

THE UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY AGAINST AFGHANISTAN MILITARY: A COVERT MILITARY METHOD

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze and explain the foreign policy of the United States towards the Afghan militia, especially the Taliban. The United States government with the help of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) investigates and seeks to destroy the Al Qaeda terrorist group led by Osama bin Laden who was later found to be in Afghanistan and obtained protection under the Taliban. The Taliban, the Islamic extremist regime that controls Afghanistan and offers space for Al Qaeda militants to exercise its military in Afghanistan. President Bush signed a resolution on September 18, 2001 regarding the attacks on Al Qaeda under the protection of the Taliban in Afghanistan which continues to this day. The United States is actively involved in supporting military operations in Afghanistan, including logistical assistance, Afghan military training, and sending American military troops to conflict areas. The main goal of the United States in doing so is to prevent potential future attacks by a growing terrorist group in Afghanistan. Based on data from the United States Department of Defense, the total expenditure in the military sector in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2019 was 778 billion USD. Meanwhile, the number of troops sent to conflict locations was 596,303 troops. There are 2,441 US military troops confirmed dead in the Afghan war from 2001 to 2019. It is estimated that about 12,000 US military troops are still in Afghanistan. This research is a qualitative research and the data collection technique used by the author in this study is Library Research in the form of books, journals, documents, reports, articles, or newspapers obtained through electronic and non-electronic media. The conclusion is that this foreign policy is relevant and elaborates that in international relations there will be actions, reactions, and interactions between political entities called states. The state, in this case the head of state as the decision maker, tries to formulate every goal to be achieved by minimizing sacrifices to the national interest. In line with the policies pursued by President Trump to end the war in Afghanistan and withdraw all military forces of the United States and its allies.

Keywords: *International; Military; Politics; Policy; War.*

A. INTRODUCTION

President Trump considers that the 18-year war with the Taliban in Afghanistan must end immediately on the pretext that the United States military forces have spent nearly two decades in the conflict area, as well as the huge costs that have been spent in the war. President Trump declared that it was time to withdraw all United States and allied military forces and establish peace in Afghanistan. This commitment is realized through peace

talks with the Taliban, which of course is supported by various interested actors¹.

In February 2020, the United States Government and the Taliban signed an agreement to end the nearly two-decade war in Afghanistan. In the agreement it was agreed that it was not permissible for Al Qaeda or other extremist groups to carry out military operations in areas under their control. The agreement, which was held in the city of Doha, Qatar, was attended by Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad as the United States' special representative in the negotiations and Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar as the political leader of the Taliban².

The expected outcome of the United States' commitment to peace in Afghanistan is to withdraw all its military forces and allies and end the war financing. The United States and NATO have agreed to withdraw US troops in Afghanistan in their entirety. In support of this effort, not only the meeting between the United States and the Taliban. However, the key actors, namely the Afghan government and the Taliban themselves³.

A peace agreement is not an easy thing and it takes time to reach a peace agreement. Not only trying to convince the parties directly involved in the negotiation process. However, the state needs domestic support on this issue. President Trump in making a peace agreement with the Taliban, in addition to trying to convince the international side, must also convince the United States domestically to fully support this policy until a mutual agreement is reached.

President Trump as the main actor in peace negotiations with the Taliban, requires various considerations between two determining levels, namely domestic and international constituents. President Trump is obliged to pay attention to domestic considerations, including governmental and non-governmental institutions, such as public opinion. The accumulated considerations at the domestic level are then brought to the international level for negotiation. The greater the support at the domestic level for the issues being negotiated, the greater the chance for ratification of the resulting treaty. At the international level, the actors involved are the Taliban and the Afghan government, and it is possible to involve countries or international organizations that have an interest in the issue⁴.

Peace talk between the United States and the Taliban is a complex process and allows the involvement of various state and non-state actors with their respective interests. Of course, every actor, both at the domestic and international levels involved, has an influence in the process of reaching an agreement or agreement between the two parties. This is what Robert D. Putnam calls a two-level games approach. It was explained that the domestic level and the international level were interrelated and influenced in the negotiation process.

- 1 Witte, Griff., *Afghanistan War*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 16 Aug. 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Afghanistan-War>. Accessed 18 August 2022.
- 2 Thomas, *Afghanistan: Background and US Policy*, In Brief, 2020
- 3 Albert Hourani et al., *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*. 1993: page. 2.
- 4 CSP – Major Episodes of Political Violence, 1946–2008, Systemicpeace.org. 12 June 2013. Archived from the original on 21 January 2014. Retrieved 14 November 2013.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the type of research used is a qualitative type, namely this study describes the transformation of the United States' foreign policy towards Afghan militants. The purpose of qualitative research generally includes information about the main phenomena explored in the research. The data collection technique used by the author in this study is Library Research in the form of books, journals, documents, reports, articles, or newspapers obtained through electronic and non-electronic media.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Approach Two – Level Games

The two-level games approach which was initiated by Robert D. Putnam is an approach that explains the relationship between domestic politics and international relations in producing foreign policy formulations. International pressures or conditions can influence changes in the pattern of a foreign policy. Vice versa, without the involvement and agreement by the domestic country, then the agreement is difficult to achieve⁵.

Foreign policy and international relations are always attached to domestic politics. For example, political parties, social class, interest groups (both economic and non-economic sectors), legislators, and even public opinion, not only at the executive and institutional levels. Despite the fact that central executives have a special role in mediating domestic and international interests because they are directly involved in both layers, it is not because central executives always have common ground on all issues and not because they are separate from domestic politics⁶.

The political process in international negotiations can be understood as a two-level game. At the domestic level (better known as Level I), all sections or groups pressure the government to take policies that (which accommodates all interests) and the politicians or groups involved increase their political power by building coalitions. At Level II or International Level, the national government tries to maximize all its capabilities to fight for satisfaction or options from Level II. However, minimizing losses for foreign developments. If a country still has the status of an interdependent and sovereign state, then these two levels are always upheld without one being ignored.

The Second Image concept (domestic causes and international effects) states that international politics is the effect of domestic politics. Second Image Reversed (international causes and domestic effects) formulated by Gourevitch as a critique of the Second Image concept, states that it is actually international politics that influences domestic political structures. This concept only explains partial equilibrium or partial analysis without covering the crucial things that need to be

5 James L. Gelvin, *The Israel–Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War*, Cambridge University Press ISBN 978-0-521-61804-5, page. 77

6 Boca Raton News - *Google News Archive Search*. news.google.com. Retrieved 2022-03-21.

explained, namely how the domestic politics of several countries are strongly influenced by international negotiations⁷.

According to Putnam, in understanding foreign policy, one should not get caught up in the debate whether domestic politics is influential or international politics is in the formation of foreign policy. Furthermore, Putnam explained that it is very clear that these two factors are very influential and have an attachment. What is more important to understand further is when and how they both have an effect. Putnam then formulated and developed a two-level games approach.

In the negotiation process, a political leader or in negotiations called the chief negotiator is present between the two games/levels. At the international negotiating table, sitting opposite the negotiator, accompanied by a diplomat and international adviser. At the domestic level negotiation table, behind the chief negotiator sits a representative or high-ranking party leader and members of parliament, spokespeople for domestic affairs (spokespersons), representatives from interest groups, and the party's chief advisor. The chief negotiator is an individual who has no preference or tendency other than to reach an agreement that is beneficial to each of his constituents.

According to Hill, foreign policy depends on domestic and international politics. There is also a consensus among scholars that foreign policy is formed as a form of relationship between domestic and international politics. So it can be concluded that foreign policy is influenced and shaped by two main factors, namely external or international and domestic or internal. In some cases, international factors play a large role in the formation of foreign policy, and in other cases, domestic factors become more important.

In general, external or international factors that can influence the formation of foreign policy are the international system and applicable international law, international organizations, state alliances, and military strategy and strength. Just like international factors, domestic factors also have power in determining the direction of a country's foreign policy. According to Taner, domestic factors will directly influence the process and decisions on foreign policy. The domestic factors are culture and history, geography and population, economic growth and natural resources, military power, the political system, the personality and character of its leaders, public opinion and the media, and science and technology.

The series in negotiations consists of a negotiation process phase and a ratification phase of the agreement. Before the chief negotiator enters the realm of negotiation at Level I, there is a consultation or offer at Level II to determine the position in the negotiations at Level I. On the other hand, the ratification process at Level II is strongly influenced by the offer at Level I. In many cases of negotiation, the process at Level II two – level can be repetitive, a negotiator tries to reach a possible

7 Department Of State, *The Office of Electronic Information, Bureau of Public Affairs*, Reagan Doctrine, 1985, 2001-2009.state.gov. Retrieved 2022-03-21.

agreement and on the other hand explores every view of his constituents. In more complex cases, constituent views develop in line with the dynamics of the negotiation. However, in the end all agreements made must be ratified at Level II.

Ratification requires a formal voting procedure from Level II, for example in the United States, it is constitutionally required to have 2/3 of the total votes in the Senate to ratify a treaty. Ratification of an agreement or agreement is identical to the function of parliament. However, that is not the main point in terms of ratification of treaties, especially international treaties. Actors involved in the ratification process at Level II who are representatives of certain bodies or bureaucrats, interest groups, social classes, or even public opinion. For example, a group of workers in a bankrupt country/country with large debts withholds an agreement between the government in power and the IMF regarding the austerity program, at Level II it is more likely that they will not ratify the program because it does not meet their expectations⁸.

In the two-level game approach, it is necessary to understand the concept of win-set. Win-set in the negotiation process is defined as the range of possible Level II (domestic constituency) approvals for the agreement to be reached at Level I. Win-set is an important component in the policy-making process in two-level games. An agreement occurs when the win-sets of the negotiators overlap or 'overlap'. Thus, it is very likely that an agreement will be reached in the negotiation process. The size of the win-set at Level I formed between the negotiators will determine the possibility of reaching an agreement at Level II.

The reason why the size of the win – set is important. First, the wider the reach of the win – set, the greater the possibility of an agreement at Level I. on the other hand, if the win-set range is getting smaller, the risk of negotiation failure is even greater. In the case of negotiations during the Anglo-Argentinian war over the Falklands/Malvinas, several interim agreements have been made, but were rejected for domestic political reasons. The reason is, the win-sets of the two parties, British and Argentinean, do not overlap, and the possibility of war cannot be avoided⁹.

Second, the size of the Level II win-set on each side is very influential with the spread of understanding of the offer at the international level. The wider the reach of a negotiator's win-set, the greater the encouragement or pressure given by other negotiators at Level I. However, on the other hand, the bargaining position is weak at the negotiating table because others assume that the scope is very large so it is easy to compromise their demands. Vice versa, the smaller the win-set range, the stronger the bargaining position at Level I because other negotiators have the assumption that they do not have many

8 The New York Times, *Sadat Says U.S. Buys Soviet Arms In Egypt For Afghan Rebels*. 1981-09-23. ISSN 0362-4331. Retrieved 2022-03-21.

9 Statistics Branch, GS, War Department, 25 February 1924; cited in World War I: People, Politics, and Power, published by Britannica Educational Publishing, 2010, page 219.

choices or alternatives so that it will make it easier to reach an agreement¹⁰.

According to Putnam, there are three important factors that can change the size of a win-set, namely:

- a. The size of a win-set depends on the distribution of power, preferences, and possible coalitions among constituents at Level II

The theory of two-level games, as a theory in international negotiations must be rooted in domestic political theory, namely theories relating to the power and preferences (tendency) of actors at Level II. In short, the domestic political principles that affect the size of the win-set, such as the smaller the cost that must be incurred by the constituents at the domestic level for a no-agreement, the less likely a win-set will be generated. This means that if in the negotiation process at Level I, the agreement that the chief negotiator wants to reach will harm the domestic level, it is likely to be rejected. So, the win-set of the chief negotiator at Level I is getting smaller. Domestic constituents are rational actors who hope to get the maximum profit by minimizing losses.

The size of the win-set (by negotiators in Level I negotiations) depends on the size of the pressure from "the isolationists" or those who reject all forms of international cooperation and "the internationalists" or those who offer or support all forms of cooperation. For example, a country that still relies on cooperation with an open economy model, compared to a self-sufficient country, such as the United States, is less likely to reach a no-agreement. On the other hand, self-sufficient countries with smaller win-sets make fewer international agreements and encourage bargaining in the negotiation process.

Different groups at Level II give preference to an issue under negotiation. In general, the group with the greatest interest in a particular issue will have a strong influence on that issue. For example, in negotiating the Law of the Sea, the Ministry of Defense of a country will pay attention to sea-lanes, the Ministry of Home Affairs will focus more on mining rights on the seabed, and so on. If every domestic constituent or group involved is given the right to make an agreement at Level I in accordance with their respective issues and interests, then it is possible that a non-negotiable situation will occur or an agreement will not occur.

In fighting for an issue to reach an agreement, domestic politics must strengthen coalitions with various domestic constituents to make it easier for their interests to be fought for in negotiations at Level I.

- b. Size of win – sets based on political institutions at Level II

The procedure for ratifying treaties in a country can affect the size of a win-set (ratification in question does not always have to be

10 Monitoring Trends in Global Combat: A New Dataset of Battle Deaths – Peace Research Institute Oslo. www.prio.org. Retrieved 2022-03-21.

formal-constitutional, such as parliamentary involvement, but what is meant is the acceptance of a policy by all groups in the domestic constituency). Like the system in the United States which requires 2/3 of the vote to ratify a treaty, the size of the win – sets will be smaller than if it only requires a majority vote. On the one hand, such a system will allow the United States to gain a strong bargaining position in the negotiation process, but on the other hand, it will be a little difficult to reach an agreement because the size of the win-sets is not wide.

- c. The size of the win – sets is determined by the negotiator at Level I A negotiator brings his national interest

To be fought for in international negotiations or Level I, usually use two strategies, namely side-payments and generic good will. Side-payments are used to attract support from marginal supporters. This strategy is familiar in game theory as well as in practical politics. The use of certain side-payments, a chief-negotiator who has domestic popularity will make it easier to reach the ratification stage of his initiative in the negotiation process. However, the generic good will does not guarantee the realization of ratification.

Win – sets brought by negotiators at Level I were negotiated to reach an expected agreement. Negotiators at Level I will discuss further about the possible impacts on domestic constituents of the agreement to be made. One point that becomes the basis is that a chief-negotiator or diplomat who is a representative in a negotiation forum is equipped with strategies that become the impetus to reach a win-win agreement¹¹.

Simply put, the two-level games approach formulates that the international negotiation process is divided into two fundamental parts:

- 1) Negotiators make bargains at the International Level which leads to a provisional agreement, referred to as Level I;
- 2) The bargaining process of each constituent at the domestic level to decide whether or not to ratify the agreement made at Level I, is referred to as Level II.

2. Foreign Policy Transformation

The term international politics is always attached to the terms actions, reactions, and interactions between political entities called states. Emphasizes the analysis of the process of an action or actions by looking at time and continuous changes in a relationship, including fundamental changes and their consequences. Action arises from the need to create, maintain, and regulate relations between states. Action is full of planning and trying to realize all the goals that have been

11 Barlett, Donald L., Steele, James B., 2003-05-13, *The Oily Americans*, Time. ISSN 0040-781X. Retrieved 2022-03-21.

formulated, as well as preventing or minimizing all forms of threats from other countries.

Relations between two or more countries are not always symmetrical, but also allow asymmetrical relationships. A series of asymmetric relations of a country, for example, country A against country B, in this case country A takes an action against country B, country B gives a reaction, but country A may not take further action on the reaction of country B. always indicates a series of actions or counter actions. Countries can respond to other countries without contradicting the actions of that country. The form of reaction or response can be in the form of inaction or inaction (this is also considered an action). As action develops, national goals may change as conditions change, oftentimes,

Action and the interaction of a country can be in the form of declarations, agreements, regulations on relations between countries, discussions or talks, grants or loans, armed conflicts, and so on. Interaction in a relationship has a pattern, namely actions and reactions that are carried out repeatedly. Action becomes special. Reaction becomes orderly. Relationships are created to be more regulated¹².

International politics is considered as a process of interaction of a state at the level of government. There are also non-governmental factors that are important in the process of determining a country's action. Setting (state) is divided into two important aspects, namely internal and external. Setting is the right term for environment (environment) because the term environment is very inclusive or has a technical meaning in other sciences. Setting consists of a series of potential and relevant factors and conditions that play an important role in determining a country's action.

External conditions refer to circumstances and factors that come from outside the country. In other words, it crosses the territorial boundaries of the country. For example, actions and reactions from other countries (from decision makers), as well as the international community. External conditions tend to change and develop and it should be noted that every decision by policy makers is important. Internal or known conditions with "domestic politics", public opinion, or geographic position. Internal conditions play a role in helping the government or policy makers to determine their attitude because basically they must pay attention to the bureaucracy, the condition and character of the domestic community, as well as the state of the physical environment of the country. These two conditions are closely related and influence each other in the policy-making process. Briefly it can be illustrated through the following diagram.

12 Totten, Samuel, Paul Robert Bartrop, Steven L. Jacobs (eds.), *Dictionary of Genocide*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008, page. 19. ISBN 978-0-313-34642-2.

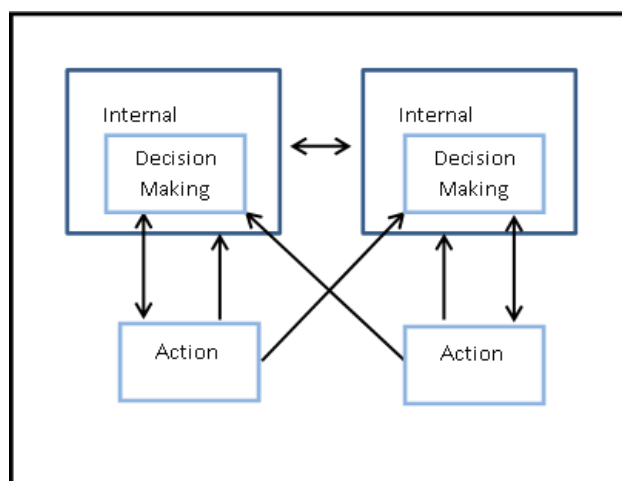


Figure 1: Combination of interaction and decision-making process by a

Based on the diagram above, it must be understood that the response to decision-making by a country emphasizes the situation, problems, and actions of other countries. The interaction pattern of a country determines the direction of its foreign policy which can be seen through the formulation of its foreign policy.

George Modelski states the definition of foreign policy as a process of changing the attitude of other countries and adaptation (countries) to the international environment. Modelski emphasizes that in foreign policy the step of a country to change the attitude of another country is the main thing and is the goal of foreign policy formulation. In addition to the goal of changing the attitude of other countries, states must have the ability to continue that attitude in different times and circumstances. Changing and maintaining attitudes or relationships is the main thing as long as it is still in accordance with national interests¹³.

One example of the application of foreign policy is the case of Gambia breaking diplomatic relations with Taiwan which has established diplomatic relations for almost two decades in 2013. The change in Gambia's foreign policy towards Taiwan (China) as an alliance that has long established diplomatic relations is confirmed to not provide a valid reason. details of why the policy was adopted. However, it was later concluded that of course the policies taken by all countries were only for their national interests.

According to Joseph Frankle, foreign policy consists of decisions and actions related to the reach between one country and another. Actions are produced by domestic countries aimed at defending and advancing national interests beyond the borders of the country's territory. Successively, Padelfor and Lincoln state the definition of foreign policy, namely the totality in establishing relations with the external environment, and foreign policy is the overall result of the process of

13 *A Long and Distant War: Photos from Afghanistan, 1988-2009*. Time. Retrieved 2022-03-21.
How the U.S. Departure From Afghanistan Could Echo Kissinger's Moves in Vietnam, Time.
 Retrieved 2022-03-21.

translating the goals to be achieved into actions under the pretext of realizing national interests. According to Huges Gibson, foreign policy is a series of strategic plans obtained based on knowledge and experience to achieve certain affairs with countries around the world¹⁴.

Understanding the transformation or change in a country's foreign policy that is implemented through policy is to explain the interests of each actor involved and how to achieve those interests using all available resources. Then by answering the question, will a country use forces/force/coercion when diplomacy fails to realize the national interest that is being fought for? The answer is Yes. As in the case of the attack on a terrorist group that led to a prolonged conflict by the United States in Afghanistan in 2001 until now¹⁵.

The policy taken by President Bush was followed by President Obama and Trump with a commitment. But in the end, under the current Trump administration, the pretext of ending the war in Afghanistan that lasted for 19 years has been elaborated through peace talks by the United States and the Taliban, as well as the actors involved. This shows that there is a transformation of US foreign policy under the Trump administration against the Taliban with the aim of withdrawing all US military forces still in Afghanistan, as well as ending the conflict and creating peace in Afghanistan¹⁶.

The transformation of the United States' foreign policy in the Trump era from the perspective of the concept of foreign policy is something that is common in international relations. Changes in the direction of a country's foreign policy can change along with the development of certain circumstances. The war on terror with its militarism, which was initiated by President Bush in 2001 as the United States' action against the 9/11 attacks, underwent a significant change in the Trump era by way of negotiations.

Given that the form of interaction by two actors in international relations can be in the form of a declaration, cooperation agreement, regulation, discussion or assembly, loan or gift, or even armed conflict. This interaction is created because the actions and reactions between the actors occur repeatedly. And, in many cases of diplomacy, the limits of tolerance of interests can be crossed by expecting the creation of a common goal. This is what President Trump is trying to build on his policy towards the Taliban.

D. CONCLUSION

Domestic political conditions have a vital role in international politics and vice versa. It is very important for every decision maker to reach an agreement on his country's domestic to maintain the offer at the International Level. This premise is in line with the two-level games

14 Poteri narodonaseleniia v : spravochnik. Moscow. ISBN 978-5-93165-107-1. pages 61, 65, 73, 77 and 78

15 McCarthy, *The Annual Cost of the War in Afghanistan Since 2001* (Infographic), 2019

16 bbc.com

approach popularized by Robert D. Putnam. President Trump's negotiating efforts with the Taliban to reach a peace agreement in Afghanistan is one of those issues that lends itself to playing this approach on two different levels. The foreign policy transformation of the previous regime on the issue of the Taliban can be influenced by the foreign policy of the ruling leader. Thus, in analyzing this issue, foreign policy theory is used. This theory will help in seeing how President Trump formulates his foreign policy towards the Taliban by bringing the goals to be achieved in his policy. This foreign policy theory is relevant and elaborates that in international relations there will be actions, reactions, and interactions between political entities called states. The state, in this case the head of state as the decision maker, tries to formulate every goal to be achieved by minimizing sacrifices to the national interest. In line with the policies pursued by President Trump to end the war in Afghanistan and withdraw all military forces of the United States and its allies.

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