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**Question:** Afghan Taliban role has outrightly changed from a non-state to state actor. Critically evaluate the challenges faced by Taliban government and give recommendations?

**Answer:**

### 1- Introduction:

Afghanistan is known as the graveyard of empires. It has seen the invasions from British, Soviet Union and then US in 2001. US declared war on terror against Afghanistan and invaded Afghanistan in 2001. Initially US was succeeded in killing and capturing Taliban and toped their government.

### 2- Revival of Taliban:

At first U.S. was successful in killing and capturing majority of Taliban, but later the war got prolonged. U.S. never imagined this war to be a long war. In 2002 Taliban announced their comeback and carried out a series of attacks on foreign forces. In 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 there were number of attacks on foreign forces.

#### a) Draw down date of foreign troops:

In 2014, majority of American troops left Afghanistan. About 70,000 U.S. troops left Afghanistan leaving behind just 14,000 troops. About 50,000 NATO troops left Afghanistan leaving behind only 15,000 troops. The Taliban celebrated this as their victory against the

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foreign forces.

### b) Doha accords 2020 and revival of Taliban:

In Doha accords 2020 U.S. agreed to release all prisoners of Taliban. The Taliban also agreed to release U.S. prisoners. Taliban made sure that they will not let any external power use their land for terrorism against any country. The U.S. agreed for complete withdrawal from Afghanistan and to vacate the land within a set period of 14 months. The Doha agreement was in full favour of Afghan Taliban.

### c) Control of Afghan Taliban on Afghanistan:

As per American policy makers in 2020 the Afghan Taliban would at least take a whole 9 months period to gain control over the country. However Taliban just took 6 days to regain control over the country and just 3 days for Kabul. The huge Afghan national army which was provided with atleast 3-lacs technologically advanced weapons just collapsed in front of Taliban like a wall of sand. Kabul was captured without firing a single bullet.

### 3. Challenges of Taliban dominated Afghan government:

The withdrawal of American and NATO forces from Afghanistan with the Doha

agreement proved to be an all out victory for Afghan Taliban. However the regime faces certain challenges.

### a) Divide within Afghan Taliban;

The Afghan Taliban have two factions among them. The one faction of Afghan Taliban is considered as the moderate one. This faction is of the view that the Taliban government needs internal acceptability as well as international acceptability. For this purpose they will have to take into consideration the women and minority rights.

The second faction is conservative and of hard liner stance. They are of the view that we didn't fight for 20 years for appeasement for others. We fought for the establishment of strict Shariah in the country.

This divide within the government of Taliban threatens the stability and sustainability of the Taliban's government.

### b) Issue of Ethnic Divide in Afghanistan;

Afghanistan is the country which is not dominated by single ethnicity.

There are currently four major ethnic groups in Afghanistan, including 46 percent Pakhtuns, 27 percent Tajaks, 18 percent Hazaras and 7 percent Uzbaks. But the current Taliban's government is purely dominated by

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pashtuns which can proved to be threatening for Afghan regime. Different groups especially Tajaks are gathering against Taliban. It is threatening for Taliban government.

### c) Security Issues regarding Taliban's government:

In Doha agreement the Afghan Taliban agreed that they would not allow any terrorism from Afghan soil. However yet the Al-Qaeda is once again re-grouping itself in the very soil. And the ISPIK / ISKP i.e Islamic movement of Khorasan Province is very strongly active in Afghanistan. Afghan's 14 provinces witness the presence of ISKP.

Instability and terrorist activities threaten the security of other world across. For example, The group has its links to Islamic movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), In central Asia, The Islamic East-Turkistan Islamic movement in China, Chechnya fighters in Russia and Jundullah in Iran. So the security of these states is threatened because of ISKP. And if Taliban are interested in recognition from regional and international states, it should make sure the stability of above mentioned states.

### d) Socio-Economic Challenge to Afghan Taliban:

After the withdrawal of American and NATO forces, Afghanistan's economy crippled. Afghanistan's budget was based more than 70 percent on American's funds. So, with the U.S. withdrawal Afghanistan's economy came on knees. U.S. froze its assets worth more than \$7 bn plus. All the essential banks closed their branches in Afghanistan. International investors hesitated to invest in Afghanistan. Even local businesses started winding up their businesses in Afghanistan.

#### 4. Recommendations;

In order to avoid these challenges the Taliban government should take into consideration following solutions.

##### a) Taliban should work on Regionalism;

If Taliban want recognition from regional and international community they should align their foreign policy with regionalism. They should work on confidence building measures targetted on those states whose security is threatened because of terrorism concern from Afghanistan.

##### b) Taliban and ties with major Powers;

Taliban should also engage with major powers like Russia, China and USA. So, that its assets of worth more than \$7 billion can be unfrozen and its economic and socio-political fabric could sustain.

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### c) Taliban should ensure security of Mega projects:

For a sustainable future government-Taliban should work on its economy and for that sake it should first make sure the security of Mega projects like TAPI and CASA-1000 which will increase the confidence of international investors which will give a boom to the crippling economy of Afghanistan.

### d) Protection of Human Rights:

If Taliban want the world to legitimize their regime and recognize them, they will effectively have to ensure the human rights particularly women rights. Banning women from education, from daily life and from politics will cause serious hurdles for their regime.

### 5- Conclusion:

Since the war on terror started with the invasion of U.S. in Afghanistan, Taliban have been fighting for whole 20 years. Now with the Americans and NATO forces gone Taliban exclusively gained control over Afghanistan without any hurdle. However Taliban government now faces different challenges as now they are not the guerrilla fighters, now they are state actors but are having different challenges ranging from internal divide and issue of ethnicities to socio-economic challenges. However the most

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significant challenge for Taliban government is the issue of domestic and international recognition, which can be resolved through different means like working on security, human rights, and regionalism etc.