

KARADENİZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY * THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

MASTER’S PROGRAM

**THE IMPACT OF TÜRKİYE’S ROLE AS A RISING POWER IN AFGHANISTAN
PEACEBUILDING PROCESS**

MASTER’S THESIS

Ruhullah AFSHAR

JULY – 2022

TRABZON

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Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Özgür TÜFEKÇİ

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APPROVAL

Upon the submission of the dissertation, **Ruhullah AFSHAR** has defended the study “**The Impact of Türkiye’s Role as a Rising Power in Afghanistan Peacebuilding Process**” in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations at Karadeniz Technical University, and the study has been found fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis by unanimous/ majority vote on **09/09/ 2022**.

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Date: 20-07-2022

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I hope I have included everyone that I should. If not, I am sorry, but please rest assured that I am not ungrateful, just forgetful. Yet, despite all the help and support over my studies, it is appropriate to add the disclaimer that I take full responsibility for the content presented here. All errors, inaccuracies, and types are my responsibility alone.

July 2022

Ruhullah AFSHAR

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to make an in-depth analysis to understand the impact of Türkiye's role as a rising power in Afghanistan peacebuilding process. More so, the study investigates how Türkiye's contribution to Afghanistan peacebuilding process has shaped the perception of the Afghan public and the most significant regional actors addressed in this thesis. In addition, the dissertation aimed to study Türkiye's overall humanitarian aid, and development projects in Afghanistan. Hence, the study utilized qualitative method and fundamentally relied on document analysis in order to get a plausible answer.

The study found that Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks marked a new era of Afghan-Turkish relations. Taking into account that the relationship has been growing in strength since the 20th century. The study demonstrates that Türkiye's foreign policy toward Afghanistan is inextricably linked to its overall engagement with Central Asia. The findings show that Türkiye has contributed remarkably to the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan. The study findings also revealed that regional actors are not feeling comfortable with Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan because it contradicts their interests and strategies. The study argues that the comprehensive approach that included humanitarian, development, security, education, infrastructure, health sector, and other assistance at a vital time unprecedentedly impacted the fate of Afghanistan peacebuilding process. On the other hand, the study discovered that Türkiye's comprehensive approach which has widely covered all sectors necessary for the recovery of Afghan society has earned Türkiye prestige and goodwill in the international stage. As a result, the study argues that Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan as a rising power has had a positive impact. Furthermore, the study was able to expose some crucial findings that will further pave the way for further research on Türkiye's role as a rising power in Afghanistan peacebuilding process.

This dissertation serves as a synopsis of Türkiye's role in peacebuilding process in Afghanistan. The findings may also serve to develop an understanding regarding how Türkiye's peacebuilding role in Afghanistan become a role model. The findings may also be helpful in comparing Türkiye's peacebuilding model to other actors.

Key Words: Rising Power, Peacebuilding, Regional Power, Türkiye, Humanitarian Aid

ÖZET

Bu tezde, Afganistan barış inşa sürecinde Türkiye'nin yükselen bir güç olarak rolünün etkisini anlamak için derinlemesine bir analiz yapılması amaçlanmıştır. Bununla birlikte çalışmada, Türkiye'nin Afganistan barış inşası sürecine katkısının Afgan kamuoyunun ve bu tezde ele alınan en önemli bölgesel aktörlerin algısını nasıl şekillendirdiği araştırılmaktadır. Çalışmada ayrıca, Türkiye'nin genel insani yardımları ve Afganistan'daki kalkınma projeleri ele alınmaktadır. Bu nedenle çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanıldı ve güvenilirliği yüksek bir cevap almak için araştırma temel olarak belge analizine dayandırıldı.

Bu araştırma, ilişkinin 20. yüzyıldan beri güçlendiğini göz önünde bulundurarak, Türkiye'nin 9/11 saldırılarından sonra Afganistan'a katılımının Afgan-Türk ilişkilerinde yeni bir döneme işaret ettiğini ortaya koydu. Çalışma, Türkiye'nin Afganistan'a yönelik dış politikasının, Orta Asya ile olan genel angajmanı ile ayrılmaz bir şekilde bağlantılı olduğunu göstermektedir. Bulgular, Türkiye'nin Afganistan'daki barış inşası sürecine önemli katkılar sunduğuna işaret etmektedir. Araştırma bulguları, bölgesel aktörlerin Türkiye'nin Afganistan'a müdahalesinin kendi çıkarları ve stratejileriyle çeliştiği için kendilerini rahat hissetmediklerini de ortaya koydu. Çalışma, hayati bir zamanda insani yardım, kalkınma, güvenlik, eğitim, altyapı, sağlık sektörü ve diğer yardımları içeren kapsamlı yaklaşımın Afganistan barış inşa sürecinin kaderini benzeri görülmemiş bir şekilde etkilediğini savunuyor. Öte yandan çalışma, Türkiye'nin Afgan toplumunun iyileşmesi için gerekli tüm sektörleri geniş ölçüde kapsayan kapsamlı yaklaşımının, uluslararası alanda Türkiye'ye prestij ve iyi niyet kazandırdığını ortaya çıkardı. Sonuç olarak çalışma, Türkiye'nin yükselen bir güç olarak Afganistan'a müdahil olmasının olumlu bir etkisi olduğunu savunuyor. Ayrıca çalışma, Türkiye'nin Afganistan'daki barış inşa sürecindeki rolü ve yükselen bir güç olma potansiyeli üzerindeki etkisi hakkında daha fazla araştırmanın önünü açacak bazı önemli bulguları ortaya koyabilmektedir.

Bu tez, Türkiye'nin Afganistan'da barışın inşası sürecindeki rolünün bir icmal niteliğindedir. Bulgular, Türkiye'nin Afganistan'daki barışı inşa etme rolünün nasıl bir rol model haline geldiğine dair bir anlayış geliştirmeye de hizmet edebilir. Buna ilave olarak bulgular, Türkiye'nin barış inşası modelinin diğer aktörlerle karşılaştırmasına da olanak sağlayabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yükselen Güç, Barış İnşası, Bölgesel Güç, Türkiye, İnsani Yardımlar

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADF	: Antalya Diplomacy Forum
AFAD	: Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency
AKP	: The Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
ANA	: Afghan National Army
BRIC	: Brazil, Russia, India, China
BRICS	: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CFSP	: Common Foreign and Security Policy
DDR	: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DoD	: Department of Defence
EU	: European Union
EUPOL	: European Police Mission in Afghanistan
G20	: Group of Twenty
G7	: Group of Seven
GDP	: Gross Domestic product
IBID	: In the Same Source
IC	: International Community
ICO	: Islamic Cooperation and Organization
ICRC	: International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHH	: Humanitarian Aid Foundation
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
ISAF	: International Security Assistance Force
ISI	: Inter-Service-Intelligence
JRT	: Joint Regional Team
KIZILAY	: The Red Crescent

LOTFA	: Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan
MEC	: Middle East Command
MIKTA	: Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Türkiye, and Australia
MIST	: Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, and Türkiye
NAC	: North Atlantic Council
NATO	: North Atlantic Treaty Organizations
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organizations
n.d	: No Date
ODA	: Official Development Assistance
OECD	: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PRT	: Provincial Reconstruction Team
QIP	: Quick Impact Project
RSM	: Resolute Support Mission
SCO	: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SSR	: Security Sector Reform
TANAP	: The Trans-Anatolian Pipeline
TIKA	: Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
U.S.A	: United States of America
UK	: United Kingdom
UN	: United Nations
UNAMA	: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	: United Nations Development Program
UNSC	: United Nations Security Council
USAID	: United States Agency for International Development
USD	: United States Dollars

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the World War II, and primarily following the Cold war, there has been a substantial change in how wars are waged, posing a serious challenge to international peace and stability. Even though several preceding wars were among the states or what is traditionally defined as inter-state wars, later, contemporary conflicts have arisen, marked by ethnic strife, separatist, revolutionary, and violence. Likewise, these wars have targeted innocent and helpless citizens. Afghanistan has been grappling with the world's destructed and prolonged conflict for decades.¹ Though the disintegration of the Soviet Union and withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan marked the end of the Cold War, Afghanistan entered into a civil war. The Afghan civil war ignited among the Mujahidin's throughout 1989-1996 in Afghanistan to fill the Russians' vacuum. However, with the emergence of Taliban, a movement under the leadership of Mullah Omar, a new era began in Afghanistan in 1994.

Moreover, the Taliban took control of the whole of Afghanistan by 1998. Then the Taliban ruled Afghanistan under strict Sharia law, reversing the progress had made in women and education. As well, the Taliban-ruled country became a safe haven for international terrorists.² Following the 9/11 horrendous attacks, the United States targeted Afghanistan, where Osama Bin Laden, mastermind of the 9/11 atrocities and several Al Qaida leaders, were sheltering in Afghanistan. In consideration of the fact that this heated political climate paved the way for military intervention in Afghanistan.

The US-led operation titled "Operation Enduring Freedom" against terrorism was supported by the United Nations security council and the international community, which also expressed their solidarity with the United States, deposed the Taliban government from Kabul in response to the 9/11 attacks in 2001, under the Bonn Accord laid the foundation of an interim government in Kabul.³ With the foundation of an interim government, a wave of optimism occurred concerning development. Due to the fact that to provide security and protect an interim government, coalition

¹ David Stewart, Mason & James David, Meernik, **Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building in Post-War Societies: Sustaining the Peace**, Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building in Post-War Societies: Sustaining the Peace, 2005, p.2-3

² Ahmad Ejaz, "Emergence of Taliban Militia, Pakistan's Disappointments and U.S. Concerns", **Pakistan Vision**, 19(1), p. 94-100

³ Roland Paris & Thomas Barfield, "Afghanistan: What Went Wrong?", **Perspectives on Politics**, 11(2), 2013, p.538-540

forces, also NATO members, set out of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

Türkiye was involved in Afghanistan through the ISAF mission and as a member of NATO rebuilding Afghanistan in 2001. As a part of ISAF forces, Türkiye has a critical and non-combative role in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process. Türkiye assumed the leadership of ISAF twice between 2003 and 2005 in Kabul. Since 2001, Türkiye has played and contributed significantly to the peacebuilding process to enhance Afghanistan's security, economy, education, culture, and stability, through projects and activities.⁴ Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan is not only because of part of NATO but also its unique and long-term strategies. For that reason, Türkiye, as a regional and rising power, has been driving its policy through soft power, which covers humanitarian development aids, to execute its policy in Afghanistan. In this sense, as a rising power, Türkiye plays and has played a leading role in different peacebuilding operations. Since the early 1990s, conflict resolution and peacebuilding have been significant components of Turkish foreign policy.⁵ So before and post-9/11 relentless attack, Afghanistan occupies a unique place in Türkiye's peacebuilding efforts through humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, institution building, education, and mediation efforts. Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan is one of the most noticeable demonstrations of rising power's policy or strategy in a war-torn country.

This dissertation brings to light the impact of Türkiye's role in the Afghanistan peacebuilding process on Türkiye's potential to be a rising power. It highlights Türkiye's commitment to Afghanistan's peacebuilding process on a grand scale, from humanitarian assistance to the development projects, from the development of the economy to the military rebuilding, and from the improvement of the health sector to education and culture.

Research Question

The thesis interrogates an increasingly prevalent narrative regarding the impact of Türkiye's role as a rising power in Afghanistan peacebuilding process.

A considerable amount of research on Türkiye's peacebuilding process in Afghanistan focuses on humanitarian and development assistance, economy, culture, military, and budgetary. In light of this analysis, this study tries to illuminate neglected literature on Türkiye's role in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process and its impact on Türkiye's becoming a potential rising power. This thesis is motivated by a central research question that asks,

⁴ Karen Kaya, "Turkey's Role in Afghanistan and Afghan Stabilization", **Military Review**, 2009, p.23

⁵ Onur Sazak & Auveen Elizabeth Woods, "Policies and Role of Turkey on Peacebuilding" **Policy Brief Series**, 2015, p.8

To examine the impact of Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process on Türkiye's becoming a rising power and forming the perception of Afghanistan and regional actors.

The research seeks to examine how Türkiye, a rising power, contributed in various fields to the peacebuilding operations in Afghanistan to answer this question.

Aim and Objective

The study investigates and understands Türkiye's role in the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan and the reflection of Türkiye's peacebuilding on Türkiye's potential to be a rising power. In addition, Türkiye has made a more comprehensive contribution to peacebuilding efforts in Afghanistan through an integrated approach that combines humanitarian aid, security personnel training, reconstruction projects, and development assistance. Considering Türkiye's success in Afghanistan, the praise it received from local and international actors, and the rising influence in the region and beyond, this study's essential aims to examine the impact of Türkiye's role in the Afghanistan peacebuilding process on its potential to be a rising power. To adequately address this thesis's fundamental objective, the study explores how Türkiye's contribution to Afghanistan peacebuilding has shaped the perception of the Afghan public and the most significant regional actors addressed in this thesis as Pakistan, Iran, India, and China. In addition, these states' perceptions have contributed to Türkiye acting as a rising power.

Scope and Limitation

This study investigates the impact of Türkiye's role as a rising power in Afghanistan peacebuilding process. To determine to what extent Türkiye's role as a rising power has affected Afghanistan's peacebuilding process. The study limits itself to particular regional actors in Türkiye's peacebuilding engagement in Afghanistan and how Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan has shaped their perception.

Thus, the thesis excludes Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan as key actors in the region. Even though they have a common border with Afghanistan, they are not considered key regional actors in this study due to their invisible influence in the region. Uzbekistan's neutral foreign policy toward Afghanistan aims to preserve stability within its territory and gain international legitimacy. Despite the fact that Uzbekistan is engaged through the various programs in the Afghanistan peacebuilding process, it is worth mentioning that Uzbek officials are inclined to deal with Afghanistan based on bilateral relations and have not been involved in also kept away from several regional projects over the past two decades. On the occasion that Uzbekistan does not desire a

bleeding wound to its south undermining its own security.⁶ Like Uzbekistan, even though Tajikistan has a close common border and cultural and linguistic similarities with Afghanistan, it has not been directly involved in the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan because of the weak economy, domestic difficulties, and the security threat.

On the other hand, Turkmenistan considers itself a neutral state on the ground that prefers to maintain bilateral relations with Afghanistan but has not played a constructive role in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process. In light of that, Turkmenistan is overlooked in this study. Overall, the primary reason is that they have feared a spillover/excess of radicalism into their territory. Noteworthy to highlight that despite Russia being a heavy and influential regional actor in the region, particularly in central Asia, not given space in this dissertation, because Russia's peacebuilding operation rhetoric has not met the reality in Afghanistan. Although Russia is one of the states that have played a vital role in the demolition and creation of regimes throughout the history of Afghanistan, due to the United States dominance in the country, Russia's peacebuilding operations are not advantageous in Afghanistan. It is worth noting that Russia provides various forms of support to the Taliban in Afghanistan. Notably, there is wide speculation that Moscow has even armed the Taliban to get leverage and even set up several conferences, summits and diplomatic meetings. As a result, Russia was left out of the study. However, their perceptions have been taken into consideration vis a vis Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan. In this context, a small part of this study has been given to reflect NATO's high officials' views concerning Türkiye's engagement in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process.

Last but not least, the terms Afghan and Afghanistan are being used interchangeably throughout the dissertation. Inasmuch as the concept of Afghan refers to the ethnicity of Pashtun, which is not favoured by other ethnic groups, accordingly, the study used both terms interchangeably.

Consequently, this research focuses on Pakistan, Iran, India, and China's perception of Türkiye's involvement and presence in peacebuilding in Afghanistan. Each of these actors competes to have more to say and influence global affairs and the region. Another limitation is that this thesis analyses in-depth Türkiye's contribution and engagement in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process post-9/11, which comprises the 2001-2021 years, and Türkiye's multi-faceted involvement continues in Afghanistan.

⁶ Balwan, Singh Nagial, "Terrorism in Afghanistan and spillover effect in Central Asia", **the Times of India**, 2021, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/col-nagial/terrorism-in-afghanistan-and-spillover-effect-in-central-asia/> [Access date, 27.08.2022]

Literature Review

The collapse of the Soviet Union marked the end of the Cold War, which has shifted how states interact in the international arena. The emergence of new states, the failure or fall of others, and the 9/11 attacks were the key events in the post-Cold War and ushered in a new era. Therefore, with the beginning of this new epoch of uncertainty, actors in the international arena have begun evaluating themselves to adapt to the new agendas. Without a doubt, change in actors' interest in global affairs promoted and generated new strategies. Thus, Türkiye has started to regain its influence in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia to retain its position in the regions and become a regional power. However, it should be mentioned that Türkiye is one of the key actors in international humanitarian, development assistance, and peacebuilding projects in war-torn country like Afghanistan. Due to its presence, Türkiye is no longer a stranger in Afghanistan. It is worth mentioning that post-9/11, Türkiye was involved in the Afghanistan conflict, multi-faceted with the United States-led operations under the umbrella of NATO.

Most works of the literature in the study of Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process have widely covered education, improving the health sector, restructuring and army training, and socio-economic relations. However, a gap in the literature exists in the area of how Türkiye's generous contributions have impacted its overall image in the region and the globe. One may argue that the literature gap in the relationship between Türkiye's rising power status and its involvement and contributions in Afghanistan needs to be covered in future studies on this matter.

There are few available literature on the studies related to Türkiye's role in Afghanistan's peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations. One of these works, Şaban Kardaş's article "*Turkey's Regional Approach in Afghanistan: A Civilian Power in Action*," published by the Center for Strategic Research in 2013, based on the argumentative method, outlines that Türkiye's regional approach in Afghanistan could not generate a stable peace in Afghanistan.⁷ However, he neglected and ignored the importance of Türkiye's presence and its contributions and merely made conclusions on unpredictable results not shaped by Türkiye's presence but rather a joint strategic success of all stakeholders in the case is compulsory. The author lacked pay attention to Türkiye's long-term objective. On the other hand, another work analysing Türkiye's reconstruction role in Afghanistan is Nilüfer Karacasulu's study of "*Reconstruction of Afghanistan and the Role of Turkey*," published in 2010. The author seeks to underscore Türkiye's role in Afghanistan. So, the author argues that Türkiye's post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan with the economic projects, diplomatic initiatives, and training efforts was solid and constructive.⁸ Despite these arguments, Nilüfer lacks the critical analysis of how this contributes to Afghanistan's peacebuilding process and, in return,

⁷ Şaban Kardaş, "Turkey's Regional Approach in Afghanistan: A Civilian Power in Action", **Center for Strategic Research (SAM)**, (6), 2013

⁸ Nilufer Karacasulu, "Reconstruction of Afghanistan and the Role of Turkey", **USAK**, 04(10), 2011

impacts Türkiye's pursuit of becoming a rising power. Nuri Sener made similar arguments in his thesis "*Turkey's Soft Power Assets in Peacekeeping Operations*," published in 2015. Sener did his analysis through the concepts of soft power, peacekeeping, and Türkiye's soft power assets in the peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan. In this sense, another crucial work carried out by Sertif Demir and Ali Bilgin Varlık titled "*Winning Peace: A Mere-Dream or an Achievable Objective? Inferences from the Turkish Peacekeeping Experience in Afghanistan*" was published in 2012. The authors examined the success of Türkiye's peacekeeping efforts in Afghanistan. Even though they do not have a common border, they have commonly shared values such as religion, language, and ethnicity. Generally focusing on the success of the Turkish approach, the authors did not raise or mention how this success contributes to the good rising image of Türkiye and what this means for them.

However, in this context, this paper slightly differs from the previous one. Akın Kıran's work concerns Türkiye's role in rebuilding Afghanistan. He emphasized Türkiye's contribution to Afghanistan through humanitarian aid and development projects. His analysis focused solely on physical and tangible projects carried out by Türkiye in Afghanistan.⁹ In addition, another study conducted related to this topic was Mehmet Yıldız's "*Success in Statebuilding and Demanding of Institutions: Turkey's Role in Afghanistan (2001-2011)*," in 2013 concluded that the western security-based model could not bring peace and stability to Afghanistan. In comparison, this article deals with the role of Türkiye in promoting soft power and encouraging all local groups in state-building in Afghanistan.¹⁰ The study has sought to discover the fuelling factors in the Afghanistan crisis and concluded that the Turkish approach of engaging with the local stakeholders is an executable engagement method to solve the crisis. However, he failed to realize that the study does not provide any conclusive evidence concerning how Türkiye's success contributes to its rising power image.

Regarding the previous sequence, another strong article written by Lialuma Haidari, "*State-building Success in Afghanistan and Turkey*," scrutinizes Türkiye's role in rebuilding Afghanistan between 2001-2011 from the aspect of economy, politics, geopolitics, and culture.¹¹ Even though a well-researched and meticulously written paper highlights Türkiye's integrated contribution, as mentioned earlier, to Afghanistan's peacebuilding process. But, Haidari's article fails to assess the effectiveness of Türkiye's peacebuilding effort in Afghanistan to some extent to its rising power status from a regional to global scale. A thoroughly well-written report, "*The Future of Afghanistan and Turkey's Contribution*" by Selçuk Çolakoğlu and Mehmet Yegin published by the International Strategic Research Organization in 2014. Çolakoğlu and Yegin's report pays attention to Türkiye's role in state-building in Afghanistan, from the democratic transition of power to stability, security,

⁹ Akın Kıran, "Afganistan'ın Yeniden Yapılandırılmasında Türkiye'nin Rolü", **Nek.Istanbul.Edu.Tr**, 2001

¹⁰ Mehmet Yıldız, "Devlet İnşasında Başarı ve Kurumlara Talep: Türkiye'nin Afganistan'daki Rolü (2001-2011)", **Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi Aralık**, 15, 2013, p. 183-212

¹¹ Lailuma Haidari, "State-Building Success in Afghanistan and Turkey", 2020

and economic development. Although the book is widely covering all aspects of Afghanistan's governance system and socio-economic situation, the analyses are only barely exploring things from the Afghanistan side and not the Turkish rising power status.

Last but not least, Canan Bayram Çubuk's thesis "*Turkey's role in Afghanistan in the post 9/11 Era*", written in 2014, analyses Türkiye's engagement toward Afghanistan's state-building and peacebuilding endeavours following 9/11. The author emphasizes Türkiye's approach to stabilizing Afghanistan through training Afghan National Army, humanitarian aid, and enhancing civilian-led PRTs.¹² But his analysis only critically focused on the peacebuilding-related projects and humanitarian assistance, lacking a solid argument on how this approach and the Turkish success contribute to its goodwill. In this sense, Baburuddin Jurat's thesis is compatible with Çubuk's work. Jurat thoroughly analysed Türkiye's activities and projects from 2001 to 2016, from humanitarian aid to development assistance and the health sector to education.¹³ This ground-breaking and extensive work related to Türkiye's peacebuilding process in Afghanistan was carried out by Jurat, yet he disregarded paying attention to its impact on Türkiye's rising power and its presence in Afghanistan. The study would have been more relevant if he had asked about the potential implications of Türkiye's contribution to the Afghanistan peacebuilding process on Türkiye's rising power and how it would change the perception of internal and regional power.

In parallel with these studies, some studies examine the economic, political relations, and investments dimension of Türkiye's peacebuilding and state-building efforts in Afghanistan. According to the authors, Türkiye's financial and investment activities have significantly promoted Afghanistan's economy over the past two decades compared to 2001. From this point of view, Alia Sharify Ortaq, in her thesis written in 2018, "*Trade and Economic Relations between Turkey and Afghanistan in the Post-War Era: 2001-2013*," extensively explores Türkiye's economic and trade ties with Afghanistan by outlining that peace and stability play a critical role in economic development.¹⁴ However, its analysis concentrates on the economic and trade relations between the two countries and does not fill the literature gap that this study is trying to fill. Although it is slightly distinct from Ortaq's work, Muharrem Ekşi's article "*Turkey's increasing role in Afghanistan*" was published in 2010. In his undertaking, he pays attention to Türkiye's expanding role in Afghanistan. However, Türkiye's role in Afghanistan was analysed through politics and economy, while Türkiye's foreign policy towards Afghani-Pakistani and the Turkish triple summit was also examined. Ekşi analyses the Turkish-Afghanistan issue from a different perspective compared to previous works done by raising the point that Türkiye's rising role in Afghanistan is worth analysing and a matter of discussion in the literature.

¹² Canan Bayram, Çubuk., *Turkey's Role in Afghanistan in the Post 9/11 Era*, Middle East Technical University, 2014

¹³ Baburiddin, Jurat, *NATO'nun Afganistan'a Müdahalesi Çerçevesinde Türkiy-Afganistan ilişkilerinin İncelenmesi (2001-2016)*, Uludağ Üniversitesi, 2018

¹⁴ Alia Sharify Ortaq, "*Trade and Economic Relations between Turkey and Afghanistan in the Post-War Era: 2001-2013*", *Anadolu University, Graduate School of Social Sciences*, 2018

Additionally, a minor part of the work is referred to Türkiye's contribution to Afghanistan concerning security and socio-economic efforts.¹⁵ It is worth stressing that Michael B. Bishku's work is more overarching than Ekşi's article. His article "*Turkey and Afghanistan: Culture, Security and Economics*" was published by Contemporary Review of the Middle East in 2020. Thoroughly analyse Türkiye's security, economic, and cultural dimensions engagement in Afghanistan and technical contribution following its independence thus far.¹⁶ Although Bishku's work was well-written, inclusive, and in-depth researched, he overlooked Türkiye's longer-term commitment and effort. The author makes no attempt to consider the long-term impact of Türkiye's role as a rising power in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process.

Turkish foreign aid policy has changed fundamentally in recent years resulting in Türkiye's regional and international influence to increase and position itself as a regional power. For that reason, international development assistance became an inevitable dimension of Turkish foreign policy. Therefore, Türkiye works hard to fill the vacuum in war-torn countries like Afghanistan and Somalia to put its mark on the international stage and be recognized as a regional and rising power. Using humanitarian assistance is one of the fundamental instruments of rising powers in developing countries. Accordingly, some studies have been conducted about Türkiye's humanitarian aid and policies in Afghanistan throughout the past years. From this point of view, Shabnam Nawabi's writing "*Turkey's Foreign aids to Afghanistan*," published in 2020, seeks to illuminate Türkiye's foreign aid to Afghanistan through humanitarian assistance construction, and military development programs. Although Nawabi has carried out extensive and in-depth detailed research on Türkiye's aid to Afghanistan. Her work immensely contributed to Türkiye's peacebuilding process in Afghanistan. However, it fails to assess and effectiveness of peacebuilding process on Türkiye's rising power.

Furthermore, the author contends that the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) is in charge of Türkiye's humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.¹⁷ Likewise, another article from Usman Khan and Ertan Efegil (2020) examines Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process through humanitarian assistance and the role of TIKA and the Red Crescent Society. Khan and Efegil have concluded that Türkiye's humanitarian and development assistance success in Afghanistan has given them a leading role in the region.¹⁸ The above analysis shows TIKA's importance in Türkiye's rising role in Afghanistan and its overall strategy of using TIKA as

¹⁵ Muharrem Ekşi, "Turkey's Increasing Role in Afghanistan", **Journal of Global Analysis**, 2010

¹⁶ Michael B Bishku, "Turkey and Afghanistan: Culture, Security and Economics", **Contemporary Review of the Middle East**, 7(3), 2020

¹⁷ Shabnam Nawabi, "Türkiye'nin Afganistan'a Dış Yardımları", **Politics, Economics and Administrative Sciences Journal of Kirsehir Ahi Evran University**, 03(1), 2019

¹⁸ Usman Khan, & Ertan Efegil, "Turkey's Humanitarian Actions in Afghanistan and Pakistan: A Policy Alternative for Conflict Resolutions", **Pscjournal.Pk**, 56(56), 2020

the driving force of softening its power policy. The increasing Official Development Agency (ODA) and TİKA's presence in every corner of the world is a considerable success for Türkiye.

On the other hand, some studies have delved into Türkiye's activities in Afghanistan regarding rebuilding and modernization. In this context, Cengiz Özel's "*Turkey's soft power strategy over rebuilding Afghanistan*," published in 2018, analyses the reconstruction of Afghanistan through soft power strategy. The author concludes that Türkiye has played a critical role in rebuilding Afghanistan's peacebuilding initiatives.¹⁹ In this regard, Abdullah Mohammadi's (2014) article scrutinizes Türkiye's role in the modernization of Afghanistan from the Mustafa Kemal Atatürk era. He contends that Türkiye has been active in Afghanistan's rebuilding and modernization at the beginning of the 20th century.²⁰ In this framework, Cem Sey and Günter Seufert's article "*Turkey in Afghanistan: a successful stakeholder, but a difficult partner*," issued in 2016, investigates Türkiye's engagement and approach method in peacebuilding and reconstruction of Afghanistan, which they conclude that Türkiye's engagement in Afghanistan is deemed successful.²¹ Although these arguments are based on Türkiye's recent engagement and success, the available literature does not cover the critical aspects of why Türkiye is supporting Afghanistan to rebuild and the intangible benefits that Türkiye would get from this political and diplomatic transaction.

Some studies dealt with Türkiye and Afghanistan relations in terms of the security sector between both countries. In this sense, Oktay Tanrısever's (2011) work has focused on Türkiye's security contribution in Afghanistan and Central Asia after 9/11. His analysis pays attention to Türkiye's security strategy based on soft power instead of hard power. Moreover, Türkiye desires to dominate the region and play Russia's role.²² In this context, Petross Vamvakas's (2011) paper has focused on similar points but subtly differs from previous work. This paper provides an in-depth historical analysis of Türkiye's civilian contribution to enhancing Afghan society through the Turkish Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRTs). According to Vamvakas, Türkiye's approach is not taking a role in the military operation. Though supporting civilians, respecting their values, and interacting with society are their main approaches. At this point, Hatice Karahan's 2020 article titled "*Turkey in the Heart of Asia: The Case of Afghanistan*," although being parallel to Vamvakas's research, Karahan focuses on Türkiye's multi-faceted projects over 15 years as a case study. Meanwhile, she emphasizes Türkiye's notable contribution and support in the security, defence, and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.²³ In her pioneering work, Karahan examines Türkiye's broad

¹⁹ Cengiz Özel, "Afganistan'ın Yeniden İnşasında Türkiye'nin Yumuşak Güç Stratejisi", **İnönü Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü**, 2018

²⁰ Abdullah Mohammadi, "Afganistanın Modernleşmesinde Türkiye'nin Rolü", **Journal of Turkish Studies**, 09(5), 2014

²¹ Cem Sey, & Günter Seufert, "Turkey in Afghanistan: A Successful Stakeholder, but a Difficult Partner", **Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik**, 2016

²² Oktay Tanrısever, "Turkey's Evolving Role in the Security of Afghanistan and Central Asia since 9/11: Sources and Limitations of Ankara's Soft Power", **Conference Paper**, 106, 2011

²³ Hatice Karahan, "Turkey in the Heart of Asia: The Case of Afghanistan", **Palgrave Macmillan**, 2020

contribution to Afghanistan. However, the study does not consider the long-term impact of Türkiye's peacebuilding process on Türkiye's potential to be a rising power.

Salih Doğan's article "*Turkey's Presence and Importance in Afghanistan*," published in 2011, tries to analyse it from one particular perspective. Doğan highlights that Türkiye has a unique place in Afghanistan compared to other western countries.²⁴ However, both researchers' main focuses are similar or somewhat close. They can be distinguished from one another. Karen Kaya's (2013) "*Turkey's Role in Afghanistan and Afghan Stabilization*" article extensively uncovers Türkiye's activities/projects and non-combative role in Afghanistan. She concludes that Türkiye has a unique place in the minds and hearts of Afghanistan.²⁵

Although the aforementioned scholars and researchers have studied various aspects of Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan from different perspectives, there is a paucity of literature on Türkiye's rising power status and how its involvement in Afghanistan affects its growing image in the international arena. Despite the fact that the existing literature has generally concentrated on Türkiye's role in Afghanistan and the physical projects carried out in the peacebuilding process, this thesis examines the impact of Türkiye's role in peacebuilding process in Afghanistan on Türkiye's potential to be a rising power. The findings of this study and the literature collected will significantly fill the gap in the literature about Türkiye's rising power status and how its humanitarian and peacebuilding projects contribute to its rising role and image in the international arena.

Hypothesis

Turkish foreign policy has been western-oriented since the foundation of the Republic of Türkiye in 1923. However, over the past few decades, Turkish foreign policy has seen a dramatic shift which is more engaging and multi-dimensional-oriented, aimed at expanding its influence in the region and beyond. It can be hypothesized that the Turkish involvement in Afghanistan have contributed to Türkiye's potential to become a regional actor and a rising power.

The debate about Türkiye's becoming a rising power gained momentum in 2011 after Türkiye started to engage with countries in the region and beyond and successfully contributed to humanitarian and peacebuilding projects. It is hypothesized that the regional actors' concern about Türkiye's successful engagement in Afghanistan and the reception it gets from the Afghan public shows that Türkiye's contribution to Afghanistan's peacebuilding process has a positive impact on its becoming a rising power.

²⁴ Salih Doğan, "Turkey's Presence and Importance in Afghanistan", **USAK Yearbook of Politics and International Relations**, (4), 2011

²⁵ Karen, Kaya, "Turkey's Role in Afghanistan and Afghan Stabilization", **Military Review**, 2013

Research Method and Procedures

This study will predominantly apply an inductive approach to investigate qualitative data and ensure evidence to support the main research question. Moreover, in the inductive method, the researcher diligently reviews and analyses raw text material before turning it into a “brief and summary format,”²⁶ binding it to research questions. Therefore, data analysis under an inductive approach is conducted by evaluating and interpreting raw data and reading multiple times to help scholars and researchers convey the study outcomes. Every researcher might come up with various attitudes and perspectives. Considering this, the study highlights significant breakthroughs and developments related to Afghanistan’s peacebuilding process efforts. This study mainly aims to explore the impact of Türkiye’s role in the Afghanistan peacebuilding process on Türkiye’s potential to be a rising power.

Collection of Data and Procedure

The thesis generally focuses on document analysis. For many years, qualitative research has relied on document analysis. This strategy helps determine the type of documents and gives considerable information about the research questions. Bowen argues that “document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material and like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge.”²⁷ Documents utilised in the study may come from various resources, comprising institutional reports, books, and articles in journals, newspapers, and agendas. Thus, it can be helpful to provide reliable information about this thesis topic.

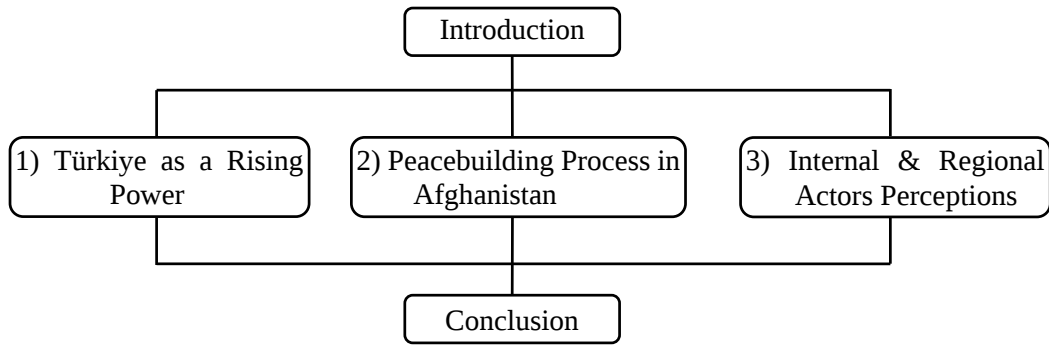
Books, articles, journals, and documents are examined to obtain accurate, reliable, and understandable data and answer the research questions. Furthermore, other sources, such as the UN and inter-governmental organizations, the IMF, and the World Bank, have been utilized. In the end, internet resources have been used significantly. In this context, I mainly relied on qualitative data analysis.

Organization of Thesis

This thesis is divided into three chapters, as the following figure depicts.

²⁶ David R. Thomas, “A general inductive approach for analysing qualitative evaluation data”, 2006 **American journal of evaluation**, 27(2), 2006, p.237

²⁷ Glenn A. Bowen, “Document analysis as a qualitative research method”, **Qualitative Research Journal**, 9(2), 2009, p. 27



In the first chapter of the study, the definition of the “rising power” and peacebuilding are in-depth discussed, why Türkiye is a rising power is analysed, and the factors which are used as a criterion for the classification of what characteristics make Türkiye a rising power’ are comprehensively highlighted.. The second chapter is mainly concerned with regional states’ and international actors’ roles in the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan. The actors’ background relationships were briefly discussed. The chapter begins with a brief historical background of the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan. Subsequently, regional actors such as Pakistan, Iran, India, and China’s roles in Afghanistan peacebuilding process were discussed. Also, the chapter ended with the international actors’ roles in Afghanistan’s peacebuilding process being thoroughly analysed. The third and last chapter of the thesis presents by analysis of Türkiye in Afghanistan’s internal and regional actors’ repercussions. Following the 9/11 attack, NATO and Türkiye’s intervention in Afghanistan will be examined thoroughly. Türkiye’s involvement in Afghanistan through humanitarian diplomacy activities within the framework of ISAF, and Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan were in-depth analysed. Historically and profoundly, it is also examined that the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) and Türkiye’s socio-economic assistance projects and activities in Afghanistan. Besides that, the Perception of Afghan Public on NATO Members and Türkiye were analysed. The chapter concludes with the regional actors’ perception of Türkiye and the criticism of Türkiye’s involvement in Afghanistan. Overall, its impact on Türkiye’s potential to be a rising power is lightened up.

CHAPTER ONE: TÜRKİYE AS A RISING POWER

1.1. Definition of the Concept of Rising Power and Peacebuilding

1.1.1. Rising Power

The concept of rising power, compares to global governance, is relatively new and thriving in international relations. This concept originated from the economic development of the BRICS countries, precisely China's economic growth ratio, which is getting exponentially higher.²⁸ Accordingly, the notion of rising powers has become ubiquitous. Even though rising power is new to the literature and has gained much attention over the past decades, the countries' effort that referred to established powers to develop further is essential in the concept's generation. In addition, efforts by established powers to seek new markets for themselves evolved into categorising countries with high potential, and the countries with the highest ability were labelled as rising powers due to these classifications and characterization.²⁹ Hence, rising powers are changing the dynamics of the international system by gaining a significant role in the international institutions and creating political ties through regional organizations. So the modern economy of the world is unlike the prior ones. In this sense, rising powers are distinguished through three features in particular being a regional power, rapid economic growth, and humanitarian assistance.³⁰ Nevertheless, regional powers form groups of rising power, and rising powers are rising nations that are regional power in their respective region.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the renowned terms “emerging powers” and “rising powers” emerged to provide a clear and effective picture of how international relations and world politics are altering. Meanwhile, it concerns their commitments to global governance, and the rising powers have frequently been defined as “reluctant” countries. Yet, inside their territories, they have occasionally adopted ambiguous grip policies, particularly in the sphere of security.³¹ While various endeavours have characterized the dispersion of power in the early 2000s, the most

²⁸ Şükrü, Aydın, **Assessing Global Governance Policy of Turkey as a Rising Power: Motivations, Strategies, Instruments**, Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul, 2017, p.32

²⁹ Özgür, Tüfekçi, “Yükselen Güçler ve Dış Politika Aracı Olarak Dış Yardımlar”, Erman Akıllı (Ed.), Türkiye’de ve Dünyada Dış Yardımlar, **Nobel Yayıncılık**, 2016, p.102-105

³⁰ Howard, Michael Doc, “Foreign aid from Emerging Powers” PHD Thesis, The University of Utah, 2014, p.22-24

³¹ Sandra. Destradi, “Reluctant powers? Rising powers’ contributions to regional crisis management”, **Third World Quarterly**, 39(12), 2019, p.2222

common characterization made as “established power” and “rising powers,” and a clear definition attempted at the point of administration to the world system.³² It is worth mentioning that not every developing country is a rising power. On the contrary, developing countries pose a potential risk to foreign investors. Thus the risk potential for rising powers is lower than in developing countries³³. Scholars have investigated the sense of the term “emerging power” and how it relates to words like “regional power” and “great power.” Some have disputed whether the BRICS, the most generally identified developing powers, share enough in common to be called members of the same category. Several have studied these countries’ economic and political development strategies over time to determine if they are on their way to becoming great powers or acquiring some other status.³⁴ In the 21st century, Türkiye, alongside the BRICS countries, has gained a tremendous position in global affairs as a rising power.

Rising powers should evolve in bolder and status-seeking foreign policy orientations and identities throughout time to match the advance in power. In the meantime, there are several potential candidates for consideration as emerging powers. The BRICS countries show up to have had a unique position in the media, politics, and academia alike.³⁵

Classification is an essential component of social science, and in this context, Thies and Nieman (2017) highlight several issues incorporated with conceptualizing and the process of rising power. The most common procedure of emerging powers like the BRICS is that they are entitled to resolve complex issues domestically which range from good governance to delivering services to the public and at the same time compete to achieve their rising power status, though it is quite complicated for rising powers to maintain achieving everything perfectly.³⁶

From the mid-2000s, the world order began to experience what others saw as a fundamental structural shift following a period of US supremacy in international political and economic systems. Furthermore, this has primarily integrated the emergence of BRICS countries such as (Brazil, Russia, India, and China, as well as South Africa beginning in 2010), and then accelerated by the financial crisis that struck the key western countries subsequently in 2007. In countries where a rising power is described, the educated workforce steadily rises, income level increases, and the young and dynamic proportion is high. Despite the enormous market potential, growth rates are advanced and democratic experiences have been unfortunate.³⁷ The most striking characteristic of the rising power

³² Hurrell, Andrew, “The Globalization of World Politics an introduction to international Relations”, **Oxford University Press**, Eighth Edition, 2018, p.84-99

³³ Tüfekçi, Ibid., p.4

³⁴ Thies, Cameron G., & Nieman, Mark David., “Rising powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism Understanding BRICS Identity and Behavior through Time”, **Michigan University Press**, 2017, p.1-124

³⁵ Fevzi Kırbaşoğlu & Özgür Tüfekçi, “The European Union's Response to Rising Powers: The Challenges of the BRICS and MIKTA Countries”, **Novus Orbis: Journal of Politics and International Relations**, 2020, 2(1), p. 39-70

³⁶ Thies & Nieman., Ibid., p.158

³⁷ Hurrell, Ibid, p.1-2

is its evolving economic impact. That is undeniably being shown by the BRICS nations.³⁸ Thus, the rising powers argue that, as a result of their recent economic progress, they are increasingly playing a significant role in international politics, even though their policies and societies are still in drift.³⁹

The rise of BRICS countries poses a substantial threat to the existing international order. In addition to their expanding presence in international organization and world affairs, the second category of emerging powers, entitled near-BRICS, has shown an increasing pro-activism in recent years about influencing the regional balance of power politics.⁴⁰ The term “emerging or rising powers” has been entrenched in the international organization’s glossary. Therefore, the concept was perceived as ground-breaking and modern in the early 2000s. Due to their contest for unipolarity and US supremacy, the rising power concept has become essential in current international affairs.⁴¹ Essentially, it is commonly known that the term “BRIC” (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), which Goldman Sachs developed in 2001, was intended to comprise four countries at the heart of the so-called developing markets.⁴² However, the majority of the scholars discussed that America had already entered the post-American era.

Furthermore, the international order is expected to shift from a US-centred one to a multipolar one.⁴³ It occurred in 2008, following the global financial crisis sparked by the fall of Lehman Brothers, one of the world’s largest investment enterprises. The impressive post-crisis development performance of emerging non-Western nations, particularly Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRICs) and near-BRICs countries (Mexico, South Korea, Türkiye, Indonesia, and Malaysia), In light of the United States’ sluggish recovery and the EU’s deepening crisis, the “West vs the rest” debate has heated up.⁴⁴

The Goldman Sachs report briefed by Domini Wilson and Roopa Purushotham pointed out that the GDP of the BRICS will account for more than half of the G7 by 2050. Also, in far less than 40 years, the economy of BRICS might be higher than the G7 countries.⁴⁵ Every one of the BRICS countries is a rather challenging complement to the conception of a rising power. However, this initiative is the outset of a more systematic studying the foreign policy shift associated with rising powers.⁴⁶ While these states were characterized as rising powers, their functions have remained

³⁸ Andrew F. Hart., & Bruce D. Jones, “How Do Rising Powers Rise?” *Survival*, 52(6), 2010, p.65

³⁹ Özker, Kocadal, “Emerging power liminality in peacebuilding: Turkey’s mimicry of the Liberal peace”, *International Peacekeeping*, 26(4), 2019, p.431-435

⁴⁰ Ziya, Oniş & Mustafa, Kutlay, “Rising Powers in a Changing Global Order: The Political Economy of Turkey in the age of BRICs”, *Third World Quarterly*, 34(8), 2013, p.1409-1411

⁴¹ Benjamin, De Carvalho & Cedrc, de Coning, “Rising powers and the future of peacekeeping and peacebuilding”, *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre*, p.1-5

⁴² De Carvalho & de Coning, *Ibid.*, p.2

⁴³ Özgür, Tüfekçi & Rahman, Dağ (Ed), *Trends and Transformations in World Politics*, Lexington Books, 2022, p.1-294.

⁴⁴ Oniş & Kutlay, *Ibid.*, p.3

⁴⁵ Hurreli, *Ibid.*, p. 89

⁴⁶ Thies & Nieman, *Ibid.*, p.158-159

consistent with their identification over time. In the early time of this analysis, few of these countries were considered regional powers or regional leaders. By the 2000s, most countries perceived them as rising powers, if not great ones.

Finally, emerging powers are either unnoticed actors or on their way to becoming established middle powers. They are really not simply aspirant middle powers but rather, they are in a position where they are candidates to become major powers. BRICS and Turkey are two real examples.⁴⁷ In modern days, Türkiye has perceived itself as a rising power due to its fast economic growth and expanding influence in the region and overseas.

1.1.2. Peacebuilding

The concept of peacebuilding refers to a lengthy process of repairing the relationship and encouraging people to dialogue, reforming institutions, and resolving the conflict. The peacebuilding process involves different functions and roles. Another way to say that peacebuilding is described as a lasting peace and conflict preventive strategy grapple and focuses on the root causes of the conflict.⁴⁸ Straightforwardly, peacebuilding can be explained as “activities intended to strengthen structure and processes to prevent a return to the violent conflict.” The peacebuilding process may disregard the domestic peril to humanity’s ability to avoid violent conflict. All the political, state-building, reconstruction and development work can be referred to as peacebuilding.⁴⁹ Peacebuilding directly or indirectly intended to establish a democratic system in a post-war society.

Theorists, academics, and practitioners use the term peacebuilding to give us a glimpse of the concept’s broad and different meanings. Though, most countries after conflict not only face several practical impedes but also “problems caused by the confused and contested understanding of what it means to build peace in the aftermath of war.”⁵⁰ The concept of peacebuilding garnered attention following the United Nations Secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali suggested the notion of peacebuilding to the 47th session of the United Nations General Assembly titled “An Agenda for Peace” on June 17, 1992.⁵¹ In addition, the concept of peacebuilding was introduced as a part of the United Nations agenda for peace to overcome newly emerged conflicts.

⁴⁷ Kocadal, Ibid. p. 435

⁴⁸ Bercovitch, Jacob & Richard, Jackson. “Conflict Resolution in The Twenty-first Century: Principles, Methods, and Approaches” Ann Arbor: **University of Michigan Press**, 2009, p.168

⁴⁹ Colonel M.P., Jorgensen “A Strategy For Effective Peace-Building: Canada’s Whole-Of-Government Approach in Afghanistan”, **Canadian Forces College**, 2008, p.15-20

⁵⁰ Rob, Jenkins., **Peacebuilding: From Concept to Commission**, Global Institution, 2012, p.1-225

⁵¹ Necla, Tschirgi, “Defining Peacebuilding”, **International Development Research Centre**, (n.d), p.1-9

It aims to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of violence before, during, and after conflicts. The primary purpose of peacebuilding is to constitute⁵² a stable peace. Nevertheless, it should not be neglected that durable peace will not be achieved on a regular basis through consistent construction, renewal, and development.

The fundamental objective of peacebuilding is to bring about stable and consistent peace. Therefore, John Galtung, father of peace studies, has proposed two different concepts of peace, “Negative”, and “positive”. He refers the absence of hostility and direct violence Negative peace. When, for instance, a ceasefire is enforced, negative peace will rise. It is negative peace because something unpleasant stopped happening. On the contrary, Positive peace is stable social stability in which emerging conflicts do not evolve into violence and war.⁵³ It is noteworthy to point out that, in the beginning, peacebuilding is overwhelmingly an internationally-coined and advanced concept, and it refers to the international community’s reflection of armed violence, dangers of savage struggle, or reverberation of such conflict. To some extent, peacebuilding is even broader than the discussion made above and is synonymous with the notion of “development.”

Peacebuilding refers to the comprehensive process of eliminating the prime causes of a conflict and establishing sustainable peace. In the 1970s, John Galtung had brought to the literature and began garnering attention in International Relations and Peace and conflict studies at the end of the Cold War. Johan Galtung first used the concept in 1976 in his pioneering work “Three approaches to peace: Peacekeeping, Peace-making, and Peacebuilding.” International politics have influenced the prevalent use of peacebuilding in practice and theory. With the end of the Cold war, unprecedented changes have occurred in the characteristics of conflict.⁵⁴ The activities of peacebuilding range based on the circumstances and the peacebuilding agent. Successful peacebuilding activities generate an environment that fosters enduring and lasting peace, reconciles opponents, prevents conflict from restarting, integrates civil society, constitutes the rule of law mechanisms, and addresses fundamental structural and social concerns.

To understand the concept of peacebuilding, society must embrace these principles to avoid conflict from escalation. The following factors must be taken into consideration:

- Everyone should live in a secure environment without threat and apprehension of violence, which does not include any sort of violence accepted by law and practice.
- Everyone must be treated equally before the law. Justice is more trusted, and equal and forceful laws preserve people’s rights.

⁵² Kroc, Institute., “What is Strategic Peacebuilding?”, (n.d), <https://kroc.nd.edu/about-us/what-is-peace-studies/what-is-strategic-peacebuilding/>, [Access date: 27.7.2021]

⁵³ Henning, Haugerudbraaten, “Peacebuilding: Six dimensions and two concepts”, *African Security Review*, 7(6), 1998, p. 17-26

⁵⁴ Dizdaroğlu, Cihan, “Barış İnşası”, *Güvenlik Yazıları Serisi*, (13), 2019, p.1.

- Everyone must take part in political decision-making and have a word about how the government is formed.
- People should have the right to access all the basic needs like water, education, and healthcare.
- Everyone, regardless of gender or identity, deserves a fair and equal opportunity to work and earn.⁵⁵

Based on the above features, engagement at the local, national, and international levels could prevent conflict from sparking.

Afghanistan has gone through more than four decades of relentless and vicious war, from the invasion of the Soviets to Civil War to the United States, millions of lives lost, and millions of Afghans displaced and migrated, mainly to neighbouring countries, Türkiye and Europe. However, The European States, non-governmental organizations, and Türkiye have been effectively active in the peacebuilding process post-9/11 in Afghanistan. But their tactics and contribution differ from each other. The path to long-term peace in Afghanistan has not been easy or unquestionable. For that reason, peacebuilding in post-conflict states would not have been smooth, not only in practice but also in understanding the peace and reconstruction. In light of that, the peacebuilding operation should be considered the most challenging mission ahead. As a result, international organizations have undertaken peacebuilding operations and attempts.

Peacebuilding has been investigated broadly and used by academics, theorists, and scholars. Even though peacebuilding was ill-defined, it has played a critical role in averting conflict and disaster in every corner of the world. Several actors have been active in peacebuilding operations from the Middle East to Asia, Africa, and the Caucasus⁵⁶. Since the 9/11 heinous attack, Türkiye has been actively involved in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process, and has contributed remarkably. Thus, the Afghan public and international actors have welcomed the Turkish success in the country and see Türkiye as a great ally and partner.

1.2. Why Türkiye Wants to Become a Rising Power

The emergence of new actors in global affairs has shifted the dynamics of international politics. The rise of Türkiye has not received much attention from the media, international actors, and the western world since 2011. Türkiye's rise as a prominent actor in world politics and not only implementing and exceeding its domination but also in the region and far beyond.⁵⁷ That is the

⁵⁵ International Alert., "what is peacebuilding?", (n.d), <https://www.international-alert.org/what-we-do/what-is-peacebuilding>, [Access date, 27.07.2021]

⁵⁶ Oliver P, Richmond & Tellidis, Ioannis, "Emerging actors in international peacebuilding and Statebuilding: Status quo or critical states." **Global Governance**, 2014, (20), p. 563-584

⁵⁷ Emel, Parlar Dal, "Turkey's rise as an emerging power", **Routledge**, London, 2015. p. 10-15

primary motivation for Türkiye's desire to become a rising power. With the end of the Cold War, most European and American officials anticipated that Türkiye's geopolitical importance would decline in the coming years. Without the threat of the Soviets, Türkiye was no longer needed by the Europeans and Americans. They have considered Türkiye as the second-tier country in the 21st Century. That anticipation would not be more than narrow-sighted. Over the past decade, Türkiye has become more potent than expected. Türkiye is a significant country among Muslim nations and especially a source of inspiration among young reformers. Türkiye is unique and has developed since the beginning of the financial crisis and the commencement of the Arab uprising. It is worth pointing out that Türkiye is one of the unique and fast-growing economic countries globally.

Burns (2012) argues that Türkiye, as a regional power, might be even more influential than France, Germany, and the United Kingdom in the Middle East. However, Türkiye's rise is designed by Justice and Development Party's outstanding, subtle, and keen foreign policy understanding. Under AKP administration Türkiye made a historical development in its history by altering Secularism to introduce the Islamic role in Turkish politics.

Türkiye, for a while, during the Justice and Development Party (AKP) had low-profile relations with regional power countries like Israel, Syria, Iran, and Iraq. Then Türkiye improved relations with those countries, accordingly, Türkiye has become primary actor in the vehement and unstable Middle East. They were conducting secret meetings between Israel and Syria, endeavouring and making close ties with the Israeli government.⁵⁸

Islamic civilizations have experienced a period of downturn and chaos over the past two centuries. At the start of the 20th century, the Ottoman Empire collapsed, and the western world conquered a large part of the Muslim countries. Western World dramatically developed in the field of Science and industry; due to this progress, western civilization started to dominate the rest of the world.⁵⁹ In recent years, Türkiye has remarkably increased its existence in global politics, from the European refugee crisis to mediation and the humanitarian diplomacy in war-torn countries such as Afghanistan and Somalia and Türkiye extended its presence widely across the world from the Middle East to Asia, Africa and even Europe.⁶⁰

In the financial crisis of 2007-2008, the United States has been progressively lost its influence over the international system, and today some global south nations have economically developed and

⁵⁸ Burns, Nicholas, "The rise of Turkey as a superpower", **Harvard Kennedy School**, 2012, <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/rise-turkey-superpower>, [Accessing date: 28.07.2021]

⁵⁹ Aktas, Ihsan, "Turkey's rising power in world politics", 2019, **Daily Sabah**, <https://www.dailysabah.com/columns/ihsan-aktas/2019/12/28/turkeys-rising-power-in-world-politics>, [Access date: 28.07.2021]

⁶⁰ Süssler, Buğra, "Turkey: An Emerging Middle Power in a Changing World?" 2019, **LSE IDEAS**, <https://lseideas.medium.com/turkey-an-emerging-middle-power-in-a-changing-world-df4124a1a71f>, [Access date: 28.07.2021]

still working on being recognized as international actors. They can be characterized as rising powers. Thus, Türkiye can be identified one of the rising or emerging power, being part of these nations.⁶¹ At the beginning of the 21st century, Türkiye had stable politics and economic development progress, weakening the Western rules-based liberal order. Thus, facilitate the territorial actors with regular economy and security to predict the clear accountabilities after the downturn of the great powers during the period of the Cold War. To illustrate, Türkiye's economy benefited from global openness in BRICS countries and other rising powers. Türkiye shares the experience of rising power and economic growth, relative stability, and evolving political transition and reform.⁶²

The study of Türkiye as a rising power had not emerged only political or professional sphere. But also, it is promoted by a variety of actors within the AKP administrations and local and foreign media. The most important and effective one is from academics to International Relations and comparative politics, which are still considered fields of study in literature. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) has been portrayed as the vibrant economic and political transformation facilitator throughout 2002 and 2012/13 in the foreign press. In 2010, the Economist reported that the Justice and Development Party had revolutionized Türkiye's economy for less than a decade, given credit to the AKP administrations, and saw remarkable transmutation.⁶³ Given the fact that Türkiye's economic success has gained tremendous achievements from 2002 to 2011 during the Justice and Development Party (AKP) were unprecedented in Türkiye's party history.⁶⁴

Türkiye's rising responsibility with the East or the Middle East countries, separates Türkiye from its long-standing western allies. Several Western observers have been sceptical of Türkiye's rise, on the ground of distancing itself from the West. According to Oğuzlu and Dal (2013), regional powers are crucial actors to influence the region and the other actors within an outer area to have a determinant role in their foreign policies. For this reason, regional powers settled somewhere in the international power circulation, somewhere between the great and minor powers.⁶⁵ As a result, Türkiye's rising material capacities, political, diplomatic, and cultural involvement in their respective region and international affairs. To shed light on whether Türkiye wants to become a rising power or not, the following parts thoroughly examine the characteristics of what makes Türkiye a rising power.

⁶¹ Merve, Aksu, "Turkey and BRICS, Emerging Powers of the Changing Global Order: A Comparative Analysis", **Strategic Public Management Journal**, 3(5), 2017, p.124-139

⁶² Onur, Sazak. & Elizabeth, Woods, "Breaking with Convention: Turkey's New Approach to Peacebuilding", 2017 p.94

⁶³ Cemal Burak, Tansel, "The Shape of 'Rising Powers' to Come? The Antinomies of Growth and Neoliberal Development in Turkey", **New Political Economy**, 25(5), 2020, p.795

⁶⁴ Tansel, Ibid, p.798

⁶⁵ Tarık, Oğuzlu & Emel Parlar, Dal, "Decoding Turkey's Rise: An Introduction", **Turkish Studies**, 14(4), 2013, p.622

1.3. What Makes Türkiye a Rising Power

Türkiye has been facing challenges in defining its foreign policy principles. Since the republic era, Turkish foreign policy had focused on the western world and ignored the rest, but since AKP has taken over as the ruling party, Turkish foreign policy practitioners have shifted their western-oriented policy to a multi-faceted foreign policy. With the economic growth, the Turkish foreign policy-makers have gained confidence in shaping their policies to a broader and seeking influence in the international arena. Over the past few years, one of the features of rising power has been economic growth. Thus, Türkiye's economy has been overgrowing compared to other rising powers.⁶⁶ Şaban Kardaş (2013) considers Türkiye a regional power and shows that Türkiye has been challenging difficulties within the global order. Regional power is one of the concepts circulating broadly among researchers and scholars, especially following the Cold War in Turkish foreign policy. Besides, it should consider that regional powers are vital in their region.⁶⁷

It is worth mentioning that the new version of Turkish foreign policy has a unique vision of aspects of the economy. In addition, Türkiye's rising economic power adherence to international order. Even though the new image will not provide Türkiye with any other options for the financial model, in contrast to the liberal economic order, Türkiye's economy is generated within the harmony of economic policies and order.⁶⁸ Despite this, Türkiye's new geopolitical vision is unique and vital to demonstrate Türkiye's position as a rising power in the international system.⁶⁹

In this context, the strength of states should be evaluated based on the following three factors: At the beginning, the sufficiency of materials, then the state must be able to use domestic resources for political purposes. Finally, it should influence decision-making or modify the outcomes.⁷⁰ According to Andrew Hurrell, countries labelled as rising powers are willing to take responsibility and influence global affairs.⁷¹ In recent years, Türkiye has been pursuing this path and effectively raised its impact in the region, Middle East, and North Africa. Furthermore, Türkiye has been helping Somalia with humanitarian aid, mediating in Libya and putting effort to take a role in the control of Kabul International Airport security, Afghanistan, and⁷² its engagement in the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan post-9/11 event. Türkiye's increasing involvement in global entities and regional concerns and its increased investment in development assistance are signs of its growing power and prominence in the international order.

⁶⁶ Oğuzlu, Ibid. p.617

⁶⁷ Şaban, Kardaş, "Turkey: A Regional Power Facing a Changing International System," **Turkish Studies**, 2013, p.639

⁶⁸ Murat, Yeşiltaş, "The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy", **Turkish Studies**, 2013, p.682

⁶⁹ Oğuzlu, Ibid. p.624

⁷⁰ Hart, & Jones, Ibid, p.68

⁷¹ Hart. & Jones, Ibid, p.65

⁷² Eşikant Sayılğan, Ibid

1.3.1. An Economic Powerhouse

Türkiye's foreign policy has been extended by the country's robust growth in the economy during the past decades. So Türkiye's rise as an emerging powerhouse over the past decade may be related to the successful integration of its historical relations with European economies with many other countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Simply, as a result of its openness to Europe, Türkiye has attracted a significant amount of investment from the European Union.⁷³ Following the crisis in 2001, Türkiye launched a program entitled "Strong economic program" in harmony to balance the budget, raise competitiveness, and restore confidence in the market⁷⁴. Despite a global financial crisis that affected the whole world, Türkiye became one of the world's fastest-growing economies. As the International Monetary Fund emphasized, Türkiye's economy was a rising and emerging market.⁷⁵ Türkiye's economic and social average productivity has been remarkable since the early 2000s. Economists and scientists explain that Türkiye is one of the world's newly industrialized countries.⁷⁶

Moreover, Türkiye has the world's 20th largest nominal GDP.⁷⁷ Since the 2000s, Türkiye's economy has undoubtedly seen ups and downs. Since 2000, there has been a considerable transformation in Türkiye's economy and social fronts. Türkiye has been maintaining a long-term commitment to exerting reforms in various fields, and the government has primarily focused on highly vulnerable groups and regions with those lacking facilities. Based on the World Bank data, the poverty rate has declined by half from 2004-to 2016.⁷⁸

Noteworthy to highlight that the extreme poverty group already had fallen more than expected in Türkiye over 13 years. Consequently, during this period, Türkiye had urbanized, sustained solid macroeconomic and fiscal policy frameworks, and adopted several laws and regulations of European Union (EU) standards.⁷⁹ Türkiye has given a phenomenal response to the refugees of Syrians in Türkiye. Thus far, Türkiye hosts more than 3.6 million Syrian refugees and has been an example for other refugee-hosting countries. Eventually, with Türkiye's successful strategy, approximately only

⁷³ Soner, Cagaptay, "Defining Turkish Power: Turkey as a Rising Power Embedded in the Western International System", **Turkish studies**, 2013, p.801

⁷⁴ Mehmet Sait, Akman, & Semih Emre, Çekin, "The EU as an Anchor for Turkey's Macroeconomic and Trade Policy", Reiners, Wulf and Turhan, Ebru. (eds) **EU-Turkey Relations**, Palgrave Macmillan, Ch. 12. 2021, p.300

⁷⁵ Turan, Aydin, "Turkey's Rising Economic Capacity", SAM, 1996, <http://www.sam.gov.tr/pdf/perceptions/Vol-I/september-november-1996/1.-Turkeys-Rising-Economic-Capacity.pdf>, [Access date: 17.09.2021]

⁷⁶ The World Bank, "The World Bank in Turkey", the World Bank, 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/turkey/overview>, [Access date: 17.09.2021]

⁷⁷ International Monetary Fund, "World Economic Outlook Database", IMF, 2021, <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2021/April/weo-report?c=186,&s=ngdpd,pppgdp,ngdpdpc,ppppc,&sy=2010&ey=2021&ssm=0&scsm=1&scs=0&ssd=1&ssc=0&sic=0&sort=country&ds=.&br=1>, [Access date: 17.09.2021]

⁷⁸ The World Bank, "Poverty & Equity Brief", 2019, the World Bank, https://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/poverty/33ef03bb-9722-4ae2-abc7-aa2972d68afe/fm2019/global_poveq_tur.pdf, [Access date: 18.09.2022]

⁷⁹ The World Bank, "Overview", The World Bank, 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/turkey/overview#3>, [Access date: 18.09.2021]

2.5 per cent of refugees live in camps.⁸⁰ Because of that, the Syrian crisis has proven that Türkiye's influence was slightly increased as a regional power.⁸¹ Due to the fact that Türkiye's role has been limited, its economic growth has slowed in recent years. As a rising power, Türkiye is leveraging the flood of refugees, specifically the hosting of millions of Syrian refugees, to present an image of governance and accountability to obtain acceptance for its new status as a "regional power."⁸² However, mass migration could represent two distinct power views and, as a result, might either strengthen or diminish a state's power status on the global scene.

During the international crisis, Türkiye was seen as an emerging economic power and acted as an international player on global platforms.⁸³ Indeed, Bacik and Afacan emphasise that, for more than a decade, Türkiye has significantly increased its relations with Sub-Saharan African countries, signing a number of trade agreements, and opening numerous embassies in the sub-Saharan African countries.⁸⁴ In addition, Türkiye has tried to improve its economic relations with countries with historical backgrounds. In this vein, new markets have developed, led to economic growth, and expanded Turkish commercial interaction beyond their regional and neighbouring nations.⁸⁵

Over the past few years since the outbreak of the Corona Virus (COVID-19), the world has experienced economic crisis which led to decline in purchasing power of the global population specifically in the developing countries and the underdeveloped nations. As a result of this crisis which affected the world indiscriminately combined with the depreciation of the value of Turkish Lira and the increasing inflations has worsened the economic situation in Türkiye. However, Turkish economy has remained to grow significantly.

In the meantime, Türkiye has devoted itself to strengthening connections with the South Caucasus, the Balkans, and the Middle East. Gürzel emphasises that Türkiye has been doing most of its business with those regions and is committed to helping development projects. Through that instrument, Türkiye uses soft power to advance its economic ties with countries in that region.⁸⁶ On the other hand, last but not least, Türkiye has improved its trade and business relations with the Arab

⁸⁰ The World Bank, "Turkey's Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Road Ahead", The World Bank, (n.d), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/turkey/publication/turkeys-response-to-the-syrian-refugee-crisis-and-the-road-ahead>, [Access date: 18.09.2021]

⁸¹ Emel Dal, Parlar & Oğuz, Gök, "Locating Turkey as a 'Rising Power' in the Changing International Order: An Introduction", **Strategic Center for Research**, 2014, p.6

⁸² Juliette Tolay, "Mass Migration and Images of State Power: Turkey's Claim to the Status of a Responsible Rising Power", **Rising Powers Quarterly**, 1(2), 2016, p.135-136.

⁸³ Aylin, Gürzel, "Turkey's Role as a Regional and Global Player and its Power Capacity: Turkey's Engagement with other Emerging States", **Rev. Sociol. Polit.**, 22(50), 2014, p.96

⁸⁴ Gökhan, Bacik & Isa, Afacan, "Turkey Discovers Sub-Saharan Africa: The Critical Role of Agents in the Construction of Turkish Foreign-Policy Discourse", **Turkish Studies**, 7(24), 2013, p.2-4

⁸⁵ Gürzel, Ibid, p.97

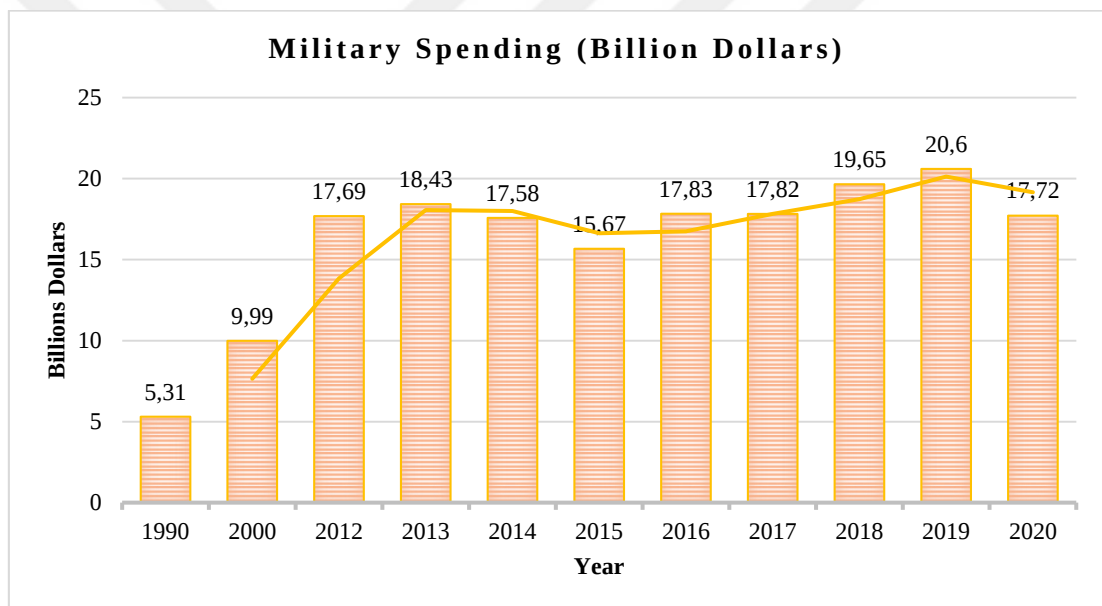
⁸⁶ Gürzel, Ibid, p.98

states and Iran. It was a remarkable development for Turkish foreign policy and neighbours,⁸⁷ and lifting visa restrictions was an irrefutable decision made so far by Türkiye.

1.3.2. Military Capability

The rise of Türkiye as a regional security power has not gone overlooked by its neighbours.⁸⁸ Türkiye's relatively successful economic growth over the last decade has resulted in considerable optimism about the country's international position. Türkiye's goal of becoming a great power and the "Center of world politics" has served as the organizing factor for many reforms and efforts in the country's foreign policy.⁸⁹ In this sense, the below figures provide particular information on Turkish Military spending.

Figure 1: Türkiye's Military Spending (Billion Dollars)



Source: SIPRI, <https://milex.sipri.org/sipri>; Trading Economics, [https://tradingeconomics.com/turkey/military expenditure](https://tradingeconomics.com/turkey/military-expenditure).

The table clearly shows that between 1990 and 2013, Türkiye's military spending increased dramatically. However, it remained flat from 2014 to 2017. In this vein, Türkiye's military spending hit a peak in 2019. Based on World Bank source Türkiye's military spending decreased compared to previous year. Türkiye's dramatic military spending appears to be a precursor of both Türkiye's rising power status and its desire to play a more role in international politics and in war-torn countries.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Gürzel, Ibid, p.101

⁸⁸ Michael Robet, Hickok, "Hegemon Rising: The Gap Between the Turkish Strategy and Military Modernization", **Parameters**, 2000, p.105

⁸⁹ Ažuolas, Bagdonas, "Turkey as a Great Power? Back to Reality", **Turkish Studies**, 2015, p.310

⁹⁰ Bagdonas, Ibid, p.314

It is worthwhile to mention that from 2014 to 2020, Türkiye displayed Turkish-developed “high tech” in international exhibitions. As well as Türkiye has already initiated exporting defence equipment to many nations, including warships, tanks, drones, and fighter aircraft, and by 2020, Türkiye has already accomplished its goal of becoming a regional power.⁹¹ Further, this is the consequence of two decades of investments that enable Türkiye’s defence industries to produce NATO standards elements and expand beyond internal military demands. Turkish weapons have drawn the attention of Asian, African, Middle Eastern, Caucasus, and Central Asian states.⁹² Türkiye’s accomplishment as a “weapons producer” evolved over ten years and has promoted it to an international arms supplier.⁹³

As a matter of fact, Türkiye already had the second-largest army in NATO, following the United States armed forces and the strongest military in the Middle East, and the most outstanding economy in the area, which makes Türkiye a viable candidate to become a rising power. Moreover, the development of Turkish hard power brought out assertive ideologies and policies on foreign, defence, and security. For instance, in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, Türkiye’s decision to offer military support to Azerbaijan changed the geopolitical order in the South Caucasus. More importantly, the conflict boosted Ankara’s influence in Central Asia.

Table 1: Türkiye’s Foreign Military Presence

Country	Base type, Military operation	Year of development Base opening	Under the authority of	Total
Afghanistan	Temporary	2015	NATO	600 to 650 Troops
Albania	Permanent	1997	1997 Defence Agreement	20 To 24 Troops
Azerbaijan	Possibly Permanent	2020	2010 strategic partnership/ Mutual support agreement	-
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Temporary	2004	EU	250 to 300 Troops

⁹¹ Defense News, “The rise of the Turkish naval industry”, **Defense News**, 2020, <https://www.defensenews.com/native/turkish-defence-aerospace/2020/09/21/the-rise-of-turkish-naval-industry/>, [Access date: 20.09.2021]

⁹² Mohammad, Iqbal, “The Emergence of Turkey as a Regional Power and the Neo-Ottomanism”, **SSRN**, 2020, p.17.

⁹³ Defense News, “How Turkey became one of the world’s leading manufacturers of weapons systems”, **Defense News**, 2020, <https://www.defensenews.com/native/turkish-defence-aerospace/2020/07/21/how-turkey-became-one-of-the-worlds-leading-manufacturers-of-weapons-systems/>, [Access date: 20.09.2021]

Table 1: Türkiye's Foreign Military Presence

Congo	Temporary	1999	U.N.	7 Police
Cyprus	Permanent	1974	1960 Treaty of Guarantee	35000 Troops
Iraq	Temporary	2019	Turkish Government	2000 to 3000 Troops
Qatar	Permanent	2019	2014 Defence agreement	3000 to 5000 Troops
Somalia	Permanent	2017	Defence Agreement	200 to 300 Troops
Syria	Temporary	2016	Turkish Government	5000 to 10000 Troops

Source: Newlinesinstitute.org. <https://newlinesinstitute.org/Türkiye/mapping-the-rise-of-Türkiyes-hard-power/>.

Türkiye's extraterritorial military operations, military deployments on foreign territory, sophisticated military bases, and showing its land, sea, and air forces in different parts of the world, such as in the Levant, Gulf, Horn of Africa, North Africa, Eastern Mediterranean, and South Caucasus, indicate Türkiye's rising hard power capacity to become a rising power.

Briefly, the table demonstrates an abundance of evidence reaffirming that Türkiye has the capability and has already influenced the regions, and as mentioned above, Türkiye's impact is exponentially increasing in the global arena.⁹⁴ Given the fact that Türkiye could be seen as a consistently rising and competitive regional rising power in the Middle East and West Asia,⁹⁵ South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa. It seems that Türkiye's evolving military and diplomatic relations over the sea encourage Türkiye to identify as a rising power.

1.3.3. Political Stability

Stability is a priority for rising nations. It is critical for states like Türkiye, where industrialization and economic growth have not been wholly realized since political stability may lead to economic growth. For that reason, countries that lack political strength and economic growth face detrimental consequences. Moreover, countries with political stability may have the potential to accelerate economic growth, attract investors and do so in a shorter period. The importance of political stability in the growth process, particularly concerning Türkiye's development, cannot be underestimated.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ali Bakir, "Mapping The Rise of Turkey's Hard Power", **News Line Institute**, 2021, <https://newlinesinstitute.org/turkey/mapping-the-rise-of-turkeys-hard-power/>, [Access date: 18.09.2021]

⁹⁵ Iqbal, Ibid., p.18

⁹⁶ Ali, Acar, "The Effects of Political Stability on Economic Growth of the Presidential Government System", **International Journal of Economics and Politics Sciences Academic Researches**, 3(9), 2019, p.18-19

Nevertheless, the economy assured sustainable development in such a powerful political situation. Political instability, of course, is the primary factor influencing economic stability. Despite that, political stability and economic growth interact, and stability promotes the country's economic development⁹⁷ in light of that. Those with healthy economies and political stability develop considerably faster than states with troubled economies.⁹⁸ Also, economic growth determines financial stability, and they are deeply interconnected to one another.⁹⁹ Therefore, political stability is one of the main pillars of rising powers.

The Economic Research Fred has released the country's national income 2020 figures. According to Economic Research Fred, the current national income of Türkiye is around \$712 billion. Turkish gross domestic product (GDP) has declined substantially in recent years. For instance, in 2018, Türkiye's national Domestic Gross Product was \$820 billion, and at the end of 2020, it dramatically shrunk to around \$720 billion. It indicates that the Turkish economy has to pass a fluctuation time.¹⁰⁰ It is seen that the recent conflict in the region and the influx of refugees into the country has affected the Turkish economy negatively.

A consistent and stable political system is necessary for a nation to reach out for steady economic development and solid political leadership that understands what it is doing and will remove numerous challenges and difficulties. On the other hand, the economy will be assured of constant growth with such a strong policy.¹⁰¹ In other words, it is worth mentioning that it is broadly accepted that political stability plays a vital role in a rising power's economic growth and that a stable political atmosphere promotes the establishment of a predictable and uninterrupted pathway toward sustainable development.¹⁰² According to World Bank data, Türkiye's stability index (-2.5 weak 2.5 strong) is more fragile than expected. The most recent figure from 2020 has shown that Türkiye's stability index is -1.19 from -2.5. Based on the 194 countries, the world stability index average was remained constant from 2013 to 2020.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ Rahman Dağ & Hakan Uslu, "Developed-Ness Dilemma: Economic and Democratic Developments in Turkey", **Dicle Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi**, (28), 2021, p.232-255.

⁹⁸ Acar, Ibid, p.19

⁹⁹ Acar, Ibid, p.20

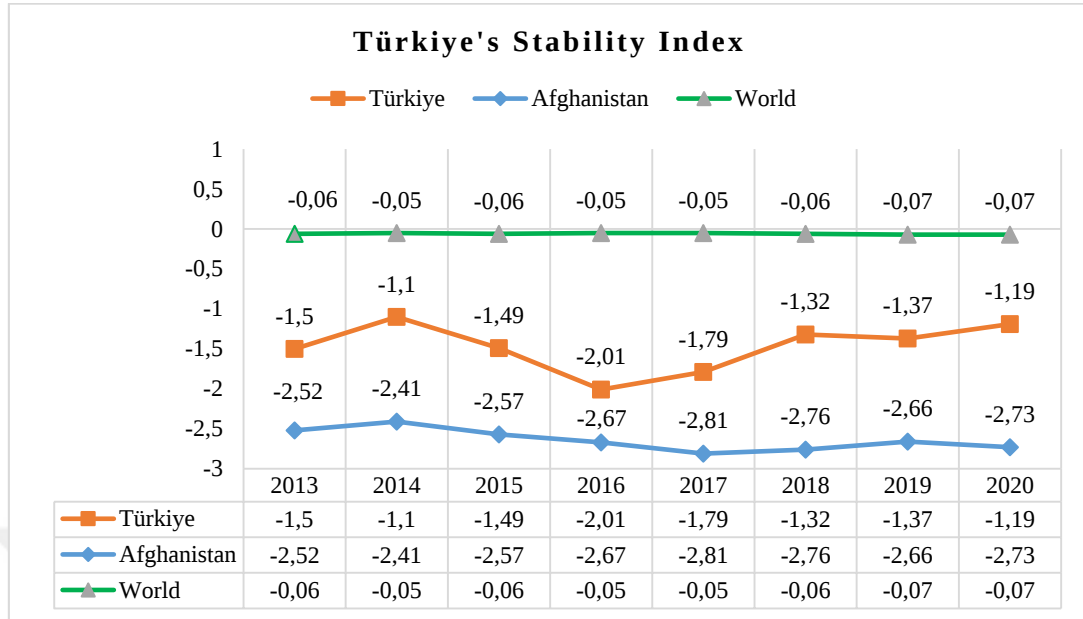
¹⁰⁰ World Bank, "Gross National Income for Turkey [Mktgnitra646nwdb]", 2021, Fred, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/Mktgnitra646nwdb>. [Access date: 20.09.2021]

¹⁰¹ Acar, Ibid, p.27

¹⁰² Zahid, Hussain, "Can political stability hurt economic growth?", World Bank Blogs, 2014, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/can-political-stability-hurt-economic-growth>, [Access date: 20.09.2021]

¹⁰³ The World Bank, "Political Stability No Violence", the World Bank, 2020, https://tcdata360.worldbank.org/indicators/h395cb858?country=TUR&indicator=376&viz=line_chart&years=1996,2020, [Access date: 05.01.2022]

Figure 2: Türkiye's Stability Index



Source: The Global Economy, https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Turkey/wb_political_stability/

As can be seen in the figure, Afghanistan's stability index is more fragile than any other country in the world. Whereas, world average values remained unchanged in the course of 2013 and 2020. When it comes to Türkiye, in the same period, the country's stability index has been erratic. It stems from Türkiye's experience with four military coups and more than 30 years of armed insurrection.¹⁰⁴ Within this framework, Türkiye is a more vulnerable country regarding political stability as a rising power.

1.3.4. Türkiye as a Rising Power at G20

Türkiye is a fast-growing market and a global trade hub which serves as the connecting point for continental businesses. On the other hand, Türkiye being one of the fastest growing economies in the G20 members also enjoys its geographical strategic significance connecting the Middle East, central Asia, North Africa, and Europe.¹⁰⁵¹⁰⁶ Türkiye is one of the world's 20th biggest economies. The main reason behind Türkiye's pursuit to become a G20 member was to portray itself as an influential international actor. Noting that Türkiye was and continues to be a big regional power with a long and distinguished history and vital links to numerous other countries in the region and beyond. Also, it has the most significant economy among Muslim nations. Türkiye as a democratic state, a

¹⁰⁴ Auveen Woods, & Onur Sazak, "Turkey's Approach to Peacebuilding: Principles, Policies and Practices", **Istanbul Policy Center**, 2016, p.1

¹⁰⁵ Ömer Çelik, "Turkey's Great Transformation: An Influence-Multiplier for the Future of Europe and Beyond", **Rising Powers Quarterly**, 2016, 1(1), p.35-53.

¹⁰⁶ Hüseyin, Bağcı, "The Role of Turkey as a New Player in the G20 System", Chapter 15, 2010, p.147

NATO member, a member of the OECD, and potentially an EU member is a candidate to become a global power but first achieve its goal of becoming a well-established rising power.

The global financial crisis facilitated Türkiye's participation in the G20, which enhanced Turkish policymakers' assurance and confidence.¹⁰⁷ Subsequently, Türkiye became a member of the G20 in 1999. The G20's members were not looking for complete agreement on everything. Initially, they wanted to establish a platform for addressing political stalemate on global issues. For that reason, they brought noticeable differences and crucial players to the table like China and India.¹⁰⁸ The founders' eagerness for Turkish affiliation never caused a rift in the organization.¹⁰⁹ Despite that, compared to other G20 members, including Australia, Mexico, Indonesia, and South Korea, Türkiye may be characterized as a "middle power." Essentially, those states are indisputably not big powers but not small ones.¹¹⁰ Even though they "cannot act alone effectively but able to have a systemic impact in a small group or through an international institution."¹¹¹ As a result of this, it provided a unique chance for consolidation. At the same time, it illustrates Türkiye's growing prominence and influence in the international arena.

Furthermore, it would strengthen its position alongside the other members. It would increase Türkiye's global and multilateral outreach. Türkiye's membership at G20 undoubtedly enhances Türkiye's prestige and impact.¹¹² In this context, Türkiye's G20 membership provided it to play a significant role in the modernization of global governance by embracing the G20 as the new international steering committee.¹¹³ In addition, following membership in the G20 is inextricably linked to Türkiye's proactive foreign policy during the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) administration. In recent years, Turkish foreign policy has grown extremely assertive and independent.¹¹⁴ In addition to its G20 membership, Türkiye is increasing its presence in a number of international forums.

In 2009-2010, Türkiye had a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for the first time since 1961.¹¹⁵ Eventually, the G20 summit provided Türkiye with a significant strategic opportunity in terms of its international stature and influence. Türkiye has also played a fundamental and dependable role in the G20, and it is widely regarded as a critical and significant actor in the international community.¹¹⁶ More importantly, Türkiye has the potential to act as a crossroads

¹⁰⁷ Bağcı, Ibid, p.148

¹⁰⁸ Dries, Lesage, & Yusuf, Kaçar, "Turkey's Profile in the G20: Emerging Economy, Middle Power and Bridge! Builder", *Studia Diplomatica*, 63, 2010, p.125

¹⁰⁹ Lesage, Ibid, p.126

¹¹⁰ Kohei, Imai, "Comparative Middle Power Diplomacies: Turkey and Japan", Middle East Institute, 2013, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/comparative-middle-power-diplomacies-turkey-and-japan>, [Access date: 21.09.2021]

¹¹¹ Bağcı, Ibid, p.147

¹¹² Lesage, Ibid., p.140

¹¹³ Bradford, Ibid, p.64

¹¹⁴ Bağcı, Ibid, p.149

¹¹⁵ Lesage, Ibid., p.130

¹¹⁶ Bradford, Ibid, p.63

between Europe and Asia and among industrialized economies and emerging markets. Türkiye could play a productive role within the G20 and as a member of the OECD or emerging market.¹¹⁷ All of the facts mentioned above will assist Türkiye in its pursuit of becoming a rising power. Due to its geographical position, emerging market or ascending military power, and its pro-active foreign policy in the global arena.

1.3.5. NATO Membership

Despite the fact that Türkiye and Greece were undoubtedly victims of Soviet Union aggression, at an early stage, they were not designated as eligible for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership. Because Greece and Türkiye, they were not regarded in Western Europe or the Atlantic, but the United States considered them eligible for membership in the Mediterranean Union. Türkiye and Greece were eventually admitted into NATO by the United Kingdom due to Middle East Command (MEC) plan.¹¹⁸ However, the British Empire's attempts to establish a separate command in the Middle East were doomed to fail.¹¹⁹ Thereby NATO was established in April 1949 by the United Kingdom and the United States and remained ones. Its main aim was to keep the Soviet Union out of regions that were essential to the UK and the US. Simultaneously, Türkiye had been geopolitically or geographically crucial for the United States.¹²⁰ Consequently, Türkiye and Greece became members of NATO on February 18, 1952.¹²¹ The Korean War was a historical event in Türkiye's accession to NATO membership. The reason is that Türkiye sent troops to Korea to fight alongside the alliance. Türkiye was the second country to respond to the United Nations' call for soldiers to be sent to Korea as well, Turkish troops had an outstanding performance on the battleground in Korea.¹²²

Türkiye has been a significantly important member of NATO since its foundation. After identifying its foreign, military, and security policy on the principle of NATO membership for many years, Türkiye started to take more critical behaviour toward the alliance, concluding the Cold War and questioning their support and partnership. Since its membership, NATO has occupied a key position in Turkish foreign policy and security discourse.¹²³ However, Türkiye has been a pivotal ally of NATO. The fact that Türkiye protected the alliance's southern frontier during the Cold War. On this ground, Türkiye's position in NATO has steadily grown since the end of the Cold War due to her aggressive foreign policy and commitments to crisis management and peacekeeping

¹¹⁷ Bağcı, Ibid., p.151

¹¹⁸ Norasmahani, Hussain, **British Foreign Office Perspectives on the Admission of Turkey and Greece to NATO, 1947-1952**, The University of Leeds, 2018, p.4

¹¹⁹ Abdulkadir, Baharççek, "From Neutrality to Alignment: The Formation of NATO and Turkish Bids for Membership", **Journal of Academic Approaches**, 1(1), 2010, p.61

¹²⁰ Hussain, Ibid., p.66

¹²¹ Baharççek, Ibid, p.61

¹²² Baharççek, Ibid., p.62

¹²³ Tarik, Oğuzlu, "Turkey and NATO", **Adam Academy Journal of Social Sciences**, 3(1), 2013, p.2

operations.¹²⁴ Türkiye's soft and hard power capacities have dramatically enhanced compared to its neighbours. Türkiye has begun to engage with non-Western states and actors in recent years. With the end of the Cold War, the global system has progressively taken on a more multipolar system discourse. As a result of these and other reasons, the one-dimensional and NATO-centric understanding of Türkiye's foreign and security policy has gradually become redundant.¹²⁵ Nonetheless, after 1999, Türkiye's civil-military relations changed significantly. Since the AKP came to power in 2002, Türkiye has experienced extensive domestic and military policy reform, and both areas have made considerable progress.¹²⁶

As far as military contributions are concerned, Türkiye is the second-largest NATO contributor behind the United States.¹²⁷ As a result of Türkiye's membership in NATO in 1952, the military's modernization and progress were significantly enhanced. The Turkish military has been regarded as just three forces capable of successfully executing cross-border or overseas operations. Unquestionably, Türkiye's NATO membership facilitated the modernization of the Turkish military, which improved the country's standing in the international arena.¹²⁸ However, Türkiye's foreign policy has been mainly Türkiye-centric and less western-oriented in recent years.¹²⁹ In this sense, it explicitly concerns the United States and European Union's interests.

1.3.6. Diplomatic Conferences

Türkiye has embraced the opportunity to implement its foreign policy agenda through diplomatic conferences. The new image promotes Türkiye as an active player in shaping the region. Diplomatic conferences are little more than a diplomatic tool in this sense. It brings attention to the problem at stake, gathers all leading players and actors around, preferably in a neutral location and with the assistance of a trusted facilitator, and generates both momentum and a concrete timeframe for response to the issues.¹³⁰ Türkiye has also been expanding its soft and smart power as a rising power through housing summits and programs and diplomatic meetings.

¹²⁴ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (n.d), "Turkey- NATO Together for Peace and Security Since 60 Years", Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-nato-together-for-peace-and-security-since60-years.en.mfa>, [Access date: 24.09.2021]

¹²⁵ Oğuzlu, Ibid., p.4

¹²⁶ Giray, Sadık, "Norm Setters or Policy Shapers? Comparative Analysis of EU and NATO Roles in the Security Sector Reforms of Turkey", *Adam Academy Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(1), 2013, p.52

¹²⁷ Daily Sabah, "Turkey's army is NATO's second largest", Daily Sabah, 2012, <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2012/04/16/turkeys-army-is-natos-second-largest>, [Access date: 25.09.2021]

¹²⁸ Sadık, Ibid, p.58

¹²⁹ Marc, Pierini, "How Far Can Turkey Challenge NATO and the EU in 2020?", *Carnegie Europe*, 2020, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2020/01/29/how-far-can-turkey-challenge-nato-and-eu-in-2020-pub-80912>, [Access date: 24.09.2021]

¹³⁰ Abiodun, Williams, "The Use of Conference Diplomacy in Conflict Prevention", United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/use-conference-diplomacy-conflict-prevention>, [Access date: 25.09.2021]

For that reason, Türkiye has attempted to establish itself as a hub of international politics by organizing multilateral forums and conferences. In other words, Türkiye has been hosting meetings on regional and international issues. Likewise, Antalya Diplomacy Forum, NATO summits, G20, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (ICO), and the South-East European Cooperation Process. All these Summits were organized and hosted by Türkiye.¹³¹ For instance, Türkiye has been hosting Antalya Diplomacy Forum annually under the auspices of the President and the Foreign Ministry of Türkiye, where politicians, diplomats, influencers, and scholars from across the globe assemble to address international issues.¹³² Furthermore, Türkiye has the 5th largest diplomatic network globally, with 252 missions led by experienced Turkish personnel in the most challenging regions. Türkiye has conducted innovative diplomacy aimed at resolving issues in every corner of the world, both at the level of leaders and Embassies.¹³³ For instance, Türkiye, along with others, has unquestionably been successful in mediating among the Lebanese, Israel-Syria, and, recently, Ukraine and Russia. One of the main reasons behind this is that Türkiye uses mediation as a foreign policy apparatus. The prime motivation for Ankara's active foreign policy is an aspiration to be a rising power. Therefore, Türkiye is involved in solving conflicts and defusing tension in different parts of the world. Türkiye has hosted many conferences and diplomatic meetings regarding the Afghanistan, Libya, and Syrian conflicts.

It's worth noting that Türkiye is one of the leading humanitarian donor countries and hosted the United Nations' which held the first-ever humanitarian summit in Istanbul in 2016. Istanbul was chosen over New York. Because the international community appreciated Türkiye's humanitarian role and standing observed in Geneva.¹³⁴ Consequently, hosting international and diplomatic conferences attracts media attention which impacts Türkiye's rising powers' image regionally and globally.

1.3.7. Humanitarian Assistance

The rhetoric of the rising powers has acquired importance as a result of its effect on international affairs. In the same way, new players have emerged on the humanitarian landscape, notably those known as emerging donors.¹³⁵ There's no doubt about the fact that Türkiye's

¹³¹ Muhittin, Ataman, "A new era in diplomacy: Who stands by Turkey Wins", **Daily Sabah**, 2021, <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/columns/a-new-era-in-diplomacy-who-stands-by-turkey-wins>, [Access date: 25.09.2021]

¹³² Rabia iclal, Turan, & Beyza Binnur, Donmez, "Antalya Diplomacy Forum", **Anadolu Agency**, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/antalya-diplomacy-forum-/2278289>, [Access date: 25.09.2021]

¹³³ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Antalya Diplomacy Forum, 18-20 June 2021", **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, 2021, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/antalya-diplomasi-forumu-18-20-haziran-2021.en.mfa>, [Access date: 25.09.2021]

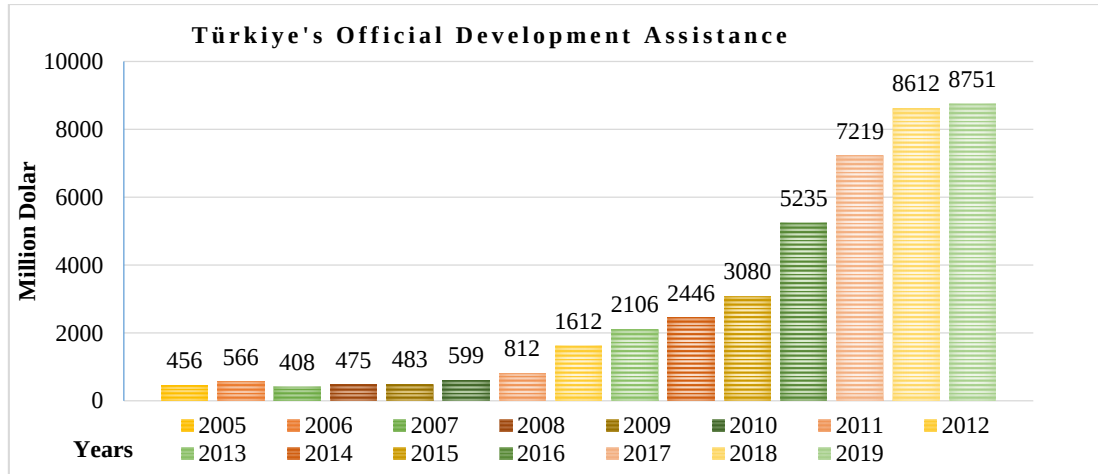
¹³⁴ Hasan, Ulusoy, "The First-Ever World Humanitarian Summit: Embarking on a Historic Journey for the Future of Humanity", **Foreign Policy Institute**, 2016, <https://foreignpolicy.org.tr/dis-politika-foreign-policy-vol-xxxxiii-no-1-2016-the-first-ever-world-humanitarian-summit-embarking-on-a-historic-journey-for-the-future-of-humanity/>, [Access date: 25.09.2021]

¹³⁵ Maria Del Mar Cabecerans, Lopera, "The rise of the emerging powers and donors: enhanced multilateralism in humanitarian action? The case of Turkey", **Universidad de Deusto**, 2013, p.161

humanitarian endeavours over the past years have been exceptional. Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy has been a striking example of this humanitarianism.¹³⁶

Humanitarian assistance has a broader meaning than just providing humanitarian aid, although this is an essential instrument in its portfolio. Türkiye has long been acknowledged as the world's "most generous" humanitarian provider in the context of official humanitarian aid when the national income on the basis per capita is taken into account.¹³⁷ Türkiye's humanitarian assistance attempts are part of its objective to strengthen its international standing.¹³⁸ On the other hand, Turkish humanitarian aid embodies its global status more than it foresees. Despite following the United States, Europe, and the United Kingdom in humanitarian aid, Türkiye maintains its level as a regional power. The Syrian refugee crisis also seems to substantially affect Turkish humanitarian assistance in the future.¹³⁹ Türkiye's humanitarian aid is most renowned for its contribution to those stricken by the Somali and Syrian crises and Afghanistan.¹⁴⁰ Aid was delivered and coordinated through the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) under the leadership of the Premiership and the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) in Somalia, Afghanistan and impoverished countries. However, it also acts through other ministries (such as Health), governmental agencies (such as the Religious Affairs Directorate in the Prime Minister's Office known as Diyanet), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (mainly the Turkish Red Crescent, but also NGOs like IHH or Kimse Yok Mu).¹⁴¹

Figure 3: Türkiye's Official Development Assistance (Million dollars)



Source: OECD, <https://data.oecd.org/turkiye.htm>; TIKA, <https://www.tika.gov.tr/en>

¹³⁶ Rahman Dağ, "Dış Yardımların Sınırlarını Belirleyen Medeniyet Kavramının Bileşenleri", *Sosyal Bilimler Araştırma Dergisi*, 2016, 14(27), p.41-57

¹³⁷ Xiaoli, Guo, "Turkey's International Humanitarian Assistance during the AKP Era: Key Actors, Concepts and Motivations", *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, (2020), 14(1), P. 121

¹³⁸ Lopera, Ibid., p.172

¹³⁹ Andrea, Binder (2014), "The Shape and Sustainability of Turkey's Booming Humanitarian Assistance", Open Edition Journals, <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/1741#tocto1n5>, [Access date: 26.09.2021]

¹⁴⁰ Lopera, Ibid., p.177

¹⁴¹ Lopera, Ibid., p.178

Türkiye's development assistance has expanded exponentially throughout this time of institutional reform and geographic growth. Türkiye's ODA to the OECD-DAC was \$488 million in 2004. Furthermore, during the Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War in 2011, it reached \$812 million. According to figure 2, Türkiye's official development assistance (ODA) for 2019 reached \$8.751 million. The AKP administration claims that Türkiye is "the world's most generous donor country" because its humanitarian assistance has risen eightfold. TİKA is the leading vehicle for spreading this picture and providing assistance on the ground.¹⁴²

It is also important to stress that Türkiye's humanitarian development activity was carried out and led by state institutions and NGOs. Like the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), the Red Crescent (Kızılay), and Humanitarian Aid Foundation (İHH).¹⁴³ It is also worth noting that Türkiye is hosting and home to more than 3.9 million refugees and asylum seekers. Thus far, Türkiye is the world's top refugee-hosting country.¹⁴⁴ Türkiye provides humanitarian assistance through bilateral means rather than multilateral engagement. Based on Ministry of Foreign Affairs data, Türkiye has spent over \$40 billion to provide humanitarian aid and services to Syrians and continues providing them.¹⁴⁵

Humanitarian aid has evolved into a direct or indirect instrument of foreign policy, a soft power strategy for gaining global attention and influence. Moreover, this could help regionally by facilitating the expansion of its regional influence or supporting the development of bilateral relations.¹⁴⁶ Some of the emerging countries have already multiplied their activities.

Worth looking at emerging powers that are well-positioned to overcome the financial and humanitarian crisis due to their thriving economies. Their developing economy also allows them to increase the country's profile in the international arena.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, Türkiye is an active developing donor and one of the most diplomatically involved rising countries. Emerging powers are marked not just by the progress of their economies but also by representing their soft power.¹⁴⁸ So over the past decade, Türkiye has emerged to become one of the world's leading contributors to humanitarian crises.¹⁴⁹ Based on the above studies, Türkiye's primary goal of humanitarian assistance is to project itself as a crucial international humanitarian actor. It has been shown that in Afghanistan, Libya,

¹⁴² Yavuz, Tüyoğlu, "Turkish Development Assistance as a Foreign Policy Tool and its Discordant Locations", **Centre for Applied Turkey Studies**, 2021, p.10

¹⁴³ Meliha Benli, Altun, "Turkey's Humanitarian Diplomacy: The AKP Model", **Cmi Brief**, 2019, p.1-5

¹⁴⁴ The World Bank, "10 Years On, Turkey Continues its Support for an Ever-Growing Number of Syrian Refugees", the World Bank, 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2021/06/22/10-years-on-turkey-continues-its-support-for-an-ever-growing-number-of-syrian-refugees>, [Access date: 25.09.2021]

¹⁴⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Turkey's Enterprising And Humanitarian Foreign Policy", **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/synopsis-of-the-turkish-foreign-policy.en.mfa>, [Access date: 26.09.2021]

¹⁴⁶ Lopera, Ibid, p.163

¹⁴⁷ Lopera, Ibid., p.165

¹⁴⁸ Lopera, Ibid., p.171

¹⁴⁹ Guo, Ibid, p.140

Syria and Somalia. Humanitarian assistance is another inspiring factor for Türkiye's rising power aspiration.

1.3.8. Seeking International Recognition

Reshaping global affairs is prevalent in the modern world. So, power transitions have proved to be essential. In the 1990s, there was a power transition, with the unexpected relinquishment or dissolution of the Soviet Union, which led to the end of the bipolar system. Therefore, it ushered in a new page and the expansion of the United States and the "rise of the rest," which changed the stability of the world and its prestige. In addition, the power transition was peaceful, and the United States' dedication to this rapid transition was commendable.¹⁵⁰ The enhancement of Turkish democracy throughout a set of changes would assist the nation in becoming a rising power able to influence both the West and "the rest," NATO has been one of the institutions through which Türkiye has fostered close ties with developed Western countries. Türkiye's position on concerns with NATO's reform agenda has provided insight into assessing Türkiye's unprecedented rise over the last two decades. Türkiye's primary goal is to expand alongside the West, being member of NATO. Like other rising countries, Türkiye will undoubtedly pursue a realistic foreign and security strategy centred on its aims in the years ahead. The strengthening of Turkish democracy through a series of reforms would enable the nation to become an absolute rising power likely to influence both the West and "the rest."¹⁵¹

However, the rise of Türkiye does not easily fit into the empirical findings that define other rising countries like China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, and South Africa. Last but not least, the capacity of Türkiye's rise within the western system is vital to its subsequent progress. Nonetheless, it is widely agreed that Türkiye frequently interferes with the rising powers forced to struggle with the current international order regardless of circumstances.¹⁵² Türkiye has focused on development aid and economic growth as a non-traditional actor. However, the country strengthened its political aspirations and its commitment to state-building. As of 2011, Türkiye has been an over-political actor, exclusively acting as a donor and economic power country.¹⁵³ Accordingly, status-seeking behaviour is prevalent throughout the rising power states. Buğra (2019) highlights that "status is intrinsically coupled with the concept of recognition." In this regard, one of the primary goals of Türkiye is to be recognized as an international actor.¹⁵⁴ In this context, becoming a regional actor

¹⁵⁰ Hart & Jones, Ibid, p.63-88

¹⁵¹ Oğuzlu & Parlar, Ibid, p.632-634

¹⁵² Soner, Cagaptay, "Defining Turkish Power: Turkey as a Rising Power Embedded in the Western International System", **Turkish Studies**, 14(4), 2013, p.808

¹⁵³ Mehmet, Ozkan, "Does "rising power" mean "rising donor"? Turkey's development aid in Africa", **Africa Review**, 5(2), 2013, p.139

¹⁵⁴ Buğra, Süssler, "Turkey: An Emerging Middle Power in a Changing World?", **LSE IDEAS**, 2019, p.8

and then a global actor is the ambition of rising powers,¹⁵⁵ given the fact that Türkiye desperately wants to raise its international status and intends to take a more role in regional and international aspects. Moreover, Türkiye has demonstrated itself in MIKTA (Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Türkiye, and Australia) as a vital mediator and humanitarian donor state.¹⁵⁶

It is worth mentioning that, during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Türkiye provided drones to Azerbaijan, which helped Azerbaijan reclaim conflict territory. That also has proven that Türkiye is an essential player in the Caucasus. Concurrently, Türkiye has already deepened its ties with Somalia and built a military base there. Türkiye has made itself one of the key players in the Middle East and North Africa. If all the questions mentioned above were taken into account, Türkiye's prestige in the regional and international arena would boost.¹⁵⁷ The latest development in Afghanistan shows that Somalia should have solid confidence in Türkiye rather than western powers. If not, they will be in the same circumstances as Afghans. The fundamental reason is that the United States abandoned the Afghans when they desperately needed help. Therefore, the Taliban took over Kabul and set up their own government.

Nevertheless, what it means for Türkiye controlling of Kabul airport, without a doubt, Türkiye would rise as a regional power and attain prestige in the international arena. At the same time, that would have brought victory in internal policy to President Erdogan¹⁵⁸ and Türkiye will influence regional powers. As a rising power, Türkiye desires acceptability by other states, mainly those status quo powers. So, to avoid serious resistance to its ascension, Türkiye must give confidence and promote collaboration in its foreign relations. Therefore, Türkiye should utilize its soft power attraction, cope with foreign policy challenges, and carve out an amiable environment as a rising power. In the fact that each rising power state seeks status in global affairs to be recognized as a rising power.

1.3.9. Pursuing International Influence

Türkiye's global influence has grown under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) administration. The AKP policy-makers are willing to become visible in the regional and international arena. Hence rising middle powers have begun to take on a more prominent role than great powers, attempting to transform the world system to represent their interests, approaches, and

¹⁵⁵ Nukhet A. Sandal, "Middle powerhood as a legitimization strategy in the developing world: The cases of Brazil and Turkey", *International Politics*, 51(6). 2014, p.702

¹⁵⁶ Süssler, *Ibid.*, p.12

¹⁵⁷ Luigi, Scazzieri, "Turkey rising?" *Center for European Reform*, 2020, p.1-2

¹⁵⁸ Center for Applied Studies, "What might Turkey's enhanced engagement in Afghanistan mean for Ankara, NATO, and for the future of Afghanistan?", CATS Network, 2021, <https://www.cats-network.eu/publications/cats-network-perspectives/turkeys-engagement-in-afghanistan>, [Access date: 14.09.2021]

values by increasing their contributions and responsibility in key international organizations.¹⁵⁹ Since the end of the Cold War, researchers have observed Türkiye's expansion aspiration. Its sphere of influence in its region, and the concept of a middle power, have been frequently utilized to define Türkiye's commitment to the international system. Although Türkiye is not one of the great powers, it has significant autonomy to stand against great powers and implement its policy as a regional actor.¹⁶⁰ One of the features of middle powers such as Türkiye, they are more willing to engage in coordinated action to resolve global governance issues.

Nevertheless, by the 2000s, Türkiye had doubled its activity in foreign policy and levelled up its status in the international arena. It is essential to note that the strategic importance of the G20 became invaluable in the eyes of Turkish decision-makers in the vein of overarching global economic governance and facilitated Türkiye's engagement in the international governance reform procedure.¹⁶¹ In this context, recently, Luke Coffey, Director of Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy, highlighted that controlling and managing the Kabul International airport and cooperating with the Taliban gives an unprecedented opportunity for Türkiye to become a rising regional power and foster its influence in global affairs. He also mentioned that Türkiye's influence in the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Afghanistan had increased over the years.¹⁶² The people of Afghanistan see Türkiye as a neutral, friendly, brotherhood country, while other states seem unreliable. For that reason, Türkiye's presence and involvement in Afghanistan will have yielded more power to Ankara's regional policies, in particular in central Asia. Following the cold war, the image of Türkiye as a regional and then rising power in the global context has shifted exponentially.

1.3.10. Türkiye as a Regional Rising Power

Since the end of the Cold War, notably after the 2000s, Türkiye has emerged as a significant regional power and global actor. Türkiye has widened its sphere of influence over the past few years. This theme scrutinises a state's fundamental requirement to claim regional rising power. In doing so, to become a rising power, a regional power must comply with the following requirements: energy sufficiency, economic development, a strategic military, a defence industry, a strategically significant location, excellent leadership with a long-term vision, a solid foreign relations strategy, and social harmony.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Emel, Parlar Dal, "On Turkey's Trail as a "Rising Middle Power" in the Network of Global Governance: Preferences, Capabilities, and Strategies", *Perceptions*, 19(4), 2014, p.108

¹⁶⁰ Süssler, Ibid., p.7

¹⁶¹ Colin Bradford, & Johannes F. Linn, "The G20 Summit - its Significance for World and for Turkey", *International Economic Issue*, 2009, p.64

¹⁶² Esin, Eşkinat Sayılğan, "ABD'li siyaset bilimci Coffey: Türk etkisi Orta Asya, Kafkaslar ve Afganistan'da yükselişte", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/abdli-siyaset-bilimci-coffey-turk-etkisi-orta-asya-kafkaslar-ve-afganistanda-yukseliste/2368993>, [Access date: 14.09.2021]

¹⁶³ Georgios C., Baltos. Et al, "Turkey's Ambitions to Emerge as a Regional Power: Example or Counter-Example for Potential Aspiring Competitors", *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 6(3), 2017, p.34-35

Superpowers utilize vast amounts of energy and therefore modify their plans and policies to maintain a sustainable supply. Similarly, while managing less energy, regional powers seek to be engaged in regional energy problems, “dominating” the generation or supply of essential energy resources. Hence Türkiye is systematically tracing its objectives to become a rising regional power and heading the prominent actor in energy diplomacy.¹⁶⁴ Over the course of two decades, Türkiye has undergone a dramatic transition that has fundamentally transformed the country’s political, economic, and social institutions, which will significantly influence the country’s future growth.¹⁶⁵ The position of Türkiye as a rising power in the regional and international arena is regarded because of its geopolitical significance. Especially in the context of energy roads. As a result, Türkiye has become not only the EU’s and US’s primary energy hub, but also a significant centre for exporters of Russian gas.

Further, it has been playing a decisive role in multiple projects, including the construction of gas and oil pipelines. Also, Türkiye is the centre of energy in the Middle East and manages the considerable water resources of the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates.¹⁶⁶ Similar projects like Blue stream, The Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP), and the Nabucco pipeline are under construction.¹⁶⁷

In other words, regional powers should be economically strong regarding their regional norms and align. No country will rise as a rising power with unstable economies and financial deficits. All other requirements for a rising regional power to become a rising power must be fulfilled and evolve anywhere in the world demands for financial resources.

Despite the current economic crisis in the global economy, Turkish-made items continue to be sold to other markets on a regular basis.¹⁶⁸ Regional recognition is based mainly on military supremacy, although it has nothing to do with aggressive or imperialist tendencies. The very presence of military capabilities favours a country’s commitment to peacekeeping, peacebuilding operations and unwavering stability.¹⁶⁹ Numerous nations may exhibit the characteristics of a regional power while staying on the periphery of geopolitics, if not of geography itself. Without any question, Türkiye’s position is an unprecedented place concerning geopolitics and geography. The United States, one of the greatest and most influential countries globally, frequently stresses that Türkiye is a crucial partner of the United States in the Middle East. Indeed, it also demonstrates Türkiye’s rise

¹⁶⁴ Baltos, Ibid., p.36

¹⁶⁵ Jan, Senkyr, “Turkey on the Road to Becoming a Regional Power”, **Konrad Adenauer Stiftung**, 2010, p.76

¹⁶⁶ Tuncay, Şahin, “Is Turkey becoming an energy hub?”, TRT World, 2017, <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/is-turkey-becoming-an-energy-hub--11912>, [Access date: 26.09.2021]

¹⁶⁷ Ozan, Karaduman. & Direnç, Bada, “Turkey: A Potential Oil & Gas Hub”, Gün Partners, 2015, <http://gun.av.tr/insights/articles/turkey-a-potential-oil-gas-hub>, [Access date: 26.09.2021]

¹⁶⁸ Lopera, Ibid., p.37

¹⁶⁹ Baltos, Ibid., p.39

as a rising regional power. Worthwhile to note that one of the main characteristics of regional power¹⁷⁰ is to become a rising power.

Another factor worth mentioning is that a stable and global strategy is one of the prime features of regional power to investigate. However, regional power, to some extent, duplicates of superpowers. For instance, the main difference is that regional powers shouldn't impede the implementation of the superpowers' strategies. In an ideal world for both parties, regional powers should implement policies and plans consistent with the superpowers' goals in each region and around the globe.¹⁷¹ Last but not least, the very initial views of regional powers were seen as geopolitical facts in the international diplomacy arena. The Social cohesion of regional powers must consider the internal dimension of the regional power's society that demonstrates the country's domestic dimension on the international scene.

Nevertheless, if a country aims to play a crucial role in resolving its neighbours' or international problems, it must first solve its domestic issues. A strong nation is determined by its domestic stability, and then rising powers could influence other states' concerns. Further, Türkiye has been working to fulfil and exert social cohesion in the country, and domestic political stability allowed them to engage with other neighbouring countries' difficulties, regional and far beyond¹⁷². In this vein, Türkiye has been involved in Syria, Palestine, Azerbaijan, Somalia, and Afghanistan disputes and problems. Due to this, Türkiye should be considered a rising power as it enjoys both economic and political stability internally.

Over the course of two decades, the rising powers are expected to continue pursuing their strategies to gain influence in the international domain that aligns with their positions. Türkiye is among the most dynamic countries in the world, and it could be considered a rising power.¹⁷³ Another essential characteristic of rising power is that geostrategic location and geopolitical importance should be considered as well. As a result, Türkiye is geopolitically important, which paves the way for the argument that Türkiye is a rising power. Based on the elaboration above, Türkiye can be identified as a rising power when the findings and implications are considered due to the fact that rising powers are made up of regional power.

¹⁷⁰ Baltos, Ibid., p.40

¹⁷¹ Beni Pardo, "What is a world power, a great power and a regional power?", 2017, <https://medium.com/instamarch/what-is-a-world-power-a-great-power-and-a-regional-power-29a7da79bca2>, [Access date: 26.09.2021]

¹⁷² Baltos, Ibid., p.42

¹⁷³ Lopera, Ibid., p.163

CHAPTER TWO: PEACEBUILDING PROCESS IN AFGHANISTAN

2.1. Historical Background of the Peacebuilding Process in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a landlocked country situated in central Asia. Afghanistan has been without functioning government institutions for many years and has witnessed several brutal wars. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the establishment of the Secular Soviet State, and the victorious rebellion groups of the Mujahidin entered into a civil war in Afghanistan. Since then, the generation of Afghans has yet to witness peace and stability in their country. With the horrific attacks of 9/11, the Bush administration determined to depose the Taliban. However, with the fall of the Taliban rule, Afghans and the International Community (IC) regained optimism for durable peace in Afghanistan.¹⁷⁴

The departure of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan created a political gap, and later that civil war erupted in the course of 1992-1995, which was the deadliest, most divisive, and worst period in the dark history of Afghanistan. The civil war caused the death of thousands of infants, innocent people, children, women, and men. Accordingly, that has also paved the way for a refugee crisis and the destruction of Afghanistan's economic, political, and education system. Within this period, the extremist movement Taliban emerged mainly from Pakistan camps. Many of them were students of clerics from Pakistan. In 1996, the Taliban captured the capital of Afghanistan, Kabul.

Accordingly, they established their government in Afghanistan and imposed strict Sharia law. Later the Taliban forced warlords from Kabul and pushed them to the north. As aforementioned, when they came to power, the Taliban sought to establish a "theocratic state" ruling based on the Quran. Following that, they imposed severe restrictions on women's education and committed human rights violations.¹⁷⁵ As a result of the 9/11 attacks, the United States engaged in a military Operation in Afghanistan. It is worth stressing that the United States-led operation led to America's

¹⁷⁴ UNDP, "Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP)", **UNDP in Afghanistan**, <https://www.af.undp.org/content/afghanistan/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>, [Access date : 05.08.2021]

¹⁷⁵ Cheshmak, Farhoumand-Sims, "Unfulfilled Promises: Women and Peace in Post-Taliban Afghanistan", **Sage Publications**, Ltd, 2007, p.642-663

forever war, it is longest, ever had in its history.¹⁷⁶ The Afghan peacebuilding process began with many good intentions from international and local players seeking to bring peace to Afghanistan.

However, the first peace-making attempt was launched in 1982 with the United Nations-led Geneva Talks. Within this period, the Afghan people's hope for peace and the end of hostilities was shaped by uncertainty. Although it was seen as a unique opportunity to solve the Afghan problems with the presence of different stakeholders in the region, it eventually failed. Respectively, the second round of UN-led peace talks, which began in 1991 and ended in 1992 with the involvement of numerous parties, had failed to produce meaningful achievements in ending the violence in Afghanistan.

In this regard, the second round also terminated without any progress. The third stage of the United Nations-led discussion commenced in 1993 to bring a ceasefire and obtain at least an effective solution. However, with the fall of the Soviets, new actors arose in the region, which complicated the situation further in order to peace-making in Afghanistan. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia's efforts under the Peshawar Agreement and Islamabad Accord could not end the conflict in Afghanistan.¹⁷⁷

After the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989, they lost their interest in Afghanistan. In contrast, Afghanistan was the United States' primary concern, and the west went to war with the Mujahidin. Furthermore, Mujahidin, the opposition party to the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan's government, was eventually defeated by Mujahidin in 1992. Then power absence led to the civil war between the warlords and Mujahidin. Who compete for power in the country, each faction controlled a different part of the country and tried to control Kabul. Warlords such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Ustad Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, General Rashid Dostum, Ismail Khan, Yunis Khalil, and other warlords.

As mentioned above, Afghanistan had turned into a battleground for the warlords. Meanwhile, the capital of Afghanistan was controlled mainly by ethnic Tajiks. Ismail Khan used to manage the western part of the country. The most critical point is that close to the Pakistan border was controlled by the council or (shura), and their commander lived in Jalalabad. Their ancestors are Pashtun. The Uzbek leader General Rashid Dostum governed approximately six provinces on the north side. In central Afghanistan, Hazaras ruled the city of Bamiyan, another side of the country held by various Jihadi groups. Later, the chain of refugees began from Kandahar to Pakistan. Pakistan hosts almost 4 million Afghan refugees, and Iran hosts 1 million refugees from Afghanistan.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ David, Rohde & Terence, Neilan, "Northern Alliance Moves into Kabul", **The New York Times**, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/13/international/asia/northern-alliance-moves-into-kabul.html>, [Access date: 06.08.2021]

¹⁷⁷ Mohammed Ehsan, Zia, "An Analysis of Peacebuilding Approaches in Afghanistan", **Asia Society**, 2000, <https://asiasociety.org/analysis-peacebuilding-approaches-afghanistan>, [Access date: 17.09.2021]

¹⁷⁸ Ahmed, Rashid, "Taliban. Untied Kingdom", **I. B. Tauris & Co., Ltd., Yale University Press**, 2001

Following the deposing of the Taliban and the foundation of the new government, the peace process was reiterated in 2007. Hamid Karzai was the country's incumbent president, and peace conferences and meetings were scheduled to take place and most of those planned conferences did not occur. To mention, reconciliation and dialogue aimed at solving the Afghan problem later at some point stopped. It is worth mentioning that the interpretation of regional stakeholder protracted conflict is still on track in Afghanistan.¹⁷⁹ Since 2009, there have been talks and meetings to finalize the conflict.

Even though it was unsuccessful, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia attempted mediation in 2009 as part of the Hamid Karzai administration's efforts to persuade the Taliban to come to the negotiating table.¹⁸⁰ The 2009 presidential election was the most controversial election in post-Taliban history, which Hamid Karzai won. In his inauguration on televised speech, he called the Taliban to make peace and save their country, "We call on our Taliban brothers to come home and embrace their land."¹⁸¹

Although Pakistan brought together countries like China, the United States of America, and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Taliban delegation refused to participate in 2016. The official boards are expected to discuss with Taliban delegates and will relieve to smooth the intra-Afghan discussions. The most important aspect of this conference was the participation of the US and Chinese governments. In addition, stakeholders play massive roles in deciding on the peace process.¹⁸² Eventually, peacebuilding attempts change from the level of political discussion conducted by the international negotiators, whether the peacebuilding was direct or indirect.

Further, a political solution is formed through high-level political talks, referred to as peacebuilding attempts. Worthwhile to state that the Afghan peace process should not be imposed. It must be formed on Afghan terms. In this sense, the most comprehensive persistent one is the Doha peace process, held among the two important actors, the Taliban and the United States. The following parts will analyse neighbouring states' and international actors' roles in the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan, particularly post-9/11.

¹⁷⁹ Saeed Ali, Achakzai, "Taliban reject Afghan president's peace talk offer", **The Reuters**, 2007, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghan-talks-idUSISL26606720070930>. [Access date: 04.08.2021]

¹⁸⁰ Gall, Carlota, Peace Talks with Taliban Top Issue in Afghan Vote. 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/18/world/asia/18taliban.html>. [Access date: 04.08.2021]

¹⁸¹ Farmer, Ben, "Hamid Karzai reaches out to 'Taliban brothers' in Afghanistan", 2009, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/6495487/Hamid-Karzai-reaches-out-to-Taliban-brothers-in-Afghanistan.html>, [Access date: 05.08.2021]

¹⁸² BBC, "Pakistan hosts four-way Afghanistan peace talks", **BBC**, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35279283>, [Access date: 17.09.2021]

2.2 Neighbouring Countries' Role in the Afghanistan Peacebuilding Process

Afghanistan, the commonly known heart of Asia, has been a battleground both today and throughout history due to its geographical location.¹⁸³ A few concrete issues that peacebuilding in Afghanistan need to consider. Noteworthy that conflict in Afghanistan has been present for years, and there is no rapid resolution to solve all the issues at once and bring lasting peace. Also, there is a long history of proxy war in Afghanistan, complicating the situation in the country.¹⁸⁴ Neighbours have always played a crucial role in Afghanistan's peace and conflict. Also, they have played a vital policy within and outside Afghanistan, mainly in Pakistan, Iran, India, and China, and international communities. Earlier stated, countries have been active in the Afghanistan peacebuilding process since 9/11.

This chapter sheds light on the role and importance of four regional countries' roles in Afghanistan peacebuilding process and conflict. Regional states were required to share the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan. However, regional and neighbouring countries, mainly Pakistan, Iran, China, India, and Qatar, were concerned about their involvement in the ongoing peacebuilding process to maintain their interest in post-peacebuilding Afghanistan. Thus, this part of the chapter explores how neighbouring countries' role has played a crucial role in causing conflict and, conversely, how they can bring peace to Afghanistan. It is vital to point out that the Afghanistan peace process has become an excellent game for the regional countries. All the regional actors want to protect their interests in Afghanistan.

2.2.1. Pakistan

Pakistan and Afghanistan are immediate neighbours with a common border share 2640 km, drawn by the British, formally known as the Durand Line. However, it shares common cultural, linguistic, and ethnic similarities. Afghanistan-Pakistan relations have never been smooth and friendly. Because Pakistan has been a dissenter of the Afghan conflict for more than four decades.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, the Kabul regime has not authorized the legitimacy of the borderline between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The people of Afghanistan argued that an imperialist power used force on Afghanistan to accept the agreement regarding the borderline. For that reason, Afghanistan has not yet approved the Durand Line. Therefore, Afghanistan voted her cast against Pakistan in the United Nations in 1947. Since then, both states' relations have been neither amiable nor worse.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Ahmed, Rashid, **Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia**, Edition 2, 2010, p.150

¹⁸⁴ Alisher Bazarov, "Peacebuilding in Afghanistan", **Beyond Intractability**, 2010, Peacebuilding in Afghanistan | Beyond Intractability, [Access date: 08.01.2022].

¹⁸⁵ Dawood, Mohammadi, "Everyone wants share in Afghan Peace process, But Kabul wants Peaceful Afghanistan for Afghans", 2019, <https://www.indiatimes.com/amp/news/world/everyone-wants-share-in-afghan-peace-process-but-kabul-wants-peaceful-afghanistan-for-afghans-375782.html#click=https://t.co/GZts34Nc1Y>, [Access date: 05.08.2021]

¹⁸⁶ Junaid, Aamir, External Invasions in Afghanistan: A Comparative Analysis of USSR and USA, **Journal of Development and Social Sciences**, 2(3), 2021, p.1-5

Therefore, both countries' relations have been strained since Pakistan's independence in 1947, when Afghanistan was the only country cast to vote against Pakistan's admission to the United Nations.¹⁸⁷ More importantly, the Durand Line was the British Empire heritage that has irritated Pakistan-Afghanistan relations for the past decades. The boundary was just a "*de jure*" between Afghanistan and British India in 1893. Other issues are raging and impeding ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan over the past years. Any shift in Afghanistan has always impacted the region and Pakistan in particular. Stability on both sides of the boundary requires peace and security in the area.¹⁸⁸

The Taliban were formed and well-equipped in Pakistani madrassas. Thus, Madrassas had received unprecedented assistance from Pakistan's military and intelligence. Pakistan's government wants to prevent the influence of India in Afghanistan as well, pressuring the Kabul administration to avoid the US presence in Afghanistan. Islamabad also wants an administration in Kabul to have close relations with them. Although Islamabad recognized the government of post-Taliban, while the Army and Inter-Service-Intelligence (ISI) endured the Taliban. Simultaneously, they were with the US on the table with its allies. It is worth mentioning that the Durand line Shared water and cross-border tension. Simultaneously, Afghanistan has had close relations with India, and closing the main transit routes issues increased tension between Islamabad and Kabul. The problems mentioned above caused damage to bilateral relations.¹⁸⁹

The role of Pakistan in the progressing Afghan peacebuilding process is of great importance. The history of the relationships between Pakistan's military foundation and the Taliban has been notable in the Afghan peacebuilding or peace process. Hence, the bond between Pakistan and the Taliban, transformed the country into essential peacebuilding and peace-making actor. Undoubtedly, Pakistan plays a prominent role in lasting peace in Afghanistan.¹⁹⁰

According to Mustafa et al. (2021), Pakistan's military commander General Ashfaq Pervez Khan stated that Pakistan would generate a suitable condition for the Afghan peace process and reconciliation. This statement demonstrates that Pakistan possesses significant influence over Taliban leaders. Respectively, the civil-military high officials admitted that the Taliban were under their control and dictation. For that reason, the world has been standing over Pakistan's influence and its relation with the Taliban. Taking into account, Pakistan had been having strong ties with the Taliban.¹⁹¹ For an extended period, the United States (US) has demanded that Pakistan take bold

¹⁸⁷ Timor, Sharan. & Andrew, Watkins, "Neighbours in a New Normal? Pakistan and Afghanistan beyond 2021", **Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Afghanistan**, 2021, p.1

¹⁸⁸ Mohibullah, Durani. & Ashraf, Khan, "Pakistan and Afghan Relation: Historic mirror", **The Dialogue**, 4(1), p.1-30

¹⁸⁹ Mohammad. (2000), *Ibid.*, p.3

¹⁹⁰ Sharifullah Dorani, **America in Afghanistan: Foreign Policy and Decision Making From Bush to Obama to Trump**, I. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, B. Tauris, 2019, London, p.68-81

¹⁹¹ Ghulam, Mustafa. et al, "Role of Pakistan in the Afghan Peace Process"-**Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology** 17(12), 2021, p.328

action against Taliban leadership and shelters. Since the Musharraf government, the US administration has pressed Pakistan to “do more.”¹⁹²

The US urged Islamabad to push the Taliban to engage in peace proactively. US President Donald Trump introduced the “New Afghan Strategy.” He placed Pakistan at the centre of his strategy. His plan would be more viable if Pakistan took decisive action against the Taliban which shelters in Pakistan because the Taliban family mainly lives in Pakistan.¹⁹³ As part of the new policy, the United States administration highlighted that they would put more pressure on Taliban fighters in the negotiations through military coercion.

Moreover, it has drawn the attention of the Taliban to negotiate to terminate the longest war in American history. Before September 2019, the United States aimed to deal with the Taliban. Nevertheless, the peace process was suspended because of the accelerating violence, bloodshed, terror, and suicide attacks by the Taliban.¹⁹⁴ Not every issue or conflict is solved by war. Peace-building with the Taliban has long been a critical problem for the Kabul government. However, according to the Afghan government and other significant stakeholders, Pakistan’s mediation role is vital.¹⁹⁵ Without a doubt, Pakistan has considerable influence over the Afghan Taliban and would play a critical role in the peace process.

The president of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani, attended a seminar in Islamabad and highlighted that “recognizing all important things we must work on programmatic approaches moving from conflict to cooperation.”¹⁹⁶ Also, in this regard, the president of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, stated that Pakistan had played a pivotal role in establishing peace and long-term security in Afghanistan and that Türkiye will work with Pakistan to make peace possible. For that reason, he added that “To achieve this, we need to boost cooperation with Pakistan.”¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, following these statements, Pakistani officials denied the allegation had made about their country’s connections with the Taliban. Although, the Pakistani military has maintained close relations with the Afghan Taliban for years.¹⁹⁸ For this reason, Pakistan will have a decisive role in the future over the Taliban.

¹⁹² M. A., Naazer. et al, “Political rights situation during Musharraf era” 1999-2004”, **Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)**, 1(1), 2017, p.3

¹⁹³ Kaura, Vinay, “Understanding the complexities of the Afghan peace process”. **ORF Occasional Paper**, (15), 2018, p.11

¹⁹⁴ The Express Tribune, “Pompeo hopes for Afghan peace deal “before September 1”, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2000160/3-pompeo-hopes-afghan-peace-deal-september-1>, [Access date: 09.08.2021]

¹⁹⁵ M, Tahir, “News analysis: As major stakeholder in Afghan peace process, Pakistan mediating for resumption of U.S.-Taliban talks”. **NEWS Xinhua Net**, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-10/09/c_138458244.htm. [Access date: 10.08.2021]

¹⁹⁶ Nazeer, Ibid., p.8

¹⁹⁷ Middle East Monitor, Erdogan: Pakistan has vital role to bring peace, stability to Afghanistan, 2021, retrieved, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210815-erdogan-pakistan-has-vital-role-to-bring-peace-stability-to-afghanistan/> [Access date: 15.08.2021]

¹⁹⁸ Aqil, Shah, “What Will Happen to Afghanistan and Pakistan’s Uneasy Border?”, **Carnegie Endowment for International Peace**, 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/08/13/what-will-happen-to-afghanistan-and-pakistan-s-uneasy-border-pub-85152>, [Access date: 15.08.2021]

In this case, a survey carried out by the Institute of War and Peace Studies shows that approximately 78 per cent of the Afghan population who participated in the survey believe that Pakistan would have a detrimental role in Afghanistan's peacebuilding and peace process. At the same time, around 11 per cent of them assume that Pakistan would have a "positive" role in Afghanistan's long term stability and the peace process.¹⁹⁹ Eventually, based on the studies, Pakistan has a backbone role in instability and stability in Afghanistan.

2.2.2. Iran

Iran and Afghanistan have shared a common language, deep historical, cultural bonds, and common enemies throughout history. Both sides' security and stability depend on each other. Afghanistan and Iran share a 936-kilometre border. Both countries' cultural and religious relations have been intense and facilitate significant political leverage. According to the author, the existence of the Iranian regime in Afghanistan is vigorous, though not formal so far. All stretches back to a common culture, customs, and language. The second official language of Afghanistan is Dari. Approximately more than half of the Afghanistan population speaks Dari. Thereby, all the Afghans and Iranians could communicate without any hindrance.²⁰⁰ Afghanistan attracts the attention of international powers' owing to its strategic location. For instance, there are three well-known invaders of Afghanistan: the British Empire, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Because of that, Afghanistan has become the battleground of superpower for many years.²⁰¹

Iran and Afghanistan's futures significantly shifted in the wake of 1979. The revolutionaries overturned Iran's monarchy, while the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Although Iran denounced the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and urged its evacuation, it was hesitant to provoke Moscow. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, both Washington and Moscow agreed not to intervene. As a result of this decision, the war-torn nation has become a battleground for a proxy war among Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. Iran was particularly concerned about the growth of Saudi Arabia "Wahhabism," dubbed "America's Islam" by Ayatollah Khomeini. Iran's Afghan strategy was initially Shiite-centric. In 1995, the Taliban captured Herat, and then a year later, the deposed President Rabbani was a significant loss for Iran but a decisive triumph for Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.²⁰² In 1996, the Taliban founded their government in Afghanistan. The Republic of Iran considered the Taliban a danger to Iran's stability and security and was afraid of spillover of radicalism into its territory.

¹⁹⁹ Mustafa, Sarwari, et al, "The Institute of War and Peace Studies Peace Perception Survey" **The Institute of War and Peace Studies**, 2020, p.93

²⁰⁰ Alireza, Nader. Et al, **Iran and Afghanistan: A Complicated Relationship**, RAND Corporation. P.5-6

²⁰¹ Sun, Yun, "China's Strategic Assessment of Afghanistan" War on Rocks, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/04/chinas-strategic-assessment-of-afghanistan/>, [Access date: 18.08.2021]

²⁰² Mohsen, Milani, **Iran and Afghanistan**, p.3-5, [Access date: 19.08.2021], <https://iranprimer.usip.org/sites/default/files/Iran%20and%20Afghanistan.pdf>.

In the very first year of the Taliban regime, the Taliban vehemently went against the Shia communities. In 1998, in Mazer-e Sharif, eight Iranian diplomats were assassinated by the Taliban. Over the event, Iran deployed troops at the Iran-Afghanistan border. It was a challenging situation. However, Iran avoided going to war with the Taliban. Thus, Iran backed the Northern Alliance vis a vis the Taliban. In recent years, Iran has been hosting Taliban and militant leaders of Hizb e Islami.

Still, Iran has been supplying the Afghan government with financial aid.²⁰³ Iran only sees Afghanistan as a country where super powers have been involved and had significant consequences for Iran. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, roughly 1.5 million Afghans fled to Iran. Thousands of troops were stationed in front of Iran's borders during the American invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.²⁰⁴

Even though Iran has been trying to contact the Taliban in recent years, it has rejected a peace deal between the Taliban and the United States. There have been several rounds of dialogue between the Taliban envoy and Iranian officials. In this line, a conference was held in Tehran amidst reports that the United States was withdrawing its 7,000 troops from Afghanistan. Iran and Afghanistan have a water dispute. Simultaneously, what is more important is that the presence of the United States in Afghanistan is a national security threat to Tehran and the region.²⁰⁵

It is important to note that Iran is a key actor in Afghanistan's peace process and peacebuilding. Iran's absence in the region makes the peace process incomplete. For that reason, a survey conducted by the Institution of War and Peace Studies illustrates Iran's role in the peace process in Afghanistan; 60 per cent of participants believe that Iran would have a negative role in Afghanistan's peace and stability process. In comparison, around 17 per cent of correspondents considered that Iran would have a positive role in the peace process in the country. Besides that, over 15 per cent of correspondents determined that Iran has a "neutral" position in the affairs of Afghanistan.²⁰⁶ In this sense, as the Trump administration's attempts to terminate the US military presence in Afghanistan accelerated in 2019, Iranian authorities began to take more aggressive moves to improve relations with the Taliban. Iranian authorities have provided military support and training facilities to the Taliban and hosted Taliban liaison offices in Iran for years. Iran's attitude to the Taliban could counter Pakistan's long-standing relations with the Taliban, which are aimed at changing Afghanistan's security and political environment.

²⁰³ S, Akberzadeh, "Iran's Policy towards Afghanistan in the Shadow of the United States". **Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs**, 01(01). 2014, p.66-71

²⁰⁴ M, Kugelman, Shutting Out Iran Will Make the Afghan War Even Deadlier. 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/11/16/shutting-out-iran-will-make-the-afghan-war-even-deadlier/>, [Access date: 20.08.2021]

²⁰⁵ Ghulam, Mustafa. Et al, Role of China and Iran in Afghanistan Peace Process, **Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research**, 3(4)., 2020, p.427-429

²⁰⁶ Sarwari, Ibid, p.94

Nevertheless, the significance of Iran's cooperation with the Taliban really should not be overstated. Following the final pull-out of US forces, a revitalized Taliban is expected to cause further turmoil in Afghanistan, posing severe security concerns to Iran.²⁰⁷ Moreover, Iran had pursued its policy in Afghanistan to expand its influence during the 1990s. It is worth mentioning that Iran's primary concern is to maintain its security, strengthen its financial and political dominance and end Tehran's isolation from Americans.²⁰⁸ Based on the above analysis, Iran wants to preserve non-Pashtun rights and its long-term interest in the country also, protect its border from spread of extremism.

2.2.3. India

Relations between the people of India and Afghanistan date back to the Indus Valley Civilization. Afghanistan has been referred to as the cradle of Indian civilization since 7th century. Nevertheless, it was evident that India tried its best to expand its influence in Afghanistan, and the terrorist attacks of 9/11, 2001, allowed the Indian government to do so. Furthermore, the significance of Afghanistan's geographic strategy in this region cannot be disregarded. India aims to access Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia.²⁰⁹ For various factors, India's relationship with Afghanistan has gradually improved with the collapse of the Taliban. India primarily focused on assisting the Afghanistan government and political process, as specified by the Bonn Agreement of 2001.²¹⁰

Since 1947, India has had friendly relations with Afghanistan, which was bolstered by signing the "Friendship Treaty" in 1950. India signed several agreements and protocols with pro-Soviet administrations in Afghanistan to boost cooperation and increase Indian dominance. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 offered India another chance to deepen its ties with the country. From 1979 to 1999, India expanded its involvement in Afghanistan's development by collaborating on industrial, irrigation, and hydropower projects. However, Indian influence in Afghanistan was limited due to its stance against Pakistan's proxy war. As well as, India rejected the Taliban administration and subsequently decided to close its embassy in September 1996 but India remained supporting the Northern Alliance which was fighting against the Taliban and advocating for Afghanistan Nation State.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ Shahram, Akbarzadeh. & Niamatullah, Ibrahim, "The Taliban: a new proxy for Iran in Afghanistan?", **Third World Quarterly**, 41(5), 2020, p.774-775

²⁰⁸ Alam, Shah, "Iran-Pakistan relations: Political and strategic dimensions", **Strategic Analysis**, 28(4), 2004, p.532-533

²⁰⁹ Wajid, Ali, "Historical perspective of indo-Afghan relations", **International Journal of Political Science and Governance**, 2019, p.26-29

²¹⁰ Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions ("Bonn Agreement") [Afghanistan], S/2001/1154, 5 December 2001, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3f48f4754.html>, [Access date: 26.08.2021]

²¹¹ Fahmida, Ashraf, "India-Afghanistan Relations: post-9/11", **Strategic Studies**, 27(2), 2007, p.92

In 2001, a US-led operation overthrew the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The United States' success in defeating the Taliban regime in Afghanistan allowed the Indian government once again to establish relations and to enhance its influence in Afghanistan.²¹² Indian efforts to re-establish relations with Afghanistan are based mainly on three dimensions: "a major role in the rehabilitation and economic development process," "strengthening ties with Central Asian states," and "seeking to minimize Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan."²¹³

India has followed a "soft power" policy to strengthen relations with Afghanistan, focusing on civilian rather than military-oriented strategy. Under the government of Afghanistan's priorities, Indian aid has primarily centred on developing human capital and physical infrastructure, strengthening security, and assisting the agricultural and other critical sectors of the Afghanistan economy. India has constructed roads, provided medical services, and helped maintain and improve the long-term goal of Afghan government through educational initiatives. Given that India considers a politically and economically stable Afghanistan as a strategic goal, it claims that India's responsibility to assist Afghanistan in ending the war, turmoil, and poverty is its obligation as a regional power.²¹⁴

It is worthwhile to reminisce the region's political history in order to comprehend India's situation in Afghanistan. Except for a brief interruption during the 1965 Indo-Pakistani conflict, India has had significant ties with Afghanistan during King Zahir Shah's (1933-1973) reign. Even after his fall, India managed to retain friendly relations with a sequence of Communist administrations, including those imposed on the nation during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979.²¹⁵ India formed a partnership with Ahmed Shah Massoud's Tajik-dominated Northern Alliance to combat the Taliban.²¹⁶ The Taliban was against India's strategic interest in Afghanistan because of its close relationship with Pakistan which was against India. However, the motivation of this proxy war and underlying problems has exacerbated the Afghan conflict. The Taliban backed by Pakistan was confronted by the Northern Alliance receiving support from India and other regional actors who were against the strategic interests of Pakistan which is implemented through Taliban administration.

It is unquestionable that India is the fifth-largest aid contributor in Afghanistan and has made significant contributions to its development. It has provided aid in the education, health, and infrastructure sectors.²¹⁷ Especially in post-Taliban Afghanistan, the Indian government has

²¹² Ali, Ibid, p.27

²¹³ Ashrafi, Ibid, p.94

²¹⁴ Pant, Harsh V, "India in Afghanistan: A Rising Power or a Hesitant Power?", **The Centre for International Peace and Security Studies (CIPSS)**, p.5-6

²¹⁵ Sumit, Ganguly. & Nicolas, Howenstein, "India-Pakistan Rivalry in Afghanistan", **Journal of International Affairs**, 2009, p.127-140

²¹⁶ Sergei, Yakolev, "Russia, India, Iran Line Up in Joint Opposition to the Taliban", **The Boston Globe**, 2001

²¹⁷ Joshi, Shashank, "Let India help Afghanistan," **The Guardian**, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/dec/25/afghanistan-india-ally-intervention>, [Access date: 20.08.2021]

undertaken numerous rehabilitation and development projects as part of a “soft power” strategy. India constructed the Afghan Parliament building and funded the Afghan-India Friendship Dam, two notable development projects financed by New Delhi. India’s development aid to Afghanistan combines reconstructing power plants and investments in the health and education sectors. India assists in training Afghan government officials, diplomats, and police officers. Hundreds of Afghans travel to India for vacation, medical treatment, and education every year. Former President Hamid Karzai, for instance, preferred an Indian hospital for the birth of his third child.

Moreover, India has facilitated Afghan government telecommunication through Indian satellites. India has several objectives; however, there are two significant strategic aims to achieve that. Primarily, India opposes the resurgence and reassertion of the Taliban’s radical form of political Islam. In addition, India does not want Pakistan to deepen “strategic influence” in Afghanistan and then use that position to threaten India’s security interests.²¹⁸ India’s participation has operated as an exercise of its “soft power.” As of 2001, New Delhi has contributed more than \$3 billion to Afghanistan’s development.²¹⁹

The strategic alliance between India and Afghanistan established in 2011 was significant because it was the first time Afghanistan had signed such an agreement since the Soviet invasion in 1979.²²⁰ In a statement similar to Ghani’s, Modi stated that “lack of action against terrorism in Afghanistan and our region would only empower terrorists and their leaders.” Furthermore, Modi also advocated for a peace process that is “Afghan-led, Afghan-owned, and Afghan-controlled.” Afghanistan, together with India, co-chaired this edition of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP), which was inaugurated in Türkiye in November 2011.²²¹ The government of India knows how crucial social and economic development is in Afghanistan and is also critical to ensuring regional security. In 2011, President Hamid Karzai visited India, and during that time, he signed a strategic partnership agreement with India that constituted and formulated the following areas: “political & security cooperation; trade & economic cooperation; capacity development and education; and social, cultural, civil society & people-to-people relations.”

Within this framework, India invested more than \$2 billion in Afghanistan and became the 5th donor country after the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Germany. Indian

²¹⁸ Vinay, Kaura, “India-Afghanistan Relations in the Modi-Ghani Era”, **Indian Journal of Asian Affairs**, 30(½), 2017, p.36

²¹⁹ Ministry of External Affairs, “Joint Statement on the 2nd Strategic Partnership Council Meeting between India and Afghanistan, New Delhi (September 11, 2017)” https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/28936/Joint_Statement_on_the_2nd_Strategic_Partnership_C, [Access date: 23.08.2021]

²²⁰ John, Boone. & Safi, Michael, “Pakistan humiliated by south Asian countries’ boycott of summit”, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/28/pakistan-humiliated-by-south-asian-countries-boycott-of-summit>, [Access date: 21.08.2021]

²²¹ PTI, “US backs India’s stand in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor,” **The Hindu**, 2017 <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-backs-indias-stand-in-china-pakistan-economic-corridor/article19795047.ece>, [Access date: 21.08.2021]

humanitarian assistance covered such as food aid, infrastructure projects, and capacity building.²²² In this regard, Afghanistan is undoubtedly a significant partner in the region for India in projecting its power status and securing its door to Central Asian energy-rich industries.²²³ Given these points, without a doubt, India has been investing in and educating Afghans in various fields. A questionnaire conducted through the Institutes of War and Peace Studies indicates that over half of those who responded to the survey believe that India would have a beneficial role in the stability and peacebuilding process in the country.²²⁴ The analysis is given above highlights that India's role in the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan was considered crucial and solid.

2.2.4. China

Afghanistan shares a 47-mile (76-kilometre) border with China's Xinjiang province.²²⁵ Both states have had friendly and good relations throughout history. It is significant to note that China never had any ideological and political tensions with Afghanistan. Trade ties between the two regions could be traced back to the Han dynasty when the lucrative Silk Road had built.²²⁶ Sino-Afghan relations were uncertain in the early twentieth century. Primarily opium and horses were being traded within both states' borders.²²⁷ Even though the Kingdom of Afghanistan recognized the People's Republic of China in January 1950, diplomatic relations had not established since 1955. In this vein, the first Afghan Ambassador to Peking, Abdul Samad, was appointed in 1955. It is worth mentioning that Afghanistan was among the few neighbouring countries which recognized the People's Republic of China in the early 1950.

Furthermore, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and Vice Premier He Long visited Afghanistan in 1957. It was the first time high-ranked Chinese officials visited Afghanistan throughout Sino-Afghan relations. During their visits to Kabul, Zhou Enlai and He Long met the king of Afghanistan, Mohammad Zahir Shah. Moreover, they held talks with Prime Minister Mohammad Daud Khan and Vice Prime Minister Ali Mohammad.

Although relations were confined to the level of the official letter in the 1950s, Chinese leaders have encouraged investment and developing relations with Afghanistan since the 1960s. Following the Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan in December 1979, the People's Republic of China became a prominent actor in the Afghan war and a vital supplier of weaponry to rebels alongside the

²²² Gareth, Price, "India's Policy towards Afghanistan", **Chatham House**, 2013, p.5

²²³ Yow Peter, Raiphea, "India-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership: An Analysis of India, Afghanistan and Pakistan Perspectives", **International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications**, 3(4), 2013, p.2

²²⁴ Sarwari, Ibid, p.94

²²⁵ University of South California-USC, "China and Afghanistan", **University of South California (USC)**, 2021, <https://china.usc.edu/china-and-afghanistan>, [Access date: 01.09.2021]

²²⁶ Encyclopaedia Iranica (EI), Chinese-Iranian Relations VI. Relations with Afghanistan in the Modern Period", <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/chinese-iranian-vi>, [Access date: 28.08.2021]

²²⁷ Gerald, Segal, "China and Afghanistan", **University of California Press**, 21(11), 1981, p.1160

United States, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia to put pressure on Soviet Russia to pull out from Afghanistan.²²⁸ Therefore, China has maintained good relations with every Afghan administration apart from the Pro-Soviet regimes between 1979 and 1989, which China denied recognizing. In the meantime, Beijing denounced the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.²²⁹ The Pan-Turkic Basmachi movement was influenced Amanullah Khan. After his first year in power, he considered establishing an Islamic Confederation, comprising Afghanistan, Khiva, Xinjiang, and Kokand. In addition, Amanullah was too keen to encourage Afghanistan domination in the Xinjiang of China, where innumerable Afghans were living under the British Empire. However, with the “Treaty of Peshawar” in 1919, the protection of Afghan diplomats and citizens were ended. Since the foundation of Sino-Afghan diplomatic relations, Afghanistan has created good ties with China’s People’s Republic. It is worth noting that from 1992 to 1996, Afghanistan’s relations with China were constrained to the level of diplomatic correspondence. Even though Burhanudeen Rabani fled the country with his interim government and hoped for Beijing’s support to persuade Pakistan to stop supporting opposition groups, it never happened. China remained silent because Pakistan, a considerable ally of China in South Asia, had a chance to ensure its persuasive strategy in Afghanistan.

In 1999, Pakistan facilitated the first contact between China and the Taliban. Then Chinese diplomats were travelled to Kabul and met the Taliban leaders.²³⁰ The new administration once again reshaped Sino-Afghan relations in 2001.²³¹ Also, China has been economically and diplomatically promoting Kabul’s new administration since 2002. After the Taliban regime, China can be called one of Afghanistan’s most influential and significant investors in Afghanistan’s peacebuilding process and development. One of the prominent examples of this is Logar province Aynak and the Copper mines extraction projects. The most notable investment project carried out in Afghanistan’s history by far. China has two approaches: diversification of energy sources by investing in central Asian states such as Afghanistan, which is particularly geopolitically located significant position and corridor of transportation and energy, and China’s security concerns.²³² China is the most populated and second-largest country in the world. With its sky-rocketing economy, Beijing needs resources; from this perspective, Afghanistan is a land open for investment, China is considering this when it comes to having good relations with Afghanistan to remain a reliable ally for Afghans. Nevertheless, China was not allowed to engage with Afghanistan until President Hamid Karzai encouraged foreign investors to invest in Afghanistan. China is willing to cooperate with Afghanistan in the upcoming years ahead. China has been increasing its activity progressively in Afghanistan as of 2001. China’s

²²⁸ Mohammad Mansoor, Ehsan, “Afghanistan-China Relations, 1955-2012”, *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, 17(3-4), 2013, p.230-234

²²⁹ Malek, Setiz, “Rabitate Na Musawi Afghanistan-Chin” (رابطه نامساوی افغانستان-چین) [Sino-Afghan unequal relations]”, *BBC Persian*, 2012, http://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan/2012/11/121108_zs_afghan_china_relationship.shtml, [Access date: 29.08.2021]

²³⁰ Ehsan, Ibid., p.230-240

²³¹ Andrew, Small, The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia’s New Geopolitics, *Oxford Scholarship Online*, 2015, p.12-21

²³² Bose, Srinjoy, “India and China: An Agenda for Cooperation on Afghanistan”, *ICS Occasional Paper*, Institute of Chinese Studies, 2014, p.7-10

presence in Afghanistan is evaluated from a different perspective in their future investment plans. It could be called the “silk road” project rather than a “Great Game” between superpowers and regional countries. Moreover, China could fill the US absence after their pull-out from Afghanistan.²³³

Since 2001, China has played a constructive role in the redevelopment of Afghanistan and the peace process. Without a doubt, China’s role in Afghanistan’s peace process would be vital and significant. China could facilitate Afghanistan’s peace process owing to its ability over the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). According to Ehsan (2013), China and Pakistan’s cordial relationship would mitigate the Afghan peace process because the government of Afghanistan wants a peace process led by Afghanistan, which China has supported.

Furthermore, most Afghan politicians have promoted China’s role in peace dialogues. Significantly, the peace initiative by the Chinese seems to have regional power acknowledgement that can let it happen. China would have achieved a peace process in Afghanistan if all the regional and central Asian states favoured China’s plans, but unlikely they have never been.²³⁴

China has been backing the Afghan government and working on peace process initiatives that will end the conflict in the country. Although China has provided aid to the Afghan government over the years, the Taliban did not consider China as an enemy. Essential factors also considered China’s prodigious influence over Pakistan and its closest ally, which is a good sign for the peace initiatives if lasting peace is expected. Without a doubt, China’s role has been gradually increasing in Afghanistan. China can play a critical role in peace and stability in Afghanistan. Furthermore, sustainable peace and stability in Afghanistan stick to China’s coordination and reach unanimity within regional countries.²³⁵

The US-China hegemony aspirations for supremacy in the region have also weakened China’s engagement in the Afghan peace process. One prominent instance, in September 2019, the Trump administration cancelled talks with the Taliban. Therefore, China attempted to benefit from the opportunity and invited both groups to Beijing for “the Intra-Afghan conference” in 2019.²³⁶ China has avoided interfering in the domestic matters of neighbouring countries. It is also worth mentioning that it is evident that China wants to play a constructive role in the world’s security as well.

²³³ Ehsan, Ibid., p.244-246

²³⁴ Rustam, Ali Seerat., “China’s Role in Afghan-Taliban Peace Talks: Afghan Perspectives”, **Institute of Chinese Studies**, 2015, p.1-7

²³⁵ Ihsanullah, Rajaye, “China-Afghanistan Relations in the post-Taliban period”, **Himalayan and Central Asian Studies**, 23(3-4), 2019, p.133-137

²³⁶ Muhammad, Tariq. Et al, “The US Military Drawdown from Afghanistan and the Role of Regional Dynamics in the Peace Process”, **International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change**, 15(6), 2021, p.1040-1045

China is reluctant to act under the shadow of the US and has not taken an active role in peace-keeping operations in any country by far. In light of that, China has provided enormous money to rebuild and construct one of the Afghanistan Province called Badakhshan. For that reason, China could play a vital role in the future of Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the US troops from Afghan soil. Precisely, it would have a noticeable impact on regional and world politics.²³⁷ China has been playing brokering roles between the Taliban and the Afghan government in recent years. The first trilateral dialogue between Afghanistan, China, and Pakistan took place in 2012 in Beijing, and Beijing encouraged the “Afghan-led, Afghan-owned” settlement peace process. It is worth mentioning that China called SCO members to play an active role in establishing lasting peace in Afghanistan. China has no direct relations with any group in Afghanistan, but at the same time China still supports lasting and stable peace in Afghanistan which it considers vital for the regional stability.

Apart from China, other neighbouring states have ties with specific political groups, so that China possesses a better image in the eyes of Afghanistan’s people. Its constructive role, as well as its political and economic interests, have assisted in the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan.²³⁸ Based on the analysis, expanding Chinese influence from Asia to Africa. Prove that China is a rising power with a gigantic economy and military in the region. It also played a notable and concrete role in Afghanistan’s peacebuilding process and was considered a successful regional actor.

2.3. Role of International Actors in the Afghanistan Peacebuilding Process

This section of the dissertation delves into international actors’ roles in the Afghanistan peacebuilding process. Following World War II, the United Nations was established in 1945 with one fundamental purpose to preserve global security and end conflicts.²³⁹ The involvement of international actors in conflict resolution and peacebuilding worldwide is significant progress. It is worth mentioning that the United Nations and other international Organisations have been taking a variety of roles in brokering peace and supporting peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives.²⁴⁰ Thus, international actors’ roles have been vital in ending civil wars, reconstruction and development. The number of UN operations has exponentially increased, particularly during the period between 1987 and 1994.²⁴¹ The United States has been playing a crucial role in peacebuilding

²³⁷ Mustafa, Ibid., p.426

²³⁸ , Hashmat Ullah, Khan. & Faarina, Ayaz, “China-Afghanistan Relations after 9/11 and its Prospects for Peace Building in Afghanistan”, **Proceedings of International Conference on Inter-Regional Connectivity: South Asia and Central Asia 2016**, 2016, p.5-6

²³⁹ United Nations, “Maintain International Peace and Security”, United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/our-work/maintain-international-peace-and-security>, [Access date: 03.09.2021]

²⁴⁰ Johannes Dragsbaek, Schmidt. & Michael Omondi, Owiso, “The Role of International Organizations in Peace and Reconciliation in Kenya”, **The Palgrave Handbook of Global Approaches to Peace**, 2019, p.545-546

²⁴¹ Chris van der, Borgh, “post-war peace-building: what role for international organizations?”, Monique Kremer (edit), **Doing Good Or Doing Better: Development Policies in a Globalizing World**, Chap. 13, Amsterdam University Press, 2009, p.303

in Afghanistan. The United States has been there since 2001 after toppling the Taliban administration and pouring a considerable amount of investment into various areas.²⁴² Without a doubt, their efforts would not go unnoticed. In this regard, Organizations, the European Union, the United Nations, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar's roles will be examined respectively in the following topics.

2.3.1. The United Nations

The United Nations was established after the devastation of the World War II in 1945. The United Nations (UN) is an intergovernmental organisation whose fundamental objective is to ensure the maintenance of peace and security. Furthermore, the United Nations is one of the leading international organisations to prevent conflicts from happening in the future and assist warring parties in reaching an agreement and making peace. At the end of the Cold War, the number of conflicts and violence gradually increased. Therefore, the United Nations (UN) and other international actors attempted to rebuild or develop newly founded political institutions and countries were healing from conflict.²⁴³ The UN's peacebuilding initiatives can be traced back to the 1980s, especially when an emergency session of the UN Security Council took place from 10 to 14 July 1980. The UN has done a lot in Afghanistan to provide the foundations for lasting peace, for instance, peace-keeping operations, advisory role to the council, support of the survival of the Afghan National Army, and endeavours in counter-insurgency. Afghanistan needs the UN role for sustainable peace in Afghanistan.²⁴⁴ The UN was helping the government to build strong democratic institutions and practices at the scope of national and local levels in Afghanistan. The primary purpose of the UN is to constitute an inclusive government that encompasses all the political units. For this purpose, the UN-facilitated transformation of the authority among the Afghan rulers from tribal elders to warlords and religious scholars to democratically elected leaders. Resolutions 1383 and 1401 of the United Nations Security Council were passed in favour of the Bonn Agreement on December 5, 2001. The UN Assistance Mission would lead international peacebuilding operations in Afghanistan.²⁴⁵

The United Nations has been operating in Afghanistan since 1949.²⁴⁶ At the request of the Afghan government, the UN Security Council constituted the political mission in March 2002 with Security Council Resolution 1401. The UN Security Council mission came to an end in 2018. It is also important to stress that the UN always encouraged an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned

²⁴² Cindy Saine, "Experts Mull US Legacy After 20 Years in Afghanistan", 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/episode/experts-mull-us-legacy-after-20-years-afghanistan-4779356>, [Access date: 04.09.2021]

²⁴³ Borgh, Ibid., p.302

²⁴⁴ Sayed Qudrat, Hashimy, "Role of United Nations in Pursuit of Peace in Afghanistan", **Legal Service India E-Journal**, <https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-1159-role-of-united-nations-in-pursuit-of-peace-in-afghanistan.html>, [Access date: 04.09.2021]

²⁴⁵ Richard J, Ponzio, "Transforming Political Authority: UN Democratic Peace building in Afghanistan", **Global Governance**, 13(2), 2007, p.1-2

²⁴⁶ UNAMA, "United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan", 2002, <https://dppa.un.org/en/mission/unama>, [Access date: 03.09.2021]

political reconciliation process and promoted Afghanistan's stability, security, and development. In addition, Afghanistan has acquired guarantees that it will continue receiving international support for security and progress.²⁴⁷ The UN's strategy has made significant progress since 2002.²⁴⁸

The Security Council has established a functional organization to achieve the UN Charter's primary goals specified in Article-I. Nonetheless, when animosity rises throughout the war-torn country instead of the UN, the council's initial aim is to eradicate or end the conflicts.²⁴⁹ There are four considerable objectives of the United Nations article 1, the charter of the UN as follows,

- To ensure international peace and security,
- To develop friendly relations between nations respecting the principle of equal rights and the direction of self-determination of peoples,
- To cooperate in solving international economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems and respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- To be a centre for harmonizing the movements of nations in achieving these common goals.²⁵⁰

As a consequence of the UN's involvement, the number of casualties and conflicts were diminished. According to the UN, a decline has been seen in conflicts globally. At the very beginning of the 21st century, the UN has endeavoured to terminate conflicts as much as possible across the world.²⁵¹ In this vein, the UN is pushing hard to promote education in Afghanistan because the root of all conflict originates from ignorance.²⁵²

According to the Afghanistan Protection of Civilians Report, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and Human Rights Services/OHCHR. According to the 2020 annual report, there was a 15 per cent wane in casualties compared to the 2019 report, making it the lowest casualties in the Afghanistan war since 2013.²⁵³

On the 13th of April, Türkiye, Qatar, and the United Nations publicly stated that they would co-host a high-level and inclusive conference between delegates of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban in Istanbul from the 24th to the 4th of May to speed up and continue negotiations in Doha for a just and durable political settlement. However, at the end of that day, the Taliban political

²⁴⁷ UNAMA, "Afghanistan", <https://dppa.un.org/en/afghanistan>, [Access date: 06.09.2021]

²⁴⁸ United Nation Environment Programs, "Afghanistan's Seventh Annual Peace Trek on International Day of Peace", **UNEP**, 2017, <https://www.unep.org/fr/node/893>, [Access date: 06.09.2021]

²⁴⁹ United Nations Association of Sweden, "Security Council Burundi Consultations 2016", 2019, P.4

²⁵⁰ The American Historical Review, "A History of the United Nations Charter: The Role of The United States 1958", **Brookings Institution Press**, Washington, 2019, p.672

²⁵¹ Peter, Wallenstein, **Understanding conflict resolution**. SAGE Publications Limited, 2018, p.65-66

²⁵² Shveta, Shah, "Bicycle Libraries Raise Literacy Rates in Afghanistan", The Borgen Project, 2020, <https://borgenproject.org/tag/literacy-rates-in-afghanistan/>, [Access date: 06.09.2021]

²⁵³ UNAMA, "2020 Un Country Annual Results Report", **The United Nations Coordination Office**, 2020, p.7

commission declared that they would not attend any conference or talks with any groups until the US withdrew all the troops from Afghanistan, which would be held between the 24th of April and the 4th of May.²⁵⁴ The UN has been covering in their area of Political developments, Security, Coordination of development assistance, regional cooperation, Human rights, Humanitarian assistance, Counter-narcotics, Mission support, and Observations, and reporting them to the UN security council every three months and promoting the peace-building in Afghanistan.²⁵⁵ The UN works to achieve a sustainable peacebuilding process in Afghanistan through the international community. However, it cannot be considered thoroughly successful in peacebuilding in Afghanistan. Even though it was not successful, it had a notable impact on peacebuilding in Afghanistan.

2.3.2. The United States of America

The 9/11 horrific attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon shocked the United States and the whole world, which ushered in a new chapter for the United States and its allies. With the 9/11 attack, the world's security has changed, and all the countries have taken into account terrorism as their common enemy. As a result, following 2001, the Bush administration declared war on terror by highlighting, "Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has found, stopped, and defeated."²⁵⁶

In addition, these terrifying attacks brought about the killing of more than 3000 innocent Americans with the collapse of the World Trade Center. However, these attacks emerged by the hijacking of 4 aeroplanes by 19 hijackers and planes that hit the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and Pennsylvania. In doing so, President Bush called on their partners, allies, the UN, NATO, International Community, and UNSC. Also, terrorism has become a worldwide security threat, and every country should join with the United States and cope with terrorism to annihilate it.²⁵⁷

"Operation Enduring Freedom" was the name given to the operation to invade Afghanistan and eliminate the Taliban. It was the first American military operation in Afghanistan.²⁵⁸ It was an immediate response with a military operation under the name of a "war on terror" against Al-Qaida. This operation was triggered by the Bush administration and high-ranking officials of the White House following the 9/11 evil strike. Notably, the war on terror includes the globe, and the primary

²⁵⁴ UNAMA, "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security", **United Nations Security General Council**, 2021, p.3

²⁵⁵ UNAMA, *Ibid.*, p.3-15

²⁵⁶ Gabriella, Blum. & David, Luban, "Unsatisfying Wars: Degrees of Risk and the Jus Ex Bello", **Ethics, Forthcoming**, 2014, p.1-3

²⁵⁷ History, "September 11 Attacks", History., 2010, <https://www.history.com/topics/21st-century/9-11-attacks>, [Access date: 07.09.2021]

²⁵⁸ Richard W, Stewart, **The United States Army in Afghanistan: Operation Enduring Freedom October 2001-March 2002**, 2003, p.8-10

aim was war in Afghanistan to occupy a tiny part of the earth, yet no empire had ever managed to possess that. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent declaration of war in Afghanistan after then in Iraq resulted in billions of dollars for American taxpayers, though worth nothing.²⁵⁹ Because of 9/11, the war in Afghanistan was raging. As a result, the US and NATO's central Asian base started bombing Taliban and Al-Qaida safe houses.

Furthermore, other groups fought against the Taliban and Al-Qaida called Northern Alliance. It became an ally of the US in the war against terrorism. The group is called Hizb-e-Jamiat Islami locally, with the commander chief Ahmad Shah Masood fighting against Taliban, Al-Qaida, and Pakistani militias. Afghanistan was under the control of the Taliban except for the city of Panjsher. However, the 9 September assassination of Masood in Afghanistan and the 9/11 attack in the US have changed the world and made the US collaborate with the Jihadist groups in Afghanistan to terminate the Taliban regime. In the end, the main object of the US was to eradicate Al-Qaida and topple the Taliban regime from Kabul. Ultimately the US accomplished its mission with victory over the terrorist groups.²⁶⁰ President George Bush asked Congress for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and allocated \$38 billion for humanitarian assistance and reconstruction of Afghanistan from 2001 to 2009.²⁶¹

The United States' assistance has had a variety of forms. It is significant, and ongoing endeavours were into civil aid to build and stabilize the country. The newly formed Afghan government required assistance and desperately needed it. In the meantime, the United States maintained to support it. Therefore, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were constituted by the United States and the UN and non-Governmental Organizations in 2002 and encouraged Afghan government's development. Donald Rumsfeld highlighted that the period of substantial war had ended in 2003. The country's priority changed from fighting to development, expecting that other nations that had not deployed troops would assist in the development and peacebuilding stage.²⁶²

A USAID program was formed in 2003 and entitled the Quick Impact Project (QIP). The main aim was to implement small-scale projects. Principally, conducted projects like irrigation systems,

²⁵⁹ Tom, Engelhardt, America's "War on Terror" has cost taxpayers \$5.6 trillion and its earned us absolutely nothing", 2018, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/americas-war-on-terror-has-cost-taxpayers-5-6-trillion/>, [Access date: 08.09.2021]

²⁶⁰ Haley, Stauss, "U.S strategy in Afghanistan from 2001 to today", Pepperdine Policy Review, 5, 2012, p.1-5

²⁶¹ NDU Press, "Annex B | Afghanistan Timeline", **National Defense University Press**, 2015, <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Publications/Books/Lessons-Encountered/Article/915975/annex-b-afghanistan-timeline/>, [Access date: 08.09.2021]

²⁶² Zachary, Laub. & Lindsay, Maizland, "The U.S. War in Afghanistan", **Council on Foreign Relations**, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan>, [Access date: 08.09.2021]

schools, small power systems, clinics, and media projects. However, as mentioned above, the program was carried out more than 440 projects and terminated in 2007.²⁶³

The United States has spent an enormous amount of money, estimated to be around \$21 billion, on the Afghan National Army and police forces from 2002 to 2009. Simultaneously, the United States funded over \$2.5 billion to promote the rule of law, democracy, and governance. However, the United States only provided \$7.4 billion of assistance through the U.S. Department of Defence (DoD). Because DoD was accountable for the reform of Afghanistan National Army,²⁶⁴ it is worthwhile to highlight that the United States could not have brought security to the Afghans for billions of dollars. Ultimately, the United States has failed. Unlikely, the United States and its allies had killed hundreds of innocent Afghans every year.

Even so, they could not won the “hearts and minds of Afghans.”²⁶⁵ Therefore, establishing a protracted and functional ANA is critical to US peacebuilding operations endeavours. It implicates that the government of Afghanistan would maintain the peace by itself.²⁶⁶

The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs were spent around \$20 million on DDR between 2001 and 2009. It consisted of less than 1 per cent of money poured into Afghanistan. Therefore, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), ISAF, and the international community implemented three major DDR projects from 2003 to 2016. In this sense, the Security Sector Reform (SSR) began during President Hamid Karzai in 2003. They were set off in 2003, while the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) began conducting the DDR program through the Afghan New Beginning Program. Around 90,000 soldiers were reintegrated into the programs, and roughly 130,000 of light and heavy weaponry were collected, despite the fact that programmes with these numbers and performance are classified as unsuccessful projects. The DDR was provided or supported by the United States and is an essential program to advocate peacebuilding operations in Afghanistan.²⁶⁷ From 2001 to 2012, the country has received \$52 billion from Official Development Aid (ODA) and various multiple donors. However, the United States aided \$25 billion and provided \$48 billion in the military. Thus, Afghanistan’s GDP increased from 3 per cent in 2003 to 10 per cent in 2013. Domestic revenue also skyrocketed between 2003 and 2009, from \$131 million constituting (4 per cent of GDP) to \$1290 million (10 per cent of GDP).

²⁶³ USAID, “PRT Quick Impact Projects”, USAID Afghanistan, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/node/51861>, [Access date: 08.09.2021]

²⁶⁴ Marc J, Cohen. & Tara R, Gingerich, “Protect and serve or train and equip? US security assistance and protection of civilians”, **Oxfam America**, 2009, p.17-18

²⁶⁵ B. D., Hopkins, “The Problem with “Hearts and Minds” in Afghanistan,” **Middle East Report** 255, 2010, <https://merip.org/2010/05/the-problem-with-hearts-and-minds-in-afghanistan/>, [Access date: 09.09.2021]

²⁶⁶ Jason, Fritz, “U.S. Peacebuilding in Afghanistan”, **The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis**, p.6

²⁶⁷ William Selber, Major. (2018), “A Question of “Government’ Control: Afghanistan DDR Programs since 2001”, **Small Wars & Insurgencies**, 2018, p.345-356

According to Bizhan (2018), State-building approaches and assistance cannot promote effective state-building. In contrast, the lack of foreign aid, states fail to perform their central functions.²⁶⁸

Even though the first peace talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban emerged during Barack Obama's presidential term, the attempts were unsuccessful between 2011 and 2013. In addition, in 2016, Pakistan hosted the Taliban and Afghan government delegations for peace dialogue with the presence of the United States and China. Nonetheless, the meeting among the groups was not productive as well. Later that year, Donald Trump came to office and reiterated peace talks with the Taliban with the leadership of the Special Envoy for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad. In December 2019, he declared that both sides had reached an agreement. After 20 years, it was the first time peace talks were fruitful for the first time due to nine rounds of intense diplomatic meetings. The United States and Taliban have signed an agreement that addresses four crucial issues: "reduction of violence," "withdrawal of foreign troops from the country," "negotiations within Afghanistan," and "counter-terrorism guarantees."²⁶⁹ The United States peacebuilding operation effort in Afghanistan post-9/11 has been unprecedented compared to other actors. The main reason is that the United States is the largest donor country globally and covers all the aspects of the peacebuilding process and combat operations.

2.3.3. European Union

Following the devastating and horrific 9/11 events, the United States and NATO engaged in Afghanistan. It changed world politics and headlines. Since then, the European Union (EU) has supported and contributed immensely to the Afghan government, society's stability, reform, reconstruction and development. However, the initial relations between the EU and Afghanistan date all way back to the post-colonial period.²⁷⁰ Afghanistan has confronted several difficulties in the past years, putting its economic and social growth in peril and developing and promoting democratic institutions. Because of that, the EU was aware that the country's economy was on the brink of collapse and insecurity in the most susceptible condition. The government of Afghanistan was in jeopardy, and the EU has expressed interest in assisting the Afghan government. The international community will also provide the required essentials to reform institutions and society.²⁷¹ The "principled stance" of the European Union was on the Afghan peace process. It has broadly referred to as a "wait and see" position. It was raising concern about the longer-term of European cooperation.

²⁶⁸ Nematullah, Bizhan, "Aid and state-building, Part II: Afghanistan and Iraq", **Third World Quarterly**, 2018, p.1015-1018

²⁶⁹ Merve, Seren, "Analysis - A critical stage in Afghan peace process", **Anadolu Agency**, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/analysis-a-critical-stage-in-afghan-peace-process/2212632#>, [Access date: 09.09.2021]

²⁷⁰ Andrew, Watkins. & Timor, Sharan, "Europe's Engagement in Afghanistan Post-2021 Uncertainty, Pragmatism, and Continued Partnership", **Friedrich Ebert Stiftung**, 2020, p.2

²⁷¹ European Commission, "Proposal for a new EU strategy on Afghanistan: in support of peace and prosperity", **European Commission**, 2017, p.1

The European Union is committed to promoting and encouraging Afghan citizens for lasting peace, security, and development of society.²⁷² Additionally, during the Geneva Conference, the European Countries pledged to aid 1.2 billion Euro throughout 2021-2025 to promote development in the country. Thus far, Afghanistan is one of the largest and most prominent beneficiaries of EU funding.²⁷³ In this framework, international communities have held multiple conferences concerning Afghanistan, and the European countries poured a handsome amount of money. Because to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a shelter for extremists, terrorist groups also avert the violent conflict in the country. No doubt, the EU has played a critical role as an international actor in the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan since 2002.²⁷⁴ The European Treaty states that the primary aim of the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is to establish international peace and security.

The treaty of the European community illustrates that the treaty constitutes strengthening the democracy, consolidating the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms, and sustainable economy-moreover, the social progress of developing countries and preserving the domestic and foreign affairs of the EU.²⁷⁵ The European Union would be the first international actor to lay the path for Afghan peace. Afghanistan considers the EU in its foreign policy as a superpower. As well as, the EU has been supporting the country from the beginning till now in all areas, paving the way for lasting peace, political stability, and peace talks, and it is worthwhile to stress that the EU was the guarantor of the peace talks between the government of Afghanistan and Taliban. Following 2001 ousting of the Taliban regime, both front relations deepened. In a manner of speaking, after the dark period of the Taliban, Afghanistan and the EU members opened new economic and political pages. The EU and its members have been with Afghanistan to combat terrorism for more than 20 years. Within 20 years, the EU members have assisted billion dollars in economy and development. Their troops lost their lives during patrol and in the mission against terrorism. Despite this, the European Union members have been vital actors in the development of Afghanistan and are committed to their military and civilian coordination.²⁷⁶

The European Union's involvement in Afghanistan's development is not about their generosity. Because failed states or countries tremendously pose threats to the world. In light of that, Afghanistan holds a unique place in the policy of Europe to prevent a similar 9/11 attack. When a

²⁷² European Commission, "Public-Private Partnerships for Peace and Prosperity in Afghanistan", **European Commission**, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/public-private-partnerships-peace-and-prosperity-afghanistan_en, [Access date: 10.09.2021]

²⁷³ Mojib Rahman, Atal, "The EU-Afghanistan Cooperation and a New Afghan Exodus", *luchtforschungsBlog*, 2021, <https://blog.fluchtforschung.net/the-eu-afghanistan-cooperation-and-a-new-afghan-exodus/>, [Access date: 10.09.2021]

²⁷⁴ Ahmad Shah, Danishyar, "Afghanistan and European Union Relations from 2001- 2019 the Challenges and Opportunities", **Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences**, 2021, p.267-268

²⁷⁵ Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, "Finland as an actor in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy", **Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland**, (n.d), <https://um.fi/eu-s-common-foreign-and-security-policy>, [Access date: 10.09.2021]

²⁷⁶ Venkatesha, H.S, "EU involvement in Afghanistan Problems and perspectives", **National Conference**, 2016, p.3-6

state protects its borders and stands independently, it no longer poses a danger to the rest of the globe. Thus, the United States and European nations have been assisting Afghanistan's Army and National Forces in their rebuilding and development.

Regarding the motives and consequences of both the EU and Afghanistan, the European Union has failed to utilize its political and economic capabilities to guide Afghanistan's ambiguous circumstances in the proper direction during its two-decade operation. Besides, for two decades, the member European Union has lost thousands of lives and confronted severe challenges. Their biggest struggles were among the member of the EU's deficiency of engagement and coordination in the economy, military, and security strategy. It would be a mistake to evaluate the European Union Police Mission's (EUPOL) failure in the EU.²⁷⁷ The European Union has played and will continue to play a positive role in Afghanistan's post-9/11 peacebuilding operation. It has contributed to the reconstruction of Afghanistan through numerous projects and programmes.

2.3.4. Saudi Arabia

The relationship between both Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan is challenging. Their engagement stretches back to the 19th century when Afghanistan was one of the first countries to recognize Saudi Arabia. Later in the 1930s, the Kingdom of Nadir Shah in Afghanistan was endorsed by Ibn Saud. Then, both states signed their first friendship agreement in 1932. After that, King Zahir Shah paid a visit to Saudi Arabia in the 1950s. Both countries' relations remained decent and close throughout the years and decades.²⁷⁸ After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Saudi Arabia, accompanied by the United States and Pakistan, undisguisedly encouraged the Mujahidin and later helped the Afghan refugees.

Following that year, Saudi Arabia intervened in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, particularly over the Islamist factions, and dispatched Saudi Arabia's fighters to Afghanistan to fight against the Soviets. It is worth mentioning that from 1980 to 1990, Saudi Arabia poured money not only into the Afghan functions directly but also exclusively through Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI).²⁷⁹ Ahmed Rashid, in his book titled "Taliban," discusses that Saudi Arabia gave almost "\$4 billion in official aid to the (Mujahadeen) between 1980 and 1990. Which did not include unofficial aid from Islamic charities, foundations, the private funds of Princes and mosque collections".²⁸⁰ Though, Saudi Arabia lost its influence over the Taliban after the Najibullah regime. Controversy arose

²⁷⁷ Qayoom, Suroush, "The Assessment EU Conflict Response in Afghanistan: Assessing EUPOL Impact on Afghan Police Reform (2007-2016)", **Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit**, 2018, p.7-10

²⁷⁸ Hugh, Miles. & Arab, Digest, "The Aftershocks of the Saudi and American Debacle in Afghanistan", Fair Observer, 2021, https://www.fairobserver.com/region/middle_east_north_africa/hugh-miles-arab-digest-saudi-arabia-taliban-afghanistan-arab-world-news-middle-east-24792/, [Access date: 10.09.2021]

²⁷⁹ Greg, Bruno, "Saudi Arabia and the Future of Afghanistan", **Council on Foreign Relations**, 2008, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/saudi-arabia-and-future-afghanistan>, [Access date: 10.09.2021]

²⁸⁰ Rashid, Ibid., p.197

between the Mujahidin factions, and both of them were pro-Saudi groups. Hence, it was a significant recession for Saudi Arabia's impact on Iran. Because of the 9/11 attacks on the twin towers, Saudi Arabia closed its embassy in Kabul. In 1998, the Taliban rejected the extradition of Osama Bin Laden to Saudi Arabia even though Saudi Arabia was one of the prominent supporters of the Taliban. Besides that, they granted sanctuary to Al-Qaida leaders, which culminated the 9/11, the US led military operation in Afghanistan, and they ended the Taliban's authority in the country. The Taliban regime, which held power from 1996 to 2001, was recognised by just three countries: Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates.²⁸¹

Saudi Arabia held meetings with the Taliban in 2006, which they thought could lead to a concrete outcome. Saudi Arabia deepened ties with the Taliban until 9/11, 2001, and it played a constructive role during the Soviet occupation and the Najibullah era. Even the ideology of the Taliban was close to Saudi Arabia's Wahhabism. In recent years, those mentioned above lost their influence with the demise of the Najibullah regime over the Islamist factions.²⁸² Nonetheless, throughout 2008-2009, Riyadh accentuated its role by brokering talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government. Despite that, Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar contested to host a political office of the Taliban in their countries in 2011. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were eager to host the Taliban, but the Taliban refused their demands because both countries cut ties with the Taliban in 2001. In 2013, the Taliban opened a political office in Doha, the Capital of Qatar. As a result, Riyadh struggled to play a constructive role in Afghanistan.²⁸³ Based on the above analysis, Saudi Arabia's peacebuilding role in Afghanistan was not productive. In other words, the involvement of Saudi Arabia in the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan was lower than expected.

2.3.5. Qatar

Qatar is a small and natural gas-rich country in the Middle East. Due to its oil richness and investments, it has a significant impact on global markets and politics. Although Qatar was once unknown in the Gulf peninsula. It is becoming an emerging, powerful international mediator in the region and a 21st century peace-maker globally.²⁸⁴ The rise of Qatar on the international stage has been spotted with the bloodless coup that triggered Sheikha Hamed bin Khalifa Al Tani as Emir of Qatar to replace his father, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamed Al-Thani.²⁸⁵ However, Qatar gained its

²⁸¹ Bruno, Ibid.

²⁸² Nasser Saghabi, Ameri, "Prospects for peace and stability in Afghanistan", **SIPRI Afghanistan Regional Dialogue**, No. 1, 2011, p.8

²⁸³ Rupert, Stone, "Can Saudi Arabia play peacemaker in Afghanistan?", TRT World, 2018, <https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/can-saudi-arabia-play-peacemaker-in-afghanistan-20565>, [Access date:10.09.2021]

²⁸⁴ Chulov, Martin, "Qatar crosses the Syrian Rubicon: £63m to buy weapons for the rebels", **The Guardian**, 2012 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/01/syria-conflict-rebels-qatar-weapons>, [Access date: 11.09.2021]

²⁸⁵ Mohamed, Zayani. (Ed.), **The Al Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media**, Pluto Press, 2005, p.50

independence from the British Empire in 1971.²⁸⁶ Subsequently, Doha was engaged with the Kabul administration when the Soviets occupied the country in 1979. Doha extensively increased its engagement with Kabul. Even if it had good relations with the Taliban, Doha did not recognize the Taliban regime, unlike Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.²⁸⁷ However, since 2013, Qatar has been hosting the Taliban and has held several meetings between the Taliban, the Afghan government, and the United States delegations.²⁸⁸ It is worthwhile to stress that Qatar plays a crucial role in opening the Taliban political office in Doha, and brokering peace process among the Taliban, the Afghan government, and the United States. With the opening of the Taliban office in Doha, the government of Afghanistan has recalled its ambassador from Qatar over the newly developed issue in Doha. In this context, the government of Qatar had not acknowledged Kabul. In light of that, Kabul recalled its ambassador from Doha. In contrast, President Hamid Karzai advocated Qatar's endeavours, welcomed the Taliban's new address, and hoped that it would help both sides further peace talks and negotiations²⁸⁹ because the office was opened with the permission of the US.

The United States and NATO had tried to reach the Taliban leaders throughout 2008-2009. They had determined that the Taliban should have an address as mentioned above.²⁹⁰ Despite the fact that the enterprise was at its rising or emerging level. Moreover, the Taliban was trying to make no use concept of "peace talks" and tenaciously called that they were inclined to discuss prisoners' faith in Guantanamo Bay. The Taliban leaders in Doha often stated that their primary aim was to strengthen talks and generate a reasonable condition for more meetings in the forthcoming years. Despite their statements and good will, the talks were stalled in the beginning.²⁹¹ Then the Afghan government and the United States expressed their intention to hold peace talks and conferences. Yet, it is beyond doubt that securing the ground, more significantly, the venue for peace talks between the Taliban and the international community was a critical step toward constructive negotiations. In this respect, Qatar was the only country that could make it happen. Qatar has been hosting the Taliban groups for more than eight years and will not need a long time to cooperate with them. Unquestionably, Qatar will significantly influence the Taliban in the next few years.²⁹² The analysis indicates that Qatar has built a reputation for mediating and resolving conflicts for over a decade.

²⁸⁶ Simon C. Smith, **Britain's Revival and Fall in the Gulf: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the Trucial States, 1950–71**, Routledge Curzon, 2004, p.78

²⁸⁷ Kristian Coates, Ulrichsen, "The Persian Gulf States and Afghanistan: Regional Geopolitics and Competing Interest", **Asia Policy**, (17), 2014, p.47

²⁸⁸ Ulrichsen, *Ibid.*, p.50

²⁸⁹ Al Jazeera, "Afghanistan recalls envoy from Qatar", 2011, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2011/12/15/afghanistan-recalls-envoy-from-qatar/>, [Access date: 10.09.2021]

²⁹⁰ Mohammad, Salami, "Qatar Emerges as Power Broker in New Afghanistan", **Geopolitical Monitor**, 2021, <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/qatar-emerges-as-power-broker-in-new-afghanistan/>, [Access date: 10.09.2021]

²⁹¹ CBS News, "Taliban to open office in Qatar for talks", CBS NEWS, 2012, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/taliban-to-open-office-in-qatar-for-talks/>, [Access date: 10.09.2021]

²⁹² Sultan, Barakat, "The Qatari Spring: Qatar's emerging role in peacemaking: Research Paper, Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States", **London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)**, 2012, p.15

Doha has been hosting the Taliban since 2013. And it is safe to mention that Qatar's role in the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan is unique and successful.

2.3.6. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is a national security alliance among the United States, Canada, Türkiye, and their European partners. NATO is a system of collective security. It was established in the aftermath of World War II in 1949, to maintain peace and promote cooperation and collaboration on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The primary aim of NATO is to guarantee the sovereignty and stability of its members' territories against third countries. Hereby, the core of NATO is reflected in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, in which the member nations agree that "an armed attack against one ally is considered an attack against all allies." In other words, an attack on one NATO member will result in retaliation from all NATO members. NATO invoked Article 5 once in its history in 9/11 attack in 2001. During the Cold War, NATO served as a deterrent against the Soviet Union's threat. In one sense, NATO is a Cold War remnant. Even though after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, NATO remained solid in its place and has been involved in military operations in the Middle East, the Balkans, South Asia, and Africa.²⁹³ NATO used Article 5 to lead a military operation in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers and Washington, DC.

The 9/11 attack changed NATO in a way that no other single incident has ever done. More significantly, there is a violation of humanitarian rights in abiding by article 5 of the UN. NATO has been encountering several difficulties around the world. It might be worthy to emphasise that NATO will not operate alone unless without the support of the UN, EU, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and other NGOs.²⁹⁴ Due to the 9/11 tragedy, the US military entered Afghanistan as part of the "war on terror" military campaign intending to destroy the Al-Qaeda network. The primary objectives of the operation were to eradicate Al-Qaida and demolish the Taliban regime that gave refuge to Osama Bin Laden, who was the mastermind behind the execution of the 9/11 horrific attacks in the United States in 2001,²⁹⁵ generally considering that one of the primary objectives of NATO is to protect human rights and the state. Although NATO supports human rights, it is not the only institution that does so. NATO allies moved to Afghanistan, which became a safe haven for international terrorist groups, to prevent being attacked again in the same way.²⁹⁶ For that reason,

²⁹³ Robert. Axelrod & Silvia, Borzutzky, "NATO and the war on terror: The organizational challenges of the post 9/11 world", **Springer Science + Business Media**, (01), 2006, p.293-305.

²⁹⁴ Paul Gallis, "NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance", **Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes**, 6(3), 2007, p.10-15

²⁹⁵ Jim, Arkedis, "Why Al Qaeda Wants a Safe Haven", **Foreign Policy**, 2009, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/23/why-al-qaeda-wants-a-safe-haven/>, [Access date: 11.09.2021]

²⁹⁶ Ahmad, Shafiq, "US timeline from entry to exit from Afghanistan", 2021, **Anadolu Agency**, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/us-timeline-from-entry-to-exit-from-afghanistan/2351337>, [Access date: 11.09.2021]

NATO has led military operations in the country since 2003. Besides that, Afghanistan has become NATO's most prolonged operation in history. So that they have been contributing troops to International Security Assistance Force (ISAF),²⁹⁷ ISAF was a NATO-led security mission in Afghanistan. Under the Bonn Agreement in December 2001, ISAF was established. Its primary goal was to train the Afghan forces, take over the country's security, and help reconstruction of government institutions. Security responsibilities were planned to gradually transfer to Afghan forces earlier in 2011, leading to security operations in the summer of 2013. By the end of 2014, the transition process ended, Afghan forces took on all responsibilities, and the ISAF operation concluded.²⁹⁸

Table 2: International Security Assistance Force-in 2013 Force of Contributing Countries

Country	Force (Person)	Country	Force (Person)	Country	Force (Person)
Albania	105	Georgia	1,561	Norway	111
Armenia	131	Germany	4,400	Poland	1,177
Australia	1,031	Greece	3	Portugal	165
Austria	3	Hungary	354	Romania	1,077
Azerbaijan	94	Iceland	3	Slovakia	199
Bahrain	0	Ireland	7	Slovenia	60
Belgium	180	Italy	2,825	Spain	856
Bosnia & Herzegovina	79	Jordan	0	Sweden	259
Bulgaria	416	Republic of Korea	50	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	158
Croatia	181	Latvia	141	Tonga	55
Czech Republic	182	Lithuania	240	Türkiye	1,036
Canada	950	Luxembourg	10	Ukraine	26
Denmark	317	Malaysia	2	United Arab Emirates	35
El Salvador	24	Mongolia	40	United Kingdom	7,700
Estonia	160	Montenegro	27	United States	60,000
Finland	100	Netherlands	400		
France	266	New Zealand	11	Total	87,207

Source: North Atlantic Treaty Organization's 2013

²⁹⁷ NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "Afghanistan), NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA), (n.d), <https://www.nato-pa.int/content/afghanistan>, [Access date: 11.09.2021]

²⁹⁸ ISAF, "International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): Key Facts and Figures", P. 1., 2013, <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/international-security-assistance-force-isaf-key-facts-and-figures>, [Access date: 11.09.2021]

The table above illustrates that their foundations were part of the international community and showed greater involvement in Afghanistan. As a result, ISAF's mission has evolved from leading operations to empowering Afghan security forces to launch their operations. At the initial stage, ISAF's mandate was to secure Kabul from Al-Qaida and the Taliban.²⁹⁹ Yet, the United Nations had broadened the mission of ISAF with the United Nations Security Council Resolution called "Resolution 1510 (2003)" and that laid the foundation to provide security across the country in 2003.³⁰⁰ In the end, ISAF's operations in Afghanistan concluded in 2014. After a decade in the country, NATO took on the country's security responsibility.³⁰¹ However, with the end of ISAF, NATO initiated Resolute Support Mission (RSM) on January 1, 2015; as aforementioned, RSM is designed to advise and train Afghan Security forces to facilitate sustainable security in the country. The RSM introduced policies in a range of areas such as supporting planning, programming, budgeting, enduring transparency, and accountability to enable the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces to put into force the harmony of the rule of law and practical governance.

Additionally, RSM had approximately 10,000 staff from 36 NATO member states and operated from bases in five big strategic cities, respectively Kabul (Bagram), Mazar-e- Sharif (North), Herat (West), and Kandahar (south), and Laghman (East). The NATO-administered Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund was one of four funding sources being used to provide financial assistance to Afghanistan's security forces and institutions. The other three were the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) to pay police and justice salaries and build the Interior Ministry's capacity; the United States Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) to equip and run Afghan security forces; and the Afghan government's commitment to provide \$500 million each year. The ANA trust fund has received \$3.4 billion since 2007.³⁰²

It is worth noting that NATO members suffered numerous casualties in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2020 due to military operations and patrols. In this regard, losses based on the countries are listed below. The table below demonstrates that the United States has more casualties and deaths than any other NATO member. It should not be neglected that NATO is one of the essential international actors in stabilizing peace and security globally.

²⁹⁹ NATO, Ibid.

³⁰⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1510 (2003)", **United Nations Security Council**, 2003, p.1

³⁰¹ Matthew, Corcoran. (2015), "UN-NATO Cooperation in Afghanistan", Center on International Cooperation, https://cic.nyu.edu/news_commentary/un-nato-cooperation-afghanistan, [Access date: 11.09.2021]

³⁰² NATO. (2021), "NATO and Afghanistan", NATO, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_8189.htm, [Access date: 12.09.2021]

Table 3: NATO Members Fatality

2001	12	0	0	12
2002	49	3	18	70
2003	48	0	10	58
2004	52	1	7	60
2005	99	1	31	131
2006	98	39	54	191
2007	117	42	73	232
2008	155	51	89	295
2009	317	108	96	521
2010	498	103	109	710
2011	415	46	102	563
2012	310	44	48	402
2013	128	9	25	162
2014	55	6	14	75
2015	22	2	2	26
2016	13	0	2	15
2017	15	0	2	17
2018	14	0	5	19
2019	24	0	2	26
2020	11	0	0	11
Total	2452	455	689	3596

Source: icasualties.org. Iraq coalition casualty count, <http://icasualties.org/>

Table 3 illustrates the number of casualties, respectively. The United States is 2452, the United Kingdom's casualties are 455, and other NATO member states' losses are 689.³⁰³ Following the analysis, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's role in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process was positive and helpful. NATO's central role in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process was to keep a secure environment for the international organizations, the UN, and other actors from appalling and fatal crises. It should not be ignored that NATO's other key role was supporting the Afghan government in exercising its influence in the country and laying the foundation for peacebuilding, reconstruction, and development of Afghanistan.

³⁰³ icasualties, "Fatalities by year and country," 2021, <http://icasualties.org/>, [Access date. 12.09.2021]

CHAPTER THREE: TÜRKİYE IN AFGHANISTAN: INTERNAL AND REGIONAL ACTORS' PERCEPTIONS

3.1. 9/11, Türkiye and NATO's Intervention in Afghanistan

The 9/11 attack was a terrorist act committed by 19 hijackers in 2001 in major American cities like New York City, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. This shocked and caused confusion in world politics, changed the security dynamics in airports internationally. It also marked the dawn of a global war on terror headed by the US. The attacks induced the death of roughly 3,000 people. It was the deadliest attack in American history ever. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who spent most of his life in Kuwait, was the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks. Al-Qaeda gained a tremendous tactical victory with these strikes.³⁰⁴ In this sense, Jackson (2009) resembled the 9/11 attacks to the December 7, 1941, tragedies,³⁰⁵ the events that took place during World War II, which are well-known as the tragedy of Pearl Harbour.

The world was in shock; following the attacks, Osama Bin Laden claimed responsibility. Bin Laden was living in Afghanistan at that time, and the Taliban sheltered him. For that reason, the Bush administration asked the Taliban to hand over Osama Bin Laden, who was the primary suspect in the 9/11 attacks and the Taliban leaders denied the American request. The Taliban ruled Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001. As previously mentioned, they had provided shelter to Osama Bin Laden, who was the perpetrator of the 9/11 attacks.³⁰⁶ After the 9/11 attacks, Bush's administration had declared that a "war on terrorism" was a necessary response to this kind of "act of terror".

To some extent, President George Bush declared that there would be two sides in this global war on terror, using a robust language that is now familiar "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ Hannah, Hartig, & Carrol, Doherty, "Two Decades Later, the Enduring Legacy of 9/11", 2021, Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/09/02/two-decades-later-the-enduring-legacy-of-9-11/>, [Access date: 28.09.2021]

³⁰⁵ Richard, Jackson, "The 9/11 Attacks and the Social Construction of a National Narrative", in: Morgan M.J. (Eds) the Impact of 9/11 on the Media, Arts, and Entertainment. The Day that Changed Everything? **Palgrave Macmillan**, 2009, p. 25

³⁰⁶ Constanze, Stelzenmüller, "The war in Afghanistan has shaped an entire generation in the West", 2021, **Brookings**, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/09/02/the-war-in-afghanistan-has-shaped-an-entire-generation-in-the-west/>, [Access date: 30.09.2021]

³⁰⁷ Frank, Gardner, "Afghanistan crisis: Five lessons learned (or not) since 9/11", **BBC**, 2001, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58502199>, [Access date: 28.09.2021]

Subsequently, George Bush, in his speech to congress and the public, asserted that the United States legally vindicate “the exercise of its inherent right of individual and collective self-defence” in line with the United Nations Charter Article 51 “designed to prevent and deter further attacks on the United States.” Considering this several states endorsed the remarks.³⁰⁸ Following the attacks, NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson declared that “if it had determined that this attack was directed from abroad against the United States, it should have regarded as an action covered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.”³⁰⁹

Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty is a prominent Washington Treaty.³¹⁰ The principle of collective defence is at the centre of NATO’s treaty. It is a defining concept that unifies the Alliance’s members, pledging them to defend one another. Article 5 states that “an attack against one Ally is considered against all Allies.” Although significant, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) accepted collective defence only once and has utilized Article 5 once in its history in response to the 9/11 attacks.³¹¹ In this circumstance, it was the first counterterror operation that included “Eagle Assist” on the request of the United States from mid-October 2001 to mid-May 2002. It comprised seven NATO’s Airborne Early Warning and Control (AWACS) radar planes that assisted in patrolling the United States from the sky; 830 crew members from 13 NATO members performed over 360 operations. In this sense, NATO military units dispatched in favour of the Article 5 operation for the first time.³¹² However, the United States-led war lasted almost two months and concluded with the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001.³¹³

The 9/11 evil attack on the United States by Al-Qaida enhanced the partnership between the United States and Türkiye in the fight against terrorism in all of its forms. Arms is another area where they have collaborated as well. Since joining NATO in 1952, Türkiye has been one of the great allies of the United States. They have already collaborated with all missions and operations in Afghanistan and are determined to continue to do so in the future.³¹⁴ Accordingly, Türkiye and NATO relations have been in good condition for over six decades and have played a crucial role in the Middle East and region.

³⁰⁸ Andrew, Cottey, “Afghanistan and the new dynamics of intervention: counter-terrorism and nation building”, **SIPRI**, 2003, p.172

³⁰⁹ NATO, “NATO reaffirms Treaty commitments in dealing with terrorist attacks against the US”, NATO, 2001, <https://www.nato.int/docu/update/2001/0910/e0912a.htm>, [Access date: 29.09.2021]

³¹⁰ NATO, “The North Atlantic Treaty”, NATO, 1949, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm, [Access date: 29.09.2021]

³¹¹ Sarah, Pruitt, “What is NATO’s Article 5?”, History, 2018, <https://www.history.com/news/nato-article-5-meaning-history-world-war-2>, [Access date: 29.09.2021]

³¹² NATO, “Collective defence - Article 5”, NATO, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm, [Access date: 29.09.2021]

³¹³ S.H, Zaidi, “Post-Taliban Afghanistan: Challenge of Reconstruction”, **Pakistan Institute of International Affairs**, 2006, p.23-24

³¹⁴ Mehmet Fatih, Ceylan. & Zalmay, Nishat, “What Role Can Turkey Play in the Afghanistan Peace Process?”, **German Marshall Fund**, 2021, <https://www.gmfus.org/news/what-role-can-turkey-play-afghanistan-peace-process> [Access date: 28.09.2021]

Türkiye has been one of the prime and critical allies of NATO. As a result of the overthrown of the Shah of Iran in 1979 and the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, Türkiye's strategic importance in the Middle East increased significantly, especially for policymakers in the United States. Since the 1990s, Türkiye, as a member of NATO, has remained an active member and contributed to all operations and tasks undertaken under the alliance of umbrella. Although, it has not taken the combative role yet but has played a crucial role in peacebuilding operations since the 1990s. Türkiye's contribution to the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF)³¹⁵ was significant.

Although, Türkiye as a member of NATO, engaged in Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks in accordance with the Washington treaty Article 5. It has maintained a non-combative presence, undertook a non-combative role, provided logistical aid, and significantly contributed to the country's development. It is worth mentioning that the most important player in the reconstruction of the Afghan Army and strengthening of the institution is Türkiye which has been supporting both training of the Afghan army and police units. Turkish officials in Ankara believe that this is the only option to strengthen political institutions to maintain law and order.

3.1.1. Türkiye's Involvement in Afghanistan

Türkiye's relatively recent involvement with Afghanistan has been the subject of debate among scholars and policymakers in Türkiye and the imminent region. It should be asked why it is important for Türkiye to engage with Afghanistan. The fundamental factors that led to Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan were the humanitarian crisis, historical links, fragile health sector, economic crisis, and international responsibility. Even though there was a conflict and a threat in Afghanistan, Türkiye helped with the humanitarian crisis, economic collapse, and health sector after 9/11.

Türkiye and Afghanistan have always enjoyed warm relations because of their deep cultural and historical connections. Afghanistan was the second country to recognise the newly founded Turkish Republic in 1921.³¹⁶ Over the years, the Republic of Türkiye and Afghanistan have had good relations. Türkiye only suspended its ties with Afghanistan during the Taliban era, resumed its relations after the collapse of the Taliban regime, and developed rapidly. Following the collapse of the Taliban regime, the first Foreign Minister who visited Afghanistan was Ismail Cem. On December 17, 2001, Ismail Cem opened the Turkish Embassy in Kabul. During the ceremony in Kabul, Cem stated that the friendship between Afghanistan and Türkiye is an entrustment from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. That is why they always recognize the value of this trust and defend it. Also,

³¹⁵ Gulnur, Aybet, "The Evolution of NATO's Three Phases and Turkey's Transatlantic Relationship", **Strategic Center for Research**, 2, 17(1), 2012, p.33

³¹⁶ Karen, Kaya, "Turkey's Role in Afghanistan and Afghan Stabilization", **Military Review**, 2013, p.23

they will contribute as much as possible to Afghanistan's rebuilding and collaboration.³¹⁷ Despite the 9/11 attacks, Türkiye has maintained good relations with Afghanistan.

In post-9/11, Türkiye became a vital actor within the international arena because it was a Muslim country in NATO and had abundant experience in the fight against terrorism. The United States has requested Türkiye to use the "İncirlik" base and airspace for operations against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Though Türkiye was not inquisitive about military operations in the country, it was indispensable not to act and support international cooperation under the umbrella of NATO.³¹⁸

Türkiye's involvement with Afghanistan took a dramatic shift when NATO-led military operations demolished the Taliban from power. Turkish forces were part of the NATO mission from the beginning. Furthermore, through its NATO membership, Türkiye's involvement projected stability and focused on the management of crisis and peacebuilding operations. However, when NATO engaged in post-9/11 attacks and established International Security Assistance (ISAF) in December 2001, Türkiye, as a part of the mission, trained and equipped the Afghan National police and provided non-combat security missions and logistical operations, which has been helping the improvement of the social and economic conditions.³¹⁹ Following the ISAF's establishment under the framework of NATO, Türkiye commanded ISAF twice, from June 2002 to February 2003 and again from February 2005 to August 2005. Türkiye increased the number of troops to around 1,400³²⁰ in Afghanistan later that year.

Turkish involvement in Afghanistan has been very successful, particularly in civilian investments. However, four international meetings in Afghanistan occurred throughout January and February 2010. Three of them, following the "Türkiye-Afghanistan-Pakistan Summit," "İstanbul Summit on Friendship and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia," and the "NATO Defence Ministers Unofficial Meeting," were held in Istanbul. Despite efforts and peacebuilding operations, no advancements were made. In this regard, after the "Afghanistan Conference" in London. Their common attribute toward Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan was essential. Ahead of the London Conference, James Appathurai, the spokesman for NATO, regarding Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan, stated that "No state can play that role as Türkiye does."³²¹ In addition to these, Türkiye has held eight trilateral summits between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Türkiye, the majority of which have sought to enhance the three countries' multifaceted cooperation in politics, security, economic

³¹⁷ Baburiddin, Jurat, **NATO'nun Afganistan'a Müdahalesi Çerçevesinde Türkiye-Afganistan ilişkilerinin incelenmesi (2001-2016)**, Uludağ Üniversitesi, 2018, p.53

³¹⁸ Sevinç, Alkan Özcan, "Turkish Foreign Policy towards Afghanistan: 2009-2010", **Perceptions**, 15(3-4), 2010, p.134-135.

³¹⁹ Umer, Karim, "Turkey's Transforming Political and Security Relationship with Afghanistan", Newline Institute, 2021, <https://newlinesinstitute.org/afghanistan/turkeys-transforming-political-and-security-relationship-with-afghanistan/>, [Access date: 30.09.2021]

³²⁰ Salih, Doğan., "Turkey's Presence and Importance in Afghanistan", **USAK Yearbook of Politics and International Relations**, (4), 2010, p.367

³²¹ Doğan., Ibid, p.369-370

growth, and further collaboration.³²² Türkiye has been very supportive of the Heart of Asia Istanbul process.

However, it is essential to emphasize that Türkiye maintains its military presence in Afghanistan as an integral component of NATO's ISAF mission. Also, from the Turkish point of view, Türkiye feels that it's a "brotherhood duty" to assist the Afghan people in re-establishing the peacebuilding.³²³ Therefore, Türkiye has fostered military, political, and other means to create peace and stability in Afghanistan. So, Turkish officials argue that the stability and peace of Afghanistan have a significant impact on the stability and strength of the region.³²⁴ Türkiye has increased its confidence through its involvement in Afghanistan in regional policies. However, Türkiye did not confront NATO and its allies' decisions.³²⁵ Türkiye has received positive reflection from local Afghans and other actors. Türkiye's role in Afghanistan has been unique compared to other nations. Although Türkiye does not share a border with Afghanistan, it has maintained a good relationship over the years.³²⁶

It is noteworthy to mention that Türkiye's common Islamic faith and cultural affinities bolstered its nuance and active involvement in Afghanistan,³²⁷ contributing to the promotion of Türkiye's role as a regional player. This involvement would positively boost Türkiye's rising power status in the international arena. To better understand the Turkish contribution to Afghanistan, the following topics will focus on Türkiye's assistance in different aspects ranging from humanitarian aid to peacebuilding initiatives.

It seems that Türkiye's soft power is on the rise in Afghanistan, and there is a widespread positive perception of Türkiye's engagement in the country and the region. Türkiye's engagement in Afghanistan has increased its influence as a regional power. Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan has resulted in tangible change in the education, health, military and infrastructure sectors. On top of that, there is a good relationship between the two states, and the Afghan people consider Türkiye a great ally and trustable partner.

3.1.2. Türkiye's Humanitarian Diplomacy in Afghanistan

Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy, as a rising power, is distinguished in different aspects from that of traditional donors. It is important to stress that Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy model is

³²² Canan Bayram, Çabuk., **Turkey's Role in Afghanistan in the Post-9/11 Era**, Middle East Technical University, 2014, p.100

³²³ Kaya, Ibid, p.23

³²⁴ Çabuk, Ibid., p.102

³²⁵ Armağan, Kuloğlu., "Afganistan'a Operasyon İçin Türk Askeri Gider mi?", **Center for Middle Eastern Studies**, 2009, <https://orsam.org.tr/tr/afghanistan-a-operasyon-icin-turk-askeri-gider-mi/>, [Access date: 20.10.2021]

³²⁶ Nilufer Karacasulu, "Reconstruction of Afghanistan and The Role of Turkey", **USAK**, 4(10), 2011, p.48

³²⁷ Kaya, Ibid, p.23

directly in contact with ordinary citizens in Afghanistan and other countries like Somalia, Yemen, and Pakistan. Türkiye's humanitarian assistance model is bilateral rather than multilateral. So, Türkiye's status elevated in the international arena thanks to its multidimensional foreign policy.³²⁸ Like other rising powers, Türkiye also uses bilateral engagement to provide humanitarian aid. Due to the lack of solid and compact institutionalism and mechanism in Afghanistan, Türkiye uses its personnel and security to fill the gap.³²⁹ In recent years Türkiye has become one of the largest donor countries via official development assistance provided to developing or underdeveloped nations.

Turkish foreign policy rhetoric on humanitarian assistance has changed since the AKP took power in 2002, but it has attracted the attention of many both in humanitarian aid and as a rising power globally since 2011. Turkish humanitarian diplomacy is based on humanitarian values that present Türkiye as a generous, responsible, and trustworthy actor whose actions are morally driven. Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan has been characterised as successful humanitarian diplomacy; for instance, how countries plan and perform successful humanitarian diplomacy, which is more highly successful and appreciated by the recipient country.

With the increased awareness of human suffering in the global society, international state actors have begun to adopt a new concept known as humanitarian diplomacy. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) stated that humanitarian diplomacy has 89 distinct definitions.³³⁰ Though there is no unanimity on the concept of humanitarian diplomacy in the literature on international relations, it includes state and non-state actors' humanitarian activities in response to humanitarian crises such as food shortages, climate change, water scarcity, drought, and famine.³³¹ In other words, Türkiye's dramatic rise from "dwarf to giant" in international humanitarian aid has promoted new issues. Türkiye contributed \$1.6 billion in official humanitarian assistance in 2013. It makes the third-highest contributor, after the United States and the United Kingdom. Indeed, Türkiye's rising humanitarian position had changed with the end of the Cold War. In the wake of the US-led war in Afghanistan, Türkiye introduced the Istanbul initiative with the critical objective of giving humanitarian assistance and infrastructure reconstruction to Afghanistan.³³²

In Afghanistan's post-conflict rebuilding, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye has played an important role, and as a result, Afghanistan has been the largest recipient of Turkish development assistance over the last decades. Further, Afghanistan became top of Türkiye's Development

³²⁸ Cemalettin Haşimi, "Turkey's Humanitarian Diplomacy and Development Cooperation", *Insight Turkey*, 16(1), 2013, p.129-131

³²⁹ Pinar Tank, "Turkey as a humanitarian actor: the critical cases of Somalia and Syria", *The Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre*, 2015, p.1-5

³³⁰ Pinar Akpınar, "Turkey's Peacebuilding in Somalia: The Limits of Humanitarian Diplomacy", *Turkish Studies*, 14(4), 2013, p.737

³³¹ Philippe Re'gnier, "The emerging concept of humanitarian diplomacy: identification of a community of practice and prospects for international recognition", *International Review of the Red Cross*, 93(884), 2011, p.1212

³³² Bruce Gilley, "Turkey, Middle Powers, and the New Humanitarianism", *Perceptions*, 20(1), 2015, p.38

Cooperation Agenda list.³³³ As of 2007, after Nigeria and Iraq, Afghanistan has become the third nation receiving development aid from Türkiye. In addition, Afghanistan received the most development aid from Türkiye, totalling \$141,96 million. However, in 2010, Türkiye's development aid was decreased due to the economic crisis.³³⁴ A significant degree of Türkiye's peacebuilding efforts had taken place in Afghanistan. Throughout 2007 and 2011, a tremendous amount of money had allocated to Afghanistan peacebuilding.

According to ODA, Türkiye's official development assistance was estimated at around \$400 million from 2005 to 2009.³³⁵ In line with TİKA 2019 report, Afghanistan benefited from Türkiye's official development assistance of approximately \$32,94 million.³³⁶ Moreover, Türkiye has finished over 1,000 projects through TİKA, mainly on progressing infrastructure, education, health, and agriculture, throughout the 2005-2014 years.³³⁷

Türkiye's foreign aid is mainly provided to Afghanistan through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA). Türkiye's most prominent state institution in Afghanistan is the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) which was formally founded in 1992. TİKA's rapid growth emerged under the AKP administration. Since 2002, TİKA has grown to be the most critical instrument of Türkiye's foreign policy towards the Balkans, Caucasus, Middle East, and the African continent. Because of Türkiye's reviving economy. TİKA has increased its capabilities from humanitarian aid to development projects.³³⁸ Afghanistan is the only country where TİKA has three operational field offices; Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif, and Herat. TİKA is not the only institution of Türkiye active in Afghanistan, but also Emergency Management Agency (AFAD) and the Turkish Red Crescent (KIZILAY) are the other governmental institutions that organize and distribute humanitarian aid. Those institutions are to maintain and provide assistance in the world. There are also NGOs such as "Is anybody out there" (Kimse yok mu), İHH ((The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Relief) supply humanitarian aid as well.³³⁹

According to Davutoglu, Türkiye utilises humanitarian diplomacy to fulfil the aims of becoming a global player and dealing with the pace of changing world order. Therefore, he defines

³³³ Teri Murphy, & Onur Sazak, "Turkey's Civilian Capacity in Post-Conflict Reconstruction", **Istanbul Policy Center**, 2012, p.10

³³⁴ Shabnam Nawabi, "Türkiye'nin Afganistan'a Dış Yardımları", **Politics, Economics and Administrative Sciences Journal of Kirsehir Ahi Evran University**, 3(1), 2019, p.82

³³⁵ Musa Kulaklıkaya, & Rahman Nurdun, "Turkey as a New Player in Development Cooperation", **Insight Turkey**, 12(4), 2010, p. 136

³³⁶ TİKA, "Turkish Development Assistance Report 2019", **TİKA**, 2020, p.27

³³⁷ Merve Aydoğan, "Turkey's long involvement in NATO mission in Afghanistan", **Anadolu Agency**, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/turkey-s-long-involvement-in-nato-mission-in-afghanistan/2279062>, [Access date: 23.10.2021].

³³⁸ Ahmet Çöğen, **Turkey's Humanitarian Diplomacy in Somalia as an Emerging Power**, Istanbul Bilgi University, 2016, p.63

³³⁹ Senem Çevik "Turkey's Humanitarian Assistance: The Fourth Largest Donor State", **USC Center on Public Diplomacy**, 2013, <https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/turkey%E2%80%99s-humanitarian-assistance-fourth-largest-donor-state>, [Access date: 23.10.2021]

Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy approach from three aspects, "The first aspect of humanitarian diplomacy refers to providing independent mobilization of Turkish citizens; the second aspect refers to the protection of people who are facing crises in their geography regardless of their nation and religion, and the last aspect refers to representing human-oriented policy in international organizations and institutions mainly in the UN."³⁴⁰

The bedrock of Turkish humanitarian diplomacy is establishing confidence and cooperation between assistance providers and recipients. Turkish policy-makers believe that humanitarian aid would not be required if there were no unfairness in the international system. Turkish humanitarian diplomacy tries to build a good image of Türkiye as a rising power through cooperation and humanitarian aid to conflict-torn countries such as Afghanistan. Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy shows the country's desire to play a greater role in global affairs. Türkiye has turned into one of the leading humanitarian aid providers. In practical terms, the Turkish organizations' bilateral engagement and immediate direct aid delivery make Turkish humanitarian diplomacy different from traditional donors.

3.1.3. Türkiye's Activities in Afghanistan within the Framework of ISAF

Türkiye has been a crucial actor in Afghanistan's post-conflict rebuilding and the development of its national security forces. Since the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was founded. They have contributed and provided non-combat soldiers to the NATO-led coalition in Afghanistan. As of 1952, Türkiye has been a traditional ally of NATO. Moreover, NATO is a leading global security organization, and Türkiye enjoys being a member of it; and both NATO and Türkiye follow their national interest in a region like Afghanistan.³⁴¹ However, Türkiye has emerged as a confident regional power with the unification of Türkiye and NATO's security priorities to adopt an agreed policy to engage Afghanistan issues.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was established following the Bonn Conference on 5 December 2001 under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council, and NATO claimed command of ISAF on 11 August 2003 in response to a request from the United Nations and the Afghan Government to combat the Taliban. The ISAF began its operations, and Türkiye contributed by deploying 300 soldiers. In contrast to other NATO member countries' forces, Turkish soldiers were on a non-combative mission. Despite this, Türkiye decided to take over ISAF in Kabul, and then it expanded ISAF, both geographically and operationally. However, the ISAF

³⁴⁰ Ahmet Davutoglu "Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy: objectives, challenges and prospects", **Nationalities paper**, 2013, p. 867-869.

³⁴¹ Yucel Yilmaz "The Impact of Turkey's Involvement in Afghanistan on Security Culture of NATO", **Atılım University**, 2016, p.1

operation concluded in 2014.³⁴² Türkiye is the only NATO member state that commanded and led the ISAF twice. Likewise, it played a constructive role in peacebuilding process in Afghanistan.

However, the Turkish Armed Forces endorsed the ISAF Operation in Afghanistan based on the permission granted to the Government by the Turkish Grand National Assembly's resolution number 722, issued on October 10, 2001.³⁴³ Türkiye became the second country that voluntarily joined the alliance, following the United Kingdom, which assumed the command of ISAF. Türkiye has undertaken the leadership of ISAF during the second ISAF period from June 2002 to February 2003. Additionally, the second leadership for Türkiye and the 4th period of ISAF, from February 2005-August 2005. Besides that, Türkiye assumed responsibility for the operation of Kabul Airport. Turkish military-led ISAF mission had carried out with 1400 forces in 2003 and 1600 forces in 2005. In 2009, Türkiye contributed 1800 military forces to the ISAF, placing 3rd among the member states.³⁴⁴

Türkiye was among the first member states to volunteer to dispatch armed forces to ISAF, promoting a significant number of soldiers to rebuild Afghanistan. Türkiye had assumed the Regional Commandership of Kabul, and the coordination and leadership of ISAF was NATO's first mission beyond the Euro-Atlantic region.³⁴⁵ McChrystal argues that the Commander of United States troops in Afghanistan and ISAF, concerning Turkish forces, "Turkish troops are very successful not only in providing security but also in containing rebellions." In this sense, Doğan puts that Türkiye has maintained to receive praise from the top commander of ISAF, NATO, and the United States.³⁴⁶ Thus Türkiye has been shown to be a trustworthy and reliable NATO member through its commitment to the organization. Last but not least, Türkiye has played a constructive role in the construction of Afghanistan and elevating regional cooperation and both hard and soft power presence and its desire to have more influence as a regional power.

3.1.4. Turkish Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Afghanistan

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were designed to assist the host country in maintaining the security sector, improving its governance, and developing its infrastructure. The objective of the PRTs was to enhance the local community's quality of life by strengthening judicial administration, developing infrastructure, supporting programs such as education and health sector, and training the Afghan judiciary. The PRTs were supposed to enhance stability in given cities by

³⁴² Tam D. Warren "ISAF and Afghanistan: The Impact of Failure on NATO's Future", **Strategy Research Project**, 2010, p.6

³⁴³ Yurdagül Şimşek "Türkiye, Afganistan'a iki yılına asker gönderecek", Sputnik Türkiye, 2015, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/20150105/1013338314.html>, [Access date: 24.10.2021]

³⁴⁴ Kaya, Ibid, p.24

³⁴⁵ Karacasulu, Ibid, p.43-45

³⁴⁶ Salih Doğan, "Turkey's Presence and Importance in Afghanistan", **USAK Yearbook of Politics and International Relations**, (4), 2011, p.370

building the host country's capability, improving the host country's legitimacy, and promoting essential government necessities.³⁴⁷ In doing so, PRTs ranged in scale, scope, and mission priority and adapted to their active region's unique security, political, and socioeconomic factors. However, every country's level of involvement in the project varies from one another.³⁴⁸ The initial stages of military reconstruction were called "hearts-and-minds operations" in Afghanistan. However, in 2002, the United States program changed the term to "Joint Regional Teams" (JRT). In the end, with the request of the Afghan government, the "Joint Regional Team" (JRT) was altered to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs).³⁴⁹ Although, a PRT is not just operated by one country but served also by a coalition of countries. It is mainly centred on providing and delivering quick impact projects. The PRT served well in promoting construction and rebuilding the political system in Afghanistan. With all these arguments in place, PRT gained momentum after 2010. It was a successful approach in the peacebuilding operation in the country.

Under NATO and ISAF command, Türkiye has established the first civilian PRTs and leads two PRTs for rehabilitation and economic development to enhance the Afghan government's capacity. With the request of Afghan authorities, it was operated as a comprehensive program based on capacity building, governance, development, and rebuilding. Türkiye launched the first PRT in Maidan Shahr, Wardak province. After the first PRT was successful, Türkiye set up a second one in the northern city of Jawzjan, Shibirgan.³⁵⁰

As mentioned above, Türkiye conducted many projects and activities between 2005 and 2014. Those projects mainly focused on developing education, health, agriculture, and infrastructure.³⁵¹

Overall, the study indicates that Turkish provincial Reconstruction teams that operated under the ISAF umbrella had been found to be a successful coalition model in Afghanistan. Due to its truthfulness, reliability, and cooperation. Over the following pages, the Turkish-led Wardak and Jawzjan PRTs will be investigated thoroughly.

3.1.4.1. Wardak Province (PRT) Activities

The Turkish-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Wardak province was established with the Council of Minister's decision on August 3, 2006, numbered 2006/8320 and launched its

³⁴⁷ Robert Beljan, "Afghanistan: Lessons Learned from an ISAF Perspective", *Small Wars Journal*, 2013, p.6-7

³⁴⁸ Michael J. Dziedzic, & Colonel Michael K. Seidl, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Military Relations with International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Afghanistan", *United States Institute of Peace*, social report, Washington, 2005, p.4

³⁴⁹ Center for Humanitarian Cooperation, "The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Afghanistan and its role in reconstruction", 2003, : <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/provincial-reconstruction-team-prt-afghanistan-and-its-role-reconstruction>, [Access date: 26.10.2021]

³⁵⁰ Doğan, Ibid, p.369

³⁵¹ Dziedzic, & K. Seidl, Ibid, 2005, p.4

activities on November 12, 2006, in the centre of Wardak province, Maidan Shahr City.³⁵² The PRT project in Wardak was one of the 27 PRTs operating in Afghanistan. The new PRT in Wardak province supported the Afghan authorities in their reconstruction efforts and contributed to its development and stability.³⁵³ Furthermore, in its area of operation, the Turkish PRT in the district Maidan Shahr was part of the Wardak province. In close cooperation with Afghan authorities, the Turkish PRT provided considerable resources to Wardak province. It is essential to stress that Türkiye's PRT strategy was seen as a successful coalition model in Afghanistan.³⁵⁴

Figure 4: Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT)



Source: <https://abcgsmalalibro.blogspot.com/2015/10/paises-de-medio-oriente.html>

The security was a component of the Wardak provincial reconstruction team, for which Türkiye assumes the responsibility, is coordinated jointly by Türkiye's armed forces, also, the civilian wing was cooperatively coordinated through Türkiye's Presidency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³⁵⁵ Furthermore, the Turkish PRT also promoted the province's security by training the Afghan national forces with experienced Turkish trainers in the Turkish-Afghan Police Training Center founded by Türkiye in 2008. The Wardak PRT was closed in 2014, though Türkiye has not left entirely. Yet, Türkiye converted the Wardak PRT facility into a Boarding school to help the youth and community for many years ahead.³⁵⁶ By the end of 2013, Turkish-led PRT in Wardak had accomplished about

³⁵² Ahto Lobjakas, "Wardak, Where Nothing is What it Seems," Eurasianet, 2009, <https://eurasianet.org/wardak-where-nothing-is-what-it-seems>, [Access date: 27.10.2021]

³⁵³ Embassy of Afghanistan-Tokyo, "Turkish PRT to complete 100 projects in Maidan Wardak", <http://www.afghanembassyjp.com/en/news/354>, [Access date: 26.10.2021]

³⁵⁴ Richard Weitz, "Turkey's Efforts to Support Afghanistan's Reconstruction," *the Turkey Analyst*, 3(3), 2010, <https://www.turkeyanalyst.org/publications/turkey-analyst-articles/item/199-turkeys-efforts-to-support-afghanistans-reconstruction.html>, [Access date: 26.10.2021]

³⁵⁵ Musa Kulaklıkaya, "Kalkınma Yardımında Dünyadaki Son Trendler ve TİKA," *Uluslararası Ekonomik Sorunlar*, (31), 2008, p.27-28

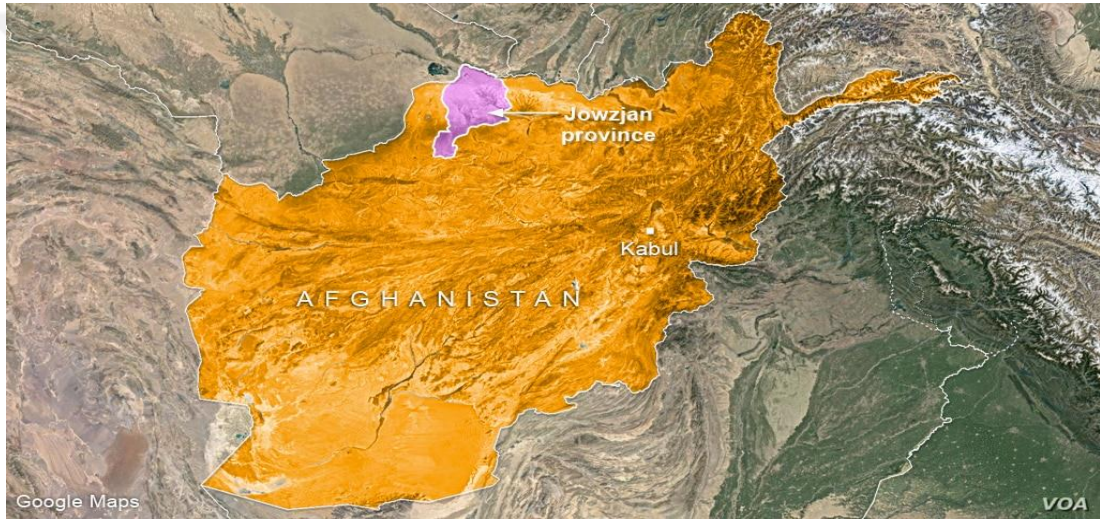
³⁵⁶ Selcuk Colakoglu, & Mehmet Yegin, "Future of Afghanistan and Turkey's Contribution", *International Strategic Research Organization (USAK)*, 2014, p.33

120 projects.³⁵⁷ It is noteworthy to stress that the projects mentioned above helped to terminate the cultivation of opium in those areas.

3.1.4.2. Jawzjan Province (PRT) Activities

Following the Wardak province, Turkish-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) launched the second PRT in the North, in Shibirghan-Jawzjan, where a significant percentage of the community formed of Uzbek and Turkmen and also Tajiks, and Pashtuns. Moreover, the city of Shibirghan is the administrative hub of the Jawzjan province, which is situated in northern Afghanistan.

Figure 5: Jawzjan Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT)



Source: <https://im-media.voltron.voanews.com/>

The second Turkish Provincial Reconstruction Team was formed in Jawzjan at the request of the Afghan government and as a result of intensive talks with the International Security Assistance Force and government figures. Therefore, on July 21, 2010, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, Ahmet Davutoğlu, attended the opening ceremony officially launching the PRT Jawzjan.³⁵⁸ In addition, at the opening ceremony of Jawzjan PRT, Foreign Minister Davutoglu highlighted that “securing Afghanistan is no different from serving Türkiye,” which showed the commitment of Türkiye’s endeavour for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.³⁵⁹ Later on, Foreign Minister Ahmad Davutoglu, with Afghanistan’s Health Minister Suraya Dalil, went to a Children’s hospital restored and reconstructed by the Turkish government.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁷ Jurat, Ibid, p.69

³⁵⁸ Bilgay Duman, “Afganistan Meclis Seçimleri ve Mezar-i Şerif Gözlemlerimiz”, **ORSAM**, 2010, <https://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/afganistan-meclis-secimleri-ve-mezar-i-serif-gozlemlerimiz/>, [Access date: 28.10.2021]

³⁵⁹ Karacasulu, Ibid, p.50

³⁶⁰ Beyaz Gazete, “Türkiye, Afganistan’daki ikinci İl İmar Ekibi’ni açtı”, **Beyaz Gazete**, 2010, <https://beyazgazete.com/haber/2010/7/22/turkiye-afganistan-daki-ikinci-il-imar-ekibi-ni-acti-244433.html>, [Access date: 29.10.2021]

The Jawzjan Turkish-led PRT is also in close ties with the Afghan government. The PRT Jawzjan has been operating in Jawzjan and Sar-e Pul provinces.³⁶¹ There were 6 PRTs under the Regional Command North, Jawzjan PRT was one of the 6 PRTs in the North. The Jawzjan PRT was built to be similar to Wardak PRT. Nevertheless, the Jawzjan PRT was administered by a Ministry of Foreign Affairs Civilian Head and Civilian Deputy Head. In addition, administrative personnel, experts, and advisors from the Turkish Ministries of Education, Health, Agriculture, and the Interior, also representatives from the TIKA, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, and several universities, as well as a Police Special Operations Team, are on the side to provide help and support³⁶², and still operates in the northern part of Afghanistan.

3.1.5. The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA)

Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) is one of the indispensable institutions of Türkiye concerning humanitarian diplomacy. TIKa is a state department under the president's leadership, and it is responsible for organizing and coordinating all activities related to Türkiye's official development assistance in terms of humanitarian assistance and development projects. The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) was officially established in 1992 to promote technical and cultural aid to the newly gained independent states in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans. Türkiye has been utilizing TIKa as the most effective soft power instrument.³⁶³ TIKa has 62 offices in 60 countries.³⁶⁴ Its operations are actively ongoing in more than 150 countries as well. Türkiye's humanitarian organizations have carried out numerous essential projects in diversified areas of education, agriculture, health, and energy, from Africa to Latin America, Asia to the Balkans, and Central Asia. Consequently, Türkiye thus far reached out to five continents.³⁶⁵ TIKa established its first program coordination office in Kabul in 2004, and activities were launched in January 2005. According to the Turkish Foreign Affairs website, from 2004 to 2017, Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided by Türkiye to Afghanistan reached \$1.07 billion.³⁶⁶ TIKa has three operational offices in Afghanistan, Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif, and Herat provinces. In close collaboration with the Turkish Embassy in Afghanistan, which has helped manage the growing volume of Turkish assistance pouring into this country.³⁶⁷ As of 2004, Türkiye's development aids have shown a regular increase. The chart below indicates Türkiye's assistance in Afghanistan over the past two decades.

³⁶¹ Colakoglu & Yegin., Ibid, p.33

³⁶² Çubuk, Ibid, p.64

³⁶³ TIKa, "Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency", **TIKA**, :https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/about_us-14650, [Access date: 29.10.2021]

³⁶⁴ TIKa, "2019 Annual Report" **Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency**, 2019, p.11

³⁶⁵ Usman Khan, & Ertan Efeğil, "Turkey's Humanitarian Actions in Afghanistan and Pakistan: A Policy Alternative for Conflict Resolutions", **Pakistan-Bi-annual Research Journal**, 56(56), 2020, p.269

³⁶⁶ Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışışları Bakanlığı, "Türkiye'nin Kalkınma İşbirliği: Genel Özellikleri ve En Az Gelişmiş ülkelere Yönelik Yaklaşımı", T.C. Dışışları Bakanlığı, (n.d): <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiyenin-kalkinma-isbirligi.tr.mfa>, [Access date: 01.11.2021]

³⁶⁷ Saban Kardes, "Turkey's Regional Approach in Afghanistan: A Civilian Power in Action", **Center for Strategic Research (SAM)**, (6), p.7-9

Figure 6: Turkish Official Development Assistance in Afghanistan Between 2004-2019



Source: TIKa and Turkish Official Development Assistance Between 2004-2014; 2015-2019 Reports. https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/news/what_tika_did_in_afghanistan_in_10_years-15837.

In the course of a decade (2005-2015), Türkiye's development aid agency TIKa had implemented over 800 projects in Afghanistan, and a majority of these projects were in education and health sectors. For instance, through TIKa funding, the Turkish government has built several schools, hospitals, and nursing and midwifery education centres for Afghan women. As well as every year, Türkiye provides 500 scholarship opportunities to Afghan students desiring to continue their studies in Türkiye at the under-graduate, graduate and post-graduate levels, and it is the only nation, apart from India, that accepts a substantial number of Afghan students. In addition, TIKa has renewed many mosques and tomb sites. As a result, the Afghan people, who are proud of their culture and religion, highly embraced those investments.³⁶⁸ Based on TIKa data, Türkiye has executed over 1,056 projects from 2004 to 2018 as a whole.³⁶⁹ TIKa has become well-known across the country and respected. It is vital to highlight Turkish personnel and staff living with the population showing that they are among them, and as a consequence of activities in Afghanistan, Türkiye generated a positive image not only from the Afghan public but also from the Kabul government and the Taliban. Therefore, TIKa's activities in Afghanistan are shown broadly through the Afghan media.

Türkiye's contribution to the education and health sectors in Afghanistan is unparalleled to other projects. The health care centres, hospitals, and schools built by Turkish agencies ubiquitous and deliver good quality service to the public in Afghanistan. To give an example, in my province,

³⁶⁸ Cem Sey, & Günter Seufert, "Turkey in Afghanistan: a successful stakeholder, but a difficult partner", **Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)**, 2016, p.3

³⁶⁹ TIKa "TIKa Opened the Mevlana Research Center in Afghanistan, **Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency**, 2018, https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/news/tika_opened_the_mevlana_research_center_in_afghanistan, [Access date: 01.11.2021]

Faryab, the “Afghan-Turk Hospital” was built by Turkish agencies. It provides high-quality service to the public. The budget that has been spent on the education and health sectors is noticeable on the ground.

Türkiye’s fundamental aim was not only to be seen as a reliable, valuable friend but also as a rising power by the Afghan’s other regional and international actors. To achieve this, Türkiye has increased humanitarian assistance since the AKP came to power. These humanitarian organizations and activities are critical pillars of Türkiye’s foreign policy, designed to enhance the country’s international profile through humanitarian work. Although, Türkiye has been concurrently struggling and improving. Türkiye has become more visible in humanitarian assistance in world politics. The study indicates that Turkish state institutions and NGOs have contributed immensely. It must be stressed that Turkish development projects have improved social institutions sectors, which are dramatically welcomed by Afghans.

3.1.6. Türkiye’s Socio-Economic Assistance in Afghanistan

Because of the dysfunction of Afghanistan’s central government institutions, the country’s economy collapsed. Thus, economy is crucial to a country’s progress. To achieve this objective, Türkiye has conducted several development projects and signed financial agreements.

Türkiye, as a rising power, has received invaluable attention in recent years. Thanks to Türkiye’s economic revival, Türkiye can possess the required principles to play a crucial role in international affairs and is eager to do so.³⁷⁰ Türkiye is a regional power that provides around \$2 billion in assistance and helps worldwide peace and stability.³⁷¹ The Socio-Economic relations between Türkiye and Afghanistan have increased dramatically since 2001. As can be seen from the table below, which provides signed agreements between Afghanistan and Türkiye.

Table 4: Socio-Economic Relations between Türkiye-Afghanistan

Socio-Economic Relation Between Türkiye-Afghanistan	
Name	Year
Transport Agreement	1969
Trade Agreement	1975
Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement	1976

³⁷⁰ Aleksandra Jarosiewicz, “Turkey’s economy: a story of success with an uncertain future”, **Center for Eastern Studies**, (120), 2013, p.1

³⁷¹ Ihsan Bal. “Why is Turkey in Afghanistan? Oped”, **Eurasia Review**, 2012, <https://www.eurasiareview.com/03052012-why-is-turkey-in-afghanistan-oped/>, [Access date: 05.11.2021]

Table 4: Socio-Economic Relation Between Türkiye-Afghanistan

Trade and Economic cooperation Agreement	2004
Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments	2004
Customs Cooperation and Mutual Assistance Agreement	2005
International Road Transport Agreement	2005
The Turkish-Afghan Joint Economic Commission	2005

Source: TOBB, <https://www.tobb.org.tr/Sayfalar/Eng/AnaSayfa.php>

Türkiye has helped Afghanistan through various projects and programs, as discussed above. Türkiye's assistance to Afghanistan constituted of military assistance, government assistance, and private sector development activities. For instance, Turkish aid was flowing into Afghanistan, and Turkish entrepreneurs had finished projects between 2002 and 2010 worth over \$2 billion. Türkiye's private companies also invested about \$200 million in specific fields in Afghanistan.³⁷² Furthermore, Türkiye's assistance from 2004 to 2019 was \$1.380 billion to Afghanistan. Türkiye was involved in several development projects and programs in Afghanistan. Additionally, Türkiye was one of the largest investors, with \$200 million investments. The volume of trade between the two countries increased steadily.

Additionally, 63 Turkish firms invested \$1.6 billion in the Afghan private sector through 157 projects. With the establishment of a mixed economy, a corporate foundation was created to enhance economic development between both countries.³⁷³ Türkiye took the role of encouraging entrepreneurs and investors to invest in Afghanistan through government and private institutions, conducting projects that might enhance the life of the Afghan people in a better way. Afghanistan has received a significant degree of financial assistance from Türkiye and other countries in the region and far. In the end, Turkish aid in Afghanistan can easily be seen in the health and education sectors. Türkiye's economic commitment has improved the Afghan government's economy and contributed to the annual revenue budget. It is a clear image of a rising power role.

3.2. Internal Reflections on Türkiye

3.2.1. The Perception of Afghan Public on NATO Members and Türkiye

Afghanistan's geostrategic position draws the attention of world superpowers. In retrospect, the country has become a battleground for superpowers at times in history, such as the British Empire,

³⁷² Salih Doğan, "Turkey's foreign policy in Afghanistan in the post-9/11 era: a non-military approach", **The University for Foreigners of Perugia**, 2015, p.55

³⁷³ Cubuk, Ibid, p.73

Soviet Russia, and the United States. For this reason, Afghanistan has been at war for long years.³⁷⁴ However, the 9/11 attacks were a turning point for the west and the east and substantially altered the security dynamics of the world and Afghanistan. Following that incident, the Bush administration declared that an act of war on United States soil would not be without consequences. He also highlighted that they had found the perpetrator of 9/11, the mastermind behind the attacks, Osama Bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda.³⁷⁵ Thus, the United States, England, and NATO members had launched “Operation Enduring Freedom” and invaded Afghanistan to oust and destroy the Taliban regime from power in 2001.³⁷⁶ Later that year, the international community negotiated Afghanistan’s interim government and rebuilding at the Bonn conference in Germany, organized under the auspicious of the United States. ISAF was created at the Bonn conference in December 2001.³⁷⁷ Before NATO assumed command of ISAF, the ISAF leadership changed the command every six months based on voluntarily assumed leadership. England commanded the first round of ISAF, and following that, Türkiye and Germany took leadership of ISAF in Afghanistan³⁷⁸ eventually, the ISAF operation was ended in 2014.

Nevertheless, in late 2001, the United States and NATO members’ military strikes overthrew the Taliban government in Afghanistan.³⁷⁹ Thereby, the United States and NATO members were overwhelmingly warm welcomed by the Afghan people. A significant number of Afghans demanded foreign troops to be stationed in their cities and regions. Also, the nation’s delegates offered their highest appreciation in June 2001. Following that intervention, the country’s economy revived, and the value of the national currency increased. In addition, during the Emergency Loya Jirga, Kabul’s inhabitants had seen the United States air forces accurately spotting the Taliban and Al-Qaeda positions. Onwards, the United States air forces’ wrongdoings resulted from the death of Afghan civilians. These wrongdoings shifted the Afghan’s attitude toward the west, and in contrast, Afghans pushed their support away from westerners in the country. So that was the last straw for the patience of the Afghan people.

Therefore, similar rising incidents and civilian deaths have rapidly changed the Afghan people’s perception of the United States and its allies. Because of the popularity of hatred among the nation against the foreign invaders in country. The perception of the Afghan population towards NATO and the United States has gradually transformed. Particularly as of 2003/4, western troops

³⁷⁴ Harsh Vinay. Pant, “New Fault Lines Emerge in South Asia Around Afghanistan”, **the Diplomat**, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/02/new-fault-lines-emerge-in-south-asia-around-afghanistan/>, [Access date:06.11.2021]

³⁷⁵ Dorani, Ibid, p.15-20

³⁷⁶ Tess Bonn, “Taliban Takeover: How Did We Get Here?”, KCM, 2021, <https://katiecouric.com/news/politics-and-policy/timeline-of-american-involvement-in-afghanistan/>, [Access date: 07.11.2021]

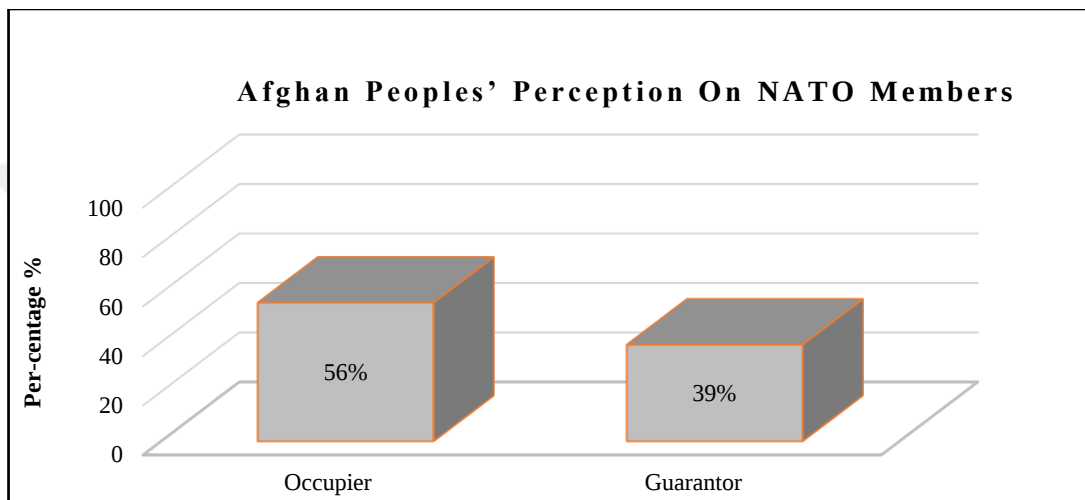
³⁷⁷ Barnett R. Rubin, “Peace Building and State-Building in Afghanistan: Constructing Sovereignty for Whose Security?” **Third World Quarterly**, 27(1), 2006, p.177-179

³⁷⁸ Marius Valeriu Păunescu, “International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan: Successful but not in Counterinsurgency”, **“Carol I” National Defence University**, 2, 2015, Bucharest, p.206

³⁷⁹ Robert McMahon, “U.S. Military Intervention in Afghanistan”, **Bill of Right Institution**, 2001, <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/essays/us-military-intervention-in-afghanistan/>, [Access date: 09.11.2021]

became the main target of the Taliban.³⁸⁰ It's crucial mentioning that, according to the survey carried out by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the process through the interviews and polling's outcome indicated that the majority, 56 per cent of the local Afghan people, see the International Security Forces as an occupier. On the contrary, 39 per cent of people who participated in the survey believe that ISAF is a guarantor of the country's security. More than 5000 people participated in interviews and the poll from five big cities.³⁸¹ Since 2001, the United States and its NATO allies could not “win the hearts and minds” of the Afghan community³⁸² by far.

Figure 7: Afghan Peoples' Perception on NATO Members



Source: the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, <https://www.leopoldina.org/en/about-us/cooperations/konrad-adenauer-foundation/>

However, Türkiye, the only member of NATO, a majority Muslim country, has won the hearts and minds of Afghan nations. The below chart indicates the percentage of people who participated in interviews.

However, the Republic of Türkiye and Afghanistan have a long history and trusted friendship going back to the era of Amanullah Khan and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Due to their close affinity with Afghan cultures, linguistics, religious and history, Türkiye is not seen as an occupier or invader by any Afghans or communities.

It is essential to mention that Türkiye has never taken a combative role in operations in Afghanistan over the past two decades. But they have provided military assistance to ISAF and

³⁸⁰ Kate clarak, “How the Guests Became an Enemy: Afghan Attitudes towards Westerners Since 2001”, **Middle East Institute**, 2012, : <https://www.mei.edu/publications/how-guests-became-enemy-afghan-attitudes-towards-westerners-2001>, Access date: 09.11.2021

³⁸¹ Spiegel International, “More than Half of Afghans See NATO as Occupiers”, Spiegel International, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/survey-in-a-war-zone-more-than-half-of-afghans-see-nato-as-occupiers-a-792436.html>, Access date: 09.11.2021

³⁸² Andrew Wilder, “Losing Hearts and Minds in Afghanistan”, **Middle East Institute**, 2012, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/losing-hearts-and-minds-afghanistan>, Access date: 10.11.2021

trained the Afghan army.³⁸³ Even though Türkiye does not have a direct territorial border with Afghanistan, Türkiye assumes that Afghanistan is a unique case and requires close attention and help to stand on its feet again. Thus, Türkiye is considered one of the regional powers committed to playing a crucial role in world politics.³⁸⁴ Türkiye has contributed significantly to Afghanistan over the past 20 years in terms of education, infrastructure, social institutions and the health sectors. Afghan people consider Türkiye a great ally, trustful and a reliable partner. The following section will intensely analyse the perception of Afghan communities towards Türkiye and its presence in Afghanistan.

3.2.1. Domestic Reflections on Türkiye

Although the relationship between Afghanistan and Türkiye dates back to the Ottoman Empire days, the Turkish involvement in Afghanistan after the 9/11 events and the humanitarian crisis became a vital for the revival of increased and still thriving Turkish and Afghan relations. The Turkish involvement in Afghanistan in 2001 has tremendously developed the momentum of Türkiye and Afghanistan relations. However, the key reasons behind Türkiye's recent engagement with Afghanistan is due to its geostrategic location.

Türkiye has deep cultural attachments to Afghan people specifically, Uzbeks and Turkmen. They overwhelmingly populate northern Afghanistan, and the region is called "south Turkistan," and Turkish culture has spread in every community in Afghanistan.³⁸⁵ Türkiye has a special place in Afghanistan people's hearts because of them being the only Muslim majority country in NATO. Therefore, for this reason, Türkiye is the only NATO member state that has gained trust and support of the Afghan public.

Given that Türkiye and Afghanistan share a mutual religion, Türkiye has never treated Afghanistan unequally throughout history. Moreover, in Afghanistan, it is highlighted that "no Afghan was ever killed by a Turkish bullet" also "no Afghan trained by Turks has ever betrayed his country." Moreover, Türkiye has been assisting Afghanistan for years.³⁸⁶ In line with that, the governor of the Wardak province, Halim Fedai, said that "The Turkish programs are very well received and readily accepted by Afghans because they work within Afghan culture. They are sensitive to Afghan values. We have very good, strong, historical relationships with Türkiye." To be more precise, Türkiye understands the hearts and minds of local people and respects them.³⁸⁷ Afghan

³⁸³ Andrei Isaev, "Turkish military in Afghanistan: Mission hardly possible", **Modern Diplomacy**, 2021, <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/07/04/turkish-military-in-afghanistan-mission-hardly-possible/>, [Access date: 10.11.2021]

³⁸⁴ Kardeş, Ibid, p. 4-5

³⁸⁵ Burhanettin Şenli, "Turkish Culture Traces in Afghanistan", **5th International Conference "Ohrid- Vodici 2017"**, 2017, p.75-76

³⁸⁶ Aydemir Erman, "How Turkey's Soft Power Can Aid NATO in Afghanistan", **New Perspective Quarterly**, 2010, p.39

³⁸⁷ Erman, Ibid, p.40-41

Ambassador in Ankara reflected his view towards Turkish presence in Afghanistan, Amanullah Jayhoon, had pointed out that “Afghan people love Turkish soldiers in Afghanistan like their sons” he also stressed that “They are helping Afghan people as much as they can.” Also, Turkish soldiers are not afraid of interacting and getting close to Afghan people.³⁸⁸ It is worth mentioning that Kabul provincial Governor Dr Zabihullah Mojaddidy gave an interview to a NATO Channel in 2012, emphasizing that, “Contrary to some other international forces here, the Turks don’t march through our streets with their guns and their caravans, ready to fire. When you see other forces with their hands on their triggers, people are very intimidated. Afghans do not see the Turkish forces as foreign forces here; they somehow view them as their own.”³⁸⁹ Similar to the interview mentioned above, Saleha Fareed, an Afghan Orphanage manager, had an interview with NATO Channel, emphasized that “Why are the Turks happy with the Afghans and Afghans happy with the Turks? Everyone knows it is because we are all Muslims, and much of our culture and traditions are similar.”³⁹⁰ It reflects why Türkiye conquered Afghans’ minds and hearts. Turkish soldiers had been seen as different from other countries,³⁹¹ and Afghans embraced Türkiye’s presence in Afghanistan contrary to western or NATO member countries. Worthwhile to point out that Afghan people considers Turkish soldier as their protector and guardian against the foreign invaders and the Taliban in their country.

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to mention that Afghanistan will be a new initiative for the Turkish Republic. Türkiye’s presence in Afghanistan will positively affect its relations with countries in the area. On the other hand, Türkiye’s presence in Afghanistan may strengthen by engaging countries in various fields from economy to security. Also, it boosts its position in NATO and the international arena. As a result, it would strengthen ties with Turkic countries in the region and would cooperate with those countries. Through military, development, and diplomatic cooperation,³⁹² Türkiye has sought to widen its influence in war-torn countries. It should not be neglected that Türkiye is a country with a special place in the hearts of the Afghan people. The study discusses what distinguishes Türkiye from other states because it deploys experts, knowledge, economists, trainers, and health professionals. The projects implemented by Turkish agencies are visible and tangible compared to the other states engaged in the Afghanistan peacebuilding process. Turkish projects and activities are for long-term development projects that comprise education, social institutions, reconstruction and health sectors improvement, which will positively impact after completing projects and programmes. The below table overtly indicates that why Türkiye’s model distinguishes

³⁸⁸ Satuk Bugra Kutlugun, “Afghan envoy to Turkey: Turkish soldiers are loved in Afghanistan”, Anadolu Agency, 2015, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/afghan-envoy-to-turkey-turkish-soldiers-are-loved-in-afghanistan/71478>, [Access date: 11.11.2021]

³⁸⁹ Kaya, Ibid, p.29

³⁹⁰ NATO-Turkish Channel, “Türkiye Mutabakatini Yeniler”, Youtube (Online), 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hRh1X4YGpw>, [Access date: 11.11.2021]

³⁹¹ Menekşe Tokyay, “Turkey to continue winning Afghan hearts and minds”, the Rahnuma Daily, 2017, <https://www.therahnuma.com/turkey-to-continue-winning-afghan-hearts-and-minds/>, [Access date: 12.11.2021]

³⁹² URL, “Afghanistan: The Super Power Graveyard”, Intell 4 Strategy News, 2021, <https://www.intell4.com/why-is-kabul-airport-important-why-is-turkey-in-afghanistan-haber-190482>, [Access date: 12.11.2021]

it from Western countries. That is a leading and a vital characteristic that makes Türkiye unique and successful.

Table 5: What Makes Türkiye Unique from the Western States

What Makes Türkiye Unique from the Western States		
Shared Values	Türkiye	U.S.A and NATO
Religion	Yes	No
History	Yes	No
Respect Values	Yes	Neither Yes, Nor No
Having Hegemonic Motives	No	Yes
Humanitarian Aid	Yes	Yes
Military Operation	No	Yes
Ethnicity	Yes	No

Compiled by the author

3.3. Regional Actors' Reflection on Türkiye

3.3.1. International and Regional Actors' Reflections on Türkiye

Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan reflects both their short-term and long-term relations and goes back to the beginning of the 20th century.³⁹³ The transformation of Turkish foreign policy reflects Türkiye's rising power, and Turkish foreign policy activity has surged in the past two decades. Turkish foreign policy has changed from a monolithic to a multifaceted orientation policy since the end of the Cold War. This part delves into international communities' perception of Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan. Therefore, this section of the thesis mainly focuses on regional actors and great powers' reflections on Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan. As of 2001, following the overthrow of the Taliban, Türkiye has played a prominent role in Afghanistan and conquered the hearts and minds of Afghan society. In addition, Türkiye's forces have taken part only in the peacebuilding process and training of the Afghan army. Even though, western countries were welcomed at the beginning of 2001, people's perception of Western and NATO members has dramatically altered due to their wrongdoings. Apart from Türkiye, the people of Afghanistan have started to see other NATO members as occupiers or invaders.

Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan demonstrates the country's capacity to be a regional power.³⁹⁴ Therefore, neither the international community nor the United States denies that Türkiye

³⁹³ Doğacan Başaran, "100. Yılında Türkiye-Afganistan İlişkileri", **Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies**, 2021, <https://www.ankasam.org/100-yilinda-turkiye-afganistan-iliskileri/>, [Access date: 13.11.2021].

³⁹⁴ Bal, Ibid.

can play a prominent role in Afghanistan in the following years.³⁹⁵ For instance, many of the NATO top generals in Afghanistan acknowledge Türkiye as a successful model. One of them, General Stanley McChrystal, praised Türkiye's role in Afghanistan. He added, "Turkish forces are exactly where I think they should be. I think American forces and all forces in the coalition have learned a lot by watching them, emulating the way they operate in this environment". The Turkish flag has already become a "badge of honour." Turkish contingents reciprocally inoculated trust and respect for one another.³⁹⁶ An essential factor is that the Turkish model is accepted even by western top generals.

On the contrary, China and India have sought to increase their influence in Afghanistan. As a regional power, India has wholeheartedly welcomed Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan. In contrast, China, another rising power in the region, is not on the same page as India. One of the reasons is Uyghurs' presence in Afghanistan and Türkiye's cordial relations and ethnic affinity with Uyghurs. China fears the spread of extremist Uyghurs in the region. At the same time, Türkiye hosts a significant number of Uyghurs. Thereby, China believes this may pose a threat to Xinjiang in the future.³⁹⁷ In addition, the presence of the Turks in Afghanistan put Russia in a dilemma. While Russia does not want the United States' presence in Afghanistan, it would not wish to see Türkiye's rise in the region with the fear that Türkiye would limit Russia's influence in the region,³⁹⁸ and the fact that the presence of Türkiye in Afghanistan would boost its ties with regional countries.

When it comes to Pakistan, it has not raised any concerns over the presence of Türkiye in Afghanistan, but Pakistan has not shown its stance plainly and its reluctance toward Türkiye's presence in the country. Because Pakistan has its unique calculations, in other words, Iran and Saudi Arabia are two rivals for Türkiye in the region, and they are an aversion condition³⁹⁹ to Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan. Despite Türkiye and Pakistan having long-standing military, economic, and religious relations, Pakistan would perceive Türkiye's presence and involvement in Afghanistan as a significant threat to its strategic interests in Afghanistan and the region. Therefore, the Turkish Analyst Galip Dalay argues that "Pakistan insisted on not using its influence on the Taliban and didn't play the role Türkiye expected. And that, inevitably, created disappointment in Türkiye"⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁵ Daniel Heinrich, "Afghanistan: Turkey moves into the spotlight", **Deutsche Welle**, 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/afghanistan-turkey-moves-into-the-spotlight/a-59055709>, [Access date: 14.11.2021]

³⁹⁶ Turkish Coalition of America, "Top Commanders in Afghanistan: Turkish Presence is a Model", Turkish Coalition of America, 2010,; <https://www.tc-america.org/issues-information/tca-issue-papers/turkish-presence-is-a-model-251.htm>, [Access date: 13.11.2021]

³⁹⁷ URL, "Turkey in Afghanistan; Mutual respect or expansionism? 2", **ISWNews**, 2021, <https://english.iswnews.com/20024/turkey-in-afghanistan-mutual-respect-or-expansionism-2/>, [Access date: 15.11.2021].

³⁹⁸ Memri, "Russia Assesses Turkey's Ambitions and Prospects in Afghanistan", **Memri**, 2021, https://www.memri.org/reports/russia-assesses-turkeys-ambitions-and-prospects-afghanistan#_ednref11, [Access date: 15.11.2021]

³⁹⁹ URL, "Turkey's Strategic Targets in Afghanistan", **Strategic Council on Foreign Relations**, 2021, <https://www.scfr.ir/en/politics/136082/turkeys-strategic-targets-in-afghanistan/>, [Access date: 16.11.2021]

⁴⁰⁰ URL, "Turkey and Pakistan vying for influence in Afghanistan after Taliban's takeover", **Middle East Correspondent**, 2021, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-pakistan-influence-afghanistan-taliban-takeover>, [Access date: 18.12.2021].

because it is evident that Pakistan does not want Türkiye to have a strong foothold in the region as a rising power.

Türkiye and Iran's rivalry has already heightened in the Middle East. In Iraq, the tensions between Türkiye and Iran are already apparent, the tension between Ankara and Tehran increased over Nagorno-Karabakh,⁴⁰¹ and both states are putting effort to have more influence on the regional issues. For instance, Türkiye has widened and deepened its influence in Libya, Somalia, Syria, Nagorno-Karabakh, and in recent years in Afghanistan. Therefore, if Türkiye attains a strong position in Afghanistan, it will increase its dominance in South Asia and the region, and for this fear, none of the regional powers wants this to happen. Last but not least, as long as Afghanistan is the case, Iran's hostility to Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan will continue due to their varying interests in the region.

3.3.2. Critiques of Türkiye's Involvement in Afghanistan

Over the past two decades, Türkiye's foreign policy has undergone a significant transformation. Thereby, after 2011, Türkiye has enjoyed unprecedented economic progress which has led them to take a more constructive role in international issues across the region and far beyond. Türkiye's comprehensive approach to peacebuilding in different countries has attracted the attention of many scholars. Although, the Turkish approach is covering all aspects necessary to the recovery of a state in Turmoil and crisis, but its approach has its own limitations.

Türkiye's burgeoning and evolving engagement with Afghanistan has been a topic of discussion for many scholars in the past few years. Noting that Türkiye has its strategic interests in Afghanistan, it is also worth mentioning that its involvement has received both praise and criticism from analysts and policy practitioners. The Afghanistan public has welcomed the Turkish presence and their projects referring to their close cultural linkages and the motives behind the Turkish involvement in their country. From the perspective of scholars, it is worth emphasizing that Wasuge (2016) argues that Ankara's involvement in the Middle East, Somalia, Libya, and Afghanistan raised criticisms towards Ankara in recent years. Even though, Turkish projects implemented in Afghanistan and other countries like Somalia and others are responding to the needs of the public but do not follow monitored procedures. On the contrary, it is imperative to mention that Türkiye's approach have received considerable praise from international actors, and analysts but did not escape from criticism. Turkish initiatives and projects in fragile states under rehabilitation have been criticized for lacking accountability and transparency.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Mk Bhadrakumar, "US, Turkey see win-win partnership in Afghanistan and beyond", Asia Time, 2021, <https://asiatimes.com/2021/04/us-turkey-see-win-win-partnership-in-afghanistan-and-beyond/>, [Access date: 16.11.2021].

⁴⁰² Mahad Wasuge, "Turkey's assistance model in Somalia achieving much with little", **the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies**, 2016, p.12

Inevitably, Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan poses a huge challenge for Ankara and at the same time is a good chance for Türkiye to showcase itself as an important actor in the region. The aftermath of the US withdrawal has created havoc and uncertainty in Afghanistan. On the other hand, Türkiye was supposed to remain in Afghanistan and administer the day-to-day operations of the Kabul International Airport. Because the Taliban not accepting to show their consent for Türkiye's presence in the country has led this initiative to disappear. This has come through the pressure and discomfort shown by the key regional actors such as China, Russia, Pakistan, and other regional actors which support the Taliban regime in Afghanistan opposed Türkiye's military presence in the country. As a result of this, Türkiye's military presence in Afghanistan has come to an end due to the fact that Türkiye's presence in the country could mean NATO presence itself. A prime example of the regional actors' perception on Türkiye to remain in Afghanistan post-the United States withdrawal is that China regards it as a threat to its security and strategic interests.⁴⁰³

Domestic actors in Türkiye, specifically, the political parties, have raised concerns on Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan. Noting that the main ruling party in Türkiye, AKP, has been considering Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan as a key factor in its pursuit to become an influential actor in central Asia. While the opposition party's leaders disagree with this policy and how the Turkish government is approaching and engaging the Afghanistan issue. In this respect, the Turkish government's Afghanistan policy was strategically criticised by the Republican People's Party (CHP), even though it has strong inducements to NATO and the United States. In this sense, CHP's spokesperson, Faik Öztrak, criticised the fact that, Türkiye has not acted quickly to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, while Ankara was insisting its decision to maintain its force in the country. He also puts it this way, "Our Turkish soldiers are not a shield to be put in front of the Taliban just because it makes possible a deal with Biden and America. Don't do this. Otherwise, Erdogan and his AK Party will be responsible for all damages that are suffered by our soldiers."⁴⁰⁴ A similar comment was made by the party chairman, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, saying, "We won't sacrifice our soldiers in places where others run away without looking back." While "Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan is legitimate, friendly and peaceful," the Nationalist Movement Party chairman, Devlet Bahçeli, in a written statement, pointed out that, "It is unthinkable that our military elements will leave Afghanistan." also criticised the opposition leader for requesting a pull-out of Turkish forces from Afghanistan.⁴⁰⁵ Due to its non-combative role in the country, Türkiye proportionately suffered less than other NATO members. In light of that, opposition party leader, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, raised questions about Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan and even required a retreat of Turkish troops from

⁴⁰³ Turkmen Terzi, "Türkiye's role in Afghanistan after the US troops' withdrawal and Ankara's Greater Central Asian Strategy", 2021, <https://afrasid.org/index.php/news-blog/56-Türkiye-s-role-in-afghanistan-after-the-us-troops-withdrawal-and-ankara-s-greater-central-asian-strategy>, {Access date:27.06.2022}

⁴⁰⁴ Barış Demir, "Taliban advance in Afghanistan, refugee crisis stagger Turkish ruling elite", 2021, <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2021/07/30/afgh-j30.html>, {Access date: 26.06.2022}

⁴⁰⁵ Bianet, "Government, opposition differ on whether Türkiye should keep troops in Afghanistan", 2021, {Access date: 26.06.2022}

Afghanistan.⁴⁰⁶ Overall, as previously discussed, regional actors such as China, Russia, Iran, and Pakistan are concerned about Türkiye's or other powers' presence in Afghanistan. It seems that Türkiye's relations with Asian great powers do not change the negative perception that these states sustain on Türkiye's presence in the region.

Finally, the Turkish involvement in Afghanistan has attracted the attention of the regional actors who are not comfortable with Türkiye's presence in the region. On the other hand, Turkish projects in Afghanistan has received praise from the local actors and international actors. While the key distinction that makes the Turkish projects tangible is that they respond to the public needs and address key areas including social, economic and security aspects. Although, much of the consideration of the Turkish projects focus on humanitarian and physical buildings, critics say that Turkish projects lack proper accountability and monitoring mechanisms which makes it complicated in nature when compared to other projects implemented by traditional donors. Although, Türkiye considers its projects vital for the recovery of the state and much emphasis is put on the speed and on-time delivery of their projects which its policy makers deem necessary to reach the affected areas easily and quickly. Türkiye's regional power dominance aspirations may have a chance to rise as a result of shared language, culture, and religion in Central Asia.

⁴⁰⁶ Kaya, Ibid., p. 28

CONCLUSION

The world has experienced significant changes after the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which led to the end of the bipolar system and the 9/11 attacks, which shifted world politics and security globally. It marked the end of an era and the dawn of a new one. After the end of the Cold War, world politics welcomed the emergence of new states and the collapse of others which plunged into violence and chaos. These post-Cold War events have exponentially affected the global system. Afghanistan's geopolitical status has attracted the attention of great powers throughout history. In light of this, Afghanistan has grappled with destructive and vicious wars and conflicts that lasted for decades. Afterwards, the dissolution of Soviet Russia and the withdrawal of their soldiers from Afghanistan shifted security and stability in the region and Afghanistan. Also, the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan eventually led to civil war between the warlords and Mujahedin, which gave the Taliban a chance to emerge and control the country.

International community-sponsored efforts to rebuild Afghanistan's state institutions in different capacities have been practised multiple times. However, these efforts did not bring the warring parties in Afghanistan to the table to compromise and establish a government. The international community made many avoidable errors in its state-building attempts. Consequently, this has led the country to get into civil war, which resulted in destruction and humanitarian crisis.

Most of the world was shocked by the unexpected 9/11 attacks on United States soil. In the wake of the attack, Al-Qaida was identified as a perpetrator of the strikes, while the Taliban hosted Al-Qaida leaders in Afghanistan. The 9/11 attack was more intimidating and frightening than the Pearl Harbor attack in a number of ways, and innocent people, individuals, and children had lost their lives. Immediately after the attack, the Bush administration declared "war on terror" and attacked the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001. For the first time, the US and its allies NATO invoked Article 5 in its history since its foundation, which provides mutual military assistance if any member states were attacked.

Although Türkiye, since its early republic days, always had amicable relations with Afghanistan, it has later, within the framework of NATO, engaged in Afghanistan after 9/11. Türkiye has contributed significantly to Afghanistan's peacebuilding, and also after ISAF was established, Türkiye supported and dispatched Turkish forces to Kabul. It is essential to note that Türkiye plays a non-combative role in Afghanistan. Therefore, Türkiye is the only country that assumed command

of ISAF twice in Kabul. It is worthwhile to emphasize that Turkish flag became a badge of honour among allies in Afghanistan.

In this investigation, the dissertation aimed to assess the role of Türkiye's peacebuilding operation in Afghanistan and how it has influenced Türkiye to be a rising power. The subsequent aim of this study was to examine how Türkiye's involvement shifted the perception of local and regional actors in Afghanistan. The study seeks to answer the following questions: What is the impact of Türkiye's involvement as a rising power in Afghanistan peacebuilding process, and how has Türkiye's role in peacebuilding in Afghanistan formed the perception within Afghanistan and the regional actors. To find answers to the above questions, the study is designed to use qualitative data analysis, and the study has noted the noble contributions of the most notable regional actors in the region during the Afghanistan peacebuilding process since 2001. The study has, in particular, focused on Pakistan, Iran, China, and India as the key regional actors. Furthermore, it can be observed that there is a power competition among regional powers in Afghanistan. However, this means that these regional actors feel uncomfortable with the presence of Türkiye in the region. Pakistan, which is a close friend of Türkiye, does not feel comfortable with Türkiye's presence in the country, because it contradicts Pakistan's geostrategic interests and rising role in Afghanistan and South Asia in general. It is not only Pakistan, which is opposed to Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan, but other regional powers such as China, Iran and even Russia are also opposed. This study validates the argument that not all nations have long-term friendships until their interests collide. In the case of Iran, tensions between Türkiye and Iran have already risen in the Middle East, and their interests collide in every way, as a result, Iran opposes Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan as well. Consequently, Afghanistan has emerged as a new playground for geostrategic competition among regional powers. Türkiye positions itself as a rising regional power competing for influence with other regional and emerging countries like India, Pakistan, and Russia as well as rising powers like China. In this thesis, the regional actors' activities and projects have been analysed.

Since 2001, Türkiye has been playing a significant role in a number of ways in the Afghanistan peacebuilding process. The study has found that with time, Türkiye has increased its engagement with Afghanistan, particularly moving towards a more robust economic, health, education, construction, humanitarian, and development aid. In terms of investments and bilateral trade, Afghanistan and Türkiye have seen a substantial increase in recent years.

Türkiye's constructive engagement with Afghanistan will help the war-torn nation in its journey towards reconstruction and rehabilitation and would also play a role in security at a regional level. Stability in Afghanistan means security in the region, and stability in the area means security in Türkiye. The study argues that Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan must be considered a transformation in Turkish foreign policy because Turkish foreign policy has undergone a tremendous shift under the AKP administration since 2002.

After surviving the 2007-2008 global economic crises, Türkiye has come out firmly supporting its reimagined political and economic vision. The study proposes that Türkiye is more confident and viable to become a regional power in global affairs. Türkiye's recent success on the global stage was bolstered by an aggressive foreign policy under the leadership of President Erdogan. The study argues that robust foreign policy and economic development played a significant role in Türkiye's rising global image, which has given it the chance to impose itself more firmly in the international arena.

Over the past decade, Türkiye, as a rising power, has played a dynamic role in different corners of the world. Thanks to its swift economic growth and foreign policy, Türkiye became more visible in the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, Africa, Europe, Caucasus, and, more broadly, the international arena. The study analysis shows that Türkiye has utilised humanitarian diplomacy and development assistance to raise its image on the global stage.

As a rising power in recent years, Türkiye has primarily been active in war-torn states like Afghanistan and Somalia through humanitarian and development assistance. Due to the fact that Türkiye's rapid economic growth, material capacity, and transformed foreign policy, the study argues that Türkiye turned into a rising power country and widened its activities on the global stage. Türkiye became one of the most generous countries globally with respect to humanitarian aid and development assistance. Its humanitarian and development assistance increased dramatically over the past two decades because humanitarian aid is the Turkish government's fundamental and most wielding soft power tool. Hence, Afghanistan became one of Türkiye's most official development aid (ODA) recipient states. Based on the study findings, Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy model is bilateral rather than multilateral, and it has been evaluated as beneficial at national and international levels. Although Türkiye has been actively engaging in Afghanistan since 2001, the key distinction is that Türkiye provides its support through TİKA, PRT, trade, political support, education, and military training of Afghanistan's National Army. Since its engagement, Türkiye has completed invaluable development projects in Afghanistan.

The study contends that Türkiye is on the rise. Although there are significant criticisms and disagreements on the speed and scope of this change, the majority of emphasis has focused on whether Türkiye's rising power poses a threat to regional actors. Türkiye's geopolitical location, its more robust growing economy, and its increasing military budget prove that Türkiye could achieve in becoming an influential actor in the region and the global stage as a whole.

Like other rising powers, the study revealed that Türkiye has emerged as a peacekeeping and peacebuilding actor on the international scene. However, this increasing interest in international

peace is related to its ambitions to rise as a rising power. On the other hand, in its foreign policy, Türkiye's utilisation of soft power instruments has created a forum for Ankara to express its views on critical global problems and gain worldwide recognition.

Consider that Western forces led by the United States were welcomed enthusiastically in their engagement at the beginning of 2002. However, by 2003 and 2004, the perception of the Afghan community shifted from positive to hatred and negative due to western states' wrongdoings during their military operations, such as murdering innocent people and children. Consequently, the western states became the central spot of the Taliban. The study argues that more than half of the Afghan community saw the western states as occupiers, while more than a third of the participant believe that as a guarantor. Within a decade, the perception of society has shifted dramatically.

Due to Türkiye's long historical, steady, and friendly relations with Afghanistan since the founding of the Turkish Republic and the shared common language, history, ethnicity, and religious identity, the study analysis has indicated that Türkiye, NATO's only Muslim majority member-state, has gained the hearts and minds of Afghan public. It is also essential to state that Afghanistan's geo-strategic position has drawn the attention of Turkish policymakers.

Although, all the regional and international powers competed to play a prominent role in Afghanistan's peacebuilding process. However, the study proposed that Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan reflects Türkiye's regional power showdown and demonstrates the country's capacity to be an influential regional actor and a rising power.

The United States and NATO mission completed and ended in Afghanistan in 2021, ushering in a new epoch in the region. Already Afghanistan has gained the attention of regional actors, and it is growing with time. The study analysis has indicated that Türkiye has played a significant role in the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan through various projects and programs. Also, through a variety of soft power tools. It is worthwhile to highlight that since the Taliban came to power on August 15, 2021, Turkey has played fundamental role through providing humanitarian assistance via TIKA, and only using humanitarian diplomacy without the presence of their military in Afghanistan.

Considering the fact that Türkiye is not one of the leading regional actors sharing a border with Afghanistan, one of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that the reaction of the regional powers to Türkiye's engagement shows the extent to which Türkiye has influenced the Afghanistan peacebuilding project. The negative reaction to Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan except in India shows that success in Afghanistan does not please regional actors like China, Iran, and Pakistan. In the light of this argument, the study contends that these regional actors do not want

Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan because of its success in making it more influential than other regional actors in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Consequently, Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan puts its relations with regional powers such as China, Russia, and Pakistan at stake. Finally, the study argues that the dramatic shift in Türkiye's foreign policy in recent years and economic development has contributed to its rising power status. However, Türkiye's presence in Afghanistan has also contributed to its geopolitical clout and ascended its image in the region and on the international stage. Recent developments in Afghanistan have shown the trust and strategic importance of Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan, with the latest proposal that Türkiye should operate Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul. It is a clear sign of Türkiye's regional rising power aspirations in the Central Asian region.



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