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# A Comparative Study on the Afghan-China Relation Based on Afghan-US relation

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## Abstract

This paper shows and highlights the broad development friendly ties between Afghanistan and the People's Republic of China (PRC) and wants to investigate the effective factors which affect the relationship with the help of theoretically informed sources and historical narratives. The study shows the relationship that started with the ancient Silk Road that passed through Afghanistan, to recent cooperation represented by Afghanistan's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, AIIB, and OBOR, altogether indicate the continuation of this relationship with the friendly and neighboring country of the People's Republic of China. Moreover, the study tries to explain the differences between Afghan-China relations in comparison with Afghan-American relations. The study adopts Copenhagen school theories based on geopolitics context. Also, this paper tries to respond to this question that, which factors are more important for shaping strength in the relationship of Afghanistan and China based on Afghan- American relation? And is based on the assumption that Afghanistan and China are two neighboring countries with shared values and interests, and these common interests play an effective role in the security, economy, and stability of Afghanistan.

**Keywords:** Afghan-China Relation, Afghan-US Relation, Copenhagen School Theory, Geopolitical Position, National Interest (Mutual Benefit)

## Introduction

Historically the Afghan-China Relations are dated back to ancient times, the transport of caravans to China and Chinese merchants and tourists through Silk Road in Afghanistan has played a great role in these relationships. Afghanistan and China have always had friendly political relations and exchanging of envoys with the exception of the so-called Taliban period known between 1996- 2000 (Munadi, 2014, p4), since 2002, the relations between Afghanistan and China have come to an unprecedented manner, both in the economic sector and in the cultural and political sectors. The membership of Afghanistan in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Asian infrastructure investment Bank, SAARC, and the Belt and Road project, as well as the strategic position of Afghanistan in this project, add to the strengthening of these relations (Sakhanyar, 2005, p8).

Afghanistan is located in a geopolitical position in South Asia, a geopolitical position that has sometimes ended at the expense of Afghanistan in international affairs: mainly the United States' military presence due to the 9/11 event has sparked Afghanistan's neighbors' concerns.

This study in addition to the bilateral relations of Afghanistan and China compared the foreign policy and strategy of China, and the US, towards Afghanistan. The comparison did by theories to investigate the success and failure points for each channel of relations. It tried to respond to the question: Why Afghan-china relationship is different from the Afghan-American relationship?

This study found that the economic and security factors are effective factors framing the relationship between Afghanistan and China, for which these factors had created shared needs and mutual benefit in these relations. The relationship between Afghanistan and China as well, in fact, creates regional convergence based on the geopolitical position of Afghanistan (Afghanistan in the geopolitical dimension of security of Eurasia, 2014).

### **1. Theoretical framework**

In terms of the theoretical framework, this paper uses the Copenhagen School. The Copenhagen school is based on two theoretical approaches of realism and constructivism. The belief in the existence of governments, the realization of national interests, the centrality of the issue of security and convergence are the real foundations of this theoretical approach (Shafiee and Dolat Abadi, 2016, pp71-102).

This study tried to introduce two phenomena based on this school, first, the relationship between Afghanistan and China, second, the presence, and strategy of the US in Afghanistan. In this study, Afghanistan and China are considered as two neighboring states, which have focused the national interests as the focal point of their relations, and among the various national interests, national security for China, and economic and political security for Afghanistan considered as the fundamental and important issues. At the same time, the Copenhagen School has coordinated efforts to develop a theory or framework for the security review in accordance with the constructivist tradition (William, 2011, p129). The attention of the Copenhagen school is to the post-Cold War security studies and to the widespread developments that have taken place in the area of security. The theorists of this school are Mac Sweeney, Eli Weaver, and Barry Buzan.

From the point of view of Bozan and Weaver, the future of the international system is a function of the power at the regional level, so these are the regions that make up the power system. Their perception of the power system is a central focus on the role of regions and geopolitical significance in the world power system. In the view of this school, regional security is a security system in which the countries in its first have similar security concerns; second, historically, geographically and culturally, they have relatively similar fate and memories, and their constituent units determine the rules and mechanisms in terms of concerns and the same understanding of the threats in order to create and maintain themselves (Nazari, 2005, pp586-599). Bozan mentions this level of analysis or new concept as regional security collections. In Bazan's view, the security suite includes a group of countries whose security concerns made sufficiently close them. So that their security issues cannot be analyzed separately from each other (Vosoughi, and others,2014, pp152-153).

This perception of the level of security analysis is precisely what connects the fate of China and Afghanistan. These two countries are neighbors, and insecurity in Afghanistan is considered a common threat and must find common solutions to these common threats (Shafiee and Ruhollah Salehi Dolat Abadi, 2017, p3) Based on the geographic territory and common geopolitical of the south and east Asian countries, countries need to cooperate in different fields and can solve some of their problems by forming the convergence in the region and will strengthen the relations, based on convergence factors that are: the common geographic territory, and the neighboring location, common geopolitics, and the labor market, Afghanistan in accordance with this characteristic can have good relations with China and resolve its problems based on this theory (Sajid, p2).

Convergence as a theory was first introduced by English researcher David Mitrany in the years between the two world wars. Mitrany believes that the interference between transnational governments in a geography that has conflicting interests only leads to crisis and war (Hettne,1999, p12). This belief precisely can consider the American presence and the concern of Afghanistan's neighbors as a negative point. Given the geopolitical theory

that can be defined in the framework of constructivism, transnational countries use preventive strategies with the wisdom of financial, economic, and cultural strategies in third countries, and this issue will bring confrontation in the region (Ezzati, 2005). From a realistic perspective, the formation of international organizations cannot have a decisive impact on conflict prevention by expanding democracies and mutual interdependence, this concept, in fact, makes zero the American argument in Afghanistan (Qaiyum, p3). The emphasis of realism is to avoid ambition in foreign policy. For example, Morgenthau sees devastating, the pursuit of a policy which is based on national interests in the far realm, and he thinks this will lead to instability in the international arena. From the perspective of realism, at a high level of analysis, such policies provide the way for turmoil, instability, and war (Afet,2017, p45).

## **2. Bilateral relations of Afghanistan and China**

Afghanistan has a distinguished and indeed, immense importance in the strategic calculus of China. The geopolitics issue of this China neighbor has four dimensions of importance, including; political, strategic, geographical, and economic. The former Afghan's president, Hamid Karzai and current president Ashraf Ghani first official trips to China explain the growing realization of the importance of bilateral relations for both sides, and it has an indication of China's crucial role in Afghanistan's affairs in current times (Muhammad Khan, 2015, p2).

The previous Chinese president Hu Jintao emphasized China's regional role when he clearly envisioned that, "We will continue to manage regional affairs by ourselves, guarding against shocks from turbulence outside the region, and will play a bigger role in Afghanistan's peaceful reconstruction" (Baggiani, 2014). Similarly, as China's former president emphasized China's plan for post-2014 Afghanistan, current Chinese president Xi Jinping confirmed China's commitment to Afghanistan's economic prosperity, stability, and peace.

### **2.1. Background of Afghanistan and China relations**

Throughout history, the relations between Afghanistan and China mostly involved trade goods via caravans through Xinjiang and the Wakhan Corridor on the border between the two countries. Buddhist monks from the area of what is now Afghanistan were involved in the Silk Road transmission of Buddhism to Han dynasty China (Wikipedia, Afghan- china relation). The Afghan-Chinese relations date back to ancient times, and perhaps Zhang Qian is the first envoy of the Han emperor who has traveled to the north of Afghanistan in 128 B.C. King Kanishka of the Kushan Empire in Afghanistan sent envoys to the Han Dynasty. The mutual visits continued until the modern period, although the background of the relation between both states shows clearly that it had a religious and business aspect (Munadi, 2014, p4). Afghanistan and China official relation in the 20th century started on 30th August of 1922 when Mohamad Sharif khan was nominated in Turkestan. In 1934, Habibullah khan Tarzi was nominated in Nankeen (Nanjing) as Afghanistan envoy. On March of 1944 a friendship treaty signed by two sides (Sakhanyer, 2005, p9). The People's Republic of China established diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Afghanistan based on the Chinese five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence and mutual respect, trust, and support, all leading to deepening the traditional friendship on January 20, 1955. The modern diplomatic relations were marked by Abdul Samad who was the first Afghan Ambassador posted to Peking in 1955.

Premier Zhou Enlai and Vice Premier He Long visited Afghanistan in January 1957. This was the first ever visit taken by the Chinese leadership to Afghanistan in the history of Sino-Afghan relations. On November 1956 Prime Minister Dawood invited Prime Minister Zhou Enlai to visit Afghanistan. On January 19th, 1957, the Chinese Prime Minister and his delegation arrived in Afghanistan for a 5 days state visit (Munadi, 2014, p4), From 1996 - 2001 the relations were stopped completely; this time was the Taliban period (Sadiq, 2016, N12).

When the Afghan provisional government was formed at the end of 2001, the bilateral diplomatic relations were restarted and developed greatly on the ambassadorial level. China and Afghanistan have maintained official contact of a high-level translated by visits such as those conducted by Afghan president to Beijing in 2002 and later in 2010. Overall President Karzai had visited China for 7 times, Chinese governmental officials also have

visited Kabul in several time. In 2010 Yang Jiechi, Chinese minister of foreign affairs, visited Kabul to participate in a conference. On September 2012, Zhou Yongkang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC), made a visit to Afghanistan and met with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan, Zhou said that it was a priority of China's foreign policy to strengthen relations with neighboring countries. On October 28, 2014, President Xi Jinping held talks with President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan at the Great Hall of the People. Xi Jinping emphasized that Afghanistan is now undergoing the triple-transition in politics, security, and economy, and China supports Afghanistan in safeguarding national independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity as well as the peaceful reconciliation process featuring "Afghan-led and Afghan-owned"(China–Afghan relation, 2014). Afghan executive Chief Abdullah Abdullah traveled to China on May 20, 2016, at the invitation of the president of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping. During the meeting, the president of China Xi Jinping emphasized having further cooperation and better relations between the two countries (Sadiq, 2016).

## **2.2. The official position of China towards Afghanistan**

The official position of China in Afghanistan, due to foreign policy, and its relations with countries, can be viewed based on several perspectives: First, Afghanistan is one of the neighbors of China, China's new policy has prioritized relations with its neighbors at the first step. Second, due to the geopolitical and geo-economic position of Afghanistan, Afghanistan has been considered as a four-way transit in South Asia (Khalil, 2018), therefore, Afghanistan's importance is not only due to its resources but rather due to its geopolitical location, due to this feature of Afghanistan and due to the One Belt One Road project, which south and southwest Asian countries is the main route of this project, China will focus on this important location. Third, due to the two internal challenges of Afghanistan, insecurity, and poverty, China's position as a neighboring country has been called important to fight against the economic and security threats, since security threats in Afghanistan will be a threat in China (Ammar, 2013, N201). Regarding all, China has taken the step with two perspectives in its relationship with Afghanistan.

### **2.2.1. The economic and security cooperation**

Afghanistan is an extremely under-developed country living in severe poverty conditions affected by unemployment, and poor infrastructure, accordingly, Beijing announced its support for the new government of Afghanistan in the post-Taliban period after 2001. Chinese support planned to include humanitarian and infrastructure reconstruction assistance. China appeared as the main actor in the redevelopment of the war-torn country, initially in January 2002(Chéné,2014, p8). In the wake of new developments in post-Taliban Afghanistan, China's role was supportive and stabilizing. In January 2002, when the chairman of the Afghan Interim Government Hamid Karzai visited China, then Chinese president Jiang Zemin announced an aid package worth \$150 million for Afghanistan (Shams, 2018).

China provided economic support to Afghanistan on dissimilar schemes, which comprise 10 million dollars for Parwan Irrigation development (Tahiri, 2017, p2). In fact, China's economic aid was estimated at roughly US\$250 million between 2001 and 2013. Moreover, China gave human-resource training to more than 800 different officials of Afghanistan and also gave technical training to local Afghans in different departments. In 2003, China gave support of \$15 million after signing a financial and mechanical assistance agreement.

Since 2006, China has exempted Kabul from tax imports on 278 items and has deepened its economic relationship. Thus, it has changed as the first and primary economic partners. Security assistance also has been provided, but it focused on non-lethal aspects such as training programs. Beijing also focuses on its efforts against drug-trafficking as that is a key source of funding for militant groups, and poses a threat to public health in the region (Chéné,2014, p8).

China is among the countries that have the largest investment in Afghanistan. Aynak copper contract was signed with a capital of about \$ 4 billion in 2007, the Amu Darya contract was signed in 2012 as the first oil producing company in Afghanistan, In addition, over the past fourteen years projects such as the Jamhuriyat Hospital, the Science and Technology Center of the Ministry of Education project, the Chinese language department building , the guest house of Kabul University and the Parwan water Supply Projects, the Memorandums on the construction of the Shirkhan Port of Herat, the implementation of the electricity project on the Kabul-Kunar Watershed, the memorandum on Technical and economic cooperation, the Memorandum on the completion of Afghan Police equipment, the memorandum on the cooperation in the field of Production and export of Saffron, the memorandum on the establishment of Belt and Road (Silk Road), collaboration on construction of the teaching laboratory of Kabul University, the memorandum on establishment buildings for government officials, mutual cooperation between Afghan Telecom and China Telecom based on One belt One road project, a Fiber optic memorandum between China and Afghanistan through the Wakhan corridor, and most importantly, providing 550 scholarships for students for the last five years, and many projects were the contents of Chinese government support for Afghanistan (Bahin, 2015).

Similarly, signing a memorandum on the transfer of gas from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to China, the construction of two railroads from Landi Kottel to Jalal Abad and from Chaman to Spin Boldak, creating two highways from Peshawar(Pakistan) to Kabul and from Kunduz to Central Asia, as well as construction of large hydropower station over the Kunar river are the examples of cooperation that has been taken (Torabi and Raziye Saneie, 2015,pp7-26).In December 2014, China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Iran signed a renewal agreement, which is the largest railway track in Afghanistan (Bahin, 2015).

The first major memorandum on security relations and the readiness of China to assist the Afghan police during the Afghan Minister of Interior's visit to China was agreed, the agreement was approved by the 480 million-yuan (\$ 73 million) aid to the Afghan security forces. Both countries are also doing fine in bilateral business. Chinese telecommunication companies, Huawei and ZTE, updated 200,000 Afghanistan 's analog telephone lines to digital (Tahiri, 2017, p3).

### **2.2.2. As an intermediary in the peace process of Afghanistan**

As Afghanistan experiences insecurity, and this insecurity has threatened neighbors even in the region, and this situation in Afghanistan directly affects China. Due to that, China as a good neighbor of Afghanistan has played a significant role in the Afghan peace process as a mediator. China has persuaded Pakistan to help the Afghanistan peace process. China also has paved the way as a mediator to persuade Pakistan to cooperate with Afghanistan in the implementation of the Afghanistan Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (Shams, 2018).

A joint statement released after the "Second Afghanistan-China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers Dialogue" noted that the three sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening their relations, deepening cooperation and advancing connectivity under the BRI, Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) and other regional economic initiatives (Saif, 2018). In the 2nd China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said, peace is the strong desire of the Afghan people and the important precondition for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. He said China welcomes the peace initiatives put forward by the Afghan government (Xinhua, 2018). The tripartite meetings by foreign ministers of China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, with the support of the Chinese government, have formed in Beijing, Islamabad, and Kabul to find a solution way in Afghanistan security case.

In October 2014, China hosted the fourth Ministerial "Istanbul process" Conference about Afghanistan. The five principles as pointed out by Chinese prime minister Li Keqiang at the conference were: first, Afghanistan should be managed by Afghan people themselves; secondly, political rehabilitation must be a political solution that is acceptable to all, thirdly, trying for reconstruction of Afghanistan must be the priority; fourthly, Afghanistan's way would be provided for the development and support of foreign countries. Also, Beijing has created multilateral

mechanisms that include Pakistan and Iran, Russia and India, Russia and Pakistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, where each and then all works together on Afghanistan issues. In 2015, China created tripartite or quadripartite talks with Russia, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan for three or four times, with the aim of finding a solution to Afghanistan's problems (Shafiee and Roohallah Salehi Dolat Abadi, 2017, p80). In January 2016, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the US created a Quartet Coordination Group on Afghanistan's challenges, which held at least five meetings in less than six months.

At the beginning of 2019, the Afghan peace process has been accelerating by giving the Taliban group a deadline for the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, the neighboring countries, including China, played an active role in this process. The foreign minister of China announced that China wants to create a contact group within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for the Afghan Peace Process (Tolo TV, 2019). China supports the international efforts to help Afghanistan overcome its challenges. As a neighbor of Afghanistan, China had been one part of the "6 plus 2" format.

### **2.3. China's Role in the Economic Growth of Afghanistan**

In recent years, trade among the 2 countries has progressively augmented, and China has swiftly appeared as one of the chief exporters to Afghanistan in the past decade. Sino-Afghan employment has previously touched over \$700 million. An appearance at China-Afghan trade volume highlights certain facts which point towards the environment conducive for China's business interests. Just between 2002 and 2010, the occupation capacity continued significantly high, i.e. China's spread capacity augmented from \$19.91 million to \$704 million, there also is a small but significant increase in China's import volume which increased from \$.08 million to \$11.7 million (Huasheng, 2012, pp4-7).

China is making substantive contributions in terms of developing the natural resources and infrastructure of Afghanistan. In 2007, Metallurgical Corporation of China (MCC) and Jiangxi Copper Corporation (JCCL) agreed to make the single largest foreign investment of \$3.5 billion in Afghanistan by winning a tender to develop what geologists believe is the world's second-largest undeveloped copper deposit at Aynak in Logar Province-Afghanistan, these copper deposits are estimated to be worth \$1-\$3 trillion (Muhammad Khan, 2015, p78).

Afghanistan has approved an exploration and Production Sharing Contract between the Ministry of Mines and CNPC for three oil blocks in the Amu Darya Basin of northern Afghanistan. The fields are expected to contain a total of more than 80 million barrels of crude oil reserves, which will be produced over a 25-year period, and this is the second huge investment of Chinese government in Afghanistan for the production of natural resources (Ministry of mines and petroleum of Afghanistan, 2012). China has generally played a positive economic role via investment and infrastructure spending in Afghanistan (Lise, 2018).

### **2.4. Afghanistan's geopolitical Position as milestone Point for China**

Afghanistan is surrounded by countries sharing land borders in South-central Asia. However, its location is geopolitically characterized as in central Asia, South Asia, and sometimes the Middle East. The geographic entity known as Afghanistan has a very long history and has been an ancient focal point of the Silk Road and migration (Tajeram, 2017). Historical records show that the Silk Road is one of the oldest routes for the exchange of humanitarian goods and knowledge between the Greek and Chinese civilizations, which most of this route crossed with centered of Balkh city- Afghanistan to Khorasan (Gorjestani, 2017). The Wakhan corridor, located in the Pamir Mountains, north-east of Afghanistan, is close to China. This corridor has its significance in providing an alternative route for the energy supply of oil and gas pipelines. Regardless of its mineral and oil resources reserves, Afghanistan's regional importance lies in its geopolitical position as a link between the region countries of India, Iran, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, and of course China. Installing the pipeline project going through Pakistan and Afghanistan shall add a big value to energy resources industry in Central Asia and Iran with a benefit for all countries in the region. On the other hand, Afghanistan's strategic position at the crossroads of so many trade

routes have for centuries made it vulnerable to invasion by transnational powers. At the same time, two major factors, economic poverty, and extremism in the country have paved the way for intervention (Zazai, 2011).

## **2.5. The official position of Afghanistan towards China**

The official position of Afghanistan in its relationship with China can be expressed based on several factors. First, China and Afghanistan are two neighboring countries, which have a common border, and the presence of common culture and history in this area is very important and influential. In addition, Afghanistan has joined the project and organizations, like the Belt and Road Project, the AIIB, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which all shows the official position of Afghanistan in its relation with China.

### **2.5.1. One Belt One Road (OBOR)**

Historical records show that the Silk Road was one of the oldest routes for the trade of goods, knowledge, and culture among the civilizations of China and Greece which flowed from Khorasan to the centrality of the Balkh city, Afghanistan. The results of the studies show that this way was essentially formed in the Han Dynasty of China in the first century BC (Gorjestani, 2017). The BRI is the new Chinese plan which is a development strategy and framework that focuses on connectivity and cooperation among countries, and this project includes the countries of Asia (Belt, One Road, 2017). Afghanistan is located to the route of this project, so, Afghanistan has signed a memorandum with China to join this project. Afghanistan is one of the earliest countries which announced its support for this initiative.

### **2.5.2. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**

The SCO is an Intergovernmental organization which formed for multilateral security, economic, and cultural cooperation. This organization was founded in 2001 by leaders of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In addition to the main members, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Iran, Pakistan, India, and Belarus joined this organization as observer members in 2012. In 2015, the organization agreed with the India and Pakistan membership, and these two countries, in less than two years, implemented all the conditions for full membership of the organization and accepted as permanent members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2017 (Wikipedia, 2018). Also, Afghanistan participates as an observer member at the meetings of this organization and has played a good role, and China has supported Afghanistan under the Shanghai Cooperation Organizations activities.

### **2.5.3. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**

The AIIB was established in 2013 by Xi Jinping the president of the People's Republic of China, and on June 29, 2015, fifty-six countries were accepted as members of this Bank. So, this bank has practically established with an initial capital of one hundred billion dollars, which, fifty billion dollars paid by China, and fifty billion dollars paid by other member countries. China has announced that this Bank will be able to pay an \$8 billion bailout for Asian infrastructure, and so, this financial fund will be used to provide the infrastructure resources that are the long-term targets of the Silk Road project (Bahin, 2015). Afghanistan has been accepted as one of its members. Officials at the Afghan Ministry of Finance emphasize that Afghanistan's membership in this bank will open a new phase for rapid economic development (Shayiri, 2017).

## **3. A Comparative view of the foreign policy of China, and the US towards Afghanistan**

### **3.1. China's foreign policy**

China wants to have a good relationship with the neighbors or regional countries based on economic perspective, enhanced by China's strategy with regional countries based on One Belt One Road as the following would show:



- **Strengthening policy communication:** that is to activate further negotiation process of cooperation to include practical implementation of cooperation projects.
- **Improving road connectivity:** which means transportation infrastructure construction; energy infrastructure construction; constructing of cross-border optical cables and other communications trunk line networks.
- **Promoting trade facilitation:** which can be translated to enhancing customs cooperation; expanding trading areas, improving trade structure; speeding up investment facilitation; expanding mutual investment areas.
- **Enhancing monetary circulation:** that is illustrated in making more efforts in building currency stability, investment and financing, and credit information systems in Asia and strengthening financial regulation cooperation.
- **Strengthening people-to-people exchange:** by promoting and supporting students exchange programs including the opening of cultural schools. Furthermore, increase cooperation in the area of science and technology and other civil non-governmental associations and tourism as well (How will the BRI advance China's interests?)

The new diplomacy of the China neighborhood has significant features, which the most important of all, relations with neighbors are the main priorities of foreign policy (Huasheng, 2016). Thus, it seems that the theory of the security collections of the Copenhagen school has opened up its place in the Chinese perspective. In confirmation of the Copenhagen School view, the history of international relations also shows that, as governments' powers grow, their cooperation extends first to neighbors. They create a safe and secure environment, improves their position, strengthens its diplomatic resources (Beeson, and Fujian Li, 2015, pp93-109).

China's constructive engagement with regional countries based on her independent foreign policy and "five principles of peaceful coexistence, win-win strategy, good neighboring policy, and mutual benefit" has always been a source of stability in South Asia (The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, 2014), which Afghanistan includes this strategy. In retrospect, China's policy towards Afghanistan is a collection of distinct bilateral relationships, characterized by economic opportunities, and security concern. Therefore, China's engagement with Afghanistan can be viewed from three perspectives.

**First**, China looks to Afghanistan from the security point of view, from this perspective, China thought at the beginning, with the onset of US attacks on Afghanistan, that one of its most concerning security threats (Taliban) is destroying, but the US military presence in its neighborhood turned to be a much bigger threat, which, should be resolved in a desirable way. The **second** comment concerns the economic dimension of relations. From this perspective, China, based on the win-win strategy, wants to bring economic prosperity to Afghanistan, so, it wants to make economic investments in a safe and secure place. The **third** view, China considers Afghanistan as an independent factor, not in the light of the United States and NATO. China is pursuing a distinct distinction to restore stability in Afghanistan from what the United States has done during its occupation of Afghanistan for 17 years (Shafiee and Roohallah Salehi Dolat Abadi, 2017, pp95-96). Thus, China's prime minister, Li Keqiang, during a press conference, points out the Chinese government's view towards Afghanistan as follows: First, Afghanistan must be managed and led by the Afghans themselves; second, political reconciliation must be accepted by all parties as a political solution. Third, there must be an effort to rebuild the economy. Fourth, Afghanistan's path should be provided for the development and support of foreign countries.

### 3.2.US foreign policy

Afghanistan has created a special geopolitical charm for the United States which located outside the US security zone and as a country which has been located to the neighboring countries of China, Russia, Pakistan, and Iran. The US foreign policy towards Afghanistan historically can be considered in five stages: The first period; Neglect and Preventing the Influence of Communism (1945-1979). Second period: indirect involvement and support of the Mujahidin against the government (1979- 1991). Third period, forgetfulness period (1991-1995). The fourth period, return (1995 -2001), and the fifth period, military intervention and colonialism from 2001 to 2019.

### **3.2.1. The first phase of US policy toward Afghanistan "1945-1979."**

The importance of Afghanistan's strategic position as a neighboring country to the Soviet Union and British India became clearer for the defense ministry of US (Tamana, 2008, pp104-105). Due to Cold War rivals, especially after 1954, the Soviet military aid to Afghanistan increased, and comprehensive agreements were signed with the Soviet Union. As a result, the United States opened the permanent presence in Kabul in 1943 as a result of the Second World War's pressure, as well as America's attention to Afghanistan was increased in 1979 based on the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan (Roohzunda, 2005, p112).

### **3.2.2. The second phase of US policy toward Afghanistan "1979-1990."**

In 1979, the United States approach was changed towards Afghanistan. Afghanistan, which has basically had a diminutive role in US foreign policy, with the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, it was considered an important geopolitical location by the defense and foreign affairs ministers of US. At the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan until the presidency of Reagan in America, the United States wanted to intervene in Afghanistan affairs but did not have any real control over it (Ahmadi, 2010, p210). One month after the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, US president Carter announced that the occupation of Afghanistan is a threat to US interests, and formed a coalition that is composed of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Kingdom against the Soviet Union (Friedman, 2007, p74).

According to the military regulations of the Russian Federation government in 1993, Moscow knew the strategic importance of Afghanistan, and this view led the United States to enter the line of Afghanistan affairs. In this time, Brzezinski, National Security Advisor of US president Carter, designed the Carter Doctrine on Afghanistan. The doctrine was formed on the basis of the support of the opponents of the Democratic Republic government of Afghanistan, which enjoyed widespread support from the Soviet Union, and it paved the way for American retaliation for the Vietnam War. Later, with the victory of the Mujahideen groups and with the formation of the government in 1992, a mysterious era in United States relations with Afghanistan was created. America's relations with the mujahideen government were stopped, and the relationship between the two governments reached a crisis resulting in the United States backing the formation of the Taliban militant group that was created in the first time in the district of Maiwand, Kandahar province (Sitiz, 2010, p5).

### **3.2.3. The third phase of US policy toward Afghanistan "1991-2001."**

With the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, the United States, which no longer saw its vital interests in Afghanistan, had left Afghanistan (Tamana, 2017 p109). The US's goal was to support the Taliban as a barrier to isolate Iran and Russia in Afghanistan (Babran and Hatif Poor Rushishidi, 2011, p106). Richard Nixon, in his book "Beyond Peace" in 1994 wrote: "Afghanistan has not lost its strategic importance as a decisive factor in Central Asia. Britain recognized the importance of this country in the nineteenth century; as the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, it was well known for its importance. Today, we must understand the reality of this geopolitics (Ahmadi, 2010, pp94-95).

### **3.2.4. The fourth phase of US policy toward Afghanistan "2001-2019."**

The fourth phase starts after 9/11, 2001, and the US military presence in Afghanistan: this phase is a new and different phase from the past. The United States has come out of the traditional phase and has located in hegemonic phase in its relationship (Hossain Ershad, 2014, p8). The isolationist policy has changed to the policy of international intervention, since that time, the United States has clearly pursued its interests in various countries. Attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq are examples of US intervention (Qadidri, 2013, p6). This stage is the era of US hegemony in relations with Afghanistan, in this period, the United States think more about the geopolitical position on the pretext of the struggle against terrorism (Javadi Arjmand and others, 2015, p1). In order to maintain its

influence over Afghanistan, the United States has launched a war on terror, and this attack on Afghanistan was a tactic and excuse for the United States to be present in Afghanistan (Faraji Rad, and others, 2012, p194).

The United States created a parallel government in Afghanistan for 17 years, which, on the one hand, she has supported the government of Afghanistan, and on the other hand, they have separately used small internal groups, especially in the first time the Taliban, later the ISIS, and this type of US policy caused the terrorist groups to become more aggravated in Afghanistan and the Afghan issues has become more complicated. The United States presence in Afghanistan was justified and represented by the slogan "Combating terrorism, drug trafficking, and human rights abuses in Afghanistan," while the number of deaths in Afghanistan has risen to 45,000 since the American presence over the 17 years. Afghanistan has produced 90% of the world's heroin, and the part of the territory of Afghanistan is still in the hands of the Taliban, and terrorism is becoming stronger every day (Fard, 2014).

### **3.3. Afghanistan and its national interest in foreign relations**

Afghanistan is located in the midst of the three areas of economic, cultural and geopolitical in the region. While Afghanistan has not been able to use its geopolitical position positively, given the lack of clear policies and other components within the country, this geopolitical position has ended up at the expense of Afghanistan's benefits and interests. Afghanistan is a war-torn country, and two decades of war have caused the country to be unable to use its economic capacities and resources. Afghanistan's mines capacity, according to the Afghanistan Geological Survey, indicates that unproduced mines in Afghanistan are qualitatively and quantitatively in the second place of the world's intact mines, in Afghanistan, 1,400 types of minerals have been identified (Wikipedia, Afghan mine). Based on these two characteristics (geopolitical position and mining capacity), Afghan authorities defined their foreign policy as an "economy axis," and stated that Afghanistan could achieve the security and the economy based on these two components. Afghanistan, in a huge picture based on the region and the world, wants to depict four pillars in its foreign policy:

- Excretion of the problem and challenges of the geopolitical and geostrategic position of the country and turning it into an opportunity to interact with regional and trans-regional countries.
- Exploiting the geo-economic position as the energetic geography highway of the countries of the region based on the principle of trade and economics.
- Excretion of the geo-cultures threats from security groups, and returning as the focal point for regional and trans-regional cultures.
- Identity and independence: through the elements mentioned, Afghanistan have strived to consolidate its independence and political identity in international relations and politics (The second round of the National Dialogue Meeting, 2017).

Since Afghanistan's policy is an economy axis policy, and Afghanistan is trying to make good use of the projects that are located on its way, so, the One Belt One Road, TAPI, and CASA-1000 are the projects which described as the most useful in the economy of Afghanistan (Munadi, 2017).

### **3.4. Usefulness and contradictions in the relationships**

This section allows us to examine theories, national interests, and foreign policy views of China, and the United States with an overall and realistic view of their relationship with Afghanistan and the usefulness of their views on the national interest of Afghanistan. It tries to find that, which of these countries can be useful in the view of the Afghan future relations.

So, as study mentioned in the previous section, in Afghanistan's foreign policy (excretion of the geopolitical and geostrategic position challenges of the country and turning it into an opportunity to interact with countries, exploiting from the geo-economic status as a geospatial energy highway and eliminating geo-culture connections towards Security collections) has defined as the provider of stability, security and economic development. In

addition, it paves the way for the Afghan national interest, and the view (economics axis, considering two features of the geopolitical position and economic capacity) can be useful for the future of Afghanistan's relations with other countries. In this section, the study looks at the views of these countries in general, which reflects the past, present and future politics of these countries in relation to Afghanistan. Here is the question: which components and characteristics are tightening of the ties of China, and the US with Afghanistan?

### ■ The People's Republic of China

China's relations with Afghanistan have been defined in three approaches (Open doors Policy, Good neighborhood policy, and win-win strategy) and two Action Plans (Security and Economic). China sees insecurity and terrorism in Afghanistan as a threat to itself, and that's why it has taken economic and financial programs to prevent the rise of terrorism.

First, China's foreign policy emphasizes the economic dimension, and it tries to restrain the internal problems by economic persuasion, this Chinese approach is in full accord with Afghanistan's foreign policy. Afghanistan emphasizes its national interests in foreign policy and relations with countries based on economic aspects. Authorities believe that, given the natural resources which Afghanistan has, it is possible by holding communication with countries can pave the way for extracting these national resources, this is the same approach that the Chinese government has exactly pointed out in its win-win strategy (Qadiri, 2013).

Second, in the security part: China has activated its role at the head of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a mediator for the Afghan peace process (Munadi, 2014), the role of organizing and supporting the continuity of multilateral meetings with Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, and Russia. China's efforts in the Afghan peace process through the formation of the meetings of the members of Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a significant contribution to the Afghan peace process because the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are neighbors of Afghanistan, and each of these countries has common geopolitics. According to the realists of the Copenhagen School, the joint geopolitical provides the common need, and common needs bring a single point of view on security. In the logic of this argument, William Thomas and Grid emphasize that a regional security suite is a set of governments that, maintaining the security of each one to secure another and threaten a member's security is known as the threat to all members of the security community (Azrabs, 2017, pp121-123).

Third: given the win-win strategy based on the One Belt One Road, Afghanistan is ready to accept this initiative, and Afghanistan will receive more benefits to the practice of this project. Afghanistan and China have a complementary economy, and this means that China has huge manufacturing factories which can produce the all goods that Afghanistan needs, and Afghanistan has raw materials to be used in Chinese factories. Afghanistan's vast natural resources need an extraction, while Afghanistan is not capable of the exploitation of it, and China with complementary economic needs and huge production factories needs these raw materials. Therefore, China has the best chance for the production of Afghan natural resources, at some time it can play a good role in the economy of Afghanistan (Aliyar, 2017).

Fourth: Common Security Concerns: In the view of Bozan, neighboring countries that have similar concerns and historically, culturally and geographically they have relatively common memories and destiny, they can soon get communicate to each other, and their relationship will remain stable. It is what connects the fate of China and Afghanistan, the Afghan security challenges have an impact on China's security, the Taliban group and the challenging groups in Xinjiang are consolidating each other, and their consistency causes the vulnerability of China and Afghanistan, therefore, these two countries need to find common solutions to common threats (Nasri, 2005, p599).

Fifth: Terrorism, separatism and fundamentalism, threatens both countries (Afghanistan and China), the rise of fundamentalism and terrorism in Afghanistan increases the opportunities for activities of this group in China's Xinjiang (Huasheng, 2012, p3), hence the Chinese government in the framework of the Copenhagen School is

determined to reduce the threat of these groups by increasing the economic and technical support for the Afghan government.

Sixth: An increase in China's investment in Afghanistan, China is the only country with the highest investment rate among the foreign countries in Afghanistan, the Aynak and Amu Darya (IRA) project are good examples of these investments.

### ■ The United States of America

1. American politics in the world, especially in Afghanistan has taken from the school of realism and liberalism, the characteristics of the school of realism are that, in the anarchic system, the power is a restraining device, this school, in some cases, describes the use of the military as the best solution way. The characteristics of the liberalism school are freedoms such as feminism, secularism, free market, and so on (Aadili, 2017). Also, based on the Bush, Obama and, Trump strategy, the using of military power on Afghanistan issues have been the main principle of the American administration and based on their ideas, the war and increasing military forces were the only solution way for Afghanistan tension.

Given these US policy features, just as Afghanistan has witnessed three decades of war, and Afghanistan has not been able to resolve the conflict through military and war, and it has not had a positive outcome, and even non-governmental organizations in the United States have acknowledged that they have not been successful in Afghanistan through war, so, the American leaders logic is as the weak logic. From the point of view of the realism school and even structuralism, the differences of model sometimes bring challenges in the community, so, for the Afghan people, the Western model such as secularism, feminism and free- market does not match culturally and ideologically with the Afghan people, and this model has been in conflict with the culture and ideology of the Afghan people for many years. In this respect, this issue has created intellectual and cultural contradictions in Afghanistan.

2. As this study has shown earlier the US foreign policy, the American relationship with Afghanistan has been shaped based on geopolitical position, where the Americans have been trying to maintain and keep its presence permanently in Afghanistan. Consequently, the presence of the Americans in Afghanistan has created a kind of confrontation with Afghanistan's neighbors, especially that it has brought about Russia's reaction, and this has led Afghanistan to become a proxy war field (Peshgahi Fard, 2008, p100).

3. To ensure the presence in Afghanistan, the United States has formed a parallel power with the Afghan government, namely the use of opposition groups within the Afghan government, this is also the result of the Americans realistic approach, which, they believe that for surviving in a third country, the using of a parallel power is necessary. Similarly, a portion of US aid in Afghanistan is spent on this policy. Therefore, this policy is a dangerous policy given the contradiction of national interests of Afghanistan (Salimi, 2010).

4. After 9,11, the United States had no interest in implementing economy programs for Afghanistan, which means that, it has not spent any money on infrastructure projects. Officials in Afghanistan say that, the United States has returned at least 70 percent of the aid which has promised to Afghanistan government, which means that US aids were not within the purview of the Afghan government, as part of the money was delivered to American companies in Afghanistan, and through them was spent on the Afghan military (Round- Table on US-Afghanistan Relations, 2017, pp17-18).

### 3.5. Opportunities and Challenges of China-Afghan Relations

As Afghanistan's relations based on the geopolitical situation have been changing for decades, and Afghanistan has experienced ups and downs in its relations with the countries, these relations in their own way have had opportunities and challenges. US relations with Afghanistan are usually formed based on the geopolitical focus of Afghanistan and on the basis of the confrontation (1/Afghanistan in the Post-Cold War World 2006, pp10-11). On

the other hand, this confrontation, physical presence, and proxy war disabled the body of Afghanistan. Insecurity, economic poverty, drugs, and unemployment are the phenomena that the people of Afghanistan have experienced based on this confrontation (Epatko, 2014).

But China-Afghanistan relations are beyond the goals and policies that the United States has pursued in Afghanistan. China as a neighbor of Afghanistan sees extremism as a potential threat to its territory (Ghiasy, 2017). Afghanistan and China relationship has entered a new phase in recent years, and the good opportunities are emerging in the relationships between the two countries, and these opportunities are predictable in two areas: First, changes in the nature of the policy of the neighboring countries of Afghanistan, Second, the announcement of the failure of the United States in Afghanistan, and the preparedness of the United States for its withdrawal from Afghanistan (Challenges and opportunities for China to invest in Afghanistan, 2013).

#### ■ **Changes in the nature of the foreign policy of neighboring countries**

The neighboring countries of Afghanistan, including the Central Asian countries, have changed the nature of their policies towards the United States. Today, these countries, in addition to changing their vision about the United States, have increased their focus on the fight against terrorism, and their understanding of the nature of terrorism has changed. Also, these countries are at the same time as the main or observer member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It is guessed that the overall consensus on the vision in the security complex (Shanghai Cooperation organization) are taking place about Afghanistan issue. What is optimistic is that China as a friend of the Pakistan country, the country that has become the key to Afghanistan's peace, has been mediating and coordinating about the peace process between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The coordination is getting stronger, as China feels more responsibility about Afghanistan, given its commitment to having a good relationship with Afghanistan and given the threat posed by terrorists, and also, given the greater influence which has in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and in the region, it can play a bigger role in Afghanistan's peace and security agenda.

#### ■ **Preparation of the US's withdrawal from Afghanistan**

Since the beginning of the US presence in Afghanistan has taken 18 years, and more than \$ 700 billion of US budget has been spent on the war. In the meantime, the United States has been accused based on its dual function, as well as, a senior American journalist Richard Cohen wrote in the Washington Post that, the war in Afghanistan is not over, and the United States cannot win (Afghanistan sputnik, 2017). Therefore, given the reactions of civil society, media and political parties in the United States, the US government has been forced to retreat with a tactic from Afghanistan, and this is more likely. Meanwhile, the US is negotiating with the Taliban, which will find a logical excuse for its withdrawal. If this scenario is used and Afghanistan's neighbors come together in Afghan affairs, it is likely that the relationship between China and Afghanistan will enter a new phase.

At the same time, to expand this relationship, there is a series of challenges: the presence of the United States in Afghanistan has created a series of challenges for the further growth of Afghanistan-China relations. Also, at the same time, US withdrawal from Afghanistan is likely to add challenges in the region. As well as, war and insecurity in Afghanistan are another challenges in Afghanistan's relations with China. In addition, Afghan-Pakistani tensions have somehow affected China-Afghanistan relations as a challenge to their relationship.

#### **A. The presence of the US in Afghanistan**

US presence in Afghanistan defines a potential threat to China-Afghanistan relations. The main purpose of the United States in Afghanistan is to interact and influence neighboring Afghanistan, for being effective in the region. The United States is trying to reduce the role of neighboring countries in their relationship with Afghanistan, and this effort has been fully seen in the US program in Afghanistan yet.

#### **B. The power vacuum in Afghanistan**

A vacuum of power will arise based on the withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan. If this issue is not managed after the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, it will create an uncertain future for Afghanistan as well as this will be a challenge for the security structure of the region. This issue may have posed challenges in China-Afghanistan relations (Shafiee and Roohallah Salehi Dolat Abadi, 2017, p89).

### **C. The tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan**

Afghanistan and Pakistan have been in conflict over time, Durand Line, the support given by Pakistan to the Taliban groups in Afghanistan, and India's role in Afghanistan, and all form the axis of tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan, these issues are relatively like a shadow in the relationship between China and Afghanistan. Because, on the one hand, the nickname of Pakistan in China is "a steely friend," meaning a completely reliable friend, on the other hand, China wants to progress its relations with Afghanistan. Accordingly, the tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan sometimes create a shadow in the context of the Afghan-Chinese relations (Andishmand, 2007).

### **D. Insecurity in Afghanistan**

The security issue of Afghanistan is paramount for Beijing, the security issue in Aynak copper and Amu Darya projects, the possibility of influencing the insecurity in China's province of Xinjiang that is on the borders of Afghanistan, and the threat of insecurity to implement One Belt One Road project are the issues which China has concerns over based on the insecurity situation of Afghanistan. In general, insecurity in Afghanistan will be insecurity in the region. With this situation, insecurity in Afghanistan will create challenges for China (Lynne, 2016). On the other hand, any instability or lack of government control in Central Asia directly affects the economic security of China, in particular, the security of oil and gas pipelines, where there are currently two oil pipelines and four gas pipelines between China and Central Asia. Based on a huge perspective, Central Asia is the western gateway to the Chinese Silk Road. If Central Asia is unstable, the construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt will be widely difficult (Shafiee and Roohallah Salehi Dolat Abadi, 2017, p88).

## **4. Findings and discussion**

### **4.1. Strong and shared points in China-Afghanistan relations**

Given the geopolitical position of Afghanistan in the neighborhood of the People's Republic of China and given the Chinese plans in its relations with neighboring countries, especially Afghanistan, a number of points can be identified and analyzed as strong and shared points in the relations between Afghanistan and the People's Republic of China. Understanding these points can be analyzable for Afghanistan based on the People's Republic of China's initiative, such as One Belt One Road and its activities in the context of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

#### **4.1.1. Afghanistan in One Belt One Road project**

Historical symbols of the Silk Road indicate that Afghanistan has been one of the focal points for connecting cultures and traditions to more than two thousand years. Thus, this country has been the crossroads of all trade routes to China, the Middle East, and Europe. The initiative of One Belt One Road which is economics initiative, at the same time affects the security field (Afghanistan. silk road).

##### **4.1.1.1. Economic dimension:**

- As the broader scope, this initiative, by creating a convergence between the countries of the path, it can play an important role in reducing the opportunities and motivations of extremist and terrorist movements (The International Assembly of the Collaboration of OBOR 2017). Given the fact that fundamentalism can be reduced by the use of the economic program, this is predictable, because a large part of the ominous movements in Afghanistan is due to the lack of job opportunities and economic insufficiencies (Kyle, 2017).
- China needs to bazaar for its export goods while also requiring energy imports, hence China, through the decision of the OBOR project, wants to fully meet the diverse needs of its and the countries located in the path of this project (Torabi and Raziye Saneie, 2015). Here, Afghanistan is a good market for both commodity consumption

and China's energy needs, because in Afghanistan, according to the geological survey of Afghanistan, the value of oil and gas in Afghanistan has estimated \$ 1131.840 trillion, in Afghanistan 1,400 types of minerals have been identified (Wikipedia, Mining in Afghanistan). On the other hand, Afghanistan gains a large of its consumer goods from China by passing the second or third countries, if Afghanistan gains the One Belt One Road project, this will be considered an economic development and transformation in Afghanistan.

- The initiative of One Belt One Road, in addition to building peace and developing joint partnerships between the countries of the path, can provide a countless occupation opportunity for Afghanistan both inside and outside the border. Afghanistan is the country that has the highest unemployment among youth.
- Since the volume of transit that will transport through the corridor One Belt One Road, the probability is much higher than the other routes currently Afghanistan has using, the signing of the project's membership agreement of the OBOR, and Afghanistan's entry into this project, provides a very good economic opportunity for Afghanistan. When this issue is remarkable in nature and outcomes (The International Assembly of the Collaboration of One Belt-One Road project, 2017), Afghanistan has not still a direct route to China, its volume of exports and imports between China and Afghanistan reached 1 billion yearly. Also, China is a good market for Afghan goods, because, in the past, Afghanistan's goods were exported to China through the market of third countries (Pakistan), holding Pakistan's trademark. If this route becomes open for Afghanistan, Afghanistan would have its own trademark along with having access to large markets within the shortest time (Mohmand, 2017).
- In all transit corridors, political parameters are important issues, and geopolitical politics discussions are existing as well, and for this reason, there is not necessarily the full economic incentive for them. So, there is necessary for countries always to consider one or more alternate transit routes to use them when they face the problem for transportation of goods with their neighboring countries. Afghanistan is one of the countries that has repeatedly experienced this problem based on the transit arena with the neighboring countries such as Pakistan and Iran, which sometimes reached the level of stopping the cars of Afghanistan from crossing borders, where consequently the goods have turned out dirty. Interestingly the Wakhan Corridor, which directly connects China to Afghanistan, will solve such a dilemma.
- China has shown its goodwill based on the implementation of this plan by providing the latest technology, lending, and investment, and also will provide a new dimension to the economic growth of countries involved in this path, including Afghanistan. Given these hopes, Afghanistan can achieve good economic growth by means of extraction of its rich mines.
- Another priority of this plan is to reduce the barriers from the members of the OBOR countries which have faced in free trade, investment, industrial cooperation, technical and engineering services. While, in this regard, in the document of OBOR initiative has emphasized the development of a free trade zone, the improvement of the business structure, the search for new areas for business growth and the promotion of a commercial equilibrium (The International Assembly of the Collaboration of One Belt-One Road project, 2017, pp8-10).
- The other priority of this plan is to connect people together. From the perspective of the initiative's narratives, the transplantation of the people of the member states provides each other with a platform for their participation and public support for the plan (Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road, 2015). In this framework, the promotion of cultural and academic interactions, media, youth and women's interactions of member countries with the aim of gaining public support for the expansion of cooperation. Accordingly, in line with the objectives of the project, there will be an awarding of 10,000 scholarships to students of OBOR countries to study in China (Nai, 2016, pp101-104).



#### 4.1.1.2. Security dimension:

Cooperation in this project is a kind of practical cooperation that will strengthen the commercial ability of the countries which are located in the project way. On a wider scale, this plan can play an important role in reducing the opportunities and motivations of extremist and terrorist movements by creating a convergence between countries on the path, because the countries that are on the path to this plan will find a common vision in the fight against terrorism. In the case of Afghanistan, the countries which connect by Afghanistan to China will find a common point of view towards Afghanistan (The International Assembly of the Collaboration of One Belt-One Road project, 2017).

#### 4.1.2. Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Afghanistan's security

The member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are often neighbors of Afghanistan. Their views on Afghanistan are centered on security. Insecurity in Afghanistan is considered a potential threat to these countries. From Bazan's point of view, national security and international security are understood by regional security. Consequently, the appropriate foreign policy of each country with respect to the Copenhagen School is a policy that pays special attention to multi-dimensional security and looks to its national security, especially to its regional security (Azrabsh, 2017, p143).

From the point of view of scientists, the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation organization have understood this important point, which is, insecurity in Afghanistan means insecurity in their countries. China, given the pervasive influence on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and based on being a neighbor of Afghanistan, and based on deep friendship with Pakistan country, has a greater role in bringing peace in Afghanistan. China's goal is to be able to come up with an appropriate solution in Afghan affairs by coordinating views. And these activities show convergence in the region (Sajid, p6).

In confirmation of the Copenhagen School view, the history of international relations also shows that, as powers grow of a country, its attention extends first to neighbors and more emphasis on the surrounding areas to expand its relation. Based on this perspective, China understood the concerns of Afghanistan and wants to resolve it through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. According to Chinese expert Andrew Small, what is striking in Central Asian countries is that China is the only actor who can provide the necessary investment in Central Asia and Afghanistan and get succeeded. So, a stable Afghanistan has crucial importance for China to reach a security coalition (Shafiee and Ruhollah Salehi Dolat Abadi, 2017, pp7-24). On the other hand, no security organization in the region has this regional integration based on Afghanistan affairs and needs. So, Shanghai Cooperation organization has this property in regional integration based on Afghanistan affairs.

#### Conclusion

This paper begins by highlighting the points that define the path of the relationship between the People's Republic of China and Afghanistan, and it does this through emphasizing the importance of these relations, useful ways, the superiority of relations between China and Afghanistan compared to Afghanistan's relations with the United States. It explains the limitations and challenges these relationships abound with the prediction of the necessary strategies. The importance of these relationships can be expressed based on several components. First, Afghanistan and China have common vulnerabilities as two neighboring countries, meaning security in Afghanistan has a positive impact on the security of China, thus, given the shared interests and mutual threat between the two countries, security aspect has continuously emphasized the importance of these relationships.

National interests in relations between the two countries have been defined on the basis of these two common grounds of "security and economy." That's why, China tries to help Afghanistan in the economic growth arena and wants to prevent extremism in Afghanistan through the advantage of the economic persuasion, so this strategy and mechanism have defined as one of the options for preventing extremism in Afghanistan's foreign policy.

Secondly, the other importance of this relationship can be expressible with the emphasis on the strategic position of Afghanistan. The implementation of the One Belt One Road project where Afghanistan is one of the main paths of this project will face a security-wise problem if Afghanistan is insecure. Therefore, China is trying to play a positive role in the stability of Afghanistan, in order to regain Afghanistan's security and stability.

Thirdly, one crucial aspect of shaping Afghan-China relations is linked to the OBOR project. Afghanistan will solve some of its economic and security problems by means of the benefits that it is getting from this project. The main characteristics of this project in the area of regional integration are in the field of security and economic prosperity. Based on that and based on the benefits one country can get from this project, Afghanistan could solve fifty percent of its economic and trade challenges.

Also, the success of the relationship between Afghanistan and the People's Republic of China can be clear, in light of comparing to the relationship between Afghanistan and the United States, as explained in the following: First, based on the geopolitical perspective, neighboring countries do have a great impact on a country's security. So, China, with its focus on Afghanistan's security issue, and due to being at the head of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's activities and security-related complexities, she can have the greatest impact on Afghan security issues. Because, most of the Shanghai Cooperation organization's members are Afghanistan's neighbors; therefore, security threats in Afghanistan are considered a common threat to these countries, in this case, these countries will find a unified view on Afghanistan's issues under the Shanghai Security Organization. From the point of view of international relations schools, the common threats and common interests create convergence in the region, and therefore, in the security case of Afghanistan, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization complex is a case in point. Also, China, given its close relationship with Pakistan as a steely friend, can play an acceptable role as a mediator in the Afghan-Pakistan tension, as well as in the Afghan peace process. Second, based on common interests and common threat, China has defined its threats including the threat of extremist's groups, which China considers a danger to its security. Based on this fact, China's major efforts in securing Afghanistan from these groups is true rather than being a mere political game, as the case of the United States. Third, Afghanistan imports a large part of its goods from China. At the same time, China is considered to be the largest foreign investor in Afghanistan.

But Afghanistan's relations with the United States have been on the contrary to these views. US relations in Afghanistan have been defined in US doctrine by fighting against terrorism in order to prevent terrorist attacks in the US, while, in fact, the US presence in Afghanistan, as confirmed in different studies, is back to the US interest in the geopolitical position of Afghanistan. In both cases, based on international relations schools approach the searching of terrorism in the second geography is irrational and undesirable as it has recently been proven that the United States, despite the massive use of money, could not bring peace in Afghanistan. The presence of the United States in the geography of Afghanistan, as the geopolitical area of the region, has led to the confrontation of the neighboring countries of Afghanistan, and she is not useful for Afghanistan.

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