am right or wrong. It can be my personal thoughts. Pakistan has always had an interfering again, the sun and it's whatever is happening in Afghanistan right now, it is because of Pakistan. They have always planned. And this, uh, the target attacks that are happening in Afghanistan and the civil war that is moving on in Afghanistan somewhere at some point, Pakistan has an interface. So in case of evacuation also Pakistan is receiving funds from the international communities. It's not like a Pakistan just facilitates the evacuation process and also. Um, I got, uh, according to me because, uh, when they, uh, uh, on 15th of August when the collapse of government happened, and then there was a resistant group, like they were resisting against when they were fighting against Taliban. Taliban didn't have any, uh, pilot to fly an airplane. And ISIS support the Taliban and there was a, they were bombarding the, uh, resistant groups. So this is, uh, this directly shows that, uh, that, uh, Taliban is being supported by Pakistan. And now also they're supporting them in, uh, most of the, uh, Pakistan has announced that we will even provide free treatment to patients in Afghanistan. It shows that, uh, Pakistan has thought that Afghanistan is just under that, uh, state of Pakistan. It's it's like that. And, and, uh, Pakistani, uh, in, in Pakistan also there, um, Taliban groups in the, in, uh, just, uh, keeping quiet and, uh, keeping busy, uh, their government Pakistan supported them and sent him to Afghanistan to fight. And yeah. So keep Pakistan peaceful. And, uh, uh, it keep Pakistani Taliban busy it's uh, it has always been planned by ISI and the government of Pakistan to support, uh, Taliban groups in Afghanistan like idolatry. It can, it can be Afghani Taliban or Pakistani Taliban, but they have already received, uh, support from them, according to me.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Yeah, no, no, that's totally fine. Just from your view, like I'm telling that's great. Okay, perfect. Thank you so much. Now I'd like to come like to the international context. Um, I would like to start with Russia. What do you think? What had Russia for political economic and also even military role?

Speaker 2: Um, right now?

Speaker 1: Um, so when the, I think it was in the eighties, nineties, right?

Speaker 2: Yeah. So, uh, in, uh, Russia, when they went to Afghanistan, it was, uh, like, uh, the central Asian countries were a part of Russia at that time. And it was, uh, intention of Russia to, uh, make Afghanistan also as a part of their land, because Afghanistan has a very, uh, critical, uh, geographic location. It's like when you have control over Afghanistan, on, you can have eyes on middle east, on south Asia and also essential nature. So it was, uh, intention of Russia to remain there. But, uh, I think why Russia, Russia left Afghanistan was. Um, long civil war that was going on in Afghanistan. The lack of, uh, fundamental infrastructure that is, uh, in Afghanistan and also, uh, this number of institutions and development, then people are like social problem. That's in Afghanistan. The people are not ready to accept the change. People are just, uh, stacked with their, uh, donation, mindset and religious mindset.

Russia has done a lot, but then, uh, at some point they came to a conclusion that they cannot, Afghanistan cannot be as good as the central Asian countries. So they left and yeah.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Thank you. Also now the same for the US. Um, why do you think that the US withdraw from Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Uh, for US, uh, it was, uh, Afghanistan has never been a center of attention and it, it, uh, was a point of risk, uh, uh, like, it can be the original power, like the countries around Afghanistan or the superpower of the world. Like if. Um, once Afghanistan, the land of Afghanistan was being used against America in 2001, the attack that happened in New York. So I may, uh, I may have gone in there to fight with uh Al-Qaida and then, uh, all the international communities there, America allies and Afghanistan they worked a lot, but then same as Russia. They came to the same conclusion. Uh, for example, Trump, he said, uh, how much we can spend on a, on a land that I'm building in school. And then someone is coming just, just, uh, put some bomb in that. And then, then there is a bomb blast and everything in like a week, we went for one year and it is just getting destroyed within a minute, within a second. And, uh, I think. And listen until the land of Afghanistan is not being used against America. They will not come back. But, uh, it was the reason that Afghanistan, never considered the government of Afghanistan in this peace negotiation. It was a direct talk between, uh, America and the Taliban, America gave that preferences priority to the Taliban, but never to the central government in Kabul. And so, uh, I think it's, it's just, uh, looking at, uh, their own benefits. As I said, Afghanistan can be used again against several countries, like around the world. That's the reason that America went to Afghanistan. And then, uh, right now, when they are, uh, in an agreement with Taliban that Afghanistan will not be used against the American.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. Okay. Um, so these are actually the, I would say prior countries I will talk about, um, therefore I also have like, um, four no prominent for minor, um, countries, um, first would be, um, China, India, and also like, um, Europe or more specific, maybe Germany. What do you think, um, does these countries play a role in the whole setting with Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Uh, yes. It's like. Um, for India, India had a very good collaboration Afghanistan And, uh, the reason for this can be, uh, India is always in complicated Pakistan with the Kashmir area, which is always problematic between them. So India had a good collaboration with Afghanistan because. If Pakistan had a good power in Afghanistan and a good elements on Afghanistan, it was dangerous for India. So India supported Afghanistan in the sense of military, in the sense of education like yearly, uh, India is providing more than 2000 scholarships to afghan students. And in the case of COVID. There was a, there were a lot of help from support and help from India. Interestingly, the millions of those of vaccines and vaccinations have been sent to Afghanistan from India and. I have a good perspective towards India, but then, uh, China as well, China supported Afghanistan in case of investments and trading and a lot of, uh, uh, businessmen, uh, men's from Afghanistan um, have gone to China and then China has invested in, uh, in business. Oh, also in mining in Afghanistan, but, uh, not in the sense of military, they did not support Afghanistan with, in case of security and military, but then in the case of economy, uh, business, uh, in, uh, in case of Germany, it's, uh, the longer nice collaboration since, uh, 2001, I said, last time when Taliban, uh, Taliban government was over and then, uh, Germany had supported Afghanistan in different sections and in the sense of, uh, social supports in the sense of military supports, for example, in the case of police reforms, that Germany has worked a lot in there for continuous years and they are trained and they're supported, uh, the, uh, what can I say? Uh, recent and modern policing in Afghanistan. For example, in case of US, US was, uh, supporting, uh, the military and police. But, um, but, uh, somehow in between, I thought it was, uh, they were wrong because America was using police as, uh, military. There has to be a difference between them and, uh, but uh, Germany was doing the right thing. If it, if there were, there was a project with the military, there was focusing on that. And then if there was a project with police, they were doing the reform and good collaboration and like, Uh, teaching them teaching good governance to the officers. And also there were a lot of support in case of economy and agriculture and then, uh, each location. And, uh, yeah, so this countries had, uh, quite good influence on Afghanistan and good collaboration in during the last 20 years.

Speaker 1: Okay. I see. Thank you so much. And then now, We'll talk about the repeating order. And now we have like the Taliban, um, again, coming to power. And also like we had the, um, intervention of like, um, the Brits, Russia and, um, the US and you're also said, like history repeats itself. What do you think? Do we have like a repeating order again? And, or what are your thoughts about that?

Speaker 2: Um, at the moment, it's, it is quite, uh, Uh, anterior and unstable because no one can make a protection, uh, concerning the Taliban and the situation of their government at the moment, if, if they considered them as a government at the moment and against them, but looking at them, I would say that they would not sustain and last long, but then I don't know if, if somehow there are some countries that are already there, negotiations, negotiations are going on, that they will recognise the Taliban as a government. I mean, if, uh, the international communities come and they support Taiwan as a government and Taliban also promise to change, maybe there can be a, um, mixed government with mixed power, where, uh, there are people from all ethnic groups and communities of Afghanistan and then, uh, collaboratively they started government. Otherwise, if Taliban continues to govern, uh, in, in such a cruel way that they are doing right now, Uh, saying that, uh, they will not, they will not last and the government will not sustain. And again, I think if, if the, the, the world cannot see, they cannot seek to identify to 38 million people just die because of power to your original claim. Definitely there will be some support from outside and then.

Speaker 1: Yeah, but do you think it's like a bit similar to a situation, um, beforehand, before the Taliban already, um, in the past took over, is it like a similar situation or?

Speaker 2: Uh, this time it's, uh, it's quite different because, uh, there, uh, the Taliban has also changed in a little bit. It's not, uh, they're not behaving as they were behaving in 2001 or 1996. There is a little bit changing their behaviour. Uh, and also, uh, people are, uh, more, uh, wise and people are more, uh, literate people in Afghanistan. This, the social situation has changed in Afghanistan. And that's what you have seen that when Aschraf Ghani left the power and the Taliban came no one, uh, So I'm stood against Taliban. They just said, if we stand against them, they will be an internal war. They trust structures that the development that has been made in Kabul. And in Kabul, all of them would have been destroyed if they started fighting against the Taliban. So people had no choice and they just accepted them. They just let them into Kabul and, uh, take the governments, but then it's, uh, the Taliban themselves. Uh, they also don't want to repeat what they have done in 2000, uh, in 1996 to 2000. So in that case, I'm a little bit positive.

Speaker 1: Okay. Um, and then for the question in my research question, I mentioned the term, a graveyard of empires may ask, what are your thoughts about that?

Speaker 2: Yeah, uh, I would say Afghanistan have been there, uh, has been the graveyard of empires but not in a positive sense. It's uh, I would say because of the critical geographical location that Afghanistan have. And for example, when Russia and Afghanistan and Russia was doing quite good, then America just started supporting. Um, the civil fighters, like the Mujahedin. **America supporting this groups and then there was a fight against Russia. And then end of the day, Russia decided to withdraw from Afghanistan. It was not a defeated Russia. So just decided to withdraw from Afghanistan. We say that we defeated. But it was never a defeat.** For example, you compare Afghanistan with any of the middle east countries not middle east country. Sorry, central

Asian countries. Yeah. Yeah. They were also under control of Russia and Afghanistan was also under control by Russia. And now you can say that all these countries are in Afghanistan is still in the deep Problem. Afghanistan in, in, uh, internal war and civil war. Like everything gets, uh, so critical in Afghanistan. That's what I'm saying. Uh, I'm thinking that it is a graveyard of empires, but it's, it is never. Being in positive. Yep.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. Okay, then one last question, what do you think? Or my predict, what might be the possible or further developments for Afghanistan, or maybe looks to future outcomes? That's a tough one, right?

Speaker 2: The moment it's like, uh, on imaginations, if I, it would be all imaginations. If I say something, but considering this scenario, if Taliban would not have taken over the power in Afghanistan, I would have seen a bright future for Afghanistan because the international community, so came into Afghanistan in the last 20 years, they did a lot. So Afghanistan has always been a country that is, that was dependent on the foreign aid, but this foreign aid was somehow used efficiently in Afghanistan, there was a huge development in case of tele-communication, education in, uh, in healths sectors, as the economy came in, every part, there was a huge improvement. In 2001, everything was zero in international communities came in Afghanistan, everything was zero. They started from the scratch. And, and now you can see Afghanistan is in a bit of better condition, but, uh, but considering the scenario of, uh, the fact that Taliban has taken over Afghanistan, If t international communities, the powers around the world. They, uh, recognised Taliban a government. And they promised that they will not commit the crimes and the cruelty, uh, the behaviour that they have, uh, done before. I would see like Afghanistan, in the next 30 or 50 years, I would say that Afghanistan will be a little bit in a better situation than now, but, uh, currently it's, it's like even making imaginations something different, something difficult.

Speaker 1: Yeah, definitely. So do you also think maybe it will lead to like humanitarian aid, or?

Speaker 2: At the moment, what Afghanistan needs is a humanitarian aid, because I, I said out of a hundred people, only two people have nutrition. That's, that's something that I don't know. If you think deeply, it hurts you like from deep inside, it will, it hurts you because, uh, it's winter. Afghanistan is a cold country right now, like in Germany and you're complaining. But, uh, at the moment in Kabul it's minus six or minus seven nowadays, and there are people who don't have even a single piece of wood to heat their houses. Most of people, they don't have um, like a roof. So it's kind of a critical situation. And, uh, Afghanistan at the moment really need the humanitarian aid from the international communities. But after, I don't know, it's, uh, Afghanistan needs it, but then how much humanitarian aid can, can be there. We have to make the fundamental, we have to, we have to do something from the fundamentals and then, and then, so that people in, again, some can work for themselves, like. In 2013 the GDP per capita in Afghanistan was somewhere around \$90 to a hundred, \$600. But right now I just, uh, I was just searching it yesterday. It is, uh, somewhere around five, uh, 50, 2. Yeah. It's, it's something that. Uh, person in Afghanistan can do not make the average earning for each Afghan in Afghanistan is only \$500 per year. And, um, with that to \$500 a month, imagine, imagine how you can live it. There should be fundamental works in Afghanistan, and there should be a focus on infrastructure on the, uh, basic economy so that Afghan people can use their sources and they. I don't know, how can I say this? It can be kind of, uh, they can use the resource from within Afghanistan that they find from outside, but, uh, in the. In that sense also for, uh, for a short period of time, Uh, foreign aid and, the humanitarian aid promotes I can work, but for longterm it will not look.

Speaker 1: Okay. Thank you so much. Yeah, I really appreciate that you took the time. Cause I know it's, I think a highly emotional and really private topic and therefore, thank you so much for taking the time.

13.9 Interview Transcript

Speaker 1: Maybe, at the beginning it would be great if you can tell me a bit about your personal background, what you studied, what you did before? That would be great.

Speaker 2: Okay. Thanks a lot. Uh, I graduated from the high school and then in 1995, then I got admission in the engineering faculty of Kabul university. In 1996, then I graduated from the university in 2001, uh, unfortunately due to the bomb of the US army troops on the Taliban previous regime, there was some interruption in between our lessons. So, uh, we graduated in march 2001. My field was in mechanical engineering following the American approach. There are two universities in Afghanistan for engineering. One is approaching the Russian approach and ours was the American approach. So later on, uh, I got admission to a private university.

Speaker 1: Okay, perfect. Thank you so much. And maybe, um, may I ask you, since you also worked for GIZ, what were your actual task and also in comparison to Afghanistan? What you did?

Speaker 2: Um, I, uh, in 2005 I was looking for a German company as a mechanical, uh, technical engineer, uh, that, that company was producing PVC doors and windows. So I worked for almost two and a half years with them. So I worked there and after my first job with the GIZ that, uh, um, early 2015 with a TVET project, which is called he GIZ project. Um, so we were, um, working with a team leader and also, and, uh, uh, direct supervision, who, uh, who have been working for Afghanistan for almost 15 years. So we were able to set up and do a vocational training system in Afghanistan to cover the manpower and the target groups there. So we embedded the experience in Afghanistan, um, through the GIZs international colleagues expertise, as well as the national colleagues expertise and in close collaboration and coordination with the ministry of education, Basically that belongs to the minister of labor, but the ministry of labour did not show kind of green light for GIZ on that time. And later on the ministry of education shortly invite the GIZ to cover the activities. Uh, to meet those people, they have job opportunities and they are working in the workshops. They have job opportunities, but they are not so much familiar with this kind of a work environment. So there was only, um, the main focus was on the activities of work and less focus on the practical part. So I worked there for almost two years. Then I had to resign because of my wife's sickness and I have to go the India for the first time. The two time GIZ kindly send me to the India. First time I realized that is my personal problem. Why the others should pay for that, so that I have to resign. Uh, so fortunately for the second time I started my work with the project with the InS um, generally first 2008, you know, till November 2021.

Speaker 1: Um, thank you so much. Um, so then a further question, do you feel that Afghanistan has changed since the Taliban came to power and how this change manifested itself actually?

Speaker 2: Uh, yeah, the people they even they and neighbour can't see such kind of thing or situation in their dreams. They thought there might not be a chance of Taliban to reentered the community, or to say to take over the power. People totally lost their hope, because of the fighting in 2000/2001, with forces entered into Afghanistan. The hopes still lived in the heads of each individual and they were so much happy that there is no Taliban and all the international communities. Um, we might have, uh, in Afghanistan here, uh, all the dignity in getting to old countries all over the world. So the people just not, uh, thought about the, did not think about that everything, uh, um, will go back to zero. Nowadays, people are so much hopeless with lots of people are leaving Afghanistan. It is not just because of the Taliban, because very difficult problems because, uh, I mean, there's no bright future for them once again. And I'm really sorry that you're going to report this, but I have to say that. But the, the, the man or the dominant, entered to Afghanistan

and why, they have to come back and the Taliban take over. And collapsed the regime and collapsed the national army. Everything, all the economy and foundation there. That's why people are so much hopeless and they are assigned to go out of the country. Even to the neighbour countries. I know some days, their daughters will go out to Iran, or Pakistan to live up to what works, but they don't, they don't have the willingness to stay in Afghanistan anymore.

Speaker 1: Okay. Yeah. I see. And also, do you think that also will be, have some changes in quite a lot of people are leaving the country and also like immigrating to other countries?

Speaker 2: Uh, yeah, I can, I can take, um, a majority of those people, they are leaving Afghanistan, they have some kind of facility, or at least they have some money to leave Afghanistan. Means the majority of them are educated and it is a big loss for the country. Educated people are willing to leave Afghanistan. Because of the fighting in Afghanistan. So at least we have some percent of educated people and they are trying to leave Afghanistan. So there might be a very dark future in Afghanistan. I think they might not be changing the positive side and about that to change anybody. More, the negative side.

Speaker 1: And also regarding the role of women, do you think what will further change? Because there are still a lot of restrictions already.

Speaker 2: Yeah, exactly. It could be so much honest. Even in the previously regime, there was only rights for the women in the 5 major parts in Afghanistan, in Kabul, Masar-e Scharif, Herat and some how in Jalalabad and in central Bamiyan province. But on that time, there was also not lots of, uh, rights for women in the rest of the provinces. So you know there are 34 provinces there was no kind of right for the women on that time, but if you compare that time or that regime, or this regime. For time being there, there's nothing. There there's nothing, no rights, no honor uh, no dignity for women in Afghanistan nowadays.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Thank you And do you also think, um, what might be limitations and challenges that arise for the Taliban now that they took over the government?

Speaker 2: So the major challenge is that, no any international community even, or no any country, even the countries in the region, they have the position to accept the Taliban government officially. So this is a huge challenge for Taliban. It is just not to, because of the, their behaviours. It is because of that they are not letting any politician, any other parties to be included in their government. And to take over, um, some, um, high positions and the government Taliban, they get admitted from the Islamic, you can say from the college, or universities and they cannot act as an engineer. They cannot think as engineer, they cannot think as an economist, they cannot think as a doctor. So for the ministry of public health, they are weak. There should be a doctor at the top. So what will be our expectations from that. So the new challenge for the Taliban is, that their own decision and choice, they are under direct supervision instructions of other intelligence department in the region. So they don't have a right to choose, which is right, or which is wrong for the people and for the homeless. And if you compare the Taliban to the with two years or 20 or 24 years back, there is a lot of challenge.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Um, therefore now I would like to come to the topic of domestic context of Afghanistan and also Pakistan. So what do you think, which role does Pakistan play, maybe also in a political, economical context. And also now in recent times we saw it was one of the most, um, yeah, used, um, evacuation land routes. Um, and also looking back, what do you think, which Role will actually Pakistan play with it?

Speaker 2: Uh, actually, you know, there is a problem between Afghanistan and Pakistan, because of the durand line. It's not, we cannot say it from 10 years back, or 20 years back. The problem is that the Taliban focus on all the time, uh, has been trying to, to be kind of uh, stable and powerful government. Because they had a feeling that if they are a stable and powerful government in Afghanistan, so they definitively to deal with, uh, the United nation, uh, to, to get back the durand line. So have a focus on where they are divided. So Taliban, uh, uh, has focused on all the time has been trying to be kind of obstacle and to, uh, have to grow some other patients or some other parties to be against the government. To, uh, to finally destroy the government. In addition to others, um, that we can see in it sets the scene or the business between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pakistan products are so low quality products. If you go to the Pakistan, I visit many times and you can see and you, you, you realise that there is no quality. Um, there there's no any kind of patient for those products and the focus all the time has been trying to sell their worst quality products to Afghanistan. Because Afghanistan is bounded by the land. There is no see ways. The, um, Ashraf Ghani government, Ashraf Ghani did a lot for Afghanistan, some tunnels out or the air channel in India, to Turkey and some other countries. And a lots of alternatives. In addition to the evacuation process, there are two things in my personal opinion. First of all, Taliban, uh, all the time we see have been receiving support from the intelligent service from Pakistan. So they are there. So now people claim Pakistan have zones and now Afghanistan is another new zone for them, so they can do anything they want. On the other hand, the evacuation process, I think, Pakistan should, or has been shown the evacuation process for Afghans who for for the international organisations, and it would be automated and some other, uh, you know, governmental high ranking positions, just because of their benefits. When I was in Islamabad, lots of thousands of hotels are full of Afghan people and they are charging lots of money, lots of money, even when we embedded in Islamabad, the price for each night was three thousand rupees, but they are charging for GIZ twelve thousand. So again, there's lots of benefits for them and also into the market. And when you take a taxi. The taxi is there, but you are looking so much happy. This is before a collapse of Kabul, there was no lots of job opportunities here. There, there was no lots of income to us, but it is because of the Taliban in Afghanistan they took over and the collapse of the former regime, so it is just because of the Taliban we are collecting lots of money and receiving a lots of income. So Pakistan, sure as a willingness to the evacuation process is of their benefit. So there is no doubt they are thinking about their own nation. They are the healer, they survived country and they are trying their best to increase the income of their country.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Um, maybe now we're coming to the international context. Maybe also you can tell a bit about your experience. So, um, what do you think which role did Russia play actually in Afghanistan? Um, also politic, economic, military. Um, yeah, since I, I assume you were quite young when Russia, um, was in Afghanistan, right?

Speaker 2: Yeah, I was in the third grade, or fourth grade. I can remember the Russian soldier were here. Um, but if you compare the Russian soldiers, with the American, uh, there are a lots of differences. Because they brought a lot of fundamental things in Afghanistan. Like EarPods, like tunnel and all those things are still there in Afghanistan. But the Americans battled for all the structures and then collapsed everything. There is no doubt that, uh, you know, uh, and also I have heard from some, uh, politicians, and also I read some books that showed that Russia did not want to occupy Afghanistan. And they did not think that they will face a huge obstacle in Afghanistan and at that time the western country, especially the American and the British provided lots of support to the Mujahideen.

Even my father and my mother. My father was a director, my mother was a teacher in a girls school. So both had free support from the government on monthly basis. And all those stuff that you required and that had did a lot in Afghanistan. And they also equipped the Afghan Army, so they were able to fight with the neighbour at least for 10 years. But unfortunately when Mujahideen entered into

Afghanistan they strike everything and sold out all of those, um tanks and military equipment. So when the superpower try to occupy Afghanistan, there, maybe they were not so much interested to occupy Afghanistan, but they occupy Afghanistan means they occupy the region. That's why all the time they are looking to occupy Afghanistan.

Speaker 1: You don't have to, it's just a feel free, whatever you would like to say. Thank you so much. Um, also, do you think that, for example, China and Germany and the EU played a role.

Speaker 2: Um, it is not because of that to be honest and the good news is that I directly, or indirectly think that positive reaction from them. In relation to China, China has never been involved in Afghanistan. Or you can say in political games directly, but indirectly, they supported, um, other groups, uh, but they never try to enter into Afghanistan. Maybe there will be fear from Russia, or from other countries, I don't know exactly. But all the time, from my childhood and know I never heard anything from the people or my parents and I never read against China and China involvement and political games in Afghanistan. But there is no doubt, that they have some indirect of course. And in relation to the German, the majority of the Afghan people thinking that, I'm not quite sure if it is right or not based on some historical books. Once upon a time, they say, and also, um, uh, some history books that they were living there and some of them have migrated to the west. So there is some kind of connections between Afghans and Germans. They have similar ethic, for example, uh, Afghans they never accept, they never accept all this. Even they are hungry and then they don't have any things in their home, if they are so much poor, but they are not in a position to accept. But when you request them, they will drop their blood to your feet. That means they will kill all of their family members, just because of your friendship. But as part of that, I worked with the Germans, uh, I can see some similarities. And if people are thinking German, not only for Afghanistan, but they are working to establish a system. Or we can say to better system in the country. So the majority of Afghans believe that the Germans assist not only for Afghanistan, but any country in the world. It is the honesty and they are looking to establish a system for the country, or let the people stand on their own feet. But unfortunately, the Americans were totally against this and the people were thinking, when the Americans withdraw their troops and their army, the intelligence service and the police. Uh, so then the people are asking the people isn't this going to be denied and they started creating a lots of problems. For me the Americans never wanted to, and everything depends on their assistance and financial preparation and once they were out, everything collapsed.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Um, may I ask, do you think also India played a role when it comes to Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Uh, we have a very famous expression in Afghanistan. Enemy of your enemy is your friend. So, uh, Pakistan is, uh, enemy of India and Pakistan is enemy of Afghanistan. So that's why there is a good relation with Afghanistan and India. If you visit in India for a short period of time, you cannot realise that. If you stay in India for long, so they have a lots of objections, a lot of pain from Afghanistan, from the kings of Afghanistan, when there was no Pakistan on that time. So when they did a lots of bad things and when they returned back to Afghanistan. So when you stay for long, you can be alive. Uh, that's nowadays they have a good relationship. In Afghanistan and Pakistan not nowadays, means before Taliban, it's just because of the same.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Um, and also what I would like to ask, um, since we saw that we have like Russia played a role, the US played a role and now the Taliban took over again. Do we think we could say like history repeats itself and we have like a repeating order.

Speaker 2: Uh, sorry. Can you explain a little bit?

Speaker 1: No problem. So then we have like a similar scenario now because Taliban taking over grants and that already happened in the past. And we also had like that Russia came to Afghanistan and went and also like, um, the U S came to Afghanistan and then withdraw. Do you think it's like, um, history repeats itself? So we have like a similar scenario again?

Speaker 2: I don't believe in my own perspective. I'm not a politician to go deeply in this question. But my own perspective, I don't believe, I don't believe the Russia will be there, they will be, uh, or they, they, they will try to enter to Afghanistan, or we can say to physically enter into Afghanistan. Because the past experiences showed, any superpower entered to Afghanistan, there is also a very famous expression: **Occupying Afghanistan is very easy, but keeping and maintaining of Afghanistan is too much difficult, even even impossible. So Russia also experienced to enter into Afghanistan and the Americans also and the Brits. The know, we can easily enter into Afghanistan, but we would lose lots of things. The dignity, the money, the soldieries. So I don't believe other countries will be in the position to enter into Afghanistan.** Um, so, you know, in that country there there's no, uh, educated people and there is no enough money and bad living conditions, even below the level of poverty, so they can get the benefits of this. They grow their own, they can by using lots of money so they will have their own people, uh, to, to act on behalf of them and to apply their policies and their strategies on the whole of this. Um, so I don't believe that they will be, uh, or they will be in the position of, they are willing to Afghanistan. But now it is, it seems that this might be a life long thing. I don't know, but if they are so much keen to establish good relation with Afghanistan. The back of the curtain, there is some kind of thing. So they have really realised that. So that's why you have to find to to establish, not a good connection with the Taliban and to equip the Taliban, who fights with ISIS and been kind of obstacle uh, uh, for the ISIS who reach out to the Northern provinces of Afghanistan., where they actually, we can say middle Asian country. Uh, so I don't really, uh, none of these would be willing to Afghanistan directly to grow or to feed and to get the benefit of the policy of the people. And also about the lower level of education.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Thank you. So, um, there is one more question. Do you think I mentioned the term graveyard of empires and you already said, um, like the Brits, the Russians, the Americans, they all tried to enter the country, but they, they couldn't manage to stay. Do you think this is a term we can use our not?

Speaker 2: Um, maybe, yeah, you can, you can use this term. But as you in the west and your country is part of the NATO force, it might be not so much good for the Americans, or the British who see that, but they there's no doubt, uh, Afghanistan is a graveyard for all the the empires, all over the world, uh, from the 5000 years history that Afghanistan has. **Um, as I already mentioned, one of them is occupying Afghanistan is very easy, but keeping and maintaining of Afghanistan is quite difficult. It was my question all the time, I asked myself why did the Americans not learn from the Russian experience. So when you enter into Afghanistan, you will help the people and you will never touch the religion and also the culture.** If you do something against the culture against the religion. Yeah. So as I already mentioned, that people are honest on there. They have a behaviour that if you don't have anything, even, even one time food in their home, so they will not, and they will not bend their head even to the superpowers.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. Um, one last questions. What do you think might be further, or possible developments that might happen for, for Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Uh, I think, uh, so the people coming to this consent. They have a lots of things the Taliban took. Why are you willing to enter into Afghanistan. In the future the Taliban, there will be a unity inside the Taliban and there is no doubt, at least they think for their own nation and they let other politicians and they give some rights to the women. And not just because of the Western countries to recognise the Taliban. And it is some better sort of, for example, I leave with my wife and my children, if my kid is crying, I don't have the right to, to wake up my wife. And of course, help to feed. These things means gives the family the highest position. So the

highest position uh, so say the Haven is under the feet of the matters. But probably one should also, uh, um, leave their type of rule and regulation and also, uh, uh, to, to see in the world, uh, how you can compare with the world. We should let the women. So on that time, yeah, it might be some possibilities to, uh, to open the door for their recognition and there is no official recognition for the Taliban. So I cannot see any kind of development, unless there is, uh, the, some kind of access and cooperation to some other countries, for the poor people at least to survive. So we cannot think about the development and all these stuff.

Speaker 1: Perfect. Thank you so much. Um, yeah, that's actually already it. Yeah. Once again, I really appreciate that you took the time and to really answered my questions, um, uh, answered my questions, honestly. I really appreciate that. And, um, yeah, then I really don't want to take too much of your time, but once again, thank you so much.

13.10 Interview Transcript

Speaker 1: Okay. So for me, I'm at the beginning, it would be good to know, maybe if you can tell me a bit about your personal background, what you learned and what is your relationship with Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Actually, as I'm working as, um, as a physician, um, working as mainly as head management and focused on different health sector. I started working with Afghanistan in 2012 within a health project to the Ministry of Public Health, which is a project supported by the EU. To provide high quality health services to the afghan people. As we started on this project on March, 2012 for four years. Then the second phase started actually on November 2016 and I started on November, 2017 to work as a team leader, which ended by October, 2020. So I spent almost, about, uh, 18 years continuous working in Afghanistan.

Speaker 1: Perfect. Thank you so much. Um, may I also ask, what were your, for example, your daily task, working with the project?

Speaker 2: Working as a team leader, I'm responsible about, uh, uh, implementation of all expected results. And also for the timely in providing the needed support and the needed the function and also to develop, different reports about the progress of the project. Follow up, give policy advise to the key experts and non-key experts. Uh, working relies on the EU and the Ministry of Public Health. I was working with them. We are responsible of our development on the experts and non-key experts and supporting the activities and follow up the activities. And review the reports and achievements. Overall responsible for the achievement of the project.

Speaker 1: Perfect. Thank you so much. Um, furthermore, I would like to ask, do you feel that Afghanistan has changed since the Taliban came to power? Or do you think, how does this change actually manifest itself?

Speaker 2: The developments started to have good achievements and started doing develop new activities. What happened after Taliban? Of course, of this the problem, the political problem of the Taliban, the people are considered as enemies. Most of the key persons working, responsible for the development strategy and implementation disappeared. A change in the leadership of the Ministry. Always new leaderships, I would like to know what will happening know and what's available. So that's why there was some sort of offer a stock of the activities to some extent. Uh, Unfortunately the Taliban does not have a good management managerial experience.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. Um, what, yeah. Sorry. Um, so what do you think might also lead to further limitations or challenges for the Taliban regime?

Speaker 2: Developing and also starting to see three are some issues and also gender issues. But still some limitation of the activities, as it means you should go to work. So women still need to be accompanied by someone. Uh, and they do not have, uh, equality, different groups actually. And the resources, especially after the limitations of national funds, that national support. I feel, there will be a lot of challenges.

Speaker 1: Yeah, definitely. Yeah. You also already answered my second question because I was also like to ask, what do you think the development of women under the Taliban? How will they change?

Speaker 2: No change till now.

Speaker 1: What do you think since the evacuation process is still ongoing and quite a lot of people still leaving the country by their own. Um, do you think it's from my personal perspective, what I heard so far is also quite a lot of educational people are leaving the country. What do you think might have this for impact for, for Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Um, you are right, I have a very big question mark about this.. From the well-educated people, just people receive a lot of education that can do a lot of training, a lot of support. They are leaving the country. I feel that now after some times that Kabul would not be available in the long stand. So I'm sure how they do to manage. The Taliban are threaten lives and families. That's why are a lot leaving the country. The country maybe after some time will have more expertise, to do something, like general directors, also from different organisations, working with embassies, this will be a asset.

Speaker 1: Yeah, thank you so much. And now I would like to come to the domestic context of Afghanistan and therefore also take a closer look at Pakistan and its role, which role does Pakistan play? Um, At the moment. And also maybe, um, when we're looking back since we're seeing now, for example, Pakistan is playing a big role regarding the evacuation, the land route, and what role also played it like in, not in history, but maybe a few years ago? So which political, and maybe also economic context. What are your thoughts about that?

Speaker 2: Afghanistan the situation that it is, Pakistan has borders with Afghanistan. East and South and actually before the Russian invent many refugees left Afghanistan to Pakistan. So this is like a geographical extension and there are like direct boarders between them. They accepted the refugees. There are countries like Tajikistan, Uzbekistan are not allowed the refugees to go. Only Pakistan, that's why people are going to Pakistan and acutely they know the language, must of them and the same culture, you know. Not like others, like Ex-Soviet Union. So actually most of them prefer to go to Pakistan. And also in the north, people are going to Iran, they are close to Iran boarders and they have direct passage from Afghanistan to Iran. So those people living in the North are going to Iran. But many, many, many will go to Pakistan as it is been close to the south and east provinces.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. And do you also think since also Taliban is present in Pakistan. Do you think this also played quite a big role?

Speaker 2: I think, that other need to I understand that that's also rising means that there is a conflict between Taliban of Afghanistan and Taliban of Pakistan. There's a big conflict between them. It's not that, perhaps the same origin, but I'm not sure that they have the same political aspect and policies. I think there's some problems between each other and some conflicts between Muslims. Yeah. **So I was at the Taliban or Pakistan have different policies and the different views and then that Afghanistan has different ones. So I'm not sure.**

Speaker 1: Thank you so much, and I would like to come to the international context. And so therefore I will take into account Russia and the US um, what do you think, um, looking back, which role did Russia play in Afghanistan also like politically, economically, also militarily.

Speaker 2: Afghanistan and the war against the Soviet Union. Send them out actually, from that Soviet occupation. Uh, so, uh, but actually it was also a position is a geographical position of Afghanistan, which is very close to the Ex-Russian public to the borders, also the same borders to Afghanistan. So as they have wanted to have a role. So that to prevent the western. This is. what happens when the American actually one of them, I think one of the issues is that the Americans went to, to Afghanistan to kick out the Russian, and to be available in the area, uh, uh, near the Russian borders or mission? The middle and near Russia. So is that. most of them will try to find a way for themselves actually, this political aspects, economical I feel, that I'm not sure, but they said that Afghanistan has some resources, but it was not discovered until now. And this, this next will also be questioned. So the Americans stayed for almost 20 years you know. So he gives them land to have the benefit from their sources. . So that is not a matter of resources. It is a matter of position, geographical situation. Afghanistan is between this many countries that we are on one side, Pakistan, China, you know? Usbekistan, Tajikistan, and also very near to India. So the position of Afghanistan is very good

Speaker 1: Yeah, that's true. Thank you. Um, therefore now I would like to ask. The role or which role that the US actually played. And what do you think were the reasons why the US withdraw from Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: I don't know, honestly speaking and it was a surprise for all of us. I feel that is a political action. Why do you withdraw from Afghanistan, when you know that Taliban remain in the back. Even you spent 20 years, almost 20 years and you wouldn't destroy or finish Taliban. We have much more of the capacity of the national army, give them the know how to support. You just left them. According to them 300.000, Taliban, or Taliban according to the statistics. or 70 to 80.000. So how can these 80.000 can occupy, ah can take over a country with 300.000 soldiers or army, you know. And this was announced by President Biden, when he said that people are not responsible to defend the country, but they did not give them, how to protect themselves, how to protect the country. Suddenly withdraw. The president himself found himself in a mess. So they keep left the country immediately, suddenly, suddenly, but they should be planned, you announced that you leave. So when that, since it was one year, so during this year they should have get some plans. Supporting this people, tell them out and help to manage how to get over? We are, we were present on that time, during these last few days. The last two weeks in Kabul. And everyday, you'll find that one of these big provinces is fallen by the Taliban. I left on 15th of August in the morning, after two hours of the announcement after the fall of Kabul. So, where is the army, the forces? So just week of withdraw of the Americans, even they left many people there. They wanted to take them out, as you know. The same for Germany, they want to take out, the evacuation, they couldn't do it until now. Why suddenly withdraw, I don't know.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Thank you so much. And also coming back to the role of Germany, what do you think, which role does Germany and the EU play with Afghanistan?

Speaker 2: Germany to some extent, people in Afghanistan understand and respect Germany. They feel that Germany is providing good support to the normal development. Uh, so they appreciate what Germany is doing and they are ready to cooperate with Germany, but I'm not sure if Germany is going to cooperate with Taliban, and that's political aspects or not. And also without the EU, or not. That is one question. For the EU I think at the moment they are refusing to have any communication with Taliban until they provide suitable government and some stability. Considering the gender issues, which is not done until now by the Taliban. So the EU stop almost all support, except this humanitarian support.

Speaker 1: Um, yeah. Thank you. Yes. And we also talked before about India and China, for example, do we think, um, which role does this country actually play?

Speaker 2: India should ah, so they try to have a role in Afghanistan too. China, ah, as a new power they are trying to have a role also. So that they can play the role of the United States. And actually by using geographical situation of China, it has borders with Afghanistan. So there'll be easy access, that they can support and the China also or economical issues. That they can also, um, you know what I mean, support Afghanistan. So that they can have really good market for themselves.

Speaker 1: Yeah, thank you. Um, now a further question of mine would be, um, do you think looking back, we had the Brits, we had Russia, we had the United States, we had NATO. Um, do you think it's like history repeats itself? We have like now repeating order since the Taliban now, also coming back, um, as regime and governing the country. And we had that before. Do you think it's like a repeating order?

Speaker 2: Um, I'm not sure, but when Taliban took over the country they said that they are changed and they expect to have international support. But for now there is no international support. This may worry, they have some sort of controversy action. Okay. So who will support this terrorist issues. they said, that we are different now and have different ideology and policies. And we want to have the international support. But I'm not sure if they didn't receive it, if they will change or not. Even if they receive it if the continue as they promise, or just promises. I'm not sure.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Yeah. Thank you so much. In my research question, I mentioned the term graveyard of empires. May I ask, what are your thoughts about it? Because the Brits, like I said, Russia, US all didn't, I would say all of them, um, had the ability to stay in Afghanistan and had to leave, have to withdraw from the country. Do you think it's a term we could use or do we think it's not well to describe the situation?

Speaker 2: I'm not sure, but I'd have seen if the Americans decided to stay longer, they would stay. No one pushing them out. they decided to leave. no one kicked them out.

Speaker 1: Um, so you think it was more like a personal decision and they could have managed to stay longer?

Speaker 2: Yeah. Yes. their decision.

Speaker 1: Okay. Thank you. Um, one last question of mine would be, what do you think, or could you imagine, might be possible further developments for Afghanistan looking into the future?

Speaker 2: First of all, I actually think they need further support, the people suffer a lot. They can not find these basic line issues. There should be some sort of support, because actually what happened is not their mistake. This is the game of power, the countries. So at the end, who's been surprised is, these poor people of Afghanistan. What I mean? They are very peaceful people that, you know, most people do want to live, but unfortunately is that as that's why most of them try to live outside and leave the country. You know, different cultural, different situations, even different. I don't, how's this feeling to live in Germany. But they want to live in peace. So they should receive support, the afghan people. Should be something humanitarian. It's not like giving somebody some medications and that's all, No. They need some sort of development. Yeah, which is not done just to give you some humanitarian issues.

Speaker 1: Okay, perfect. Thank you. That was already actually it, and once again, I really appreciate that you took the time and I'm happy about your really insightful answers.

Speaker 2: At anytime you need anything, please let me know.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much. I really appreciate that. And once again, thank you so much. Um, and yeah, it was great to having the interview with you and it was really interesting hearing your opinion. Um, and therefore also, if you have some further needs or questions, you can also feel free all the time, feel free to reach out at any time and I will be happy to support.