
THE THOUGHTS CONSTRUCTION OF PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP IN MAKING FOREIGN POLICY TO END THE WAR BETWEEN US AND TALIBAN

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ABSTRACT

The war between the US and the Taliban began after the 9/11 attacks in 2001. President Bush immediately sent US military troops to Afghanistan to capture the leader of the Al-Qaeda terrorist group, Osama bin Laden. It is known that President Obama was sheltered by the Taliban in Afghanistan. During the Obama's administration, bin Laden was successfully killed in 2011. The war between the US and the Taliban will continue until President Trump's leadership. He considers that the goals of this war have been realized, targeting Al-Qaida leaders and that nothing is profitable for the US in continuing the war. According to Trump's thinking, in 2020 there will be a peace agreement between the US and the Taliban. To answer this fact, this article will use constructivist theory to explain the construction of Bush's thoughts, the result of which is the United States' political policy towards the war in Afghanistan. Therefore, this journal will discuss the construction of Trump's thoughts on ending the long war between the US and the Taliban. So that this paper can see how Trump's thought construction can end the war and what the real impact is for the US. From this, it can be concluded that the result of Trump's thought construction is to protect US citizens and interests in the economic and military fields.

Keywords: *9/11 attack; peace agreement; terrorist; thought construction; war*

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INTRODUCTION

The United States of America had a dark history on September 11, 2001. Terrorist attacks damaged the Pentagon Building and the World Trade Center (WTC), two symbols and hubs of US activity. (Kean, 2004) The attack killed 2,977 people in Washington,

D.C, Pennsylvania, and New York and was successful in instilling fear and a sense of menace in American citizens. (CNN, 2022) The attack happened in two phases. Hundreds of people perish on the plane and nearby when the first attack destroys the structure on the north side. The second

assault then struck the building's south flank. The attack resulted in a huge explosion, which left the road underneath the WTC building and the surrounding buildings covered in debris. Most of the victims—including hijackers and crew members as well as passengers—were on board aircraft. When two commercial jets that had been hijacked by terrorists collided with the WTC skyscraper, which had become a symbol for the United States and was believed to be sturdy and resilient, it was instantly destroyed (Hakim, 2019).

After 9/11 attacks, when President George W. Bush was leading the US, Bush hurriedly put together a war cabinet that included Vice President Dick Cheney, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Chief of Staff Andy Card, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Secretary of State Colin Powell. Finding and addressing the source of attacks is the main objective of US military intelligence. Direct efforts by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) led to the identification of Osama bin Laden's militant Islamic terrorist group, Al-Qaeda (Ilardi, 2009). On the other hand, bin Laden is protected by the Taliban, Afghanistan's hardline Islamic regime, and Al-Qaeda trains battalions of terrorists in its facilities. Bin Laden utilized his personal riches to assist the Taliban in exchange for safety. Bush also gave a statement, "Every country and territory must now make a choice. You either support us or you support terrorists", which became known as the Bush Doctrine (Byers, 2002).

Terrorist groups in Afghanistan are totally controlled by the Taliban, which is bin Laden's hiding spot and where he fully funds this group's financial demands and military

weapons for carrying out its terrorist acts. The Al Qaeda network has expanded its links and schemes against the US and its allies while avoiding punishment or sanctions for terrorist acts committed (Benjamin & Kirby, 2006). After 9/11 attacks, the Bush Administration decided to militarily overthrow the Taliban when it refused a U.S. demand to extradite Bin Laden. President Bush articulated a policy that equated those who harbor terrorists to terrorists themselves, and asserted that a friendly regime in Kabul was needed to enable U.S. forces to search for Al Qaeda members there. Major combat in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom, OEF) began on October 7, 2001. The US effort initially consisted primarily of US airstrikes on Taliban and Al Qaeda forces, facilitated by the cooperation between reported small numbers (about 1,000) of US special operations forces and Central Intelligence Agency operatives. The purpose of these operations was to help the Northern Alliance and Pashtun anti-Taliban forces advance by directing US air strikes on Taliban positions (Thomas, 2017). The war between the US and the Taliban continued even though President Bush's administration ended in 2009 after leading for two terms.

President Obama, who was elected as the 44th President of the United States in 2009, continues to manage the United States. Under Obama's presidency, there was a strong trend toward centralized US policymaking with thorough consideration and prudence, as well as personal control over every facet of policy. Obama's decision-making mindset, like that of most other new presidents, was influenced by his learning from the previous administration's mistakes. As a result, Obama attempted to carry out a policy by directly focusing on the issue of terrorism in order to

combat the Taliban movement in Afghanistan, which was believed to be the foundation of terrorism, while minimizing Afghan victims (Husna, 2012).

Obama promised in a speech on August 1, 2007, that he would bring change to the US in response to 9/11 attack by boosting civilian capability, in contrast to President Bush, who used military operations as a strategy against terrorism. Obama has a different perspective than Bush, in which the theme of President Bush's War on Terror has been replaced with a strategic commitment against the new danger of terrorism, which is summarized in Obama's thoughts, namely Smart Power foreign policy. If the military strategy is known as hard power, then this is a change from the old hard power strategy to a new smart power strategy, a combination of hard power and soft power, which strengthens the civilian role while using hard power as a supporting instrument (Valdes & Duarte, 2012).

From Obama's smart power strategy, one of the goals to find Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda, to be responsible for the 9/11 attacks was not in vain. President Barack Obama made an announcement that the American people had waited almost 10 years to hear,

“I can report to the American people and to the world, that the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda and a terrorist who is responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women and children,” Obama said. (VOA News, 2011)

Osama bin Laden's death proves that the US goal to punish the Al-Qaeda former leader responsible for the 9/11 attacks was

successful. However, the war between the United States and the Taliban in Afghanistan was not finished until the second terms of President Barack Obama's administration. And Donald Trump, who was elected as the next President of the US, will automatically maintain the policy of sending US soldiers to Afghanistan.

Trump succeeded Obama as the 45th President of the United States on January 20, 2017. During his campaign, Trump questioned the US government's military policies and promised to end conflicts and focus more on domestic economic growth. However, even after being elected president, Trump has continued the war on terror, which began with the 9/11 attacks. (Trump, 2018) Terrorism issues were addressed directly by Trump, who stated his controversial position. Many of Trump's speeches contained violent and racist content. His statement regarding the issue of terrorism and radical Islam, for example, received a negative response from Muslim circles in the US and internationally. Trump is known to be outspoken on the subject of radical Islam and terrorism; he even promised not only to limit but to prohibit the entry of immigrants from Islamic countries suspected of being the origin of terrorism (Berman, 2015).

Not only is Trump focusing on fighting terrorism in the country, but he also sees the reality of what is happening in Afghanistan. According to Trump, the long war between the United States and the Taliban has been too long and has cost the United States a lot in various sectors. From Trump's thoughts, the United States immediately observed the United States' shipping policy in Afghanistan. After observing the situation in Afghanistan, the US abruptly changed the pattern of

interaction with the Taliban in Afghanistan by initiating peace talks, despite the fact that deploying American soldiers to Afghanistan has been ongoing since 2001, following the attack of the 9/11 attacks. After nearly two decades of war in Afghanistan, the US and the Taliban signed a peace treaty. The discussion process carried on extensively until a peace accord was signed between the United States and the Taliban on February 29, 2020, in Doha, Qatar (The Washington Post, 2021). After the peace agreement was implemented, the two parties immediately realized the contents of the agreement that had been agreed upon.

Trump is known to be very anti-Muslim and the president who fights terrorism. This article is included in the post-nationalist scope as a section of American Studies since it tries to understand American identity and culture. On the other hand, some cultures will undoubtedly alter as a result of changing times, which will be followed by some key studies on gender, ethnicity, postmodernism, and post colonialism. (Rowe, 2000) Looking at the changing times as well as American identity and culture, which develop and alter through time, this research is classified as post-nationalist and will focus on Alexander Wendy's Constructivism method, which claims that national interests are produced from the views of state leaders. This study then will employ a constructivism approach to examine the various perspectives of the US president in deciding Trump's policies against terrorism.

However, Trump has his own conception of thoughts regarding the US policy towards a long war with the Taliban in Afghanistan. For Trump, it is time for this long war to end because the main goal of finding Osama bin

Laden has been accomplished, and if the war continues, it will be detrimental to the US from various sectors. Therefore, this article will discuss more clearly the policies of Trump in resolving the long war between the United States and the Taliban in Afghanistan. And the construction of Trump's thoughts so that he can generate ideas for peace is seen in his background, character, and leadership style in realizing the peace agreement between the United States and the Taliban. As well as the impact of this long war will be seen from the aspects of domestic politics, economic, and military conditions.

DISCUSSION

From the background of President Trump, it will be seen that the POTUS's background will influence the construction of his thoughts to determine a policy for the United States in various fields. In this paper discussing the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban, it will also be seen that President Trump's background influenced the realization of the peace agreement carried out in Qatar in 2020.

Travel Ban Policy: Fighting Domestic Terrorism

The presidential administrations of Bush and Obama have shown notable strategic coherence in the 15 years following the 9/11 attacks. Additionally, Trump, the next president, is in charge of the counterterrorism operation. Trump's beliefs and opinions differ from those of prior presidents. The previous president's policies, according to Trump, were a failure of American strategy. Trump evaluates everything that has been said about the failure of the anti-terrorism effort under Bush and Obama (Azmi & Aulia, 2019).

Before becoming president, Trump highlighted the love for one's country by offering numerous opportunities to even put American interests ahead of those of other countries through the concepts of "America First" and "Make America Great Again". This idea emphasizes the morality of the attitude of the spirit to make the country better by emphasizing the identity and interests of the country through the main features that underlie the regime. The executive order has delivered a proclamation of truth as well as reinforcement of Trump's spirit of nationalism as President. This policy is a systematic attempt that departs from the nationalism of a US president in reaction to mounting concerns and Trump's concern that the refugee acceptance program may allow terrorists to enter the US (Scribner, 2017).

Trump's travel ban policy against immigrants who want to enter the country is not without reason. The detrimental potential of immigrants seen by Trump, as someone who has nationalism, provides space for him to provide real solutions through his policy authority so that the country is not disadvantaged. The primary goal of this order is to ensure that people who are not in line with the US will be prevented from entering US territory for the protection of citizens (Lopez, 2019). This is an effort by Trump's protective attitude, through the authority of his leadership role as President, to defend the interests and lives of American citizens. The American public's interest is seen to have a detrimental impact on the entry of immigrants. Trump's protection of the US is a visible aspect of the existence of measures affected by his nationalism to safeguard his population from the threat of terrorism.

On January 27, 2017, Trump signed the Executive Order (EO) No. 13769 known as "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States." The executive order set a "Travel Ban" for 90 days, forbidding citizens from 7 primarily Muslim nations from entering the US, which was later lowered to 6 and included North Korea and Venezuela by Executive Order No. 13780. Additionally, it forbade residents of those nations from reentering, even if they had legal visas and green cards. Also, the order prohibited all Syrian refugees for an undisclosed amount of time while suspending the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) for 120 days (Lopez, 2019). The executive order's primary goal is to ensure that unfriendly persons won't be allowed to enter US territory. The order also hopes to protect the American people from foreign terrorist attacks and the use of the country's immigration laws for nefarious reasons. However, several protests and complaints were lodged against Trump's policies and its claimed breach of international law. From this, it can be seen that Trump is anti-terrorism and that various methods will be taken to protect US citizens from the threat of terrorism.

Peace Agreement between the US and the Taliban after 20 Years of War

Trump is also thinking about the policy of sending US troops to Afghanistan, which has been going on since 2001 after 9/11 attack. As in 2017, Trump agreed to send 4,000 additional troops to Afghanistan, where there were already 8,400 troops in the nation. Trump believes that the US stay in Afghanistan is counterproductive since it has not seen success in a long time. According to Trump, it would be foolish if the US left

abruptly, fearing that it would leave a hole that terrorists could exploit. This anxiety stems from the deterioration of conditions in Afghanistan. According to General John Nicholson’s report of, the US military leader who served in Afghanistan, Afghanistan required thousands of additional troops. The US troops are expected to train Afghan troops more intensively so that they can balance Taliban fighters and combat the Taliban.

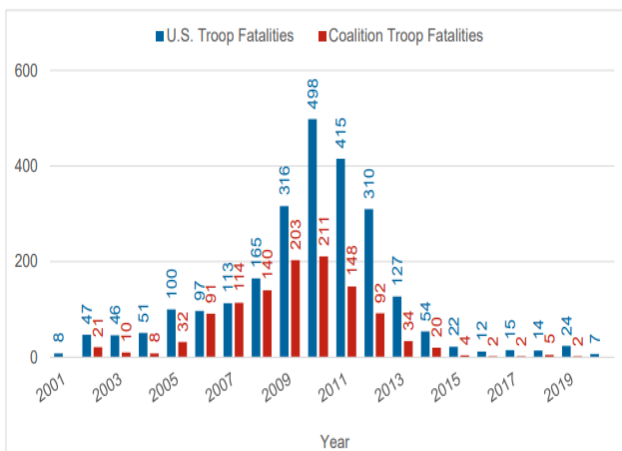


Figure 1. Total US and allied troops killed in Afghanistan (Brooking Foreign Policy, 2020)

However, there was something interesting in 2018, President Trump made the decision for the US Armed Forces serving in Afghanistan to return to their home countries, and the idea of withdrawing military troops from Afghanistan began in 2018. In the same year, Trump stated he would only withdraw half of the total number of troops in Afghanistan. At the beginning of his presidency, President Trump said that their presence in Afghanistan had consumed a lot of time, energy, money, and lives, especially for US troops in Afghanistan. Based on the graph above, from 2001 to 2019, the war in Afghanistan killed 2,434 US troops and 1,139 coalition troops (Gollob & O’hanlon, 2020).

Despite Trump’s hard stance against terrorism, there were disagreements in US foreign policy toward Afghanistan near the end of his presidency. If the past presidents did not reach a deal to actually make peace, Trump’s leadership reached an unexpected agreement. During Trump’s presidency, there was optimism for peace in Afghanistan, and when the President of Afghanistan met Trump at the White House, Trump stated that he preferred conversation over combat. “If we want to fight and win, we will be defeated in one week, Afghanistan has the potential to vanish off the face of the earth”, Trump stated (Utomo, 2019). However, Trump does not want to go down the path of war because it could kill millions of people.

After observing the situation in Afghanistan, the US abruptly changed the pattern of interaction with the Taliban in Afghanistan by initiating peace talks, despite the fact that deploying American soldiers to Afghanistan has been ongoing since 2001, following the attack of the 9/11 attacks. After nearly two decades of war in Afghanistan, the US and the Taliban signed a peace treaty. The discussion process carried on extensively until a peace accord was signed between the US and the Taliban on February 29, 2020, in Doha, Qatar (The Washington Post, 2021). Finally, a peace agreement between the US and the Taliban has been signed in an effort to put an end to the 18-year conflict in Afghanistan, but there are a number of factors that could derail the peace effort. The agreement addressed four issues: reducing violence, removing foreign soldiers from Afghanistan, starting intra-Afghan dialogue, and making sure that Afghanistan would also not serve as a safe haven for terrorists (Bimo, 2021).

The Doha summit generated four papers from the draft peace deal titled “Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, known as the Taliban, and the United States of America”. The agreement’s four parts are as follows: 1) Guarantees and enforcement procedures that will prevent any group or individual from using Afghan soil to undermine the security of the US and its allies; 2) Guarantees, enforcement measures, and the proclamation of a date for all foreign forces to leave Afghanistan; 3) After the announcement of guarantees for the complete withdrawal of foreign troops and a timetable in the presence of international witnesses and guarantees and an announcement before international witnesses that the land of Afghanistan will not be used against the security of the US and its allies, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, which is not recognized by the US as a state and is known as the Taliban, will start intra-Afghan negotiations with the Afghan side on March 10, 2020; and 4) A permanent and comprehensive ceasefire will be one of the agendas for intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations. The participants in the intra-Afghan negotiations will discuss the date and modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, including a joint implementation mechanism announced alongside the completion and agreement on a future Afghan political roadmap (US Embassy, 2020).

After the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban is reached, it automatically ends the long war that has been going on. The war in Afghanistan should have ended long ago, considering the main purpose of sending US troops to Afghanistan was to punish Osama bin Laden. However,

bin Laden was killed in 2011, during Obama’s time. Trump also sees that there will be a lot of losses for the United States if this war continues. Therefore, from the construction results, his thinking has succeeded in achieving peace between the US and the Taliban after 20 years of war. This was done to show that the US interests in Afghanistan had been achieved and to end the war, which would be detrimental to the US from a political, economic, and military perspective.

Impact of the War between the US and the Taliban Domestic Political Conditions

The Peace Agreement was signed by Taliban and the US during Trump’s presidency. There was intense disagreement about the nature of the conflict between the US and the Taliban in Afghanistan during Trump’s presidency, which caused turbulence in internal politics in the country. Many Americans believe that it is no longer worthwhile for the US and the Taliban to continue their conflict in Afghanistan from a domestic perspective. The majority of Americans believed that the war in Afghanistan was not worth continuing and regretted the US’ decision to continue its battle with the Taliban after nearly 20 years in Afghanistan (Hubbard, 2021).

Hamid (2021), a prominent American lawmaker in charge of Middle Eastern-specific foreign policy, agrees with this claim. He contends that the Taliban are more knowledgeable about Afghanistan than the US. The Afghan people do not require the ideal that the US pursues in that country. The Taliban are more knowledgeable about what Afghanistan needs and the best type of government to impose. Even worse, he said

that the failure of the Afghan government, which the US supported, did not only affect Afghanistan. On the other side, the US' ignorance of and hostility toward Afghanistan also contributed to this failure.

Every US presidential candidate of the president-elect has vowed to finish the fight with the Taliban and return US army who have fought in Afghanistan (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019). During their presidential campaigns and tenure, they kept such commitments. However, it was only under Trump's leadership that the Taliban and the US began the process of establishing a peace agreement. The peace accord was initiated on July 28, 2018, and it was signed on February 29, 2020. Unlike President Obama, who campaigned on a wise power policy in every decision to tackle Afghanistan's problems, Trump demonstrated that his harsh attitude may lead to a peace agreement between the US and the Taliban. The peace agreement was never struck while Obama led the US.

It can be concluded that the war in Afghanistan for the US and its citizens is no longer needed. Given that the main purpose of sending US troops to Afghanistan is to capture bin Laden, that goal has been realized during the administration of Obama, which led to bin Laden's killing. Even though bin Laden was killed during Obama's era, the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban was implemented at the end of Trump's era. As a result, it is no longer necessary for the war to continue during Trump's administration. If the war continues, the US will suffer in a variety of ways. The government and citizens of the US recognize this. That it becomes a domestic issue as well and the community supports the

implementation of the peace agreement between the US and Taliban in Afghanistan.

Economic and Military Conditions

Furthermore, the 20-year conflict in Afghanistan between the Taliban and US has resulted in a large number of casualties. Following the end withdrawal of US soldiers from Afghanistan, Biden estimated that the US had likely spent more than \$2 trillion on the Afghan war. While the majority of the anticipated spending is for US military operations, the US is also actively investing in rehabilitation efforts.

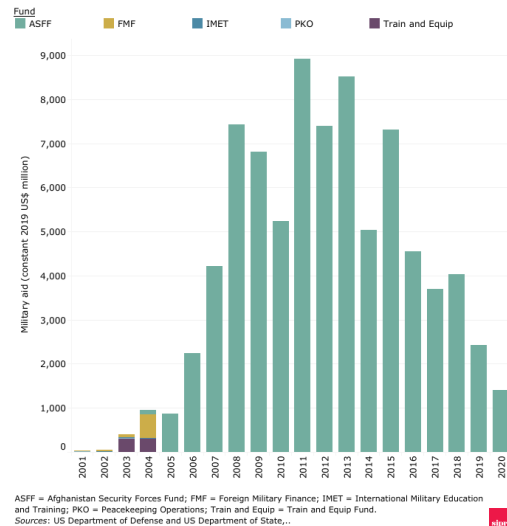


Figure 2. US military aid to Afghanistan, 2001-2020 (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2021)

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) views five budget lines—out of the total amount of reported US security-related reconstruction spending in Afghanistan—as military assistance. The Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of State are two sources for late. These five funds made payments to Afghanistan totaling \$72.7 billion in current dollars (or \$81.6 billion in constant 2019 values) between 2001 and 2020. A separate

Train and Equip Fund (\$440 million in current dollars) and the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF; \$71.7 billion in current dollars), which were both established by the US Congress, provided the majority (99.2%) of this military assistance. Equipment, supplies, services, training, funding for salaries, facility and infrastructure repair, renovation, and building were all provided by the two funds together to the ANDSF.

The Department of State provided \$564 million in current dollars' worth of military assistance to Afghanistan through the International Military Education and Training (IMET), Foreign Military Finance (FMF), and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) grants. The initial level of US military assistance to Afghanistan was quite minimal; between 2001 and 2005, the combined DOD and DOS budget was less than \$1 billion per year. Annual aid expenditures increased to \$7.4 billion by 2008. This surge in assistance occurred at the same time that the US started to provide a sizable number of troops to multinational peace operations, showing increased US commitment in Afghanistan. The global financial and economic crisis, however, temporarily reduced aid, and by 2010, it had decreased to \$5.2 billion for Afghanistan.

The amount of military assistance provided by the United States to Afghanistan reached a peak of almost \$9 billion between 2011 and 2013. The United States and its NATO allies have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the ANDSF so that it will be fully in charge of maintaining national security by the end of 2014. This increase in military support is related to that commitment. One well-known aspect of US military assistance is the wide variety of

heavy munitions that are shipped to Afghanistan. The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) estimates that between 2005 and 2021, the ASFF gave the ANDSF about \$18.6 billion in military equipment.

Soldiers killed in action in Afghanistan 2001-2021				
Number of fatalities among Western coalition soldiers involved in the execution of Operation Enduring Freedom from 2001 to 2021				
Year	Total*	U.S.	UK	Other
2001	12	12	0	0
2002	70	49	3	18
2003	58	48	0	10
2004	60	52	1	7
2005	131	99	1	31
2006	191	98	39	54
2007	232	117	42	73
2008	295	155	51	89
2009	521	317	108	96
2010	710	498	103	109
2011	563	415	46	102
2012	402	310	44	48
2013	162	128	9	25
2014	75	55	6	14
2015	26	22	2	2
2016	15	13	0	2
2017	17	15	0	2
2018	19	14	0	5
2019	26	24	0	2
2020	11	11	0	0
2021**	13	13	0	0
Totals	3,609	2,465	455	689

Figure 3. The estimated death toll for US troops and their coalition in the war against the Taliban (Statista Research Department, 2022)

Not only is the budget amazing, but the battle in Afghanistan between the US and the Taliban has also killed numerous US military personnel and civilians. The US invasion of Afghanistan claimed the lives of over 2,000 US servicemen as well as tens of thousands of civilians (Gollob & O’Hanlon, 2020).

Furthermore, several US economic practices, like errors in budget allocation, have facilitated confrontation with Taliban. The closest comparable is US, which doubled its spending for the Taliban battle in 2007–2008. This seems rash given that the US was in the midst of a catastrophic economic crisis known as the Great Recession in 2006–2008 (Bennet & Kochhar, 2019). Despite decreasing funds in 2009 and 2010, the US

increased its spending on the Taliban campaign considerably in 2011. This is as though the United States did not learn important lessons from the previous economic crisis, and it continues to highlight its struggle with the Taliban, despite the fact that it is considered perpetual and has no beneficial implications for the US.

The US figure of two trillion dollars and the accompanying number of deaths is inflated, given that the budget allocation is mainly geared at Afghanistan's own security. The US efforts to preserve Afghanistan from the Taliban appear overbearing, because the Afghanistan's security should be the responsibility of the local nation, not the US. Finally, this diverged from the initial goal of establishing the War on Terror strategy, which was supposed to conclude with bin Laden's murder.

From a military standpoint, the struggle between the US and the Taliban does not benefit the US. Many US adversaries are actively researching and implementing new technology to make their conventional troops significantly more effective in conflict. China, Iran, Russia, and North Korea may demonstrate that other nations have made significant investments, upgraded their military capabilities, and equipped their military forces with cutting-edge technology. In the global order, the US military capability remains quite capable and advanced. Few, if any, believe that the United States' ambition of global dominance is made attainable by its technological capabilities. However, the battle undertaken by the US and the Taliban did not reflect US technological gains. In this fight, the public culture of guerilla warfare conveys the sense that the US is not progressing beyond this conventional war.

As a result, the battle with the Taliban is no longer important and can be utilized to highlight the US military's accomplishments and stability in other countries.

CONCLUSION

The findings from the points of the US peace deal with the Taliban discussed related to 1) efforts to progressively withdraw US and coalition troops; 2) conducting a ceasefire ceremony; 3) Intra-Afghan talks to thoroughly review Afghanistan's security; 4) The last point as an expected goal is to make Afghanistan a safe environment from terror groups so as not to disturb the security stability of Afghanistan, the US, and also their allies. From the peace agreement that has been implemented, it can also be concluded that President Trump is very concerned about the US condition and the pride that must make the US greater than other countries in various sectors. Even though President Trump is considered tough and different from previous presidents in handling cases of terrorism and the war in Afghanistan, they have the same goal, to protect US citizens from terrorism and safeguard the US interests both domestically and abroad. The construction of President Trump's thoughts in making policies is in the US interest, so that it continues to be considered a strong country in the eyes of the world.

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