

A Descriptive Look at the Factors Influencing the Geopolitics of Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

Geopolitics means the effect of the geographical location of the region on the policies of other governments. Afghanistan, as a landlocked country, is a strategic geographical area because of its neighbors, and in principle, a country with a strategic position is inevitably part of the military strategy. Afghanistan also has this potential, so Afghanistan's geopolitical attractions have attracted the attention of superpowers from the past to the present. Understanding geopolitical codes is one of the factors that politicians of any government should try to identify to use the appropriate strategy to establish a strong diplomatic relationship with other countries.

Keywords- Geographical location, Topographic status, Geopolitics and Afghanistan.

I. INTRODUCTION

It seems that the foreign policy of governments depends on the decisions of political leaders and decision-makers. But if we do not fall into the trap of geographical determinism, we must say that in many areas these decision-makers are not free and the factors of the geographical environment play a very important role in determining their policy and in the decision-making process, causing specific political behavior.

The importance of Afghanistan's location, which culminated in intense rivalry between Russia and Britain in the 18th and 19th centuries, can be traced back to Mahan's theory of naval power. Geographical policy is the study of the influence of geographical factors on the political decisions of those in power. Geographical locations and natural resources in planning to advance political goals. Identifying Afghanistan's geopolitical factors helps us to better understand the nature of Afghanistan's political developments in relation to the geopolitics of the international system. Geopolitical factors are tools that provide the basis for influencing

and influencing political change. Examining the factors influencing Afghanistan's geopolitics provides us with an understanding of the opportunities and bottlenecks in the foreign and domestic policy of the Afghan political elite. Identifying Afghanistan's geopolitical factors helps us to better understand the nature of Afghanistan's political developments in relation to the geopolitics of the international system. Factors affecting the geopolitics of Afghanistan will be examined to get acquainted with the opportunities, threats, and bottlenecks in the field of foreign and domestic policy.

The Main Goal of the Research

Understanding the factors affecting the geopolitics of Afghanistan.

Sub-goals of the research

1. Identifying fixed factors on the geopolitics of Afghanistan.
2. Identifying the variables on the geopolitics of Afghanistan.

The main question of the research

What are the factors influencing the geopolitics of Afghanistan?

Sub- questions of the research

1. What is the impact of fixed factors on the geopolitics of Afghanistan?
2. What are the variables and how do they affect Afghanistan's geopolitics?

Background and Literature Theoretical Foundations of Research

Sir Helford Mackinder (Heartland theory):

The heartland theory of the land of the heart should be considered the beginning of all twentieth-century geopolitical debates. It is known as the most famous geographical model in world political debates (Mojtahedzadeh, 2002, 145). According to this theory, anyone with control over the human and physical resources of Central Asia, located between Germany and Siberia, can control the world. In a message, Mackinder blamed Britain for a power on land, saying it was more vulnerable than in the past, giving power to land in the production of power. According to this theory, the great land of Eurasia had an area inaccessible to naval power, which played the role of a fortress that has always been the focus of pressure around it throughout history. Mackinder named the three continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa as global islands, and named its central axis the Heartland. He then put forward his theory: "Whoever rules Eastern Europe will rule the heart of the earth and the axis. Whoever rules the heart of the earth will rule the world island. Whoever rules the world island will rule the world." That this theory was accepted by the colonialists and superpowers so that this theory is still considered by the hegemony of the great powers after many years. At the beginning of the 21st century, due to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the grounds for paying attention to Mackinder's theory in the policy of European powers, we can see that the United States and Russia have been involved in the expansion of domination over Central Asia and the Persian Gulf (Elahi, 2005, 21).

Nicholas Speakman (Rim land Theory):

This theory points to Europe, the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, and the Far East as the key to the security of the United States. This theory was put forward by Nicholas Speakman. It is because of such a situation that the siege of the new world becomes possible, and he says that whoever controls Rim land rules over Asia, and whoever controls Eurasia has the destiny of the world (Lora, Pascal, 2002, 24).

House Hoffer (Living Space Theory):

House and his followers at the Geographical Institute in Munich, while studying the causes of Germany's defeat in World War I, sought to find ways for the German army to succeed in the future. It can be seen in the justification of vital space. According to the documents left from Hoffer house, he had a special strategy for German geopolitics, and if his strategy works, the world may be different today because his strategy was based on the principle that the main enemy of dry power in the future, it is England. Therefore, the

countries that have a chain of power in Eurasia must unite. Hoffer opposed the German invasion of Russia because he believed that German forces in Russia would be weakened and defeated, so in 1944 he was sent to a concentration camp.

Admiral Alfred Tyreman (See power theory):

Alfred Mahan, a US naval officer, believed that conquering and defending the lands of the world, rather than separately, believed that the conquest and defense of the colonies of an empire depended on a period of empire. He believes that the success of some countries, such as Britain, in overthrowing the hierarchy of governments is due to this factor. SB Cohen (Fragile Belt Theory): Cohen proposed the Fragile Belt Theory in which the Middle East region is located. (Valdani, 2009, 28).

Fixed factors:

Geographical location has a significant effect on the ability and power of a state to persuade, reward, punish, bargain and wage war with other countries. This is because control and possession of strategic areas is a major advantage for the political system. Establishment in the neighborhood of small powers or adjacent to large powers is all a consequence of geographical location (Amiri, 2004, 57).

The way a place is located on the surface of the earth is called geographical location, which itself has two general or relative and private or mathematical states. The general situation can be examined on a large scale, such as global, continental, or regional; If the relative position examines the situation of the country from the angle of latitude and longitude and can be divided into bar, sea, and strategic positions (Ataat, 1997, 35).

Afghanistan has a barren position due to its landlocked location and lack of access to open waters. Opportunity for countries has both positive and negative aspects, the negative aspect of which has always been superior to the positive aspects. Countries with this kind of situation are always suffering from a kind of suffocation, especially when economic and security requirements make them dependent on neighbors with whom they do not have good relations. Therefore, this situation always affects the trade, economic and political situation of countries. If a country has this situation, it will never have stability and security if it complements the geostrategic complement of its neighbors. Conversely, if it does not complement its neighbors, it will have a relative security. Afghanistan is a good example for the first example and Switzerland is a good example for the second case (Ezati, 2001, 85).

Afghanistan's location in Central Asia has made it inaccessible to the high seas. The closest way for Afghanistan to access open waters is through Iran and Pakistan. Through these two countries, Afghanistan can access the Oman Sea and the Indian Ocean and benefit from maritime communications. The countries of northern Afghanistan are among the landlocked

countries and Afghanistan is the geostrategic complement of these countries to access the southern waters through the continuation of the route in Iran and Pakistan (Rahimi, 2017, 99).

Although Afghanistan's geographical location is a barren position, but due to its proximity to important countries and after the discovery of oil and gas in Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, it has given the country an important and strategic position in the vicinity and communication with these areas. This strategic position made Afghanistan a buffer zone during the rivalry between Tsarist Russia and Britain in the 19th century and the Cold War in the 20th century. This special geographical location in the 20th century has caused serious attention from the West, especially the United States, and a direct and long-term presence to pursue the geostrategic interests of the West in the region (Rahimi, 2017, 99).

Afghanistan's geographical location has hampered the country's political stability throughout the twentieth century but turning this threat into an opportunity for Afghanistan's economic growth and prosperity and political stability in the future. Drawing smart and realistic national policies in the light of relative stability in Afghanistan and completing the process of nation-building and state-building can provide the conditions for a positive use of Afghanistan's strategic position.

Width:

There is a hypothesis that powerful countries in the international arena are large enough. The Soviet Union and the United States are witnessing this claim. Extent has played an important role in the power of a country in the past. Gaining more territory tempted many countries and started many wars, including World War II. "The vastness of a country's territory is the best representative of the political power and cultural development of that country, and the wider the territory of a country, the greater its political power and civilization" (Ezati, 2001: 90). The area of Afghanistan is mentioned in various sources between 649 and 684 thousand square kilometers. Unresolved border issues with Pakistan and some border advances on Afghan soil during the war with the Russians and the civil war have validated the country's size in various sources. But according to its size, this country is ranked 40th among countries in the world in 2005 (Rahimi, 2017: 101). Afghanistan ranks fifth in size among Central Asian countries and its neighbors. Overall, Afghanistan is an average country in terms of size.

Country shape:

The territorial form of governments is important in issues such as communication, unity and integrity of the country, defense considerations, and in general, national power and security (Attaat, 1997, 49). Accordingly, the best situation for political systems in terms of the above conditions is achieved in a circular shape. Because the distances of the diameters are close

to each other in this case. Long-shaped countries seem to have the next priority; because units that extend over long distances have better security conditions than systems that extend across. The best shape for a country is a circular shape and the worst shape is an environmental shape (Attaat, 1997, 49).

According to the WA Khan Corridor, Afghanistan is one of the following countries. This part of Afghanistan, which is the border region of Afghanistan with the People's Republic of China, was in fact based on the political necessity of the late 19th century in the rivalry between Tsarist Russia and Britain and as a buffer zone between Tsarist Russia and British India (Guilford, 1989, 3).

Topographic status:

Topographic discussion is drawing on the external features of the earth. Among the most important components of this factor are borders, water network and unevenness, each of which has affected the geopolitics of Afghanistan.

Borders:

One of the most effective tools for separating and determining the territorial identity of governments is its borders. Border lines, as they can play a significant role in unity, if they are determined based on the political interests of the great foreign powers and regardless of racial, linguistic, ethnic, historical and resident conditions, can be a major indicator in creating the ground will become instability. Afghanistan shares a total of 5,514 km of border with its neighbors. It shares 2384 km of border with its northern neighbors, approximately 57 km with China's Xinjiang province, 945 km with Iran, and about 2240 km with Pakistan and Kashmir (Arez, 2003, 67).

Afghanistan's borders in the north are of the blue border type, which has so far been able to provide us with a good security margin. But the eastern, southern and southwestern borders, which are part of the imposed borders and have been created without the human, cultural and social image of the border area and only on the basis of colonial interests, have created many problems for neighboring countries and residents on both sides of the border. Around the borders of Afghanistan live tribes that are scattered on the other side of the border, the neighboring country. Pashtuns are one of the most important ethnic groups in Afghanistan. In addition to Afghanistan, they have a large presence in the border areas of Pakistan. The two provinces of Pakistan and Baluchistan are made up of Pashtuns and Baluchi's who also live on this side of the border. The area of residence of the Baluchi's also includes parts of Iran. The tribes living in the north of the country also have independent national governments beyond the borders of Afghanistan in the northern regions of the country. The Tajiks, Uzbeks and Turkmen of northern Afghanistan have always had close ties to independent tribal governments across borders. In the event of a conflict between Afghanistan and these countries, the situation of the

borders and the inhabitants on both sides of the border is a serious threat to the country's independence. But adopting policies based on regional cooperation can turn Afghanistan's borders into borders of friendship and pave the way for strong ties between the country and its neighbors.

Ruggedness:

Although technological advances have diminished the importance and role of unevenness in military and political action, unevenness still retains its importance, at least in the form of geopolitical debates. Afghanistan is a mountainous country. The main part of the country is made up of high and interconnected mountains such as Hindu Kush, Kura Baba, Sihun and the Pamir Mountains in the northeast, so that some sources consider 80% of Afghanistan's territory to be mountainous. But in the western and southern regions of the country, deserts and sands have covered these areas (Rahimi, 2017, 107).

These mountains have been of great military and defense importance to Afghanistan throughout history. Some consider the existence of many high mountain ranges in this country as one of the reasons for the defeat of many past rulers and colonialists and colonial superpowers such as England and Russia (Azimi, 2003, 34). Mountains are also the source of rivers flowing into the lowlands in neighboring areas, and Afghan governments can use them as a tool in their foreign policy with neighboring countries.

Water network:

Territorial unity or dispersion, economic, communication and transportation capacities of the country interact to some extent with the water network of each country. In this regard, several considerations are important: the permanence, seasonality and randomness of rivers, the depth of water currents in terms of navigability and the end of the river settlement area. This is because the mode of operation and shipping conditions on the Border Rivers require the observance of certain legal issues. Due to its mountainous and plateau position, Afghanistan is the source of rivers that flow to the lowlands north and south with one direction of outflow. The main water networks of Afghanistan, which include the Amu Darya (Jehun), the Helmand, Arghandab, and Harirod and Kabul rivers. These rivers are flowing to Afghanistan's neighbors. If Afghanistan makes good use of its position as the source of these rivers within the country, it can take advantage of this opportunity as a means of establishing peace and stability with neighboring countries. But in the event of environmental or political problems, this will become an important challenge in Afghanistan's relations with neighboring countries.

Variable factors:

Population

Quantitative aspects should not be the only type considered in population analysis; the "human" factor is the most important geopolitical factor (Ataat, 1997, 56).

Especially in the current situation where the main emphasis is on skilled, trained and qualified manpower. Such a capacity can be considered as a factor in the development of a society. There are various considerations for the population, including: density, distribution, number, consumption or productivity, average age, and, ultimately, its cultural cohesion. When people between the ages of 20 and 65 make up more than 35% of the total population, the country has the best and most desirable geopolitical factors to maintain security, political stability and economic development, and benefits from such a factor as the backbone of the strategy (Ezati, 2001, 92).

The Central Statistics Office of Afghanistan stated that the population of Afghanistan in 2018 was about 31.6 million, of which 16.1 million were men and 15.5 million were women. In 2016, they were below the poverty line, which compared to the previous year, showed a 16 percent increase.

Political and social institutions:

The fundamental components of geographical policy that have been studied and examined pave the way for the establishment of social infrastructure, political institutions, as well as the adoption of basic policies. Politics always seeks to justify or transform these factors while maintaining their independence. On the other hand, it is possible to develop their influence and mobility by selecting a factor and creating a suitable bed. The political and social context of countries is one of the changing factors that affect the geopolitics of countries. In fact, all the factors influencing the political and social context make sense. Although geographical factors in many cases require politicians to make certain decisions, but in a certain geographical area, conflicting policies can be adopted (Ataat, 1997, 58). Afghanistan's political changes throughout history have had a tremendous impact on the country's position and geopolitical change. The influence of Afghanistan's political context on its international system has ultimately affected the country's geopolitics and the international system.

International system:

One of the most important factors influencing the geopolitics of Afghanistan is the international system. The characteristics of the international system's shape are influenced by the geopolitical characteristics of countries. Due to its special geographical location, Afghanistan has had the greatest impact on the international system over the years. Being strategically located in West Asia and turning Afghanistan into an effective gateway close to Central Asia, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and East Asia and South Asia has always kept international powers interested in Afghanistan. In this regard, the characteristics of the international system in interaction with the understanding of Afghan political decision-makers will determine the course of developments in the country (Rahimi, 2017, 119).

II. METHODOLOGY

The method used in this article is a combination of primary and secondary research, collected from scholarly works of other researchers and of our own firsthand research in the field.

This research is a descriptive survey, in terms of purpose, in terms of methodology. The library and field studies approach are explained in a descriptive manner. The data collection tool in this research is Scholarly publications and distribution of questionnaires to social science faculty students. This research is applied in terms of the nature of this research and the method of its implementation is descriptive.

Due to the specialization of the research topic and the existing limitations, geography experts of 50 people have been used as a statistical population. Given that the statistical population and the sample population were compatible, the sampling method is considered integer.

Data collection tools: books, journals, scientific-research articles (internal and external) online and questionnaires. The required data and information have been collected by documentary method. The required data were provided using library studies (internal and external), and the data were analyzed using a descriptive method.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A review of the research findings shows that Afghanistan faces various opportunities and threats in terms of its geopolitical situation. In this regard, Afghan political decision-makers should consider the factors influencing Afghanistan's geopolitics in formulating national strategies. A review of the research findings shows that the geographical location of Afghanistan allows this country to take appropriate economic, security and political exploits from its strategic location if a proper national strategy is formulated. A review of the research findings suggests that consolidating regional stability and building a bridge between Central Asia and Southeast Asia are opportunities that Afghanistan can take advantage of to make good use of such a situation.

Examination of the findings shows that the geopolitical situation of Afghanistan in the absence of a clear and appropriate strategy will cause a period of crisis and insecurity in the country and the region. The research findings show that Afghanistan's transit route and its relationship with the common economic interests of neighboring countries will eliminate the threat of land enclosure. The research findings indicate that the size of Afghanistan, due to the poor quality of the land, about 2.3 of which is mountainous, has reduced the role of size in the national power of the country. The findings of the study indicate that the presence of Afghanistan in the northeastern part because of the colonial policies of the

Great Game period and is a threat to the security of Afghanistan. One of the most important factors influencing the geopolitics of Afghanistan is the international system. The characteristics of the international system shape and are influenced by the geopolitical characteristics of countries. Due to its special geographical location, Afghanistan has had the greatest impact on the international system over the years.

Geopolitics means the influence of the geographical location of the region on the policies of other governments. Afghanistan, as a land surrounded by purely geographical strategic location of its neighbors, and in principle, a country with a strategic position is inevitably part of military strategies. Afghanistan also has this potential, so Afghanistan's geopolitical attractions have attracted the attention of superpowers from the past to the present. As Amiri (2004) writes about the impact of geographical location on the geopolitics of Afghanistan: "Geographical location has a significant effect on the ability and power of a government to persuade, reward, punish, bargain and fight with other countries.

This is because control and possession of strategic areas is a major advantage for the political system. "Settling in the vicinity of small powers or adjacent to large powers is all a consequence of geographical location." With this in mind, the research findings show that one of the factors influencing the geopolitics of Afghanistan is its geographical location. In this section, the research findings are consistent with the statements of Amiri Ali Doust. As Rahimi (1396) writes about Afghanistan's geopolitics and its influential factors: "Afghanistan's location in Central Asia has made it inaccessible to the high seas from any direction. "The closest way for Afghanistan to access open waters is through Iran and Pakistan." According to Rahimi (1396), the findings of the study indicate that, although the geographical location of Afghanistan is a remote location, but due to its proximity to important countries and after the discovery of oil and gas in Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, it has given the country an important and strategic position in the vicinity and communication with the mentioned regions.

In this section, the research findings are consistent with Rahim i's opinion. "One of the most important factors influencing Afghanistan's geopolitics is the international system. The characteristics of the international system shape the geopolitical characteristics of countries and are affected by it "(Rahimi, 1396).

Findings show that the characteristics of the international system shape the geopolitical characteristics of countries and are affected by it. Due to its special geographical location, Afghanistan has had the greatest impact on the international system over the years.

IV. CONCLUSION

A review of the research findings shows that the geopolitical situation of Afghanistan in the absence of a clear and appropriate strategy will cause a period of crisis and insecurity in the country and the region. The research findings show that Afghanistan's transit route and its relationship with the common economic interests of neighboring countries will eliminate the threat of land enclosure. Identifying Afghanistan's geopolitical factors helps us to better understand the nature of Afghanistan's political developments in relation to the geopolitics of the international system. Geopolitical factors are tools that provide the basis for influencing and influencing political change. Examining the factors influencing Afghanistan's geopolitics provides us with an understanding of the opportunities and bottlenecks in the foreign and domestic policy of the Afghan political elite.

ETHICS STATEMENTS

This article has been done with the principles of article writing, in this article, different sources and references have been used by mentioning their names.

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