

## **AFGHANISTAN, AFTER THE TWO YEARS OF TALIBAN RULE**

### **Co-led by:**

Dr. Fidel Rahmati, a former lecturer at Parwan University in Afghanistan, holds a Ph.D. in Geopolitics. His research centered on South Asia Geopolitics and Afghanistan. With over a decade of teaching and research, he has made significant contributions to academia.

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Dr. Kazim Karimi is a former Professor at Afghanistan University. Dr. Karimi has a Ph.D. in Commerce where he focused his research on rural development models. His years of work in the development sector in Afghanistan as well as in the public sector have allowed him to enrich his contribution to academia over the years.

### **Description:**

After battling the Afghan Republic for two decades, the Taliban's resurgence established the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan." This led to displacement, renewed constraints on girls' education and jobs, worsening the economy, and disrupting lives. During the last two years of Taliban rule, there have been extensive human rights abuses, political crackdowns, opponents targeting, including reprisal killings of ANDSF and previous government officials, marginalization of ethnic and religious minorities, and denial of women's fundamental rights. This has led to severe humanitarian, food, and economic crises, with some responsibility attributed to the unilateral US decisions to withdraw and the disregarding of global calls for better governance needed for diplomatic recognition. This seminar examines the two years after Afghanistan's democratic republic fell on August 15, 2021. It looks at Afghanistan's complex political landscape and its relations with the regional and international community.

### **Week 1: *Who and Who before August 15, 2021***

During the Taliban's initial rule from 1996 to 2001, Afghanistan plunged into a dire state, marked by severe restrictions on women's rights, education, employment, media freedom, and cultural activities. After the US-led coalition entrance into Afghanistan in 2001, the country embarked on a new era and made significant progress and achievements in democracy, human rights, governance, women empowerment, freedom of speech, and media advancements aided by international support.

## ***Week 2: Decoding the Collapse of the Afghan Government***

Afghanistan's history of government instability spans over four decades, marked by continuous upheaval leading to systemic breakdowns. The recent rapid power shifts have caused the world to be alarmed by the collapse of Afghanistan's government. Analyzing the motives behind the collapse of the republic and examining these factors will reveal crucial insights into the complexities of the current state.

## ***Week 3: Media Freedom under the Taliban Rule in Afghanistan***

Before the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan, the country hosted more than 526 media outlets including video, audio, print, news agencies, and online platforms. Together, they employed 7,746 male-journalist 2,138 female journalists, and 4,110 personnel of both genders. In the wake of the Taliban's resurgence in the country, more than half of the media outlets closed down due to economic hardships and imposed restrictions. This section delves into the profound impact of these issues on the country's media landscape.

## ***Week 4: Banning of Women's Educational and Employment Opportunities***

In the past two years, the Taliban's imposition of suppressive policies and practices has severely impacted Afghanistan. Under their control, essential rights for women, particularly in education and employment, have been drastically restricted. These constraints hinder the country's progress and its societal development and economic growth potential. We assess the effects, challenges, and strategies to restore women's rights amid these restrictions.

## ***Week 5: Escalating Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan over the Last Two Years***

The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan has intensified following the Taliban's takeover on August 15, 2021. The country urgently needs assistance, as 29.2 million people struggle to survive. Notably, 3.2 million children and 840,000 pregnant/nursing mothers are severely malnourished, highlighting the gravity of the situation. This section examines the severe humanitarian crisis within the country and outlines the appropriate responses to address it.

## ***Week 6: Geopolitical Clashes in Afghanistan Among Regional Powers***

Afghanistan has long been caught in the clash of geopolitical interests among regional countries, including Pakistan, Iran, China, Russia, and Central Asian

states. Pakistan has sought to exert influence due to historical and strategic factors. Meanwhile, Central Asian states have also expressed concern about militant groups' potential to disrupt their borders. Amidst these complexities, Iran's role in Afghanistan adds another layer, influenced by its regional aspirations and the need to manage ethnic and sectarian dynamics. The section explores the complex geopolitical position of Afghanistan among the regional countries. These regional players hold considerable influence over the region's dynamics. Their distinct interests and actions are critical factors in shaping the ongoing situation in Afghanistan.

### ***Week 7: Afghanistan: Navigating the New "Great Game"***

This section delves into Afghanistan's pivotal role as a significant geopolitical battleground for superpowers. The recent emergence of a power vacuum following the Taliban's assumption of control has triggered a dynamic competition involving three major global players: the United States, China, and Russia. These superpowers are competing to establish and consolidate their influence within the war-torn country and the Taliban as a ruler.

### ***Week 8: Escalating Terrorism Threat in Afghanistan***

The Taliban's resurgence since August 15, 2021, has led to a sharp increase in terrorism threats in Afghanistan, presenting significant security challenges. This section looks at the heightened dangers posed by terrorist groups within the country and the resultant security repercussions on both regional and global scales. A paramount concern is the emergence of the Islamic State's regional faction, also known as the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISK-P).

### ***Week 9: Doha Deal: Zalmay Khalilzad's Key Role in Current Scenario***

Khalilzad is an Afghan-American, US foreign policy expert, and former US special representative for Afghanistan reconciliation (September 2018 - October 2021). He was the mastermind behind the Doha Deal which broke the backbone of the republic system in Afghanistan and facilitated the ultimate US withdrawal, followed by the Taliban taking over the country and he is blamed for that by the Afghan public.

### ***Week 10: Navigating present: Exploring future scenarios***

After over two years since the Taliban's takeover of Kabul, the country confronts significant questions: Will the international community recognize the Taliban

regime? Can Afghanistan achieve an inclusive government? Is a significant opposition expected to arise against the Taliban regime? What will happen to the people in Afghanistan amid a dire humanitarian crisis? This session looks at the present situation and future outlook for Afghanistan, explicitly emphasizing the prospects for women living under Taliban rule and the resistance happening in and out of the country.

## **READINGS AND RESOURCES LIST**

### **Week One Reading**

NATO Article 5 on Collective Defense: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_110496.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm)

UNSC Resolution 1363: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/448051?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>

UNSC Resolution 1373: [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/terrorism/res\\_1373\\_english.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/terrorism/res_1373_english.pdf)

Bonn Agreement 2001:

<https://peacemaker.un.org/afghanistan-bonnagreement2001>

US engagement in Afghanistan:

<https://www.vox.com/world/22634008/us-troops-afghanistan-cold-war-bush-bin-laden>

Conflict Timeline:

<https://www.npr.org/2021/08/19/1028472005/afghanistan-conflict-timeline>

Conflict Timeline:

<https://www.npr.org/2021/08/19/1028472005/afghanistan-conflict-timeline>

### **Week Two Reading**

Why the Afghan Government Collapse: <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/evaluations/SIGAR-23-05-IP.pdf>

The Factors Leading to the Collapse of the Afghan Government and its Security Forces:

[https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/speeches/SIGAR\\_John\\_Sopko\\_David\\_Young\\_Berlin\\_Speech\\_2023-03-02.pdf](https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/speeches/SIGAR_John_Sopko_David_Young_Berlin_Speech_2023-03-02.pdf)

The Doha Deal: <https://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglefindmkaj/https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Agreement-For-Bringing-Peace-to-Afghanistan-02.29.20.pdf>

<https://aspensiaonline.it/reading-the-doha-agreement-literally/>

Afghanistan Study Group: <https://www.usip.org/programs/afghanistan-study-group>

Impact of Deal on the War: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-58738953>

### **Week Three Reading**

Afghanistan and Civil Society:

<https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/1765-afghanistan-and-civil-society.pdf>

Media in Afghanistan

<https://www.rferl.org/a/1068023.html>

Overview of NGOs in Afghanistan

<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28962/csb-afg.pdf>

Kabul

Times

1962:

<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=kabultimes>

Impact of Taliban takeover on media in Afghanistan

<https://rsf.org/en/afghanistan-has-lost-almost-60-its-journalists-fall-kabul>

<https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-21-46-LL.pdf>

<https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/evaluations/SIGAR-23-02-IP.pdf>

<https://www.khaama.com/undoing-20-years-of-progress-in-afghanistan-sigar/>

<https://rsf.org/en/2023-world-press-freedom-index-journalism-threatened-fake-content-industry>

### **Week Four Reading**

The Taliban War against Women DoS: [https://2009-](https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/6185.htm)

[2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/6185.htm](https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/6185.htm)<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/6185.htm>

Taliban imposed restrictions on Afghan women:

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/afghanistan>

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/03/24/one-year-taliban-still-attacking-girls-right-education>

Impact of ban on education:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/03/afghanistan-quality-education-must-be-equally-accessible-all-un-experts->

[say#:~:text=The%20Taliban%20denied%20women%20and,introduced%20as%20a%20temporariy%20measure. https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/12/06/schools-are-failing-boys-too/talibans-impact-boys-education-Afghanistan, https://spia.princeton.edu/news/spia-reacts-implications-talibans-decision-ban-women-and-girls-attending-school-afghanistan](https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/12/06/schools-are-failing-boys-too/talibans-impact-boys-education-Afghanistan)

### **Week Five Reading**

The Afghanistan Economy under the Taliban:

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/afghanistans-economy-under-the-taliban-the-challenges-ahead><https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/afghanistans-economy-under-the-taliban-the-challenges-ahead>

Afghanistan Economy in Crisis under the Taliban, BBC: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58328246><https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58328246>

Dire humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan: <https://www.khaama.com/un-to-cut-aid-to-21-million-amid-dire-humanitarian-crisis-in-afghanistan/>

[https://openaccess.uoc.edu/bitstream/10609/149062/4/Rajimil\\_Afghanistan%20\\_RC.pdf.pdf](https://openaccess.uoc.edu/bitstream/10609/149062/4/Rajimil_Afghanistan%20_RC.pdf.pdf)

<https://www.unrefugees.org/news/get-the-facts-what-s-happening-now-in-afghanistan/>

Return of Afghan immigrants amid dire humanitarian crisis:

[afghans.aspx#:~:text=While%20the%20pressure%20has%20eased,over%2090%25%20of%20the%20population.](#)

Child Labour in Afghanistan:<https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/07/15/they-bear-all-pain/hazardous-child-labor-afghanistan><https://www.khaama.com/afghanistan-remains-one-of-worlds-worst-places-for-childrens-rights-kidsrights-index-2023/>

Human Rights Watch: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/29/list-taliban-policies-violating-womens-rights-afghanistan>

### **Week Six Reading**

India-Pakistan proxy war:

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/another-proxy-war-afghanistan>

<https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13680-us-troop-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-risks-fueling-a-new-india-pakistan-proxy-war.html>

Iran-Saudi proxy war:

<https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/the-risk-of-a-saudi-iran-proxy-war-in-afghanistan-30428>

[https://www.swp-](https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/fachpublikationen/Steinberg_Woermer_SaudiArabia_Interest_April2013.pdf)

[Berlin.org/publications/products/fachpublikationen/Steinberg\\_Woermer\\_SaudiArabia\\_Interest\\_April2013.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/fachpublikationen/Steinberg_Woermer_SaudiArabia_Interest_April2013.pdf)

Regional rivalries in the Afghan conflict:

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/afghanistan-saudi-arabia-qatar-iran-taliban-vie-influence>

Great proxy wars:

<https://warontherocks.com/2021/09/the-return-of-great-power-proxy-wars/>

### **Week Seven Reading**

BBC the new great game

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-38582323>

Proxy war:

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/another-proxy-war-afghanistan>

<https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13680-us-troop-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-risks-fueling-a-new-india-pakistan-proxy-war.html>

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<https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/afghanistan-saudi-arabia-qatar-iran-taliban-vie-influence>

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<https://warontherocks.com/2021/09/the-return-of-great-power-proxy-wars/>

The Afghanistan geopolitical location: <https://www.khaama.com/assessing-the-global-chessboard-the-intricate-dance-of-geopolitics-and-the-shadow-of-world-war-iii-01003/>

<https://www.eastwestcenter.org/events/new-geopolitics-afghanistan>

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/india-pakistan-regional-rivalries-still-rule-afghanistan>

### **Week Eight Reading**

The Growing Threat of the Islamic State in Afghanistan and South Asia: <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/sr-520-growing-threat-islamic-state-afghanistan-south-asia.pdf>

Countering a Resurgent Terrorist Threat in Afghanistan: <https://www.cfr.org/report/countering-resurgent-terrorist-threat-afghanistan>

Global Terrorism Index 2023: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2023>

### **Week Nine Reading**

At Center of Taliban Deal, a U.S. Envoy Who Made It Personal:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/01/world/asia/zalmay-khalilzad-afghanistan-taliban.html#:~:text=Zalmay%20Khalilzad%2C%20the%20Afghan%2Dborn,if%20not%20of%20Afghan%20officials.&text=DOHA%2C%20Qatar%20%E2%80%94%20It%20seemed%20a,exit%20from%20its%20longest%20war.>

A Veteran Diplomat, a ‘Tragic Figure,’ Battles Critics in the U.S. and Afghanistan: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/16/us/politics/zalmay-khalilzad-afghanistan-war.html>

Why the Afghan security forces collapse: <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/evaluations/SIGAR-23-16-IP.pdf>

Khalilzad deal with the Taliban in Doha: <https://www.khaama.com/khalilzad-on-doha-agreement-afghan-government-dawdled-in-negotiations-6756757/>

<https://8am.media/fa/khalilzad-and-the-history-of-afghanistan/>

<https://www.khaama.com/former-nsa-calls-doha-accord-terrible-agreement/>

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Impact of Deal on the war: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-58738953>

**Week Ten Reading:**

Afghanistan: Scenarios - Possible developments in household livelihoods and purchasing power over the next 20 months (April 2023): <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-scenarios-possible-developments-household-livelihoods-and-purchasing-power-over-next-20-months-april-2023>

Stanford news; <https://news.stanford.edu/2021/07/19/whats-next-afghanistan/><https://news.stanford.edu/2021/07/19/whats-next-afghanistan/>

Ethical Conflict and political instability in Afghanistan;  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354207466\\_Ethnic\\_Conflict\\_and\\_the\\_Political\\_Instability\\_in\\_Afghanistan](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354207466_Ethnic_Conflict_and_the_Political_Instability_in_Afghanistan)[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354207466\\_Ethnic\\_Conflict\\_and\\_t](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354207466_Ethnic_Conflict_and_the_Political_Instability_in_Afghanistan)  
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The crisis and politics of ethnicity in Afghanistan;  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2012/6/26/the-crisis-and-politics-of-ethnicity-in-afghanistan/><https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2012/6/26/the-crisis-and-politics-of-ethnicity-in-afghanistan/>

The Conversation: <https://theconversation.com/whats-next-for-afghanistan-two-experts-make-predictions-170684><https://theconversation.com/whats-next-for-afghanistan-two-experts-make-predictions-170684>

Aljazeera where Afghanistan is going:  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/where/afghanistan/><https://www.aljazeera.com/where/afghanistan/>

UN Refugee Crisis if conflict not solved: <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/get-the-facts-what-s-happening-now-in-afghanistan/><https://www.unrefugees.org/news/get-the-facts-what-s-happening-now-in-afghanistan/>