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The role of geopolitical factors in neighboring countries and regional powers in the continuation of the Afghanistan crisis

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Abstract. Afghanistan has at times faced crises, mostly due to the interference of hostile countries in all affairs of the country. The crises in Afghanistan, at any time, from the interventions of the countries of the region and the rivalry of the great supra-regional and global powers that have caused the crisis in this country to continue, especially in recent decades, which has led to many tensions. Investigating why this country is in crisis requires recognizing its contexts and underlying factors. Global regional and trans-regional factors are the root causes, sustainability and context that need to be examined. The present study seeks to study, analyze and find the root of the crisis of this country from a geopolitical point of view with a descriptive-analytical method. And the area has been surveyed. Findings show that neighboring countries and the region, especially the above factors, have a role to play in the recent crises in Afghanistan, as well as the competition of powers, both domestically and nationally, as well as regionally, trans regionally and globally. Have played an effective role in the crisis in this country and have caused the crisis in Afghanistan to continue.

Keywords. Geopolitics, Afghanistan, Crisis, Geopolitical Crisis, Neighbor, Regional

1. Introduction

The term geopolitics, first coined in 1899 by a Swedish scientist named Rudolf Killen, refers to some of the information that comes from the relationship between geography and politics. Geopolitics has been conceptually and philosophically floating since its inception in the last century, and there is still no consensus on its nature, and different views have been expressed about it. Because the meaning and concepts such as geopolitics tend to change and are influenced by historical periods and the structures of world order, which are evolving on their own. Geopolitics is: understanding the realities of the geographical environment to gain power, so that one can enter the world game at the highest level and preserve national interests and national life. In other words, geopolitics is the science of discovering the relations of the geographical environment and its impact on the political destiny of nations. As mentioned, geopolitics mainly studies the role of geographical factors in policy formation and in studies of analyzing phenomena from a geopolitical point of view, requires attention to the role of natural

geographical factors, human geographical factors, economic geographical factors, geographical factors Political and strategic geographical factors and other geographical factors.

Afghanistan is a mountainous and landlocked country with an area of 652225 km², located in the heart of Asia. Geographically, Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic country with ethnic groups such as Afghanistan's (Pashtuns), Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Imams, Baluchis, Nuristanis, mosquitoes, trout, Pamirs, and others. Its largest ethnic groups, there are Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks. Among the languages of this country are Pashto, Dari, Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluchi, Mosquito, Nuristani and other common languages, Pashto and Dari are its official languages. More than 8 percent of Afghanistan's population is Muslim, of which 2 percent is Sunni, 1 percent is Shiite, and 1 percent is followers of other religions. It includes Hindus, Sikhs, and a small number of Christians.

Afghanistan is geographically diverse and a mountainous country with a semi-arid climate. The situation of inequality in this country as a context and hospitality has caused the diversity and complexity of human geography. In addition, Afghanistan's special geographical location has attracted the attention of international actors at various times, complicating the situation in the country and causing crises both domestically and regionally and globally. Afghanistan crisis affects the socio-political developments in the region and even the world and the interaction of policies and actions of other countries and international actors on the Afghanistan crisis. Now that Afghanistan has become a hotbed of crisis, its root cause must be sought at home and abroad.

The geopolitical situation in Afghanistan can be discussed on the basis of fixed and variable factors affecting geopolitics. Although Afghanistan is a landlocked country, it has always had a strategic position. Afghanistan has an almost average size, and most of the poor quality of the land (somewhat mountainous) has reduced its role in Afghanistan's national power. Having a follow-up form in political geography is a bad privilege. Also, the location of almost all the borders of Afghanistan in the category of imposed borders, which is one of the worst types of borders, as well as the origin of important rivers such as; Amu Darya and Helmand are important geopolitical advantages for this country.

Afghanistan has suffered from various crises in the last decade, which have left many implications for the country and hindered the country's development. Sometimes the existing crises themselves have caused another crisis; for example; it is possible that the Taliban emerged from the crisis, which has complicated the situation and the country's crisis. Although the Taliban government collapsed in 2001, we continue to see unrest and crisis in the country. So; this study seeks to analyze the crisis in Afghanistan from a geopolitical point of view, in which domestic, regional and global issues affect the crisis and its continuation in Afghanistan. All the geographical factors that cause the crisis in this country are thoroughly studied, and then these areas are analyzed in relation to the rival and influential domestic and national forces, regional and trans-regional factors. The role of these forces in crises can always be seen, mainly due to the country's special geographical location and its special importance in geopolitical equations, which has always been the focus of regional and trans-regional powers and actors.

The writings on the Afghanistan crisis show that the ongoing crisis and insecurity in Afghanistan are based on the general internal and external realities of the crisis, and that the continuation of the crisis will lead to regional and inter-regional power struggles. Competitions have existed over time between global and regional interests, and at different times, only the actors have shifted. In general, research on Afghanistan's role and position at the regional and global levels has neglected the importance and role of Afghanistan in the areas of communication, politics and security concerning neighboring countries and the region. This

neglect has led to a lack of understanding of the country's real potential and place in the international system. This has led to a cycle of instability and crisis in the country at the domestic level and its immediate consequences at the regional and global levels. The country's position in the region and the world is such that it integrates Tommy with regional geographic systems and various geographical and geopolitical areas, especially in the Middle East and Central and South Asia. Although the research points to various aspects of the Afghanistan crisis, a comprehensive study of the Afghanistan crisis from a political and geopolitical point of view, as well as the impact of natural, human and strategic factors, has not yet been conducted.

2. Research method

The present study is based on an applied purpose. The analysis has been done using a descriptive-analytical method and seeks to study, analyze and find the root of the crisis of this country from the perspective of human geography. Data collection be was done in a library manner and using Internet resources.

3. Theoretical foundations

3.1. Geopolitics

The term geopolitics has various meanings and interpretations, the subject of which can be considered in the study of the impact of geographical factors such as location, as well as the distribution of natural and human resources on international relations. Geographical factors, along with other political, social, cultural and military factors, in addition to influencing national power, also play a role in the developments of the international system and are considered as one of the factors. In other words, the environment and geographical factors play a key role in how politics is shaped. This concept means "the role of geographical factors in politics" which is the general and traditional meaning of geopolitics (Mokhtari Hashi and Shams, 2017: 167). The term geopolitics, first coined in 1899 by a Swedish scientist named Rudolf Killen, refers to some of the information that comes from the relationship between geography and politics. Geopolitics has been floating conceptually and philosophically since its inception in the last century, and there is still no consensus on its nature, and different views have been expressed about it (Hafeznia, 2006: 135). The meaning and concepts such as; Geopolitics tend to change and are influenced by historical periods and the structures of world order that they evolve (ibid.).

Geopolitics is: understanding the realities of the geographical environment to gain power, so that one can enter the world game at the highest level and preserve national interests and national life. In other words, geopolitics is: the science of discovering the relations of the geographical environment and its impact on the political destiny of nations (Ezzati, 2015: 7).

Geopolitics studies the structural relations of "powers" together, in two horizontal (relations of equal powers) and vertical (relations of larger and smaller powers) directions. The following definitions have been proposed: A- Geopolitics is the influence of geographical, economic and demographic factors on policies, especially the country's foreign policy. B- Geopolitics is a combination of political and geographical factors in a way that determines the country or a special region (Hafeznia, 2006: 27).

3.2. Geopolitical factors

3.2.1. Geopolitical weight

It is the gravity of the forces and the positive and negative factors that affect the national power of a country. In other words, the algebraic sum of the factors of national power.

Some factors such as illiteracy, poverty, natural disasters, political instability and the like play a negative role in national power and in contrast some factors such as literacy high per capita income, lack of accidents, political stability, scientific level high technology and the like play a positive role in national power. Therefore, in estimating geopolitical weight, the role of factors and variables affecting national power in different dimensions should be considered and their positive or negative role should be considered in the estimation model. To estimate the geopolitical weight of a more realistic result. Geopolitical weight shows the position of a country or its status in a set of countries or in the global and regional geopolitical system (Hafeznia, 2006: 109).

3.2.2. Balanced / unbalanced level of regional power

All domestic or international policies reflect three basic patterns; every political policy seeks to maintain power, increase power, or demonstrate power. Three types of international politics are consistent with this pattern. A country whose foreign policy tends to maintain power rather than make a change in the distribution of power in its favor pursues a policy of maintaining the status quo. A country whose foreign policy aims to gain more power than existing power by overturning existing power relations, or in other words, whose foreign policy seeks to bring about a favorable change in the state of power, pursues the policy of imperialism. A country whose foreign policy wants to show its power pursues politics (prestige), whether it aims to maintain power or increase power (Hosseinpour Pouyan, 2013: 180).

Therefore, given that the basis of relations between countries and governments in the international system is based on their national goals and interests, there are always second-class countries that pursue expansionist policies in the system. International and the global geopolitical system have existed and exist. Therefore, if in a certain region, the actors are not in a state of relative equality of power with the interventionist and developmental actors, they will have to submit to their relations, which will lead to the domination of the expansionist and interventionist actors in affairs. If these actors are world powers, they will be in world affairs. Hence, the relations between the countries within the geopolitical region with the peripheral region and the geopolitical region with the global geopolitical structure are influenced by the balance or imbalance of power between the countries within the region, between the dominant actors of the geopolitical region and the dominant actors of the peripheral geopolitical region. The geopolitical region with dominant actors will be the global geopolitical structure (ibid, 181).

3.2.3. Strategic load of places or geographical spaces

The best geopolitical locations in any region of the earth or space available to any country will easily ensure that the current and future goals of that country are achieved. These desirable situations may be as large as a country or as small as the stains drawn on large-scale tactical maps. The power that results from having a point or area usually varies according to the missions, positions, and conditions of the forces, the ground, and the political constraints (Hosseinpour Pouyan et al, 2011: 60).

At the same time, the competition between the powers and the political forces to seize and control the opportunities and tools and facilities of the power-creating forces, takes the geographical places and spaces out of the conditions of balance and calm and imposes a critical situation on them (Hafeznia, 2006: 18).

3.2.4. Safe- insecure spaces (critical)

All countries in each region can expect the immediate effects of regional unrest and insecurity caused by the crisis in their national and regional space. The export of crisis to the national and territorial space of countries in a competitive and critical environment is, in fact, an undeclared war for countries and a regional security complex, which in most cases occurs indirectly. In addition, the impact of critical situations on perceptions in which decision-makers have to make decisions is different from non-critical and normal situations. In such cases, the decision-making processes, limitations, and pressures that are often psychological and different from normal situations. The critical situation exposes the decision maker to a variety of choices, and the decision maker and the administrator look at those choices in a particular way; such situations overshadow the decision-maker's desire for rational behavior. Decision makers are more rational and measured in critical situations without low stress or stress. The impact of the Kashmir crisis on the inter-regional relations of the Indian subcontinent is the most obvious objective example of a geopolitical crisis that has an irreversible effect on the security complex of the Indian subcontinent's regional space compared to other issues and problems in the Indian subcontinent (Hosseinpour Pouyan et al., 2011: 66).

3.2.5. The degree of regional stability and security

Security is so important to countries that it has a profound effect on national development, national goals and interests, and most importantly, their national preservation and territorial integrity. The international community and the international system depend on providing and maintaining it in any situation and at any cost. Human historical experiences have continued and the nature of his social life has proved that it is only in a safe and peaceful atmosphere that human development has been achieved and that the atmosphere of insecurity and chaos is delayed except the development of societies. Both materially and spiritually, have imposed staggering and pathetic costs on human societies. It has caused serious problems and in some cases unsolvable problems in compensating and repairing the consequences. In addition, there is a direct link between national security and the level of regional political stability. This means that the formation of a stable island in insecure regional seas is impossible or unstable. On the contrary, occasional unrest and crisis will not last long in stable areas (Hosseinpour Pouyan, 2013: 167).

3.3. Geopolitical theories

The relationship between geography and politics and power has been the focus of scientists and politicians in the past. In ancient Greece, Aristotle and Strabo, and in the Middle Ages, scientists such as Baden and Montesquieu and in the nineteenth century geographers such as Carl Ritter and Frederick Ratzel discussed geography and politics. In the Islamic period, scientists such as; Ibn Khaldun studied the relationship between geographical factors and the natural environment and politics, and presented his famous theory of tribe and city, two powerful political units at the time, as well as the cycle of the rise and fall of governments.

Geopolitics emphasizes that part of geographical knowledge is linked to power and politics. In fact, geopolitical ink is power. Geopolitical knowledge deals with these issues, both in the processes of power generation and in the processes of spatial distribution and displacement of power, and in relation to the global structure of power. Therefore, we can consider geopolitics as a knowledge that studies the spatial-geographical dimensions of the power relations and political behavior of actors in the fields of national and international

politics. Geopolitical knowledge literature has theories that explain the phenomenon of power in relation to space and geography (Hafeznia, 2006: 232). These theories are as follows:

3.3.1. Mahan's theory of maritime power

According to Mahan, in the new world of trade and commerce, a good maritime position has many economic and political benefits, while landlocked countries are less important. The basis of the politics and history of the nations along the open waters can be found in the following three issues:

- Production for exchange.
- Development of shipping as a means of exchange of goods.
- Existence of colonies that facilitate shipping and provide safe havens for this

purpose (Ezzati, 2015: 53).

According to Mahan, the northern hemisphere, much of which is connected by the blue canals of the Panama Canal and the Suez Canal, is the key to global power, and within this hemisphere, Eurasia is the most important component. He believed that a state could take control of the world's power so that its naval power could take precedence. Mahan endorsed Russia as the dominant land power in Asia, whose location is invincible. But in his view, being trapped on land would be to Russia's detriment because, in his view, the naval movement was superior to the ground movement.

3.3.2. Hartland's theory

This theory was put forward by Sirhalford Mackinder (1875-1962), who for many years was a member of parliament and chairman of the Royal Society of Geography in England. He stated in 1890 that the balance of geographical power against Britain has shifted, and the current trend shows that the global naval power, which is currently led by Britain, will be jeopardized in the future (Ezzati, 2015: 12).

According to this structure, the central part or axis that played the role of the castle of the world was called the "heart of the earth", which was located between Volga, Yenisei, Alborz, the Alps and the Arctic Ocean. The second part of this structure is called the inner crescent or inner margin, which includes all the margins around the axis (the heart of the earth) and access to sea power, including the peninsulas around Eurasia and North Africa. The third section was called the Foreign Crescent, which included the Americas, Oceania, and South Africa.

Mackinder put these three parts together in a spatial structure, using his famous hypothesis as follows: "Who rules of East Europe commands the Heartland: who rules the Heartland commands the World Island, who rules the World-Island commands the world (Hafeznia, 2006: 237).

3.3.3. Rimland's theory

This theory was put forward by Nicolas John Spikman (1893-1980), a professor of international relations. In his work, he emphasized the relationship between power between states and the influence of geography on politics, and in his books *Geography and Peace* and *US Strategy in Global Politics*, he rejected Mackinder's theory and rejected the German School of Geopolitics. Unlike Mackinder, Spikman gave originality to the inner margin of Mackinder's theory and considered it to have real power, giving it a new title called "Rimland" or Marginal Land. He said the area between the land and sea powers was vulnerable on both sides, and that the allies of the major powers had often been selected from the Rimland area. He made this

statement; "Whoever controls the Rimland will rule Eurasia, and whoever rules Eurasia will control the fate of the world" (Hafeznia, 2006: 238).

3.3.4. Theory of the geopolitical system of the world

This theory was put forward by the contemporary American geographer Sail B. Cohen. In this system, in the early stages of specialization and hierarchical integration of the contract of dual geostrategic domains, the relationships of the centers of internal power are formed. The system maintains its integrity through a series of balancing and moving links and mechanisms. In this system, Cohen explains the pattern of power distribution, power relationships between system components, system leveling, system dynamics, and system spatial structure. The pattern he presents is dynamic and not static, because the system is open and within the framework of extensive and reciprocal relationships between components, energy is exchanged and the entropy of the system is reduced. The spatial structure of the system includes two large geostrategic domains that include specific geopolitical regions as well as fragile belt regions and gateway countries. The global geopolitical system has internal solidarity based on foreign trade, economic, social, and political forces, the urban system, and technological development also causes the evolution of the global political system (Hafeznia, 2006: 240).

3.3.5. Theory of balance of forces

The lack of sufficient resources available and the conflict of interest in achieving the goals cause an actor or country to be active in motivating the increase of power in order to achieve the goals. In contrast, other countries and actors are trying to do the same as soon as they see the potential danger of an invasion by a country that has strengthened its forces. The move is likely to deter an attacker from possibly waging war. Thus, the efforts of competitors to maintain a balanced level of power continue (Hafeznia, 2006: 247).

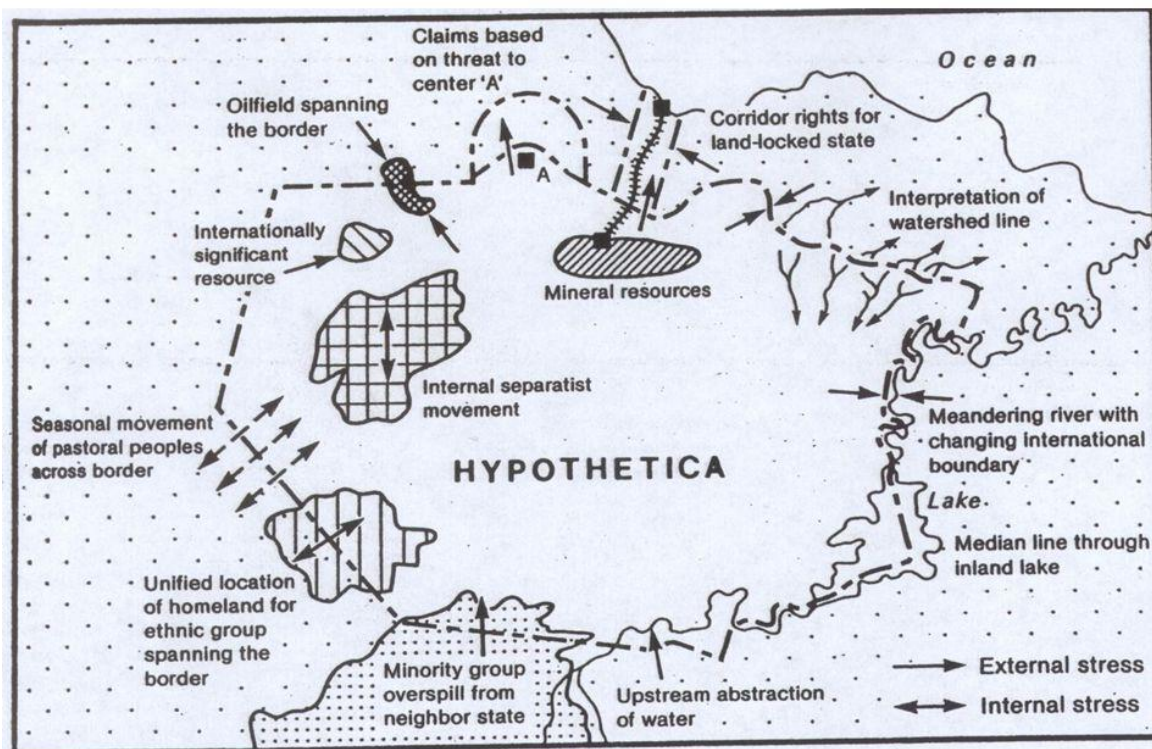
Hans Morgenthau is considered to be one of the clearest theorists of the balance of power, and he and other theorists of the strong balance have largely used the historical experiences of a hundred years in Europe (1648-1789 and 1914-1915). The term strong balance emphasizes the relatively equal power and capacity of each other's competing governments and unions. For example, the United States and the former Soviet Union maintained their nuclear weapons equally in the 1970s and 1980s, creating a kind of balance of military power. Some countries play a balancing role in international power, such as what China played during the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union (ibid).

3.5.3. Theory of "Hypothetica" - Peter Haggett:

Peter Haggett described the geographical origins of tensions in countries' relations in the form of a pictorial model that involves a hypothetical country called Hypothetica with a set of specific situations that create tensions with neighbors. Haggett's model includes 12 geographical factors of tension in Hypothetica's country relations with its neighbors, which are:

1. Dollar rights for the access of the landlocked country to the sea through the territory of the neighboring country;
2. Disagreement over how to interpret the water distribution line (Ab-Pakhshan) on mountainous borders;
3. International border of variable rivers;
4. Disagreement over delimitation in the common lake and how to exploit its resources;
5. Water hijacking of the upper part of the river by the country above the river;

6. Continuation of territorial and spatial expansion of an ethnic-linguistic group into the territory of a neighboring country;
7. Establishment of a racial and ethnic minority group along two international borders;
8. Seasonal relocation of migrants on both sides of the international border;
9. The movement of ethnic separatists in the interior of the country;
10. Establish an important international resource near the border that is claimed by neighbors. This important resource may be a strategic resource such as uranium or a cultural resource such as sacred sites.
11. The claim of each country to the territory of the neighboring country to maintain the superior and vital position of its regions and border resources;
12. Legal disputes over artificial insemination of clouds in order to provide rain in the interior of a country and to create precipitation in the territory of a neighboring country due to the movement of clouds (Ghorbani Nejad et al, 2017: 15).



Peter Haggett, *Geography: a Modern Synthesis*, 3rd ed., 1983, p.477, Harper & Row

3.4. Crisis

A crisis is a situation that disrupts the order of the main system or parts of it and disrupts its stability. In other words, the crisis is a situation that causes a sudden change in one or more parts of the system's variable factors (Vaezi, 2015: 22). The crisis is an event that occurs naturally or by human beings, suddenly or increasingly, and imposes hardship on human society that requires urgent, fundamental, and extraordinary action. Crises can occur in a variety of political, social, economic, cultural, and military fields, and the causes and factors of the crisis are very diverse. In the field of geopolitics, crises occur at different levels, from local to international, and after the occurrence, they can spread to higher or lower levels. For example, a local crisis, depending on its components, can spread to national, regional, or global levels or be reflected from the global level to lower levels. From a geopolitical point of view, crises at any level are the result of the existence or absence of causes and factors that have caused or exacerbated crises (Mokhtari Hashi and Shams, 2017: 169).

3.5. Geopolitical crisis

Geopolitical crises are a special type of international crisis that originates from political geography. This is the most important feature of geopolitical crises. Unlike international economic or political crises, the negative consequences and global repercussions of which may be far greater than the specific type of geopolitical crises, however, none of these crises, like the geopolitical crises, are the foundations of the nation-state. They do not threaten. The geopolitical crisis arises from the conflict between countries and political-spatial groups and political actors over the control and capture of values and geographical factors, both natural and human. The geopolitical crisis is relatively stable and unresolved, because the issue of crisis and conflict are geographical values that are among the national and collective interests. In other words, individuals of a nation or group of human beings understand the collective and national interests of them, and therefore, cannot be ignored, and reconciliation is difficult for them. Contrary to popular belief in international crises, although geopolitical crises sometimes take on a political dimension in the trans-regional dimension, they are different from specific types of political crises (Vali Gholizadeh et al, 2013: 113).

4. Research findings

4.1. The role of neighboring countries and the region in the continuation of the Afghanistan crisis

4.1.1. Afghanistan's strategic position in the region

The religious, linguistic, cultural, and geographical location of the two countries has created a special strategic situation. This sensitive situation has created competition between the two superpowers for greater influence in Afghanistan, and the attitude towards this competition can determine the importance of this country in terms of these two world powers (Salimi, 2001: 113).

4.1.2. Iran's policy in Afghanistan

Iran's goals and policies in Afghanistan can be divided into two parts: global policy and action policy:

Declaration Policy: The most important principles of this policy were:

- Decisions about the future of Afghanistan must be made by the Afghanistan people themselves. This is the principle that is known in international law as the "principle of the right to self-determination."

- Foreign countries should not interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. In international law, this principle is the "principle of non-interference in the affairs of others."

- Every government in Afghanistan must be inclusive and include all ethnic and religious groups in the country. We call this principle "constructive intervention."

Action Policy: The most important principles of this policy are:

Geopolitical principle: According to this principle, Afghanistan is a country that is in Iran's neighborhood, and regardless of the nature of politics and government in this country, Iran had to come to terms with the ruling government. Efforts to establish a relationship with the Taliban in the last year or two can be seen in this context.

Geo cultural Principle: According to this principle, Iran tried to ensure that groups with some kind of cultural, civilizational, and religious affiliation with Iran had a worthy place in politics and government in Afghanistan in the future. Achieving this principle could help develop Iran's influence in Afghanistan.

Geo economic Principle: According to this principle, Iran tried to prevent the infiltration of hostile powers in Afghanistan. At the same time, with the expansion of Iran's sphere of influence in Afghanistan, the axis of the Persian-speaking civilization (Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan) became a strategic axis.

Geo-Strategic Principle: Afghanistan has important economic capabilities, and Iran's presence and influence in Afghanistan could provide the basis for the optimal use of the country's economic capabilities. This is especially important for the creation of an Afghanistan with relative prosperity, so that the problems of that land do not send people to Iran (Shafiee, 2002: 32).

4.1.3. Pakistan's policy in Afghanistan

Pakistan has also been a regional power and actor in the Afghanistan political and military arena. The role of Iran and Pakistan in the developments in Afghanistan has been strongly influenced by each other.

Pakistan's goals for Afghanistan:

Geopolitical goals: to create a cohesive and weak government in Afghanistan, to ignore the disputed Durand Line issue, to weaken Afghanistan's national power and ability.

Geocultural goals: To support the Pashtun ethnicity and expand ideological influence in Afghanistan.

Geostrategic Objectives: Direct access to the Central Asian region, giving strategic depth to Pakistan versus India, and ultimately influencing Iran-Afghanistan relations.

Geo economic Objectives: Opening a vital transit route between Pakistan and the Central Asian market, making it possible to access the oil and gas resources of Central Asian countries and turning Afghanistan into a consumer goods market (Shafiee, 2002: 35).

4.1.4. The role of Central Asian countries in continuing the crisis in Afghanistan

Although developments in Afghanistan could have a direct impact on the security and national interests of Central Asian countries, their own internal problems and mainly economic poverty have prevented them from paying serious attention to the Afghanistan crisis.

It is important to note that Afghanistan is a secure and stable country, a vital issue that brings security to its neighbors, and this is an issue that, from the perspective of regional and non-neighboring governments, is not so important and colorful. Taking advantage of the opportunities available in Afghanistan requires that the major governments have the necessary will and honesty.

It is important to note two points:

- Security in Afghanistan affects the security of the region.

- Regional cooperation in reducing tensions is closer to effective views.

Accordingly, regarding the discussion of regional cooperation and according to the stated contents, in the form of issues and challenges in this field, several points can be mentioned:

- The impact and importance of Afghanistan's geopolitics.
- Injuries and weaknesses of regional cooperation.
- Opportunities and threats to regional cooperation with Afghanistan.
- Existence of problems and weakness in the performance guarantee and the obligation to fulfill the obligations and memorandums.
- General problems, concerns and threats (such as terrorism and drugs).
- Weakness in macro strategies for cooperation and use of opportunities.
- Countries' view of cooperation, whether bilateral or regional (goals, programs, strategies and interests).
- The role of the great powers in the relations between the countries of the region and Afghanistan.
- The presence, role and interests of major governments and regional and trans-regional players (such as the United States, Saudi Arabia, Russia, China, India and Pakistan) in the region.
- Lack of consensus interests of actors.
- Development of extreme thoughts.
- Development of terrorism and the influence of ISIL in Afghanistan.
- Security and security arrangements.
- Weakness of strategies to promote and expand cooperation.
- Existence of factors other than the economy that affect regional cooperation.
- Transportation, transit and energy.

4.1.5. India's policy in the Afghanistan crisis

In recent years, India has become an important regional power and a key player in the global system, and is moving rapidly toward becoming a major global power. Afghanistan's and India's long-standing cultural and economic ties have led it to pay more and more attention to Afghanistan in competition with Pakistan. This can be clearly seen in the way the United States is dealing with Afghanistan and India's significant contribution to Afghanistan's reconstruction. The Great Doctrine of India's Foreign Policy divides countries into three concentric circles in which Afghanistan falls within the circle of austerity. Therefore, this country is of special importance in India's foreign policy. India, which lost its influence during the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, Since September 11, it has had a positive and cooperative approach to the country. India is seeking to reduce the influence of its long-time enemy (Pakistan) by playing a greater role in Afghanistan's internal developments and to end its political siege. In this regard, India has tried to cooperate with other regional and influential powers in Afghanistan in various fields. On the other hand, India wants to benefit from Afghanistan's trade route to Central Asia and vice versa; but there are a number of major problems along the Indian route, such as the unfavorable relations between India and Pakistan (Hassanzadeh, 2013: 80).

Three main factors can be considered for the expansion of relations between India and Afghanistan in the post-Taliban period:

1. Competition between India and Pakistan, especially for a wider presence in Afghanistan, is the main factor that has forced India to have more influence in modern

Afghanistan than Pakistan and to be able to use Afghanistan as an ally and strategic partner against Pakistan. .

2. After the collapse of the Eastern Bloc led by the Soviet Union, India slowly developed into a strategic alliance by expanding its political and economic structures, as well as acquiring new technologies in military, economic, and social affairs. The United States led the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan and is the biggest supporter of this government. Naturally India will play a very positive role in Afghanistan to get closer to the United States and the West.

3. Access to Central Asian markets is another factor that has expanded relations between India and Afghanistan. Today, India needs access to markets in Central Asia and the Middle East, and a secure Afghanistan will create a tremendous transit opportunity for Indian goods, which will greatly help India's growing economy. However, since 2001, after the Bonn Conference, India has suddenly become one of the great supporters of modern Afghanistan, even during the Taliban era and before that. According to statistics, 30 memorandums of understanding have been signed between Afghanistan and India so far, indicating the quality of relations between the two countries, and at the 2002 Tokyo Conference, India provided \$ 550 million in assistance to Afghanistan. At the 2006 conference, London also provided \$ 307 million in aid to rebuild Afghanistan (ibid: 81).

India's policy and performance in the Afghanistan crisis have been fully protected by intelligence. Therefore, it is difficult to explain the position of this country in the face of the crisis in Afghanistan and it does not have transparency in the policy of Iran and Pakistan. However, in general, India's policy is in stark contrast to Pakistan's policy and its relative alignment with the Iran-Russia policy. The most important aspects of India's policy in the Afghanistan crisis are: neutralizing Pakistan's efforts in Afghanistan, supporting the Northern Alliance groups and trying to end the crisis to prevent the consequences of the crisis in Kashmir.

4.1.6. China's policy in the Afghanistan crisis

China's policy in the Afghanistan crisis is subject to five main considerations:

- Considering his relationship with the United States, which does not want Washington to step into the region.
- Preventing Indian influence in Afghanistan, which has long been considered an enemy.
- Fear of the spread of Taliban fundamentalism in Xinjiang.
- Considering its relations with Pakistan and its impartial policy towards the Afghanistan crisis.
- Considering its relations with Russia and Iran and supporting the peace process in Afghanistan.

For these reasons, China's policy toward the Afghanistan crisis has been one of the malignancies. Therefore, we are always fluctuating and volatile positions in Beijing politics (Shafiee, 2002: 37).

Recently, with the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and the possible spread of the threat in the region, China is trying to play a role as an influential player in the region's security equations based on its relations with Pakistan. Based on its economic relations with Pakistan, China can turn Afghanistan-Pakistan security interactions into economic security interactions, but specifically on peace talks, it seems that Pakistan is unable to align with China's interests and the complexity of group relations. The achievements of the terrorist group ISIS

and the lack of the necessary basis for the Taliban to become a political group, the achievements are vague (Marjani Nejad, 2015: 3).

Given China's involvement in the fight against terrorism, the following scenarios could be possible:

A) Limited single-axis operation: This method is similar to the Chinese operation in the 1990s, which contacted Mullah Omar and prevented terrorist acts in Xinjiang. The probability of this method is low.

B) Limited regional action: Accordingly, China has prepared the ground for negotiations between the Afghanistan government and the Taliban in cooperation with Pakistan. This is a kind of expansion of China's role from a unilateral nature to a regional one, but it is still limited by the extent of terrorist currents and groups. This measure cannot be effective in the long run, given the vastness of China's economic plans and the extent of the growing threat posed by the region.

C) Unlimited regional action: The Chinese government can use its influence in the region, especially through Shanghai, to create a platform for countries in the region and beyond to take joint action.

D) Regional and trans-regional performance: Regional-centric design is more important than single-axis projects. With the spread of terrorism and the flow of radicalism in the region, trans-regional and global measures to combat this phenomenon are more effective. Therefore, China's joint regional action in cooperation with the United States could have more effective results.

4.1.7. Saudi Arabia's policy in Afghanistan

Although Saudi Arabia is not one of the regional actors in the Afghanistan crisis in terms of distance, we are putting it in the realm of regional actors in terms of its influence (through Pakistan). Saudi Arabia has intervened in the Afghanistan crisis with three motives:

- Religious-ideological interests (meaning Wahhabi interpretation of Islam).
- Financial and geo economic benefits (support for Delta Oil Company).
- Benefits of political power to expand the Saudi sphere of influence in

Afghanistan (ibid: 38).

5. Analysis

Due to its special geographical location, Afghanistan has been plagued by many crises throughout history, especially after the Taliban took office in October 1994, which marked the height of the civil war in Afghanistan. During this time, the country has experienced many upheavals, and the Afghanistan people have endured many hardships and insecurities, especially during the Taliban era.

After the overthrow of the Taliban and the arrival of the US, NATO and several other European auxiliary forces, the people of Afghanistan have become more hopeful that the situation in the country has calmed down and recovered. Unfortunately, after the arrival of these seemingly foreign auxiliary forces, the situation in the country became worse and worse than before, which has continued to this day with the same misfortunes and unrest, and given the current situation, a bright future cannot be seen in the near future. The present study seeks to analyze the recent crisis in the country from a geopolitical perspective and by analyzing geographical factors. For this purpose, first, the role of geographical factors as underlying factors was analyzed and then the role of national, regional and trans-regional powers, mainly based on underlying geographical factors, were investigated.

Factors influencing Afghanistan's strategic geography stem mainly from Afghanistan's geographical location, geopolitical position, and strategic location. Its location in the heart of Central Asia and its proximity to powerful countries like China, India and Russia, is forcing trans-regional and global powers to ignore the country. Therefore, the great powers cannot be comfortable, and this situation of Afghanistan causes the hostile powers to always encroach on this country and not allow this country to have relative peace.

On the one hand, the fact that Afghanistan is located in the center of Central Asia and South Asia, which plays a connecting role between these countries, is one of the factors that has made this country (Afghanistan) more attractive. On the other hand, Afghanistan's geographical proximity to nuclear powers like Russia, China, India and Pakistan, has played a key role in political developments and the continuation of the country's crisis, and has led to the presence of some trans-regional and global powers in this geographical unit. Due to the special geographical location of Afghanistan, many powers want to infiltrate this country, so that they can enter other large countries through the territory of Afghanistan, such as; China, Russia, and India. Some trans-regional powers have set foot in Afghanistan to control, limit and challenge nuclear powers beyond Afghanistan's borders. What is more important to Westerners than Afghanistan's proximity to nuclear powers? It is clear that Afghanistan itself is not very targeted; Rather, the country's geographical, strategic, and proximity to nuclear powers near its borders is important for trans-regional powers, and countries in the region are forced to either fear the influence of major supra-regional powers or under the command of major supra-regional powers. The world is interfering in the political and governmental affairs of Afghanistan and disrupting the political situation in Afghanistan.

In light of the above, strategic geographic factors will have the following consequences in the Afghanistan crisis, as shown in Table 1.

Table1. Consequences of Strategic Geographical Factors Affecting the Continuation of the Afghanistan Crisis:

Number	Factor	How to influence
1	Neighbors	- Intervention in government affairs, - support for insurgents, - influencing insecurity, - Causing crises.
2	Regional powers	- Intervention in government affairs, - strengthening insurgent groups, - Setting the stage for crises in the country.

6. Conclusion

The study of crises in a political unit is very important because of its impact on the country and society and therefore on human life in today's world, because by recognizing the crises affecting countries and human society and accurately rooting out the causes of these crises, it is possible to prevent these crises by taking precautionary measures, or at least to prepare for the crisis before the crisis occurs. The study of crises from a geopolitical point of

view due to the comprehensiveness of the science of geography will lead to an accurate rooting of the causes of crises in various fields. From this perspective, crises are examined at different levels, and after review and research, the factors affecting the creation or exacerbation of the resulting crisis at all levels are identified. So, the results of this study, which have been obtained by accurately identifying all aspects of the crisis at different levels, will be very effective in managing and resolving the crisis.

The causes and factors of crises in Afghanistan are classified into three levels:

- Internal level, (internal factors of crises).
- Regional level (includes the involvement of neighboring countries and countries in the region).
- Trans-regional and global levels, (the competition of major world powers, such as the United States, Russia and the United Nations).

One of the regional causes of the crisis in Afghanistan is the interference and involvement of neighboring countries and countries in the region and their policies in the crisis of this country; especially Pakistan, which has always been involved in all matters (political, military, economic, ethnic, religious, etc.) in Afghanistan and has played an effective role in continuing the Afghanistan crisis. Especially, after the emergence of Pakistan (1947), the two countries have had a lot of tensions. Pakistan has been a supporter of the Taliban since the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan, which has its main source in Pakistan. In addition, Pakistan has intervened directly and indirectly in all matters of Afghanistan at all times (especially after the fall of the Taliban). Among the trans-regional and global factors involved in the Afghanistan crisis are the rivalries between the great powers, which have made Afghanistan a scene of their own political struggles. These great actors include the United States, Russia, and the United Nations. These powers have always been involved in Afghanistan's crises and have been key players in Afghanistan's crises and tensions.

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