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## The Political and Economic Dimension of the War in Afghanistan

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**'While the 'coalition of the willing' invasion of Afghanistan was primarily as a result of 9/11, there are other political and economic reasons for the invasion.' Critically Discuss this Contention using the Copenhagen School of Analysis.**

The invasion of Afghanistan by the "coalition of the willing" was primarily as a result of the September 11 attacks on the US and the invocation of Article 5. Afghanistan's strategic location makes the country a very important regional actor and its stability is vital for regional peace. With increasing globalization the spread of ideas is limitless and makes states' borders porous therefore permitting radical ideas and believes to infiltrate other countries. Spreading radicalism was a shared fear among all members participating in the coalition in their quest to bring peace and security to a war-torn country and to stabilize the region. This paper will break down the members of the "Coalition of the willing" into two groups and explore their secondary motives for participating in the coalition through reviewing any potential political or economic benefits they might enjoy. Even though the US is a member of NATO, it will be examined separately, due to the fact that it was the driving force behind the invasion. The second group would be made up of NATO's members, who are also in the EU or share their values and believes. The Copenhagen School theory will be used to critically analyze the political and economic motives of the different groups and their implications on the global arena. The theory was developed at the Conflict and Peace Research Institute in Copenhagen and has played a major role in broadening the definition of security by including non-military security sectors and it is represented by scholars, such as Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde. Among the core ideas of the theory is the notion that security should be concentrated on survival of the state; it also introduces the process of securitizing an issue and broadens the concept of security. The school also manages to analyze and preserve the coherent structure of the concept of security (Emmers, 2007, pp. 110-111). There are three main elements in the school, which look at different aspects of security.

The first element responsible for determining what constitutes a security threat is the Securitization theory. An object is given the label of a security threat, provided that it actually poses a direct danger to a given territory, society or state. The status of an existential threat permits the state to use extraordinary measures to defend itself (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, 1998, pp. 21-22). In their book "Security a New Framework for Analysis", Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde define "security" as the "move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics" (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, 1998, p. 23). In theory, for an issue to be securitized, it has to move through several strata of the social spectrum. An issue can range from non-politicized, which does not involve state actions as a result of lack of public discussions and debates, to politicized, when it needs financial, political or administrative involvement from the government, to securitized, when it is perceived as an existential threat and requires extraordinary measures to be resolved (Emmers, 2007, pp. 111-112). The second element of the theory is the regional security complex. This has become increasingly popular after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the breakup of the bipolarity maintained by the US and the USSR. Ideology is no longer thought of as a leading factor in motivating rivalries between great powers, who avoid any form of engagement, unless their interests are directly threatened. This gives regional powers the opportunity to sort out their regional claims or ambitions in a diplomatic manner (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, 1998, pp. 9-10). The third element of Copenhagen School is the five security sectors. As the name suggests, there are five

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different security sectors: military, political, economic, environmental and societal, with each one of them elaborating on different security threats, which are not necessarily military in aspect. This new approach widens the concept of security, while still keeping it within a fixed structure. All the previously mentioned sectors could be explained through the political sector. Political security can be purely political in regard to both giving and receiving recognition, support and legitimacy both domestically and internationally. In addition to that, any issue from societal to military can be politicized and therefore be made political (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, 1998, pp. 141-143). For a politicized issue to be securitized it has to be deemed a security threat and that happens through a speech act. Its objective is to convince a relevant audience of the existential threat a given object poses. Only after that is successful can extraordinary measures be imposed (Emmers, 2007, pp. 111-113). The following lines will go into more detail explain the military, political, economic and societal sectors, as well as, examine their relevance in explaining the political and economic reasons other than September 11<sup>th</sup>.

In the book "Security a New Framework for Analysis" the term politics is defined as "the shaping of human behavior for the purpose of governing large groups of people" (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, 1998, p. 142). This becomes very clear in the process of securitization, when a certain issue first has to be politicized by involving the government and publicly discussing the issue. An example of that is the fact that the issue of Al Qaida and Osama bin Laden has been politicized since 1998 attacks of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania (Perl, 1998, pp. 1-3). After that the UN and United States demanded that Osama bin Laden be turned over by the Taliban for prosecution (CBC News, 2000). The issue became securitized after America's national security was under threat after 9/11 and George W Bush's speech proclaiming the "war on terror" (Tristram, 2001). Copenhagen School theorists define national security as "primarily in terms of protecting the components of the state from outside threats and interference" (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, 1998, pp. 146-147). On September 11 2001 four commercial airplanes were used to attack the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (Terrorism, 2011, pp. 1-3). On that day 2 900 people lost their lives and as a result a few months later followed the invasion of Afghanistan which it was thought Osama bin Laden and Al Qaida were using as a base (Smith, 2005, pp. 150-151).

## **US Political and Economic Reasons**

Another reason for US presence in Afghanistan is the need to stabilize the region by putting in place a democratic government. This by itself would have an effect over the entire region and the societies that inhabit it. This could prove invaluable in a country full of different minority groups and religions. According to Copenhagen School theorists "society is about identity, the self conception of communities and of individuals identifying themselves as members of a community" (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, 1998, pp. 119-120). After the Soviets left Afghanistan, the power vacuum turned different ethnic communities against each other and a civil war broke out. The two opposition fractions were the Taliban, representing the Pushtun majority of the population, versus the Northern Alliance representing the small Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara and Turkmen ethnic minorities. The Taliban may have used ethnic division within their country but they were exporting radical Islamist views (Rashid, 1999, pp. 4-6). Moreover they were exporting their methods of self-financing through heroin production, extortion and the smuggling of drugs and goods in addition to arming regional insurgency groups. It was estimated that between 1994 and 1999 some 80 000 to 100 000 Pakistani nationals had been trained or fought in Afghanistan. In addition to Pakistan's financial meltdown, ethnic and sectarian divide it was particularly vulnerable to a potential radical Islamic wave (Rashid, 1999, pp. 5-7). This posed a great danger to one of the US's closest allies in the region and no less important one that possesses a nuclear bomb (Kronstadt, 2009, p. 2). The Islamic extremism spreading throughout the borders of Afghanistan has the potential to destabilize the whole region. It poses a military security threat to several of its regional neighbors including Russia, China, India, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which all have sizable Muslim communities. Russia has a large Muslim population and an ongoing conflict with Chechen separatists who according to the Russian Federation are being trained in Afghanistan (Vidino, 2005). China has a similar problem with its Xinjiang province which is home to large number of Muslims who could be easily radicalized in a potential Islamism wave (Rogers, 2011) (Kathrin, 2012). India shares her neighbor's problem with continuing conflict in Kashmir brought on by Islamic militancy, fueled by the Taliban (Rashid, 1999, pp. 5-8). Iran does share its regional neighbor's problem, but for it Afghanistan poses a political threat with the potential to escalate. The Taliban have given sanctuary to different dissidents opposing the regime in Tehran (Rashid, 1999, pp. 6-7). This lack of regional security makes it harder for investors to come in the region.

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The economic benefits of stabilizing Afghanistan would have a regional and global impact on the energy markets. The US department of Energy has anticipated an increase in the world's energy consumption of more than 50% between 1993 and 2015 (Brzezinski, 1997, pp. 124-125). This requires the development of new oil and gas reserves which involves the creation of new pipelines to circumvent unstable regions or states, therefore avoiding a potential energy security situation. In his book "The Grand Chessboard", Zbigniew Brzezinski argues that in order for Europe to reduce its dependency on Russian oil and gas, it needs to find alternative routes to the Caspian Sea Basin. This would also serve to satisfy growing US energy needs and give it an alternative source of oil and gas. This need for energy resources became apparent in 1943, when the US shifted from net exporter to net importer of oil. By the end of 1943 the US Navy and State had deemed the country's interests in the Middle East of the highest importance and recommended the countries further involvement in order to preserve the strategic reserves of the west (Anderson, 1987, pp. 198-199). Brzezinski also discusses two potential pipeline projects that would solve the West's energy vulnerability. The first one is a pipeline going from the Caspian Sea through Afghanistan and the Arabian Sea. The second one would go from the Caspian Sea through Azerbaijan and to the Mediterranean through Turkey (Brzezinski, 1997, pp. 139-141). This chapter will discuss the first pipeline due the fact that it is more relevant to the State's geopolitical and economic needs.

The first project is a pipeline route from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan into Pakistan and India (TAPI) aiming at satisfying Asia's growing energy needs (Foster, 2010). Unocal managed to secure the project after it muscled out the Argentinean Bidas oil and gas company. Unocal had the support of the US administration, which gave Turkmenistan the chance to engage the Clinton Administration in the region in hope of attracting western investors. Unocal had planned two pipelines for gas and oil respectively, with the latter having the capacity to allow oil from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to feed into it. This would allow the use of the existing Soviet built pipelines and permit producers from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to access the Asian market (Rashid, 2002, pp. 157-161). The process of negotiations with the Taliban went on through the bigger part of the 1990's with no visible results. This was mainly due to the fact that the Taliban were not recognized by the international community and that was proving to be a big problem for them. Unocal needed international financing from the World Bank to proceed with the project, as well as the signing of government to government agreements and government to construction agreement which all required a unified government in Kabul (Foster, 2010). Negotiations with the Taliban were terminated in July 2001 after an unsuccessful attempt by the Bush administration to encourage unification of the country and resolution of the conflict. Negotiations were quickly resumed after the 2001 invasion and in February 2002 President Karzai met with his Pakistani counterpart to announce their renewing of the TAPI pipeline project which is expected to be functional by 2015 (Foster, 2010). If the project is completed successfully there will be both economic and political benefits for the US. From a political standpoint an alternative route for the ex-soviet republics to export their oil and gas will make them less dependent on Russia and make them more susceptible to western influences. In addition to that the pipeline will stabilize Afghanistan and its neighboring countries creating a more secure environment which could attract potential investors.

A competitor to the TAPI pipeline is the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI), 2775 km long gas pipeline. The pipeline will satisfy the needs of Pakistan and India's growing economies with the potential to further extend to China (Haq, 2010). Even though both pipelines are expected to start work in 2015, the TAPI project has not yet managed to solve the security issue of protecting the 735km long pipeline which crosses through half the country and goes through Herat and Kandahar which are the regions the Taliban are most active (Haroon, 2012). The relations between the US and Iran have not improved since the revolution of 1979 when American diplomats were taken hostage for 444 days from 1979 until 1981 (Chivvis, 2009). If Iran's proposed pipeline becomes operational before the TAPI pipeline project this will give Iran the ability to dominate over the region by controlling the energy supply and US economic pressure on it will not be as effective. This will help its ambitions of turning into a regional power and in the same time reduce American influence in Asia.

It will also have an economic setback to any potential development of Afghanistan's vast natural resources by US companies. Geological surveys done by the Soviet Union during its occupation of Afghanistan show that the country has vast natural resources of copper, cobalt, iron, high grade chrome ore, uranium, beryllium, lead, zinc, fluor spar, bauxite, lithium, tantalum, emeralds, gold, silver, thorium and natural gas. This information has been confirmed by a Kremlin report from 2002 stating that "It's no secret that Afghanistan possesses rich reserves, in particular of copper

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at the Aynak deposit, iron ore in Khojagek, uranium, polymetallic ore and oil". (Chossudovsky, 2012). A joint survey by the Pentagon and the US Geological Survey in 2010 have confirmed the large deposits of natural resources worth approximately a trillion dollars (Haynes, 2012). If the US manages to stabilize Afghanistan it will be able to satisfy its domestic needs which include commercial manufacturing, implementation of a green-energy economic policy, sustaining both advanced weapons systems and innovation in the technological sector (Mcgroarty & Wirtz, 2012, pp. 2-3). Tantalum, iron, zinc, beryllium and cobalt are among the metals deemed of vital importance by the States' *Strategic and Critical Materials Stockpiling Program*. The purpose of the program is to reduce the "dependency upon foreign sources of supply in time of national emergency" (Center, 2009, p. 2). Beryllium, tantalum, thorium and lithium are of strategic importance with their applications in the air and spacecraft construction (Chossudovsky, 2012). Securing those resources could prove vital in determining who will lead the next space race. Lithium is also used in the building of batteries which have wide application in different products (Risen, 2010). This will prove vital to the States smooth transition to green energy which is set to be 80% of the country's energy supply by 2035 (Appleyard, 2011).

Another reason that motivated the US to go to war with Afghanistan was its ongoing problem with drugs (Warner, 2008). The issue is highly politicized in the States which makes it of high priority for the government to resolve. The US government had put pressure on the Taliban leadership to crack down on the poppy production in Afghanistan, which at the time was responsible for more than 70% of all the drugs produced in the world (Catarious Jr. & Russell, 2012). In 2000 the Taliban managed to successfully implement the production of poppy in the controlled by them part of the country. This forced farmers to relocate their opium production and poppy cultivation farms in the northeastern provinces controlled by the Northern Alliance (Werb, Kerr, Montane, & Wood, 2008, pp. 441-443). This in turn resulted in a political security risk for the Taliban as they started to lose public support and recognition (Werb, Kerr, Montane, & Wood, 2008, pp. 443-444). The poppy production seems to be both a political and an economic problem but also a solution for the US and NATO forces. Both the States and its European allies have to allocate substantial funds to secure their borders and prevent drugs from entering. The cultivation of the poppy plant has been going on in Afghanistan for centuries and is highly imbedded in the local tradition. It would be much easier for the allies to develop a solution around those lines rather than banning the production of poppy plants entirely, which was implemented by the Taliban in 2000, and resulted in extremely high level of famine and poverty (Peters, 2009, pp. 14-15). The licensing of Afghanistan with a permit to legally produce morphine or just licensing it to export the raw production to licensed countries would solve both the political and economic issues that arise from poppy production. Politically it would secure the support of the local population which would be able to sell its production legally. It would also reduce the amount of narcotics that are exported to western states and help secure domestic support. Economically it will result in reduced spending on border control as well as it will create sustainable employment for the local population.

## NATO Political and Economic Reasons

NATO is a Eurocentric alliance with some minor exception all its members are in Europe. Most of its members are also members of the European Union or share common views and values. NATO's political motivation to enter Afghanistan was the invocation of Article 5 of the Treaty, which states that: "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all" (NATO, 2005). Fulfilling this essential obligation is critical in maintaining the alliance and the further development of the organization. NATO also has secondary political and economic motivations related to its domestic security and future development which have further influenced it to invade Afghanistan.

After the end of the Cold War even though nowhere in the Washington Treaty was mentioned a connection between the establishment of NATO and the Soviet Union there was a sense that the threat the treaty was created to counter-balance was gone. The Alliance also proved indecisive in its action during the war in Yugoslavia with which it raised questions about its post-cold war application (McCalla, 1996, pp. 446-447). The 1990's marked a very important transitional period during which the Treaty turned to crisis management and promoting international stability (McCalla, 1996, pp. 449-450). Thus the conflict in Afghanistan gave NATO the platform it needed to prove its self and thus expand its field of operation. This conflict gave the Alliance an opportunity to prove its relevance as a security force on the global stage and defend the political and economic interests of its members. Most of who are

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also members of the European Union, giving them the opportunity to use force to secure their interest.

With rapidly developing economies the EU's energy needs have dramatically risen and are expected to keep that tendency with each year registering between 1% and 2% increase up to 2030. This has turned energy in "an economic good, a strategic good and a geopolitical power tool" (Programme, 2008). Giving producer states the opportunity to take full advantage of their resources and influence foreign policies. The Union currently receives natural gas from Algeria, Norway and Russia, which constitutes the largest percentage of that. This leads to the need of diversifying in order to avoid the political and economic consequences of dependency. The Baltic States and Poland are the most dependent on Russian supplies of natural gas (Programme, 2008). This makes them especially vulnerable to pressure from the Russian Federation which in turn might reflect on NATO and EU policies. According to NATO experts' military deterrence is the best form of protection making a hostility act from a state too costly (Buzan, *The International Politics of Deterrence*, 1987, p. 175). This might be correct from a military standpoint but from energy perspective potential fallout between Europe and Russia could lead to negative political and economic implications for the EU. Politically falling in that situation could show lack of leadership and vision on behalf of Europe's leaders in turn affecting their domestic popularity. Another disadvantage of Russian supplied gas is that it is unreliable in terms of its transit route through Ukraine and Belarus. With tension between the two states over gas prices ever present it could be only a matter of time before Russia cuts supply to Ukraine and Europe yet again (Kramer, 2009). An alternative to that could be the further up mentioned pipeline from Azerbaijan through Turkey and the Mediterranean. It has the potential of supplying Europe with gas that only originates from a non-EU or NATO state. This will result in a safer and sustainable supply of gas to Europe and free it from its dependency on Russian gas.

The Treaty also shares the same drug problem that the US faces, with Afghan drugs flooding the European continent (Chouvy, 2003, pp. 32-35). This issue has been highly politicized in Europe with extensive discussions and media coverage of the topic. This poses a political security risk to the European Union and the leadership of the individual states, as it undermines the support those democratically elected governments receive. There are 1.5 million drug addicts, mainly heroin users in the Union. As a byproduct of drugs, could be considered the spread of HIV and hepatitis B, C, as well as, organized crime and increases in governmental spending to cover the expenses while under treatment for a drug related problem (Addiction, 2000, pp. 8-9). The solution that was proposed further up for licensing Afghanistan in order for it to be able to produce morphine or just for the export of raw materials to licensed morphine producing countries has political benefits and economic disadvantages. Politically it will show decisiveness on behalf of the EU leadership in dealing with drug problems and will further attract public support for the government. Financially it will result in less government spending on drug treatments as presumably there will be less drugs circulating the street. This will have a negative effect on the current producers of morphine who use home grown poppy plants to satisfy their production needs. Economically it will have a negative impact on the industry as nine of the nineteen licensed producers of morphine are members of the EU and/or NATO. Furthermore sixteen of the nineteen licensed producers of morphine and codeine are participating in the coalition force currently in Afghanistan (Chouvy, 2008, pp. 101-103). This will be hard to apply since all states have their own poppy plantations varying in sizes that make them self sufficient and independent. This principle of just in time production that made Toyota into an automobile giant is applicable in this situation but will require regional stability and control of the process (O'Brian & Williams, 2010, pp. 202-203). A future realization of a just in time principle involving Afghanistan and morphine producing states will show a commitment by the West in further developing its economic relations with the Asian state.

Lastly, both the US and NATO have large Muslim communities which are vulnerable to the rising Islamism of Asia mainly caused by the instabilities in Afghanistan (Muslims in America – A Statistical Portrait, 2008) (Michaels, 2009). The Taliban have specialized in assisting Muslim groups fighting for independence via with military training and means of self-finance. In addition to that one of the strongest members of the alliance is a Muslim state (Turkey) which could at times be politically unstable. This in addition to Turkey's repressed Kurdish minority that seeks independence makes the Alliance and Europe particularly vulnerable outside interference. The future stabilization of Afghanistan will resolve the ethnic and religious tension that could spread through the region and beyond. This stability will also be beneficial for the development of economic relations between the European Union and the Asian Republic. Eight of the resources materials deemed as critical by the Union are found in vast quantities in Afghanistan

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they include: beryllium, cobalt, copper, iron, lithium, silver, tantalum and zinc. All of those materials have both civilian and military uses and provide jobs for thousands of people. The most important materials necessary for the implication of the EU set goal of having 20% renewable energy by 2020 are cobalt, copper and lithium (Renewable Energy Now, 2012). Lithium and cobalt are used in the manufacturing of rechargeable batteries which will be central in the future green policy of the EU in addition to that copper increases the efficiency of motors, wiring and hybrid cars which helps reduce pollution. Those three materials will be vital in the efficient implementation of the policy (Group, 2010, pp. 47-114).

## Conclusion

In conclusion this paper has critically examined the alternative reasons that have motivated members to join the "coalition of the willing" other than the attacks of September 11. Due to the large number of members participating, this paper has limited its examination only to the motives of the US and the Alliance, in an attempt to give a more detailed reasoning. This has been achieved through separately reviewing their regional interests in respect to their domestic needs. The assignment has proved that NATO and the States have both common problems and industrial needs and both their solutions involve Afghanistan. They face the same challenges brought on by radical Islam and the spread of terrorism which if left unchallenged could result in Islamophobia in the western world, as well as, domestic securitization which in turn would give law enforcement agencies greater power and could limit the rights of their nationals. They also face a common drug challenge which mainly comes from Afghanistan and if it is not properly handled will continue to corrupt their domestic population resulting in increased governmental financing for treatment and tightening of borders. Drugs are also a means for terrorist organizations to finance themselves and continue to be a security threat to states. Another common interest they have is their growing need for raw materials and energy. The political and economic consequences if they don't meet their resource needs could result in compromising both their defense capabilities and the effectiveness of their power politics. Economically without resources to satisfy their production needs they will not be a factor on the international arena and will eventually have to start laying off potential voters. If NATO and the US are unable to meet those challenges that will demonstrate their declining power as political and economic leaders and will leave a power vacuum in Afghanistan similar to the one left by the Soviet Union after their retreat in 1989.

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