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<https://islamicreligious.com/index.php/Journal/index>Print ISSN: [3006-1296](#) Online ISSN: [3006-130X](#)Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)**Navigating South Asian Security after USA Withdrawal; Challenges and Prospect****Ahmed Mustafa**

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This paper looks at the changes in South Asia's security when the United States took away their troops from Afghanistan in 2021. The quick end of the Afghan government and the Taliban's return have impacted local politics, made security a problem again and given rise to new issues and new opportunities for working together. The study focuses on major research questions relating to Pakistan, India, China, Russia and Iran as actors in the region. To do this, the report uses secondary research and analysis of opinions written by actors in the region, assesses how strategies have changed and studies how instability in Afghanistan as a result of no government has resulted in risks and renewed opportunities across the region. After the U.S. left South Asia, Realism and the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) are used to look at how countries' interests, rivalries and threats evolved. The text closes by explaining how collaborative efforts, addressing any disagreements and maintaining a stable future can be accomplished.

Keywords: Power Vacuum, Taliban Resurgence, India Pakistan Rivalry, China's Influence.

Introduction

The withdrawal of the last American troops in August 2021 had a major and permanent impact on political affairs in the region. U.S. troops came out of Afghanistan very abruptly after two decades which showed that the country's politics were in a bad state (Jones, 2021). Soon after the US troops departed, the Taliban captured the country, proving that Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) were not able to keep order in the country on their own (Giustozzi, 2021). With the collapse so rapid, many global investments were lost in a short period and other countries had to think again about security in the region as the situation changed swiftly.

The presence of U.S. troops in Afghanistan for many years brought some peace, but was discussed for its discrepancy, as they fought militants, kept neighboring countries from fighting constantly and provided a reliable security feeling (Kugelman, 2021). Missing a U.S. presence in Afghanistan has led to more problems between Pakistan and India, as well as challenging Iran, China and Russia which are involved there (Fair, 2014; Rashid, 2012). It deals with dangers that may arise from jihadist organizations, unregulated migration and the drug trade, plus allies in the region restructuring their forces (Younas, Razzaq, & Kanval, 2025; Malik et al., 2025; BA Notes, 2024). The control of Kabul has made these nations reconsider their foreign policies, decisions about border security and future goals considering the Taliban once again (Polity Prober, 2025). Several major historical conflicts, problems over

land, ideological disagreements and strong nationalism make South Asia complicated (Syed, Awan, Yasmin, & Mustafa, 2025).

Therefore, regional countries may respond to incidents in Afghanistan because of the unclear situation in the region (Polity Prober, 2025). Since they have more power, people are not sure about their rulership, how they treat human rights and whether they have the commitment to ensure terrorists do not use the country again (Younas et al., 2025; Syed et al., 2025). Because of these, the peaceful nature of the region is shaken and local countries have to consider changing their strategies (Zakariya, Rana, Abbas, & Ikram, 2024).

It tries to analyze the effects of the new Afghan situation on the security schemes in South Asia (Polity Prober, 2025). Based on secondary data from written sources such as research articles, reports from government bodies, media accounts and statements by multilateral organizations, a qualitative type of study is carried out for this research (Margalla Papers, 2024). The focus is mainly on Pakistan, India, China, Russia and Iran as major regional actors. Every nation responded differently because of their individual experiences with Afghanistan, local security matters and future ambitions (Zakariya et al., 2024; Polity Prober, 2025; Younas et al., 2025).

Pakistan has a major role in reshaping the regional situation. Because Pakistan's border with Afghanistan is lengthy and open, the country has long played an important part in Afghanistan (Syed et al., 2025). At the time they first appeared in the 1990s, Pakistan's military was linked to the Taliban and it was claimed that Taliban leaders found refuge in Pakistan during times when the U.S. was in Afghanistan. At first, the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban seemed to help the government of Islamabad (Syed et al., 2025). If there is a friendly government in Afghanistan, India may lose influence, the Afghanistan-Pakistan border could settle and Pakistan may be able to meet its bigger goals in the region (Zakariya et al., 2024). There are yet other aspects to this problem as well. Pakistan is facing a big challenge to its internal safety because the TTP has risen (Younas et al., 2025; Syed et al., 2025). Also, Pakistan is experiencing troubles from both 4 sides of the economy and in its foreign relations, due to the country's links to extremists and issues about human rights. So, Pakistan needs to be very attentive in dealing with the problems that the new regime may cause (Syed et al., 2025).

Because of the action taken by the U.S., India's influence is now decreased. Within the last two decades, India placed major efforts on reconstructing Afghanistan through work on its infrastructure, schools and aid to those who needed help. India frequently supplied Afghanistan with arms, to lessen the influence of rival Pakistan supported by the U.S. As a result, the arrival of the Taliban troubles Indian efforts to influence the area. India thinks that if the Afghan government allows it, these armed groups might target India from Afghan territory. For this reason, India has been selecting a cautious but vigilant approach. It is trying to negotiate with the Taliban, discuss security with neighboring countries and enhance its links with Iran and Russia (Zakariya et al., 2024; Polity Prober, 2025). Also, the Indian military has been moving closer to Kashmir and the Pakistan border, ready to face any future trouble at the border (Zakariya et al., 2024).

China seems to be approaching events with the Taliban cautiously and sensibly (Qurtuba University Journal, 2025). Beijing has been in conversations with the Taliban to request safeguards on key security and economic issues. Officials in China are afraid that extremism might reach the Xinjiang province where the Uyghur Muslims live. China is working to keep infrastructure projects linked to BRI safe, for example, the China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor (CPEC) that goes across Afghanistan. Even though Beijing encourages playing a bigger role in Afghanistan, it is being careful due to the instability there. For this reason, China is expected to focus on security and specific parts of the economy, while not playing a big role in Afghanistan's internal affairs (Qurtuba University Journal, 2025).

After the events in Afghanistan, Russia which is located farther from Kazakhstan, has changed its military approach there as well. Actions of Russia in Afghanistan are still linked to its involvement after the Soviet invasion in 1979 and the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989. The stability of Central Asia is important to Russia which is why it monitors the ongoing activities of the Taliban closely. Because of this, Russia is stepping up security cooperation with its former Soviet neighbors including Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, engaging in partnered military play and offering weapons for sale. Open channels have been set up with the Taliban so that the United States can keep in touch with them. Moscow aims to come across as a mediator that can make the region stable and follow its own interests (Polity Prober, 2025).

What Iran feels about the new Afghan regime depends on its beliefs, party views and its own strategic concerns. To prevent being threatened by extremist groups, Iran used to avoid allies with the Sunni Taliban, as it had a history of antagonism towards Shias. Since the U.S. withdrew from Afghanistan, the group has revised its views. Tehran wants to interact with the Taliban to manage its borders, help its fellow Shia in Afghanistan and reduce immigration. Also, Iran wants to stop the U.S. from influencing the region and now it sees the U.S. leaving as a chance to take on more leadership. It also needs to be ready for instability at home and still maintains a powerful force to keep its east safe (Polity Prober, 2025).

Since there are new security issues, individuals are beginning to mention regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) more often. Although some members of these organizations disagree and disagree about power, these places help them communicate, gain each other's trust and work through disagreements. The SCO focused on China, Russia and a number of Central and South Asian countries, has worked to reduce terrorist threats and ensure regional stability. The organization may help collaborate interests that differ between groups. But, the conflict between India and Pakistan weakens SAARC and better efforts at diplomacy could make it more effective. This report tries to answer major questions that have emerged due to America's decision to leave Afghanistan and bring its troops home. It examines the changes in political power in the region due to changes in national priorities, preparations and diplomatic connections among significant regional countries. Besides, the study broadens and enriches discussions about regional security by relying on accurate facts and concepts (Polity Prober, 2025; Margalla Papers, 2024; Younas et al., 2025).

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Scholars have discussed at length the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, examining how foreign intervention failed, the Afghan government fell, violent groups came back and how it impacted regional security (Jones, 2021; Giustozzi, 2021). Analysts and academics have examined what is likely to happen following the withdrawal, especially concerning South Asia, a place with many issues linked to changes in security, ideology and power.

RSCT was introduced by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver in their book (2003) and has played a big role in shaping how security trends are studied in regions (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). It points out that nearby countries tend to have the strongest and most joined security issues which are referred to as regional security complexes. For this theory, threats in these regions

can endanger more than one country which can prompt nearby nations to either cooperate or clash and opt for militarization. In South Asia, the outcomes are related because there are very close connections among Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and the neighboring nations (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). Due to RSCT, specialists are able to compare new Afghan policies with the approaches of surrounding countries to similar challenges.

As soon as the Taliban regained control in Afghanistan, the changes there led to shifts in other countries' security strategies, alliances and long-term plans (Tellis, 2022). This idea points out that one unstable area, linked to insurgency or extremism, can destabilize the whole area.

Studies have also often applied Realism, focusing most on structural or neorealist ideas. Realists point out that states must act out of self-interest, try to gain power and do what is necessary to stay alive in a world without law and order. Realist theory states that leaving Afghanistan opened a gap in influence that led regional countries to change the way they related to one another. From a realist view, every nation will behave to secure its most valuable assets, avoid change and bar oncoming competitor countries as its allies depart (Tellis, 2022).

Though Kenneth Waltz, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt did not look at Afghanistan in particular, their theories help understand India, Pakistan and China after the US withdrawal. When this happens, giving more advantages in security to one group typically means taking them away from another which might create more tension and encourage people to spend less time cooperating (Tellis, 2022).

Some recent research has used these approaches to understand circumstances in Afghanistan after it fell. Michael Kugelman, Christine Fair and Bruce Riedel have discussed how the region's stability and changes from a confident Taliban are viewed. Because Taliban rule has returned, Kugelman states that Afghanistan's borders may experience an increase in extremism which could start creating dangers for Pakistan and India (Kugelman, 2021). Many times, Christine Fair has described the potential threats that come from supporting and protecting militants inside Pakistan (Fair, 2014). Bruce Riedel, drawing on his time at U.S. intelligence, assessed why nations make mistakes and what their results are for local counterterrorism (Riedel, 2011).

A lot of research highlights that the security risks in the region have worsened for those involved. Other states could view defensive strategies as being aggressive which may lead to increased arms development and more mistrust. After the withdrawal, it is quite clear to see this trend in South Asia. India feels that Pakistan is tied to the Taliban which has caused it to focus more on protecting borders and strengthen its military presence in border regions such as Kashmir (Mohan, 2021). Pakistan thinks that India is taking steps in Afghanistan to attack and weaken the nation. Due to these common doubts, diplomatic talks are mainly marked by mistrust and it is not easy to reach any agreements. Professional papers and analyses about India's foreign policy after the U.S. left Afghanistan were common following the event. They say that the new government in Afghanistan under the Taliban has raised questions about a number of Indian projects, especially in construction, healthcare, education and helping democracy. But India is taking action to improve the situation. For this reason, it has had quiet discussions with Taliban officials, tried to relax relations with Iran and Russia and included itself more often in talks with neighboring 8 nations concerning Afghanistan (Mohan, 2021). How India reacts to these things seems to show it wants to stay the same, despite shifts in the political situation.

Although many in Afghanistan believe Pakistan has a big role, its role there is in fact complicated. It is stated by academic and policy studies that Pakistan is both a source of influence in Afghanistan and a potential victim of issues there. Before, sections of the Pakistani security establishment supported the Taliban to counter India, but Pakistan now deals with more attacks from the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) (Fair, 2014). Some experts think that relying on the "strategic depth" approach in handling Afghanistan was ineffective and made Pakistan suffer much of the difficulties it has experienced before (Kugelman, 2021). With Pakistan's national economy declining and questions from around the globe about its actions on terrorism, the government is under greater pressure concerning their international choices.

Since the withdrawal from Afghanistan, many researchers are interested in how China is involved now. Among experts in Chinese and international policy, security and the economy are the major points that shape views on Afghanistan. Xinjiang's extremism, the safety and security of its people and investments in Pakistan and Afghanistan, plus the further progress of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), are the main challenges for China in the region (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). Beijing contacts the Taliban and suggested the possibility of financial help, while staying cautious with its approach. Most believe that China is keeping its role in Afghanistan restricted to trade and passing on information and does not wish to change the country's structure.

Iran is not rushing its response when dealing with the new Taliban government. Even though the Taliban attacked Shia Muslims and Iran in the 1990s and despite strong resistance, Iran held talks with the group. It is considered by most experts that Iran adopts a diplomatic stance based on clear ideology as well as real-world realism (Tellis, 2022). Iran works to protect the Shia Hazara people in Afghanistan and prevent extremist thoughts in Sunni groups. In another view, it means that if relations with Kabul are good, Afghanistan won't have to accept refugees, its border will remain safe and influence from the U.S. and Saudi Arabia in the region will decrease. Russia's policy toward Afghanistan has shifted a lot. Because Russia was key to the past invasion during the Cold War era, the focus on it today comes from its role in Central Asian security (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). Many are concerned the Taliban's win could allow it to oversee Islamist groups situated in nations like Tajikistan and Uzbekistan which used to be republics in the former Soviet Union. A lot of Russian scholars and policy makers stress the importance of becoming involved in regional security collectives such as CSTO and strengthening their cooperation with Central Asian countries (Tellis, 2022). Russia has used diplomatic approaches, acting as an unbiased mediator and protector of safety with the Taliban.

Reactions from different countries have been widely covered, but not many studies have examined how countries in the same region act compared to one another. Most publications study the India-Pakistan and China-Pakistan relationships, not looking at the rest of the region. Most of the literature focuses on sudden risks connected to terrorism and boundaries, avoiding longer-term topics about working together in the region. A limited group of researchers have evaluated the role of groups like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in cutting risks and motivating countries to cooperate on security issues (Buzan & Wæver, 2003).

Although security and anti-terror efforts have grown in importance for the SCO membership (made up of China, Russia, India and Pakistan), there is little study of this at universities. Although India and Pakistan's issues have upset the scheduled work at SAARC in the past,

if SAARC is given stronger direction and support, it can assist in regional development and solving regional conflicts. Narcotics trafficking, illegal weaponry, humanitarian disasters and economic difficulties in the region are not widely studied by academics (Tellis, 2022). Because security problems affecting many countries require nations to work together, it seems strange that they are rarely included in security analysis.

Research Questions

1. How was the US withdrawal redesigned?
2. How did China, Russia, and Iran adapt their strategic politics to withdrawal?
3. Where did Afghanistan, led by the Taliban, play a role in regional security concerns?
4. How can regional cooperation, diplomatic commitment and conflict resolution be achieved?

Methodological Approach

This paper uses qualitative research design that is founded on secondary data analysis. In order to thoroughly assess security changes in South Asia, this examine relies on a method where many types of information and analysis methods are matched. Because stories, strategies and important changes in geopolitics are diverse and sometimes hard to quantify, this approach is best for analysis.

Data Collection

The analysis combines basic facts and extra resources to better explain what took place after the U.S. left the area. Major resources include white papers on arrangements taking place at a distance, speeches of heads of state and overseas leaders, records of parliamentary sessions, principles on security and agreements made with one or even more nations. They help us to quickly understand what governments have said about events. Auxiliary Sources mean scholarly articles in diaries, original reports by reliable think tanks, commentary books, reputable analysis from news websites and masters' books. Such sources provide various descriptions and explanations of situations which strengthen the conclusions drawn from the key documents. Mixing various sorts of information helps even out bias and provides a clear look at different perspectives.

Scope and Limitations

The study was very thorough but it is important to acknowledge some of its limits. Also, most decisions made within organizations are often not documented, so it's likely researchers will not see them in free archives. Political issues and media censorship in some countries (like Iran and China) require people to see alternative opinions. Eventualities in Afghanistan are evolving very rapidly, so the security outlook keeps shifting which can potentially make conclusions less tough.

Comparative Case Study Method

In its investigation, The Belt and Road Initiative uses a comparison of cases to analyze the methods and responses of main regional players: Pakistan, India, China, Russia and Iran. Each 19 nation is looked at independently, so that its specific background with Afghanistan, core relationships and ongoing policy decisions can be examined. When examining these cases, the think about notices what is similar and what differs, helping understand what leads states to be at peace or in conflict. The strategy additionally allows the analyst to track the influences of both regional and global factors on a country's actions.

The case of Pakistan involves its history of dealing with the Taliban, its recent security efforts and its role both in promoting stability and in possibly causing instability in the area. India is understood using its actions in Afghanistan, the sense of risk from powerful nations

surrounding it and the bigger impact on its self-determination. To understand China's reaction, its cautious approach with neighboring countries, financial communication (especially under the Belt and Street Activity) and stress over Uyghur insurgency are studied.

The Russia example points out its top priority on Central Asian stability, its group participation in security alliances and the way in which it handles matters affecting its influence. The Iran case centers on its one of a kind political arrangement with the Taliban, concerns over high numbers of refugees and political turmoil and how it aims to develop both its religious and important goals.

Analysis and Discussion

To better understand national accounts and main communication, the inquire about reviews the available materials, national security reports and media descriptions of every country. It requires dividing texts into categories, selecting recurring themes, opinions and main priorities. 20 The consider notes the countries' ideas on Taliban return, expresses how safe they feel and expresses whether they wish to engage with others. Procedural method discovers that India uses fear and oppression, Pakistan pays attention to security threats and their influence and China preserves its lack of engagement and economic strength are all compared in their own countries and internationally.

With this strategy, the ponder can follow shifts in discussions as the organization's policy and worldwide conduct were gradually seen. In addition, Complex Hypothesis (RSCT) relies on two important breakthrough ideas: Authenticity and Territorial Security. Authenticity, especially in its auxiliary entailment, explains that states behave as they do in the global context mainly by trying to stay safe and in control. The hypothesis sheds light on how both India and China have responded to their situations and boundary concerns because the U.S. has moved toward China in diplomacy. This reason for deviation leads to more emphasis on borders, impact in Afghanistan and the pressure to be united on agreements.

The Realistic security complex theory (RSCT) developed by Buzan reinforces authenticity by suggesting that security is strongest between closely located territories. Because of its design, RSCT fits especially well to the South Asian region, as improvements in Afghanistan can influence the rest of South Asia. It helps us realize how closeness to borders, repeated conflicts and social bonds form a web of shared issues in security. 21 By using both sets of measurements, the inquire looks at both the political side and the main forces behind territorial behavior. National intrigued is most easily understood through authenticity and RSCT allows for the examination of how well a nation can engage with international affairs and where it may face risks.

Territorial security reactions and elements because of its relationship with the Taliban, Pakistan is now facing a difficult situation after the forces left Afghanistan. Initially, Islamabad attempted that the Taliban would stay, hoping for a 23 steady Pakistani border, but reality has proven to be difficult. Because of the rise in Tehrik-i Taliban Pakistan (TTP) attacks within Pakistan, ties with Afghanistan are now strained. The TTP caused more than 2,500 casualties in 440 assaults in 2024 and this led Pakistan to perform airstrikes against TTP hideouts in Afghanistan's Khost and Paktika regions. Because of these activities, Islamabad's relation with the Afghan Taliban has become entangled, since they are accused of hosting TTP leaders. Additional difficulties are likely from Afghan refugee waves, as predictions report that over 700,000 Afghan citizens could flee to Pakistan and place even greater pressures on the economy and local population. It demonstrates that Pakistan's security network is unusually complicated and how that affects its internal security.

India recalibrating key engagement because of its work in Afghanistan and worries about territory, India has approached the Taliban's rise with caution. It is feared in Delhi that Afghanistan could again be an area for fear-based oppressors to plan attacks, especially in Kashmir. This has led India to improve relationships with the U.S., Iran and Central Asian states and improve its defense and observation systems. India has further decided to meet directly with the Taliban. In 2025, Jan up till January, senior Taliban and Indian leaders discussed important matters related to investments and land rights, with the Taliban mentioning India as an important partner. India also maintains its visa services for Afghan nationals, meaning it gives equal importance to concerns about security and engaging with neighbors positively.

China vital financial engagement the main focus of involvements in Afghanistan for China is to secure the China-Pakistan Financial Hallway (CPEC) and to anticipate radicalism reaching Xinjiang. Beijing has used careful tolerance of Taliban leadership, stayed away from Afghan soil being a shelter for terrorists, pushed for broad legislation, showed warmth and spoke negatively about how the west withdrew. China has promised assistance with trade to Afghanistan if the country ensures its security which is meant to steady the region and secure China's projects. By being part of multilateral organizations like the Shanghai Participation Organization (SCO), Beijing shows its commitment to maintaining stability in and around China.

Russia security and diplomacy adjusting Russia is bojanic worried that radical groups could enter Central Asia and affect their southern borders. The country has started joint military exercises with other countries in Central Asia and enhanced how it communicates insights for safer borders. At the same time, Russia is continuing friendly talks with the Taliban and is taking steps to formalize relations. On 15 April 2025, the Higher Court in Russia removed the fear based oppressor group linked with the Taliban which promoted exchange and political ties. By taking this step, Russia is showing it is focused on bringing stability to Afghanistan and controlling threats from groups similar to the Islamic State-Khorasan Territory (IS-K) active within the region.

Iran cautious engagement in the midst of tensions is concerned about Afghanistan led by the Taliban because of issues with border security, 25 rights of Shia groups and trafficking. Tehran has worked closely with the Taliban and gave the Afghan safe haven in Tehran to the Taliban negotiators in February 2023. Yet, both sides have faced difficulties because of disputes over the border and about using shared water resources, mainly the Helmand Waterway. Iran takes steps to secure its frontiers and tries to join in multilateral talks aimed at solving these challenges.

Challenges and Prospects Challenges

Surge in psychological warfare and radical networks the return of the Taliban has boosted ISIS-K, Al-Qaeda and the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to act as activist groups. They consider the withdrawal by the United States as a success and might use Afghanistan for their regional military operations. Adjacent nations are becoming increasingly worried about the effects which include radicalization, cross-border fear-based oppression and increased violence. On occasion, when fear mongers act on Pakistan's western borders with Afghanistan and Iran, it leads Islamabad to consider better coordination with neighboring countries to overcome these security problems.

Border administration and outcast influx the lack of strong borders between Afghanistan and its neighbors, Pakistan, Iran and the Central Asian states brings various security challenges

as well as helpful opportunities. The country of Pakistan, supporting more than 2.5 million Afghan refugees, is putting an extra strain due to the possibility of new crises. Allowing migrants to move freely without official approval can result in lost security, trafficking of humans and a great responsibility on government officials. Likewise, the 462-kilometer-long border between Iran and Afghanistan is now a hotspot for fear based oppression, with security powers for both countries prioritized by different radical groups.

Key realignments and control vacuums since the United States' is no longer playing a key role in Afghanistan, territorial states are readjusting their actions abroad. India finds itself concerned about missing out in Afghan affairs as it has not engaged a lot with the Taliban despite its efforts in Afghanistan's transformation. Despite its focus on major learning, Pakistan is still scared about threats from the TTP. China worries about insecurity affecting its Xinjiang region, mainly due to Uyghur activists. There is a great deal of concern in Iran about the influence of Sunni radical groups beside its borders.

Intermediary clashes and geopolitical rivalries since the state of Afghanistan has changed, there has been a rise in competition among neighboring states. Pakistan and India support different interfaces, but Russian, Chinese and Iranian interests seek to spread more. A worry might be Afghanistan being turned into a useless ground for global power battles. The Shanghai Participation Organization (SCO) and a range of regional arenas are being taken advantage of to study these flows.

Organization shortcoming and administration gaps, the Taliban is feeling an authenticity crisis for reasons of a lack of worldwide acceptance and the weakened economy. Without strong governmental structures, certain disasters, including wilderness and compassionate events, tend to occur and weak national unity. Lots of Afghans have migrated because of the conflict and much of the country's population needs help to keep going through this period.

Prospects

Opportunities for Territorial Cooperation Spite numerous challenges, there are still paths to participation. Joint efforts in border security, exchanging intelligence and supporting charitable activities can take place in organizations like the SCO and the SAARC. By working together, people can deal with similar issues and help strengthen connection in the community.

Shared Financial Interests Afghanistan is important to many projects in this region such as the TAPI gas pipeline and the CASA-1000 power supply project. A dependable Afghanistan could lead to exchange courses between Central and South Asia and such initiatives could provide additional support for peaceful involvement. Even so, because of the political upheaval in Eminent 2021, the CASA-1000 project in Afghanistan was halted, pointing out the need for stability to unlock such economic advantages.

Decreased Remote Military Presence When U.S. military powers are not present, it becomes harder for other countries to mediate and the chance for occupying key regions increases. Because of this move, neighboring countries can increase their involvement in choosing Afghanistan's future and introducing new methods to address security challenges.

Compassionate and Reproduction Aid There is room to improve efforts at making needed changes in Afghanistan's education, health care and family matters. Organizations focused on expanding territory and countries such as Bangladesh are successfully contributing to remaking efforts by preparing Afghan hospitality workers, police staff and negotiators. They are able to help reform state institutions and guarantee lasting peace.

Policy Recommendations

- India-Pakistan Confidence-Building: Resume dialogue through backchannel means to help stop an arms race and encourage SAARC to resume operations.
- Regional Counterterrorism Framework: Simplify intelligence-sharing in SCO by making it overseen by NATO, so redundancy can be avoided.
- Economic Stabilization Fund: Ensure a UN-funded aid package is put in place to improve Afghanistan's economy and this will encourage less people to become refugees and stop more people from joining terrorist groups.

The post-withdrawal era underscores South Asia's precarious balance between competition and collaboration, demanding nuanced strategies to avert systemic collapse

Conclusion

The American departure has greatly altered the way security matters work in South Asia. The war ended the two-decade presence of foreign forces, but it likewise created an empty space where governments were weak and the dispute over borders was not settled. The partners Pakistan, India, China, Russia and Iran" have developed strategies that fit with their views on how to interact with the region and what risks to expect. People are now facing more security threats because of increased fear, instability along borders and pressures from politicians. Still, the situation also gives places a chance to take action independently and join CBRN efforts. South Asian nations have choices in replying to U.S. withdrawal which will impact future partnerships.

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