

Strategic Diplomacy: Afghan Taliban's Shifting Foreign Policy Approach

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Introduction

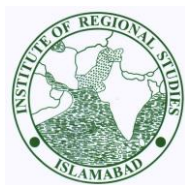
States cannot prosper in isolation in an interconnected world since their economies and politics are and interdependent. Due to worries about their policies, Taliban 2.0 are still struggling for international recognition. But international engagement is required to address issues ranging from international relations to governance. The secret to Taliban 2.0's success will be proficient diplomacy. They can build bridges with the international community, strategically solve problems, and assuage foreign concerns, change international perception, and acquire international respect through skilful diplomatic conversations. In this *Spotlight*, I will elucidate whether Taliban 2.0 can successfully negotiate this environment and accomplish their objectives through diplomacy. This analysis looks at their potential to succeed through strategic engagement or deal with obstacles to achieve their objectives.

Tracing the altering Global Engagement of the Afghan Taliban

In August 2021, the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan once again, ushering in a new era in the nation's history. This comeback, sometimes referred to as 'Taliban 2.0', has demonstrated a significant change in the organization's strategy for international diplomacy. In the 21st century, it seems like the

Afghan Taliban have changed their approach and have become more progressive. Following the fall of Kabul, the people of Afghanistan have been dealing with various crises, including hunger, economic struggles, and resource shortages. Prioritizing these issues, the Taliban recognize the importance of soft power and diplomacy in gaining the global community's attention and demonstrated this by holding a press conference on their first day in power, where they discussed the arising issues. Some among the senior leadership of the Afghan Taliban have been exposed to modern education, diplomacy, and professional careers, which means that their old strategies may no longer suffice.¹ In the previous iteration, the Taliban, known as Taliban 1.0, were radical and reliant on coercion as their mode of communication, and their policy was jingoistic, but the current version, Taliban 2.0, is signalling to the global community that they are more pragmatic despite their radicalization. It is impossible for them to be both at the same time, as for their objective, they are committed to their organization's core values and must keep them coherent. However, they are demonstrating political pragmatism to the global community in order to gain recognition and financial assistance.

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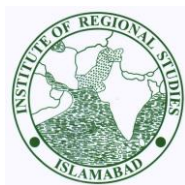
Taliban's Approach towards the Media and Communication for Outreach

The fragile state is keen to commence its diplomatic engagement with other states to become a prosperous state. The main goal of Taliban 2.0's diplomacy is to gain recognition from the global community with few concessions.² During their first conference, they made a promise to uphold women's rights and allowed for gender-segregated classrooms in universities.³ Unlike Taliban 1.0, they granted amnesty to political opponents and acknowledged their past mistakes, learning from them. The second supreme leader named Mullah Akhtar Mansoor was responsible for restructuring the organization, transforming it from a patronage-based group to a bureaucratic proto-state.⁴ During an interview, the acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi was asked about their foreign policy achievements. He responded by stating that they had successfully gained access to embassies in foreign countries. When questioned about the reluctance of some states to recognize the Afghan Taliban government, he explained that recognition could be shown through practice as well. Despite non-recognition, their affairs are proceeding officially with several state embassies opened in their country and vice versa.⁵ Diplomats from both sides are conducting good dealings and exchange visits. They are consistently using media diplomacy to show accountability to the people of Afghanistan and the global community. The acting foreign minister is actively engaging with the media and sharing developments with the global community. It

appears that they are pragmatic and understand the importance of media use in building a narrative and promoting their country's interests.

Neighbourhood Diplomacy

The Afghan Taliban have shown a clear commitment to cooperating with neighbouring and regional states from the beginning. Their active Foreign Minister has been at the forefront of these diplomatic exchanges. Notably, the Taliban leadership held talks with a number of important countries, including Germany, Japan, the UAE, and Indonesia, immediately following the fall of Kabul. This outreach took on added importance after Saudi Arabia reactivated its diplomatic corps, reviving consular relations between the two parties.⁶ The tripartite arrangement was revived a year ago when the acting foreign minister of the Afghan Taliban met with his counterparts from Pakistan and China.⁷ They are committed to interacting with China, as seen by their willingness to work together on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Highly skilled and engaged Afghan Taliban are approaching all states with open arms, regardless of previous battles. Surprisingly, they refrain from hostilities with their neighbours because they are aware of the possibilities for constructive diplomacy to mitigate problems and foster a favourable worldwide perception. Tensions recently increased following a fatal conflict between Iranian and Afghan guards, but the Taliban's denial of the incident and advocacy for a treaty-based settlement highlight their desire to continue having good relations with Iran.⁸ The Taliban's strategic approach to



participation in the region is demonstrated by their subtle neighbourhood diplomacy. An important event occurred at the start of the month when the US held its first official dialogue with the Taliban. The \$7 billion that has been frozen in Afghan Central Bank accounts at the US Federal Reserve and Swiss banks since Kabul's collapse was the main topic of discussion in this speech.⁹ The Taliban have already accomplished something by getting a seat at this negotiation table.

Strategic Minerals Diplomacy

The Taliban have been particularly successful in reaching out to audiences around the world by using interviews on global news platforms and diplomatic strategies. By doing so, they successfully highlighted Afghanistan's internal issues and challenges. This tactic highlights their changing diplomatic approach to interaction with the world and drawing attention to the complicated problems affecting their country. They recognized the potential of Afghanistan's soil and minerals and know how to utilize them for the benefit of the Afghan people. Afghanistan's mineral resources and strategic location make it crucial globally. The Afghan Taliban provide a stage to the state to commence trade on resources and enhance ties. On the flip side, if the Afghan Taliban end up being unable to manage the country's mineral resources, it could turn into a resource curse.

Afghanistan contains a wealth of mineral assets. These resources provide a route to prosperity and are thought to be worth roughly three trillion dollars.¹⁰ Afghanistan's geography is unique due to the presence of rare

minerals that are not found elsewhere. This untapped potential might produce billions and strengthening the economy of the country. If properly utilized, Afghanistan's abundant natural resources can prove to be the finest alternatives to international help and decrease the nation's dependence on foreign economic assistance. A permanent peace may be made possible by better management of mineral resources, which would lead to sustainable economic growth. Afghanistan has populous neighbouring states that have a dire need for mineral resources. Afghanistan could fulfil their needs for mineral resources and, in turn, urge the neighbouring states to sit with the Afghan Taliban.

Conclusion

Since the Taliban assumed control of Kabul, they have attempted to address all international concerns about Afghanistan via news conferences. They have demonstrated diplomatic skill and media awareness. Taliban in Afghanistan approached other states using a variety of diplomatic strategies. In front of the world community, they shrewdly discussed Afghanistan's internal problems. Since they are running the affairs of Afghanistan, addressing international audiences gives them international voice and some sort of international acceptance. The international community also needs to understand the importance of working with the Taliban to address the domestic problems that Afghans deal with. The stability of Afghanistan will ultimately have an impact on regional and global stability.

Notes and References

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- ⁵ "A Special Interview with Al Jazeera International Television by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi - Google Search." *Google.com*. https://www.google.com/search?q=A+special+interview+with+Al+Jazeera+International+Television+by+the+Minister+of+Foreign+Affairs+Mawlawi+Amir+Khan+Muttaqi&rlz=1C1UEAD_enPK1028PK1028&oq=A+special+interview+with+Al+Jazeera+International+Television+by+the+Minister+of+Foreign+Affairs+Mawlawi+Amir+Khan+Muttaqi&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIGCAEQRRg8ogEPMTkxMDI1NTc3MGowajE1qAIAAsAIA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8.
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- ⁷ "The Afghan, Pakistani & Chinese FMs Revived the Tripartite Mechanism for the First Time Following the Changes in Afghanistan." *Gov.Af*. <https://mfa.gov.af/en/the-afghan-pakistani-chinese-fms-revived-the-tripartite-mechanism-for-the-first-time-following-the-changes-in-afghanistan/>.
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- ¹⁰ Tushar Abdullah, "The War for Mineral Possession Started in Afghanistan." *Modern Diplomacy*, 14 July 2021. <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/07/15/the-war-for-mineral-possession-started-in-afghanistan/>.