



International Journal of Advanced Academic Studies

E-ISSN: 2706-8927

P-ISSN: 2706-8919

www.allstudyjournal.com

IJAAS 2020; 2(3): 559-563

Received: 15-06-2020

Accepted: 20-07-2020

Fawzia Yousufi

Associate Professor,
Department of History,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
Professor at Shaheed Prof.
Rabbani Education University
Kabul, Afghanistan

Saudi Arabia's foreign policy towards Afghanistan

Fawzia Yousufi

Abstract

This article has been authored regarding Saudi Arabia's foreign policy toward Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia as one of the powerful countries in the region is recognized as a key player in the international relations and Saudi Arabia's foreign policy objectives regarding Afghanistan can be clearly visible. Using different methods in attracting the international assistance, Saudi Arabia plays a key role in its foreign policy. As two countries that share the same religion, Saudi Arabia is following a specific foreign policy regarding Afghanistan. The two Asian and Muslim countries have good relations from the past and are considered the key players in the region.

The nature of the relationships among these two countries have direct impact on their interests and even the interests of the Asian and other countries in the world. For this reason, the current research that focuses on the above issues utilizes qualitative and quantitative methods using desk reviews and library resources. For further enriching the research, in addition to the library resources, other relevant articles and books have been utilized.

Keywords: Saudi Arabia's and foreign policy

Introduction

After the emergence of the Saudi Arabia as an effective country on world's and region's economy and politics, Saudi Arabia's relations has been expanding with the different countries and in this process, Afghanistan has also been included in the countries that is having good relations with Saudi Arabia since its creation, although at times these relations have been fluctuating due to political changes. Saudi Arabia's foreign policy regarding Afghanistan due to Afghanistan's geographical location in the center of Asia, locating in the world's crossroads transit hub and locating in the center of the world's security threats and opportunities, introduces Afghanistan as one of the effective and center of the cooperation in the heart of the central Asian countries. By developing the Istanbul process and central position of Afghanistan in this process, the relations between Asian countries in particular the heart of Asia countries have been highlighted, this process created an environment that developed new norms for expanding trust among the Asian countries. Strengthening these norms and relying upon them have created new and positive opportunities.

The events of the September 11th 2001 and the US Attacks on Afghanistan brought a new policy to Afghanistan and opened a new page in countries history and after the years of political and international isolation, Afghanistan emerged as an effective country in regional and international politics and Afghanistan's relations got expanded with different countries.

Saudi Arabia that is one of the key allies of the United States in the region formally recognized the interim government in Afghanistan that took shape as a result of the Bonn agreement and in several dimensions kept comprehensive relations with the Afghan interim administration. The Saudi relations started with Afghanistan in 1380 (solar year) with the recognition of the interim government by Saudi Arabia and continued in several economic, political and cultural levels during the transitional and between elective government and still the relations between the two governments are friendly.

In the diplomatic arena several meetings have taken place among the two countries. In these formal meetings issues such as jointly fighting against terrorism, immigration of the Afghans to Saudi and strengthening the Afghan and Saudi relations has been discussed. The other issue that worth mentioning is the fact that the relations between Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia After the Bonn conference in 2001 and the creation of the Afghan interim government in accordance with the decision of the Bonn conference started based on the mutual respect and totally in a formal way unlike the previous period it is still going on formally.

Corresponding Author:

Fawzia Yousufi

Associate Professor,
Department of History,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
Professor at Shaheed Prof.
Rabbani Education University
Kabul, Afghanistan

Presenting the research topic

The rules and key objective of the Saudi foreign policy is supporting the national interests of the Islamic region. Saudi policy in Afghanistan has been timebound and have been affected by several local, regional and international factors. This policy has moved along with allies such as US and Pakistan, but the potentials of Riyadh in Kabul has been visible without strategic allies like US and Pakistan. Its geographical location in the Muslim world has given Riyadh a role that most of the Islamic countries and their nations want to have direct relations with Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan is not an exception. Governments in Kabul have looked toward Saudi Arabia to seek legitimacy and have asked for Saudi's support. In this part an attempt is made to analyze the permanent lens through which Saudi Arabia looks to Afghanistan.

The Main objective: Understanding the importance of Saudi foreign policy toward Afghanistan.

The Sub - objective: Awareness about the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia in order to maintain balance of power toward Afghanistan.

The importance and need for the research

Afghanistan has been one of the very good and long-term opportunities in the policy of maintaining the balance of power in the region for Riyadh to prevent Iranian influence in the region. It is a weight for Saudi Arabia to balance power in the Middle East and the Islamic world. Therefore, there are a number of venues for cooperation considering the commonalities and needs of both sides (Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia). Undoubtedly, Saudi Arabia has had a profound impact on the political situation in Afghanistan, which is important to know in the current situation. Given its importance, it can be explained that these two countries can be good supporters of each other. As two countries in which more than 99% of Muslims are present, in this case, it shows the cultural commonalities of the two countries, and according to that, they should defend each other's interests and be supporting of each other, which is a good advantage for both countries and has great value.

The key Question: What is the significance of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy towards Afghanistan.

Sub question: How much did Saudi Arabia's foreign policy relations affect the interest process in Afghanistan.

Research Method

In this article, an attempt has been made to study Saudi Arabia's policy towards Afghanistan using the library and documentary research method. Since the library research forms the bases of the all-academic research, using this method one can analyze the existing information about a topic and while doing the research focus the attention on the primary resources such as books and articles.

The Findings of the Research

The findings of this research have been obtained by studying relevant academic books, articles and quarterly journals. According to the data obtained, with the emergence of the Istanbul process and the focus on Afghanistan, the relations between Asian countries, especially the countries of the heart of Asia, became more elegant, this process created an atmosphere to create new norms to expand trust between countries. Strengthening and reliance on such norms has provided the grounds for new

and positive opportunities. In both countries, the importance of these relations has put forward the fact that the balance of power is an effective tool in maintaining stability which is of great value.

The Background and theoretical foundations of the research

Research Background

Through library studies and research, the researcher has examined and reviewed the research background. Because every research has a background and various topics have already been presented in each field, the following are some quotes from the authors related to the topic:

Bakhti, Ali - Aqa (1383) ^[2] in his book entitled the culture of political science writes that: The relations between Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia is an issue that has historical roots that are intertwined with religious commonalities, so it has had an impact on the country in every way. Especially the role of Saudi Arabia in the last three decades has been very prominent beginning from Saudi Arabia's economic and political support to the Mujahideen against the Soviet Red Army, support to the Mujahideen government, to the Taliban regime, and finally to the interim, transitional, and current elected government. Despite the fact that Saudi Arabia has had a great impact on Afghanistan politically and economically; it is necessary to know the political, economic relations, intelligence interventions of Saudi Arabia and its support for the groups involved in the war in Afghanistan, and especially the political and economic support of the Taliban regime, which will be resulted in disruption of the country's political system (Bakhshe 109, 1383) ^[1].

Khoshwaqt, Mohammad Hosain (1385), in his book, entitled Analysis and decision making in foreign policy writes: relations with foreign intergovernmental and international environment have always been based on the views, strategies and internal developments of a country. The mobility of governments in foreign spheres and their orientations in foreign relations show the type of their domestic policy. Foreign policy involves setting and implementing a series of national goals and interests that are pursued by governments on the international stage. Foreign policy can be an initiative of one state or a reaction to the actions of other states. In other words, foreign policy is a strategy or a series of actions pre-designed by government decision-makers that aim to achieve certain goals within the framework of national interests in the international environment (Khushwaqt 25, 1385).

Sadat, Roqia Azimi (1380) ^[8], in his book entitled Saudi Arabia writes: Saudi Arabia and its first level allies at multiple points in time designed their foreign policy to achieve their goals and coordinate jointly in the form of an efficient system. In 1981 the leaders of the seven countries in the Persian Gulf for the purpose of coordinating joint policies and cooperation designed and implemented the Security Defense Council. The council was formed to integrate security, defense, economic, socio-educational and cultural policies (Azimi 98, 1380) ^[8].

Faramarz Tamanna (1393) ^[3], in his book entitled Afghanistan's foreign policy in the sphere of regional cooperation writes: Saudi Arabia's policy in Afghanistan is time bound and influenced by local, regional and global factors. This policy has continued in concert with other allies, but Riyadh's political potential in Kabul has remained

tangible without strategic friends such as Pakistan and the United States. The geographical location of Saudi Arabia in the Islamic world has given Riyadh this role so that many Islamic countries and their nations want to establish direct relations with Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan is no exception (Tamana 318, 1393)^[3].

Saeedi Ahmad (1391)^[6], in his book entitled, Afghanistan, the target of sedition and harm writes: For Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan serves as a counterweight to create a balance of power in the Middle East and the Islamic world, and that is why Kabul is never forgotten in Riyadh's long-term policies. Saudi Arabia always pursues its policies in this country in various forms and supporting the Taliban was the result of this. Riyadh paid special attention to Afghanistan in order to actually regain its lost position by supporting an anti-Iranian regime.

Balkhi Mirwais (1396), in his book entitled Saudi Arabia's foreign policy towards Afghanistan writes: Religious and cultural commonalities between Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia have created good opportunities between the two countries in which the Afghan government can take full advantage of these opportunities in security, stability and infrastructure development. The issue of two layers of security within Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf has forced Riyadh to establish relations with the major countries of the world to ensure its security and these interactions have created security for Saudi Arabia. The leaders of Riyadh seek to align the great regional powers with their policies in order to defend the interests of their country in the region. (Balkhi, 72, 1391)

Principles and goals of Saudi foreign policy towards Afghanistan

The goals and principles of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy are not set by a particular individual or leader. Rather, it stems from the intentions that Saudi Arabia has had to fulfill from the very beginning and has gone through a gradual process. Saudi Arabia has shaped the principles and goals of its contemporary foreign policy since the reigns of King Faisal and King Khalid after the oil embargo in 1973. This coincides with the emergence of Saudi Arabia as an influential player in the Middle East, but at this time period the framework of such policy is clearer. In the 1980s with the Shia revolution in Iran and then the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan this framework became more prominent (Balkhi 24, 1394).

The principles and goals of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy have not always been the same, and we are going to study and analyze these principles:

Support for Non-Aligned Movements and International Organizations: Saudi Arabia was unaffected by developments in the Cold War. It was a very active and prominent member of the Non - Aligned Movement. Although it is not a founding member of the United Nations, Riyadh is involved in all international issues and assists various international organizations in natural disasters in all countries. In 1996, Saudi Arabia provided significant assistance to the Government of Afghanistan (Alior 122, 1388).

Opposition to the rise of regional countries: Saudi Arabia has always strongly rejected and opposed the unipolar structure in the Middle East and has not accepted the hegemony of regional powers, as Israel, as a non-Islamic state, has always sought hegemony. Riyadh also saw the

collapse of the Soviet Union as incompatible with its security. Because of the emergence of the United States as a major power in the world and the Middle East, Saudi Arabia's utilitarian policies were influenced, and in 1919, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Riyadh backed Gorbachev to provide financial assistance to the Soviet Union to prevent its collapse.

The Spread of Salafism in the Region: another principle of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy is the spread of Islamism and fundamentalism in the Islamic world.

The main principles in the first circle of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy as follows

1. Establishing security and stability in the Persian Gulf.
2. Preventing any internal and external obstacles to maintain the independence of the Persian Gulf.
3. Preventing interference in the affairs of these countries.
4. Strengthening strong ties between the members of the GCC and Saudi Arabia.
5. Coordinating the policies of the GCC countries in the regional and global dimensions.
6. Taking decisive steps to resolve disputes between council members, including cross-border disputes.
7. Adoption and coordination of regional economic policies with regard to oil reserves in the region. (Sadat Roqia, 89, 1380)^[8]

The issue of internal and external security: Riyadh seeks to align the major regional powers with its policies to defend the country's interests in the region. The second security challenge for Saudi Arabia was after the Mujahideen's victory in Kabul followed the fall of the communist regime in 1992, when most of the Arab Mujahideen returned to Saudi Arabia motivated by a victory and engaged in terrorist activities to topple the Saudi monarchy. Afghanistan, Sudan, and Yemen were major centers of activity for the above groups. Riyadh's leadership announced its support for the insurgents and hard liner groups, but in Sudan they warned the countries President Omar - AL Bashir to throw-out the enmities of Saudi Arabia from the country. In particular the aim of Riyadh was Osama bin Laden one of the leaders of the disaffected Arab Mujahideen who sought to overthrow Riyadh by protesting against the presence of American forces on Saudi soil (Balkhi 40, 1396).

Supporting regional and Islamic national interests: One of the important principles and goals of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy is to protect the regional and Islamic national interests. This tripartite policy has led to controversy and criticism within Saudi Arabia. As Al-Saud seeks the national interests of Saudi Arabia, while the Arab nationalists pursue regional and Arab interests, and the Islamists and religious scholars pursue Islamic interests all over the world. (Balkhi, 40, 1396).

Saudi Arabia's long-term goals for Afghanistan

A brief study of Saudi policy towards Afghanistan reveals the fact that the country has a long history in Afghanistan. But in the contemporary era, this policy can be summarized in three stages. The first is the traditional stage that revolves around the problem of security and pan-Islamism. The second stage was to cooperate with the Afghan Mujahideen in the fight against the Soviets, and finally the third stage after the fall of the Communists was to fight for the balance

of power against Iran, strategic cooperation with Pakistan and gaining international prestige claiming that Saudi Arabia is the hegemonic power in the region. Saudi Arabia's policy in Afghanistan is time bound and influenced by local, regional and global factors. This policy has continued in concert with other allies. But Riyadh's political potential in Kabul has been palpable without the support of strategic friends like Pakistan and the United States. Its geographical location in the Islamic world has given Riyadh the role of allowing many Islamic countries and their nations to establish direct relations with Saudi Arabia. Afghanistan has not been exempted from this rule and many regimes in Kabul have looked to Saudi Arabia to gain power and legitimacy in Afghanistan and have sought its support. Saudi Arabia's political attitude towards Afghanistan is based on four basic principles that Riyadh has played a role in Afghanistan since the 1980s. It would be very appropriate to examine these four principles of Riyadh's long-term policy in Afghanistan separately and argue by presenting documents (Faramarz 1393, 381) [3]

Maintaining the balance of power: the issue of the survival and maintenance of the monarchy in the Saudi regime has made the policy of "maintaining the balance of power" as a very effective tool in the foreign policy of that country. One of the strongest pillars for maintaining the balance of power between Saudi Arabia and its regional enemies has been the presence of US forces on Saudi soil. Saudi regional rivals felt threatened in the area and did not dare to interfere in the country's affairs. Given this fact, Afghanistan has been one of the best and longest-running opportunities in Riyadh's policy of maintaining a regional balance of power to prevent Iranian influence in the region. For Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan is a weight to create a balance of power in the Middle East and the Islamic world, and that is why Kabul is never forgotten in the long-term policy of Riyadh and always pursues its policies in this country in various forms (Balkhi 1396, 54).

Supporting Friends Strategic Interests: Saudi Arabia's second long-term policy in Afghanistan is influenced by cooperation with its strategic allies Islamabad and Washington. Since the years of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, international developments have taken place in which the three countries have shared goals and interests and Afghanistan became the common scene of the game for all three countries. Clearly, a strong bond was formed between the three countries in the context of developments in Afghanistan. This strategic relationship has led Riyadh to look at Afghans from a Pakistani perspective. The government of Afghanistan can use the distrust of the West from Pakistan to request the leaders of the White House to ask the government of Saudi Arabia to consider Afghanistan as an independent friendly country and help it (Faramarz, 1393, 55) [3].

Existing opportunities between the two countries: religious and cultural commonalities between Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia have created good grounds and opportunities between the two countries, in which case the Afghan government can take full advantage of these opportunities in strengthening security, stability and the development of the country's infrastructure. The opportunities are described below:

1. Religious and political opportunities: more than 99% of the people of Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia are Muslims and sharing the same religion has resulted on

having similar opinion on the issues of common interest. The membership of both countries in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the almost similar attitudes their people toward the affairs of the Islamic world are good opportunities that will help strengthen the relations between Riyadh and Kabul.

- 2. Security opportunities:** After the Taliban and al-Qaeda joined hands based on common interests as Afghanistan's and its allies sworn enemies, this provides opportunity for both countries to work closely together to mitigate security threats. Saudi Arabia seeks to reconcile the Taliban with the Afghan government and make them to take part in Afghanistan's political system.
- 3. Educational and cultural opportunities:** The Importance of Arab minority in bringing Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia closer during the three periods that included Islamic expansions, expansion during the occupation of Central Asia by Tsarist Russia and during the period of Afghanistan's occupation of the Soviet Union, Arab minorities migrated, which today shows a significant population.
- 4. Economic and business opportunities:** the role of this Saudi Arabia is more evident in the reconstruction of roads, and the Afghan government can expand the process by attracting the leaders of Saudi Arabia and by giving an open hand to them in the reconstruction of the country. The Government of Saudi Arabia has pledged \$ 268 million in grants and long-term loans to Afghanistan, of which 103 million were disbursed to Afghanistan by 2010. Afghanistan's long-distance relations with Saudi Arabia provide jobs for the country's workers so that tens of thousands of job-seekers can travel to Saudi Arabia (Khoshwqat 1389, 29).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that Saudi Arabia has looked to Afghanistan from a perspective motivated by its security considerations with regards to the regional countries and the world and regional competitions for the survival of the Saud family. Saudi Arabia has not been able to prove its friendship and harmony in different periods of contemporary history with Afghanistan. Sometimes, as an Islamic state, it has treated Afghanistan with cultural commonalities, and sometimes, as an encourager to terrorist groups, it has created a variety of social ills in Afghanistan. Another issue that has highlighted most of the skepticism and instability in the friendly relations between Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia has been Saudi Arabia's repeated assistance and support to Pakistan. Therefore, there are a number of ways according to the commonalities and needs of both parties (Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia), which can be considered that these two countries can be good supporters of each other. As two countries where more than 99% of Muslims live. In this case, it shows the cultural commonalities of the two countries, and according to that, they should defend each other's interests and be honest with each other, which is a good benefit for both parties.

References

1. Bakhshi Ali Agha. Culture of Political Science. Tehran: Chabahar Publications, 1383.

2. Balkhi Mirwais. Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia towards Afghanistan. Kabul: Afghanistan Higher Education Institute Publications, 1383.
3. Tamana, Faramarz. Afghan Foreign Policy in the Sphere of Regional Cooperation. Kabul: Strategic Studies Center Publications, 1393.
4. Khoshwaqt, Mohammad Hossein. Decision-making analysis in foreign policy. Tehran: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1358.
5. Roy Alyor. Afghanistan, Islam and Islamic Modernism. Translation, Saroqad, Moqadam, Tehran: Islamic research Publications, 1380.
6. Saeedi Ahmad. Afghanistan, the target of sedition and harm. Kabul: Saeed Publications, 1391.
7. Talat Armin. ISIL on the scales of international law. Tehran: Khorsandi Publications, 1395.
8. Azimi Sadat Roqia. Saudi Arabia. Tihnan: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Publications, 1380.
9. Nabawi Sayed Abul Amir & Nijat. Study of new Syrian Salafi Groups Based on Discourse Analysis, Fourth Year, Fourth Issue, 1393.
10. Wahizi Mahmood. Political crises and social movements in the Middle East. Tehran: Office of Political and International Studies, 1390.