

IA Club: Status Report

09/20/2021

Geopolitics of Afghanistan: the proposal is to conduct an actor-analysis. In other words, we will explain the interests of the different parties involved.

Name= Please bring research on this topic to next meeting. This is not your designated topic, this is just to start getting the ball rolling.

A. Introduction: history of conflict in Afghanistan

B. Local Actors: Afghan government, Taliban, Northern Alliance (ethnic minorities)

Jack- Afghan Gov

Hermione- Taliban, Northern Alliance

Milo- Taliban

C. Regional Actors: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India

Sarina- Iran

Jack- Saudi Arabia

Milo- Pakistan

?- India

D. Global Actors: U.S., China, Russia

Sarina- China

Darly- China, Russia

Fund Raiser: talk to Student Life

Mentioned to Kodi, she said it sounds like a good idea and possible, just let her know.

10/11/2021

Regional Actors- Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan

Iran (Sarina)- Iran's focus is anti-terrorism, specifically to cut off ISK from gaining ground, so they are trying to gain more influence in Afghanistan themselves to prevent ISK from doing so. COVID-19 still poses a threat to Iran as they go through their 3rd surge of high COVID rates.

Saudi Arabia (Jack)- Report next week

Pakistan- Assigned to Hermione, will update next week

Global Actors- China, Russia, U.S.

Russia (Darly)- Planned out presentation outline in following order: Soviet Union in Afghanistan, Post-Soviet geopolitical interests in Central Asia, U.S. Withdrawal, Predictions of Potential Actions. Also covered Migration Crisis, and Russian government's involvement.

U.S. (Darly)- Will update next week

China (Sarina)- Chinese involvement in money laundering of Afghan Drug Trade funds through Chinese businesses. Chinese serving as allies to Taliban, had recent gathering to discuss alliance, and China to provide foreign aid to Taliban, with caveat that Taliban not interfere in Chinese affairs (foreign and domestic) and that Taliban remain silent on Chinese treatment of Uyghur Muslims.

10/18/2021

Local Actors- Afghan Gov/Army, Taliban

Afghan Gov/Army (Jack)-

Presentation outline in following order: American decision to withdraw from Afghanistan, Ghani's inauguration, corruption in government and army, unable to protect democratic institutions, and the collapse/surrender of Afghan Gov/Army.

Feedback: connect to Darly's coverage of U.S. (Darly will cover Obama & Trump's moves to withdraw from Afg.)

Regional Actors- Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan

Iran (Sarina)- Shifting perceptions of Taliban, more focus on ISIS-K and trying to root them out. Extrapolate Taliban vs ISIS-K in terms of reach of influence (regional or global), and the threat each group poses to Iran, respectively. Iran tentatively working with Pakistan rather than against it with goal of stabilizing Afghanistan.

Feedback: distinguish between Taliban as a nationalist movement and ISISK as a globalist movement >> Iran's threat perception

Saudi Arabia (Jack)- Saudi/Iranian legislation concerning Afghanistan/Pakistan. Saudis are allied with Pakistan and plan follow a similar foreign policy approach to Afghanistan, with the long-term goal of maintaining the regional hegemony and engaging with state/non-state actors to destabilize Iran. They don't care who runs Afghanistan, as long as they pose a threat to Iran.

Feedback: connect to Intro (Sunni/Shia rivalry, and Arab/Persian rivalry)

Global- China, Russia, U.S.

China (Sarina)- Officially taking an anti-drug stance and helping Afghan farmers to grow crops aside from poppy, of which Afghan economy is so dependent. Unofficially, Chinese businesses help launder funds from drug trade and transfer them to Afghanistan. China still sending foreign aid to Afghanistan and working with them on BRI, but definitely taking advantage of power vacuum U.S. left behind.

Feedback: make sure you have good sources for China laundering money via Afghan drug trafficking. Both China and Russia seeking to fill power vacuum post-US withdrawal.

Pakistan (Hermione) – Pakistan wary of Taliban take-over, fearing the Pakistani Taliban coming to power within Pakistan.

Feedback: Pakistan has almost a split personality when it comes to the Taliban – both wanting to see it succeed and drive out American presence, and being wary of the Afghan Taliban providing support to the Pakistan Taliban. Both are predominantly Pashtun organizations (Pashtun straddle the border). **See “Pakistan’s Pyrrhic Victory in Afghanistan” on the IA Club website.**

Russia (Darly) – Outline of Russia's interests. I didn't get notes on all of this – sorry!

Feedback: focus on Russia's contemporary interests in Afghanistan. You can touch on historical events/motivations, but these should probably get covered in the Intro.