

the

best

**Journal of Politics and Development**

**ISSN 2632-4911**

**Volume 14 ■ Number 2 ■ Summer 2024**



# the rest: journal of politics and development

*Previously published as Journal of Global Analysis (JGA)*

## Editors-in-Chief:

**Ozgur TUFEKCI, Assoc. Prof.** | Karadeniz Technical University, Türkiye & CESRAN International  
**Rahman DAG, Assoc. Prof.** | Marmara University, Türkiye & CESRAN International

## Associate Editor:

**Alessia CHIRIATTI, Dr.** | Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy  
**Marco MARSILI, Dr.** | Ca' Foscari University, Italy & CESRAN International

## Assistant Editor:

**Ekrem OK** | Agri Ibrahim Cecen University, Türkiye & CESRAN International, UK

## Editorial Board

**Sener AKTURK, Prof.** | Koç University, Turkey  
**Enrique ALBEROLA, Prof.** | Banco de España, Spain  
**Mustafa AYDIN, Prof.** | Kadir Has University, Turkey  
**Ian BACHE, Prof.** | University of Sheffield, UK  
**Kee-Hong BAE, Prof.** | York University, Canada  
**Mark BASSIN, Prof.** | Sodertorn University, Sweden  
**Alexander BELLAMY, Prof.** | Uni. of Queensland, Australia  
**Richard BELLAMY, Prof.** | Uni. College London, UK  
**Andreas BIELER, Prof.** | University of Nottingham, UK  
**Pinar BILGIN, Prof.** | Bilkent University, Turkey  
**Ken BOOTH, Prof.** | Aberystwyth University, UK  
**Stephen CHAN, Prof.** | SOAS, University of London, UK  
**Nazli CHOUCRI, Prof.** | MIT, USA  
**Judith CLIFTON, Prof.** | Universidad de Cantabria, Spain  
**John M. DUNN, Prof.** | University of Cambridge, UK  
**Kevin DUNN, Prof.** | Hobart and William Smith Colleges, USA  
**Can ERBIL, Assoc. Prof.** | Boston College, USA  
**Stephen Van EVERA, Prof.** | MIT, USA  
**Marc FLEURBAEY, Prof.** | Princeton University, USA  
**Bulent GOKAY, Prof.** | Keele University, UK  
**Ayla GOL, Prof.** | York St John University, UK  
**Stefano GUZZINI, Prof.** | Uppsala Universitet, Sweden

**David HELD, Prof.** | London Sch. of Economics, LSE, UK  
**Tony HERON, Prof.** | University of York, UK  
**Raymond HINNEBUSCH, Prof.** | Uni. of St Andrews, UK  
**John M. HOBSON, Prof.** | University of Sheffield, UK  
**Michael KENNY, Prof.** | University of Sheffield, UK  
**Cécile LABORDE, Prof.** | University College London, UK  
**Scott LUCAS, Prof.** | University of Birmingham, UK  
**Kalypso NICOLAIDIS, Prof.** | University of Oxford, UK  
**Ziya ONIS, Prof.** | Koc University, Turkey  
**Alp OZERDEM, Prof.** | George Mason University, USA  
**Danny QUAH, Prof.** | London School of Economics, UK  
**José Gabriel PALMA, Prof.** | Cambridge University, UK  
**Jenik RADON, Prof.** | Columbia University, USA  
**Oliver RICHMOND, Prof.** | University of Manchester, UK  
**Ibrahim SIRKECI, Prof.** | Regent's College London, UK  
**Ian TAYLOR, Prof.** | University of St Andrews, UK  
**Ali WATSON, Prof.** | University of St Andrews, UK  
**Brian WHITE, Prof.** | University of Sheffield, UK  
**Stefan WOLFF, Prof.** | University of Birmingham, UK  
**Biroł YESILADA, Prof.** | Portland State University, USA  
**Hakan YILMAZKUDAY, Prof.** | Florida International University, USA

*The Rest: Journal of Politics and Development is published on behalf of the Centre for Strategic Research and Analysis (CESRAN) as an academic e-journal. The articles are brought into use via the website of the journal (<https://therestjournal.com/>). CESRAN and the Editors of The Rest: Journal of Politics and Development do not expect that readers of the review will sympathise with all the sentiments they find, for some of our writers will flatly disagree with others. It does not accept responsibility for the views expressed in any article, which appears in The Rest: Journal of Politics and Development.*

*\* The surnames are listed in alphabetical order.*

# the rest: journal of politics and development

*Previously published as Journal of Global Analysis (JGA)*

## INDEXING & ABSTRACTING

- Academic Index
- Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE)
- Columbia International Affairs Online (CIAO)
- Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
- EBSCO Publishing Inc.
- EconLit
- EconPapers
- Genamics JournalSeek
- IDEAS
- Index Islamicus
- Infomine
- International Bibliography of Book Reviews of Scholarly Literature in the Humanities and Social Sciences (IBR)
- International Bibliography of Periodical Literature in the Humanities and Social Sciences (IBZ)
- International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)
- International Relations and Security Network (ISN)
- Lancaster Index to Defence & International Security Literature
- Peace Palace Library
- Research Papers in Economics (RePEc)
- Social Sciences Information Space (SOCIONET)
- Ulrich's Periodicals Directory

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## RESEARCH ARTICLES

**133**

**Great Power Politics over the Natural Resources in Afghanistan**

*By Babur Rahmani*

**153**

**In Search of an African Theory of Democracy: Utilizing the Tiv Cultural Philosophy of Ya-Na-Angbian**

*By Ayaka Simon Silas & Yusufu Ahmed Audu*

**165**

**Portuguese Neutrality during World War II - A Case Study of Portuguese Foreign Policy Analysis**

*By João Tavares*

**181**

**It is Time to Reconsider the Hereditary Succession of Politicians and Medical Practitioners in Japan: Reform Ideas to Overcome the Adverse Effects**

*By Yukio Sakurai*

**194**

**Enhancing Disaster Resilience through Gender-Sensitive Policy Frameworks: A Case Study of Pakistan**

*By Nialish Khan*

**208**

**Women Leaders and the Concept of Women Empowerment: Benazir Bhutto and Margaret Thatcher**

*By Betül Türyaki*

**223**

**Mind the Gap! Small State Influence within the EU during the Brexit Process: The Case of Slovakia**

*By Sedanur Yıldız & Özgür Tüfekçi*

**238**

**Relations Between Russia and Türkiye in The Context of The Syrian Conflict: From Edge of the War to Strategic Cooperation**

*By Cenk Özatıcı & Polat Üründül*



International Think-tank [www.cesran.org](http://www.cesran.org)

Consultancy

Research Institute

CESRAN International is headquartered in the UK

CESRAN International is a member of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI)

**CESRAN International** is a think-tank specialising on international relations in general, and global peace, conflict and development related issues and challenges.

The main business objective/function is that we provide expertise at an international level to a wide range of policy making actors such as national governments and international organisations. CESRAN with its provisions of academic and semi-academic publications, journals and a fully-functioning website has already become a focal point of expertise on strategic research and analysis with regards to global security and peace. The Centre is particularly unique in being able to bring together wide variety of expertise from different countries and academic disciplines.

The main activities that CESRAN undertakes are providing consultancy services and advice to public and private enterprises, organising international conferences and publishing academic material.

Some of CESRAN's current publications are:

- THE REST: Journal of Politics and Development (tri-annual, peer reviewed) [www.therestjournal.com](http://www.therestjournal.com)
- Novus Orbis: Journal of Politics and International Relations (biannual, peer reviewed) [www.dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/novusorbis](http://www.dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/novusorbis)
- Journal of Conflict Transformation and Security (biannual, peer reviewed)
- Political Reflection Magazine (quarterly) [www.politicalreflectionmagazine.com](http://www.politicalreflectionmagazine.com) (2010-2023)
- CESRAN Paper Series
- CESRAN Policy Brief
- Turkey Focus Policy Brief

CESRAN International also organises an annual international conference since 2014. Until 2023 it was called as “**International Conference on Eurasian Politics and Society (IEPAS)**”. From 2023, it was renamed as “**CESRAN: Annual Conference on International Studies**”.

[www.cesran.org/call-for-papers](http://www.cesran.org/call-for-papers)

- **Ranked among the top 150 International think tanks**

# Great Power Politics over the Natural Resources in Afghanistan

the rest:  
journal of politics and development  
2024 | vol 14(2) | 133-152  
[www.therestjournal.com](http://www.therestjournal.com)

**Babur Rahmani**

Postgraduate Student at Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University, Türkiye

## KEYWORDS

Afghanistan,  
Great Power Politics,  
Power Struggle,  
Natural Resources,  
Hegemony

Received May 21, 2024  
Revised June 11, 2024  
Accepted June 19, 2024

## ABSTRACT

*Afghanistan has always been the centre of attention of global powers throughout history due to its strategic location and the presence of substantial natural resources. While the hegemony of the U.K. has a strategic and geopolitical dimension, the hegemony of Russia and the U.S. has a strategic dimension, and it is claimed that one of the reasons for the occupation of Afghanistan by these two superpowers is its underground riches. The struggle of the great powers to seize and dominate the world's natural resources, scarce earth resources, has continued extensively from the second half of the 20th century to the present day. Afghanistan has been one of the countries significantly affected by this power struggle. Therefore, in this study, by using the concept of "Great Power Politics", the scope, breadth and seriousness of the struggle between great powers and rising regional powers over Afghanistan's natural resources have been analysed. In this context, Afghanistan's rich underground resources and most of the critical contracts signed with foreign and domestic-foreign companies regarding Afghanistan's natural resources after 2001 were analysed.*

## Introduction

After three decades of a devastating war that destroyed all of Afghanistan's infrastructure facilities, including the Geological Survey Laboratory, new studies were initiated in 2004 in cooperation with the United States Geological Survey (USGS). In 2006, NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey conducted aerial geophysical surveys of Afghanistan's natural resources and estimated the initial value of Afghanistan's minerals to be more than \$3 trillion. In addition, 24 mining areas were identified by analysing the studies conducted by the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the British Geological Survey (BGS), the economic reconnaissance group affiliated with the U.S. Department of Defence and the previous studies conducted by the Soviet Union. Lithium deposits are in Naver, Ghazni, Nimroz, and Farah. Gold and copper deposits in Zarkshan Ghazni, Aynak Logar copper deposits, Shida copper deposits in Herat, copper deposits in Balkhab district of Saripul, Haji Gak iron mine in Bamyan province, gold deposits in Badakhshan and Takhar, Jalyst deposits in Kunduz, oil and gas deposits in the north of Afghanistan, gemstone deposits in Panjshir and Badakhshan, lithium, niobium, barium and other elements in Nangarhar and other provinces. Talc and mechanite deposits were found in Kabul, Jalalabad and Wardak (Orris and Bliss, 2002; Ministry of Mines, 2008).

Until the end of the civil wars and the establishment of the new government of the "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" in 2001, precious stones, talc, gold, coal, etc were not found. Until the end of the civil

wars and the establishment of the new government of the “Islamic Republic of Afghanistan” in 2001, precious stones, talc, gold, coal, etc., were continuously mined and sold illegally by terrorist organisations, smugglers, strongmen, village elders and other irresponsible individuals. With the formation of the new government in 2001, the government of Afghanistan organised and compiled Afghanistan’s national development strategy to prevent illegal mining and smuggling. In this strategy, the government of Afghanistan stated that the rapid growth and development of the national economy depends on extracting Afghanistan’s natural resources and minerals. Therefore, the government of Afghanistan emphasised that the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum has changed its role from a producer to a policy maker to develop and attract private investment (Ministry of Mines, 2008).

This study aims to analyse the value of Afghanistan’s natural resources, the role of these natural resources in the intervention of the great powers in Afghanistan and finally, the struggle of the great powers to obtain influence over these vast and enormous resources. Afghanistan’s underground riches, natural resources, and geopolitical position have attracted the attention of great power politics and global hegemony in the last 100 years.

In the 21st century, the struggle between the great powers is more focused on natural resources such as oil and coal, rare metals and rare earth elements. In fact, economic and technological power has overtaken military power and constitutes the basic need of the technological age. It can be said that dominating natural resources means dominating global politics and hegemony. The emergence of China as one of the most considerable economic and military powers has further clarified this issue. Europe’s continuous colonisation of Africa, the struggle of great powers to establish hegemony in countries such as Libya, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, etc., the institutionalisation of soft power strategy in Central Asian countries, and the constant struggle of great powers such as Russia, America, the European Union and China to capture Afghanistan’s natural resources represent the value and role of natural resources in great power politics. Therefore, this study analyses Afghanistan’s mineral and natural resources after 2001 by foreign, foreign-domestic companies and countries. By analysing the contracts, the policies of the great powers and the struggle between the great powers in Afghanistan are investigated

## **Methodology**

This research aims to investigate the great power politics on Afghanistan’s natural resources. To achieve the study’s primary aim, qualitative research by content analysis of the data is conducted: news agencies, documents, official statements, journals, news media, official websites, articles and books.

Since the subject of the study is “Great Power Politics on Afghanistan’s Natural Resources”, it is necessary to investigate and analyse the tenders, contracts and agreements of the mines in Afghanistan after 2001. From this point of view, to examine the policy of the great powers on this issue, it has been tried to investigate and analyse a large number of tenders and significant contracts that can explain and clarify the policy of the great powers regarding Afghanistan’s natural resources and to collect reliable data. In this context, it is tried to analyse many tenders and contracts related to mines in Afghanistan after 2001 by addressing all details, issues and cases. In addition, a table of tenders, countries, companies, mines and the date of signing the contract has been drawn to present the collected data in a more specific and concise manner. Carrying out this research tries to fill the gaps in this field as much as possible.



## Literature Review

Afghanistan's natural resources have been one of the most important reasons for the great power struggle in Afghanistan. The struggle between Britain and the Soviet Union, which started in the 18th century and peaked in the 19th century (Daultrey, 2016), continued in the 20th century with changing actors. The United States replaced the United Kingdom, but Russia maintained its position in this struggle. In the 21st century, the actors of the struggle changed again, and China filled the space created by the declining Russian influence (Farhadi and Bekdaş, 2021). It seems that the course of international politics and the field of power politics no longer have the colour and character of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Undoubtedly, in the 21st century, regional actors and rising powers are among the key actors and influencers in international politics and power politics. They are both active and passive actors in great power politics (Stuenkel, 2020; Dag and Tufekci, 2022). Since Afghanistan is one of the most central and attractive countries of the Middle Ages, it has been the focal point of great power politics and the struggle between global powers and rising powers to establish global and regional hegemony and dominate natural resources and strategic areas by getting the work on natural resources in Afghanistan either with state or private companies. In the last 40 years, and especially in the previous 24 years, it has attracted the attention of great powers such as China, America, the European Union and Russia, as well as rising powers such as India, Turkey and Iran (Hussain et al. 2023; Foster, 2008; Gdl and Raof, 2021).

The issue of "Great Power Politics over Afghanistan's Natural Resources" is one of the hottest and most prominent issues of the last 40 years and can be seen as the issue that has always attracted the attention of the politics of the world's great powers. However, a few articles and studies treat the theory of great power politics as a direct variable and Afghanistan as a dependent variable or vice versa.

To start with the most recent one, Raziq Hussain et al. (2023) analyse the concept of the "new great game" in terms of Afghanistan and aim to understand the actions and objectives of global and regional powers in Afghanistan. Hussain et al. argue that Afghanistan is the centre of the new great game in this work. The main thesis of the research by John Foster (2008) is based on the argument that Afghanistan is of great importance to Canada because of its strategic importance as an energy bridge between Central Asia and South Asia, as well as in the geopolitical competition for control of oil and gas in Central Asia.

On the other hand, the main thesis of the article by Alia Tasleem et al. (2021) is based on the political-strategic position of Afghanistan, a critical geography for global players, which has always influenced Pakistan. Ahmed K. Khan (2011) analysed the importance of Afghanistan in the geopolitical framework and made sense of Afghanistan's role in the international system. To do so, he tried to centralise the intervention of the two great powers (the Soviet Union and the United States). Serpil Gdl and Farida Labib Raof (2021) have seen Afghanistan as a corridor in Central Asia, the centre of attention of great powers in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries and the key to the new great game.

However, almost none of the studies have specifically addressed the issue of great power politics over Afghanistan's natural resources, with data to be obtained from Afghanistan's mining tenders and contracts. All of the studies on this subject are entirely different from the subject of this research, both in terms of subject matter and content. Among the recent publications, only three articles stand out, which are somewhat close to the topic of this study but quite different in terms of content, data collection and analysis.

Firstly, Kenan Aslanlı (2023) bases the main argument of his study on the connection between the danger of the "curse of natural resources" and the geopolitical power struggle. Moreover, this article tries to analyse the regional geopolitical power struggle for natural resources, including rare earth



elements and Afghanistan's oil and gas, in interaction with the country's internal factors (political and institutional). Secondly, the study's central thesis by Adib Farhadi and Ayman Bekdash (2021) is based on Afghanistan's lithium, which is America's strategic focal point. This study emphasises that the U.S. needs Afghanistan's lithium to compete with China, which controls most of the world's rare earth elements, including lithium. And lastly, the main argument of the study by Sally Daultrey (2016) is the competition between China, America and India to obtain Afghanistan's rare earth element resources. While this study touches on the history of Afghanistan's mines, more effort has been made to analyse the importance of Afghanistan's geopolitical position. In general, it can be said that this article tries to analyse the foreign policies of actors such as China, America and India by considering their interests and thoughts in Afghanistan.

One of the common points of these three works with the research is that they take the struggle between the great powers over the natural resources in Afghanistan at the core of their research. However, in academic terms, the data and reasons that can prove the thesis of the great powers' rivalry in Afghanistan may be considered insufficient. It must be said that none of these studies has specified the name of the mine, the tender conditions, the time, date and place of the tender, the terms and conditions of the contract, which mine, which company and their countries, on which date, between which parties and under which conditions the contract was signed.

The post-2001 case study of great power politics through tenders and contracts regarding Afghanistan's natural resources requires a more detailed analysis. Since no research or study examines this issue precisely and in detail, it aims to fill this literature gap. The limited number of articles written on this subject and their inadequacy in terms of content and data convinced us that this research should be carried out to eliminate the deficiencies in this subject.

## **1. Theoretical Framework: Great Power Politics**

Historically, the politics of great powers has always been associated with the issue of power transition and devolution. This change in international politics has always been intertwined with the concept of power transfer (Chegnizadeh, 2007). The graph of great powers has constantly fluctuated throughout international politics, but economic and technological changes have always influenced these fluctuations and changes. From the advent of the largest merchant ships after 1500 and the subsequent invention of the steam engine to the present day (the age of technology, communication and information), it represents the interdependence of military and economic power. (Kennedy, 2001). The point that brings us to the hidden truths in the causes of change and power transfer in the international system is the examination of the power pyramid and the factors that effectively create stability and crisis in this pyramid (Chegnizadeh, 2007). Historically, the main factor causing crises in the international system has been the increasing military and economic capabilities of rising powers (Larson, 2015) and the decline and weakening of the power of the global hegemon (Demir, 2021). Undoubtedly, participation, the degree of material power and the degree of relations between the great powers and political-economic dependencies play a decisive and vital role in understanding the evolution, transformation and development of relations in the international system (Chegnizadeh, 2007).

As Paul Kennedy points out in his book "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers", the great powers, which usually have relative or absolute hegemony in international relations, will never remain as fixed and unchanging hegemonies. One of the main reasons for this change is the uneven growth rate among societies, the imbalance in social development among societies, and the structural and technological developments that make one society superior and stronger than the other (Kennedy, 2001: 14).

Considering the dynamics of the last two decades, it can be argued that the world order is changing, and rising powers are challenging the traditional boundaries created by the global hegemonic power between the centre and the periphery, reorganising and recreating international alliances and coalitions (Mohammadi and Aram, 2023). According to Ikenberry, all these processes lead the international system towards a redesigned new global order (Ikenberry, 2018: 7-23). The 21st century can be viewed as an era of transition in which the foundations of the world order based on Western values are shaken (Şimşek, 2019: 29-40). To prove this theory of trends and processes, the multiplicity and diversity of powers in the new world order, the redistribution of international power and wealth, the emergence of new institutions parallel to Western institutions, the challenge to American hegemony in the international system, the crisis in the values of the liberal international order (Mohammadi and Aram, 2023: 372-373; Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies, 2024), and the importance of Asia-Pacific in the global governance structure (Şimşek, 2019: 29-40).

First, states with great power potential increase their domestic production capacities, anchor in major international markets to obtain significant financial resources and increase the national growth rate. In the second step, they spend a large part of their financial resources on weapons, equipment and subsidiary industries for their land, naval and air forces (Ikenberry, 2018: 14). This scenario shows that great economic power is needed to create, strengthen and protect a great military power, while a strong and great military power is required to preserve a great economic power (Rosato, 2011: 49; Larson, 2015: 328). From this point of view, it is clear that military and economic power are two sides of the same coin and are complementary to each other, and it is thought that one is incomplete without the other. Great powers, by virtue of possessing great military and economic power, seek to use it to influence the interests of weak governments and other actors (Chegnizadeh, 2007: 11).

In fact, the international system is considered a hierarchical system reflecting the interests of the great powers (Levy, 1983). Since the system based on the interdependence of power and security is created by the great powers (Levy, 1983), they (the great powers) create and determine institutions, structures and norms, determine what is possible and what is impossible in international politics, set and change the rules of the game (Chegnizadeh, 2007: 10). In general, great powers play an essential role in maintaining and managing the order of the international system (Levy, 1983). This action shows the anarchic and hierarchical nature of the international system. The great powers seek to consolidate and enhance their global hegemony. At the same time, second and third-class states have as much influence on the international system as they can influence the behaviour and policies of the great powers (Chegnizadeh, 2007: 11; Kim, 1992).

Neo-realists believe that the politics of great powers, their behaviour, actions and reactions, the reduction and enhancement of their military and economic capabilities, and their exit from or participation in the international system are the keys to understanding global politics (Chegnizadeh, 2007). This implies that the ultimate determinants and decision-makers in the international system are the great powers (Wendt, 1992; Chegnizadeh, 2007). As Chegnizadeh puts it: "The international system means the system of great powers" (2007: 11).

Suppose a definition of great powers and great power politics is made by considering the above characteristics. In that case, firstly, the classics say that a great power is a power that can fight against the unity of more than one country, has the potential to maintain its capability and superiority over other great powers, can wage major wars and emerge victorious from these wars (Chegnizadeh, 2007). Bear F. Braumoeller argues that great powers are states whose resources and capabilities are more significant than their neighbours (Braumoeller, 2008: 77). Rothstein believes that a great power can secure itself and control its destiny's security. He adds that while small powers need alliances and the help of other countries to ensure their own security, they usually cannot directly control their own destiny (Wright, 2004; Chegnizadeh, 2007: 12). Hoffman believes that great power

can ensure its security without affecting its independence, while small powers are often forced to choose between security or independence (Chegnizadeh, 200: 12). According to Michael Howard, great powers can control issues and activities beyond their borders (Levy, 1983). The conclusion that can be drawn from these definitions is that great powers play a fundamental and critical role in the security of the international system, have different military power than other powers/countries, and have different interests, behaviours and policies than others.

Therefore, great powers have transnational actions, see their interests beyond their borders and have a global perspective on their interests (Chegnizadeh, 2007). In addition, economic development, level of technology, education and military resources are among the factors that determine whether a country has the necessary prerequisites for a great power position and which countries can become great powers (Ross, 1999: 81). Great powers plan laws, institutions, norms and principles, structures, and systems in a way to ensure their own interests (Chegnizadeh, 2007: 13-15).

According to Mearsheimer, the great powers pursue two types of strategies to achieve these goals: 1- increasing power, which includes war, baiting, blackmail, attrition and provocation. 2- the strategy of containing the aggressor involves silencing, balancing, delegating responsibility and monitoring (Pourahmadi Mibedi and Khushkar, 2018: 59; Mearsheimer, 2001). For example, Russia's efforts to establish regional hegemony in Central Eurasia, protect and control strategic areas, and weaken and block the influence of Western factors in the region (Sani Abadi et al. 2018: 60).

According to Deborah Welch Larson, behaviours indicative of rising power are competing through economic development in countries allied with the ruling power, efforts to build regional security and financial institutions (because great powers must first of all assure their neighbouring countries of preventing mutual dangers, as well as the establishment of order and institutions based on the interests of all parties), and military modernisation to confront the international dominant power (Larson, 2015: 332). Moreover, rising great powers usually pursue three strategies to expand their geopolitical identity: convergence, stabilisation and partnership strategy.

In the form of convergence strategy, great powers try to bring together neighbouring countries and countries with a common geo-economic or geo-cultural identity under the umbrella of a union or organisation. Thus, with this strategy, they implement deterrence diplomacy while simultaneously creating a single regional diplomacy (Sediq and Sharqi, 2016: 122).

In the form of a stabilisation strategy, great powers try to prevent crises and instability from spreading to the organisation and the union. To implement this policy, great powers try to ensure stability and security around their borders by providing financial and development aid to neighbouring countries (Sediq and Sharqi, 2016: 122-123). In the theory of great power politics, powers establish political relations and alliances with neighbouring countries to prevent threats and rival activities (Larson, 2015: 337).

In the form of engagement strategy, great powers seek to actively participate in global and international affairs, playing more of an official, judge and active leader role. Issues such as terrorism, the environment, regional wars, human rights, the fight against poverty and crises are among the issues that pave the way for the great powers' political participation strategy (Sediq and Sharqi, 2016: 122-123). Great powers seek to expand and increase their political power through economic development (Ross, 1999) and the expansion of trade borders (Larson, 2015). More precisely, it can be argued that economic development is a potential incentive for the emergence of great powers (Ross, 1999). Rising great powers seek influence in neighbouring countries as allies or subordinates to secure their borders and fend off potential threats. Finally, to present themselves as a great and influential power in the world and the international arena, they seek to criticise and reject

the decisions and activities of the world's dominant power and challenge international laws, norms and institutions that defend the interests of the Power (Larson, 2015).

Shaun Breslin believes that the critical determinants of the global role and influence of emerging great powers are three essential considerations. The first is the need for resources and the availability of the necessary facilities to sustain domestic growth—the second is the sale of arms and the transfer of technology to others. And thirdly, prudence (Breslin, 2010: 7). In this context, Shaun Breslin cites the rise of China as an example; firstly, China's strengthening of its extensive relations with countries with raw materials, industrial and food resources, including Iran, which supplies 10 per cent of China's oil needs and has strained relations with the West (Breslin, 2010). Meanwhile, the importance and scope of China's global economy can be counted among the points distinguishing China's position as a major global power (Deng and G. Moore, 2004). As for the second point, Shaun Breslin mentions that China has been accused of exporting military technology to Syria, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Libya and North Korea and has also been accused of involvement in armed conflicts in Nepal, Sudan, Burma, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Liberia and Burundi through arms sales. Shaun Breslin emphasises that China, as a rising power, is indirectly making it more difficult for the liberal West to pursue its global goals and policies (Breslin, 2010: 7-8). On the third point, Shaun Breslin reminds us that China should be cautious in global economic equations and activities. He states that many developing countries are concerned about China's growth because cheap imports of Chinese products and the influx of Chinese businessmen into global markets have created severe problems for domestic producers in Latin America and Africa (Breslin, 2010: 7-8).

As a rising great power, China's global policies and measures to establish regional and extra-regional organisations, norms, and structures can be seen as aimed at creating an alternative to structures and institutions that defend the interests of powers such as the West and the U.S. (Breslin, 2010; Hasnat and Awan, 2016). Shaun Breslin refers to China's position in global equations as a "responsible and dissatisfied great power" (Breslin, 2010). The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was established in June 2001 to promote mutual investment and trust among China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (Deng and G. Moore, 2004: 126). The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, 2024) has gradually evolved into a more institutionalised form of cooperation on a range of issues from counter-terrorism to trade (Deng and G. Moore, 2004: 126; Hasnat and Awan, 2016). At the same time, China's confidence building in Central Asia, South Asia and Africa, its avoidance of political rhetoric, China's investments in Europe, Australia, North America, Asian countries and Africa have made China a potential primary source of much-needed investment and a possible substitute for reducing the consumption of Western goods and stabilising the global economy (Breslin, 2010: 3). Chinese leaders now present the SCO as a model of regional cooperation that enhances collective security for the participants and does not threaten any outside party (Deng and G. Moore, 2004). All this may represent China's global policies and China's struggle as a global great power with the structures it has built.

The E.U., NAFTA, APEC, ASEAN, etc., are regional organisations led by states along economic and political lines for a particular set of political and economic interests and as a project designed for a specific regional space (Held and McGrew, 2014; Dağ and Tüfekçi, 2022). Although the regional organisations that have emerged in recent years have been founded on economic interests and movements, it seems inevitable that there will be unity on political and deeper issues such as the E.U. In a globalised world, great power policy requires strengthening relations with developing countries, superior economic markets and rising powers (Deng and G. Moore, 2004). In fact, China is seeking to strengthen its great power policy through soft diplomacy (Larson, 2015). The development of China's relations with France, Germany, the European Union and Russia demonstrates this (Deng and G. Moore, 2004: 126).



To prevent the emergence of another potential power on the stage of global competition, the great powers that hold global hegemony try to strengthen their positions in the regions near the emerging potential power. In this context, the policies of the United States and the European Union in Georgia, Ukraine, Afghanistan and Central Asia are examples (Spanger, 2021). On the other hand, the U.N. (United Nations), IMF (International Monetary Fund), WTO (World Trade Organisation), GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), global NGOs, A.F. (Amnesty International), World Bank, Oxfam, News Media, Doctors Without Borders, etc. (Hardt and Negri, 2001; Dağ and Tüfekçi, 2022). are among the tools that pave the way for intervention in countries that provide the interests of the global hegemonic power and pursue the economic and strategic interests of the hegemonic power (Kloby, 2005; Hardt and Negri, 2001). This is because it is not military power but moral instruments that make the ground favourable for the hegemonic power to intervene in distant and nearby geographies and pursue its interests. In fact, moral instruments are a potential auxiliary power for global hegemonic power and prepare the ground for the legitimate use of military power. Ethical intervention will pave the way for military intervention, and thus, there will be no need to seek permission and approval from the international organisation for military intervention (Hardt and Negri, 2001).

On the other hand, according to Yong Deng and Thomas J. Moore, the rising great powers are not trying to usurp the position of the leading great power, the United States of America, but they are pursuing strategic economic and political interests in international relations (Deng and Moore, 2004). According to him, rising powers are less concerned with the hegemon's power and more about how to use it. For example, from the joint declaration signed in 2003 between France and China that China is committed to promoting "multilateralism" and the words of Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi: "China does not seek a confrontational struggle with great powers, but harmonious coexistence with all powers, including developing countries" (Deng and Moore, 2004: 122). This means that the global scene of great power politics has changed, and the game of great powers no longer has a classical colour and has shifted to modern, soft, strategic and economic directions (Deng and Moore, 2004).

Countries, including the Central Asian countries, considered the battlegrounds of the great powers, enable the entry of great powers due to the need for economic development, trade, transport and export. The great powers in this geography are pursuing a new great game that started in Central Asia in 1991 (Iqbal and Afridi, 2017: 235). Intervention is one of the prominent strategies of the great powers' policies to reveal and declare their global hegemony (Kloby, 2005: 311). Political, security and economic dynamics are among the variables that influence great powers to intervene in regional equations (Mohammadi and Aram, 2023: 68). These dynamics bring many opportunities and threats in areas such as energy, world trade, arms sales, international terrorism and diplomacy (Rye Olsen, 2015). Great powers pursue a policy of colonising or controlling other countries to assert their global hegemony by intervening in third-world countries and weak powers (Kloby, 2005: 311). The interventions of great powers have military-political, diplomatic, and offensive forms (Spanger, 2021). In addition, supporting a specific political group against the authority, providing material support to a group, organisation or a particular party, intervention in the form of armed and military aid in support of a group or a specific party, and finally, direct military intervention and occupation are among the interventions mentioned above (Kloby, 2005: 311).

On the other hand, some political science theorists (Kupchan, 2019) believe that the established Western order has a significant capacity for the integration and participation of great powers, which is why they see China as one of the major emerging powers that effectively and actively pursues its goals within the Western and American established order (Kupchan, 2019: 8). Liberals also believe that global interdependence is a deterrent against conflicts in the foreign policy of great powers. This is because they believe that conflict and war will bring enormous human and financial damage to both sides of the war (Larson, 2015: 325). China's extensive activities and investments in African

countries, Afghanistan, Pakistan, several European countries, Latin America, Central Asia, countries and countries allied with the West and the United States (Rye Olsen, 2015), primarily through large corporations such as CNPC and MCC (MCC, 2024; CNPC, 2024), show that China as a major global power is well integrated into the order created by the West (Rye Olsen, 2015). Constructivists also see China interacting with other powers and believe it is on its way to accepting international norms through participation in international organisations (Larson, 2015: 325). Charles A. Kupchan's remarks suggest that the great powers no longer seek military confrontation as in 1914, 1939 and 1947. Instead of tensions and conflicts, great powers prefer ways that benefit both or more than one party (Kupchan, 2019: 4). Even though countries' interests are different. The interests of one great power are not the same for another great power. Great powers have many common interests that should be carefully evaluated in the process of globalisation (Deng and Moore, 2004). In this case, he cites the presence of the United States in Japan, South Korea and Guam as an example; he believes that the presence of the United States in these countries is better for China because in the absence of the United States in these countries, Japan and South Korea may pursue nuclear weapons enrichment, which is the biggest threat to China (Kupchan, 2019: 4). In this way, the U.S. has somehow helped prevent a nuclear arms race around China (Kupchan, 2019: 4).

Thompson argues that great powers decide with whom to ally and which rivals to fight based on four variables: proximity, maritime-trade orientation, similarity (culture, regime type, ideology and race) and innovative nature. He argues that alliances without these variables have a different strategic orientation and are likely to collapse (Rasler and Thompson, 2015: 310). According to Charles A. Kupchan (2009) and William Thompson (2015), military confrontation of great powers in the 21st century seems impractical, as none of the powers involved in the war will benefit from it. If we look at the relations between the U.S. and China in this context, we can see that the two factors that prevent war and conflict between the great powers are, firstly, nuclear weapons, which must be restrained and cautious, and secondly, the economic interdependence between the U.S. and China. The strengths of the great powers, which can be considered an advantage against regional or more minor powers, seem to be an obstacle against other great powers.

- In Charles' words: "Stronger mutual interest in curbing geopolitical competition" (Kupchan, 2019).

The war between Russia and Ukraine has further emphasised that the economy and global needs make countries interdependent. The West's need for Russian gas, as well as the West's, Central Asia's and South Asia's need for Ukrainian grain products, have made this more evident than ever. In fact, the Ukrainian war has shown that the conflict between the great powers is hardly recognisable and predictable. And the great powers have proved that they will not engage in direct military confrontation even if the expected losses are small (Iqbal and Afridi, 2017). On the other hand, great power policy is, in the first step, an attempt to strengthen and maintain the existing position and, in the second step, to expand it (Rye Olsen, 2015). In terms of realism theory, great power policy can unite rival powers against a larger power that limits the interests of both (Iqbal and Afridi, 2017: 9), such as the proximity of Moscow and Beijing, which was well expressed by the Shanghai cooperation organisation in 2001 (Iqbal and Afridi, 2017: 9). However, this cooperation of two great powers against a common rival and a larger power does not mean that the rivalry between the two cooperating powers is excluded; in the theory of great power politics, the political scene is always active and great powers are always active rivals of each other despite little cooperation between them. The investments and bilateral agreements between China and the Central Asian republics regarding the vast energy resources of Central Asia undoubtedly do not please Russia (Iqbal and Afridi, 2017: 9).

If the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan from the perspective of realism is analysed, it can be seen that to secure their interests. The great powers can overnight overturn the most time-consuming, largest and costliest project, which is the creation of a government under their control. Government

or regime change is one of the biggest games and strategies the great powers use in the regions and countries under their control, just like the result that the U.S. failed to get from the republic under its control in Afghanistan. It seems America could not continue in Afghanistan against China's economic power, infrastructure projects and huge investments. Therefore, the U.S. has implemented a government and regime change strategy in Afghanistan (U.S. Department of State, 2014). However, the creation, recruitment, training and development of terrorist groups may be the projects and policies of great powers. Still, these policies and projects seem to be carried out to enhance the hegemony of the great power, challenging the security of the borders of potential powers and creating problems and distractions for its rivals (Iqbal and Afridi, 2017). In the 1990s (Zia, 2022) and 2021 (BBC News, 2021), the rise of instability in Afghanistan and Moscow's concern about the rise of extremism and the threat that this danger poses to the territory of Russia's allies in the first step, In both decades, Moscow was forced to send a large military force to Tajikistan to prevent instability and extremism in Afghanistan from spreading to the territory of Russia's allies and eventually to Russia itself (Iqbal and Afridi, 2017; BBC News, 2021).

Throughout history, Afghanistan has always been one of the countries at the centre of attention of great global powers in terms of geopolitics, geoeconomics, and even geoculture. This country has experienced many global hegemony throughout history. The hegemony of Great Britain in the 19th and 20th centuries, the hegemony of the Soviet Union in 1979 and the hegemony of the United States of America in 2001 are among the bitter experiences and black history in the Afghanistan calendar. One reason that makes Afghanistan attractive to global great powers is its geopolitical and strategic location. Afghanistan's neighbourhood with China, Iran, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Iran makes it an essential bridge for Russia's access to the Indian Ocean (Pasricha, 2023) and a gateway for China's Silk Road and One Belt One Road project (whereby China can institutionalise its global hegemony by creating a vast international trade corridor linking Central Asia to the East and the East to the West) (The Economist, 2023). For the United States, a solid government-controlled and supported by the United States and guaranteeing America's interests in the region, or a grenade and unstable and tense geography that will cause headaches for America's opponents such as China, Russia and Iran, is intended as a consumer market for Iran, a supplier of cheap labour and proxy combat forces (Al-Arabiya Persian, 2018).

In addition to being considered one of the most strategic countries in the world from a geopolitical point of view, Afghanistan has attracted the attention and policy of great global powers and is of extreme importance for them due to its substantial natural resources estimated to be worth over 3 trillion dollars (SIGAR, 2024; Najafizada, 2021; Noorzai, 2021). Enormous natural resources such as lithium, uranium, beryllium, tin, iron, copper, talc, barium, quartz, oil and gas, gold, precious stones, aluminium, lead, zinc, silver and other rare earth elements (Zaki, 2015; Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, 2019) are among the natural resources that the great powers have always tried to obtain in Afghanistan.

## **2. Natural Resources of Afghanistan**

Afghanistan is a country dependent on foreign aid despite its vast natural resources worth \$1-3 trillion (Noorzai, 2021). The government, which had survived with billions of dollars of aid over the last 24 years, collapsed and crumbled with the cessation of U.S. aid and the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a country that has always been the centre of attention of the world's great states and superpowers due to its valuable and precious natural resources. Afghanistan's precious stones, such as lapis lazuli, rubies, emeralds and garnets, are among the gems with a global value of billions of dollars, uranium, lithium beryllium and dozens of other rare earth elements (Arredondas, 2021; Horowitz, 2021), Afghanistan being one of the top 5 countries in the world in terms of iron and copper resources (Montgomery, 2021), large deposits of gold, copper, iron, aluminium and other metals, as well as extensive oil and gas resources (Arredondas, 2021).



## **2.1. Companies Receiving Afghanistan's Mining Tenders After 2001**

### **2.1.1. Steel Authority of India Ltd (Sail) and Haji Gak Iron Mine**

The tender of this mine was held on 28.11.2011 (Rostami, 2013), and India and Canada won this tender (Radio Azadi, 2011). This large iron mine was divided into four blocks: A, B, C and D for mining and tender and SAIL company won the B, C, and D blocks of this mine (Hasht Sob, 2012).

### **2.1.2 Block A of Haji Gak Iron Mine and Kilo Goldmines Ltd.**

In the tender held by the Ministry of Mines of Afghanistan on 28.11.2011 for the mining of Haji Gak iron mine (Rostami, 2013), the Canadian company Kilo Goldmines Ltd. won the A block of this mine (Hasht Sob, 2012).

### **2.1.3 Centar (Afghan Gold and Mineral Company, Turkish-Afghan Mining Company), Badakhshan Gold Mine and Balkhab Copper Mine**

These two minerals are among the precious metals for which the Afghanistan government signed an exploration and mining contract with Centar Company in Washington in 2018 (Varshan, 2018).

### **2.1.4. China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Amu Derya Oil Field**

The Afghanistan government signed a 25-year contract with China's CNPC through an open and international tender in 2011 for the tender of Qashgari, Zamarodsai and Bazarkami three blocks in the Amu Derya oil field, with a total oil reserve estimated to be 87 million barrels (Mandegar, 2012).

### **2.1.5. Fortescue Metals Group**

The government of Afghanistan signed an exclusivity agreement with Fortescue in 2020. This agreement covers the exploration and extraction of gold, rare minerals and other metals in 17 provinces of Afghanistan, covering a large area and numerous mines (Loewenstein, 2022).

### **2.1.6. Metallurgical Corporation of China (MCC) and Aynak Logar Copper Mine**

The government of the Republic of Afghanistan awarded the Aynak Logar copper mining contract to China's MCC in 2008 with an initial investment of \$3 billion (O'Donnell, 2014).

### **2.1.7. Dragon Oil, Turkish Petroleum, Ghazanfar Group and Afghan – Tajik Oil Field**

The Afghan-Tajik oil field agreement between Afghanistan, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates was signed in 2013. According to preliminary investigations, this region has 3 trillion cubic metres of gas (BBC News, 2013).

### **2.1.8. Herat Shida Copper Mine and Silk Road Mining and Development Company**

The contract for the Shida copper project was put out to tender on 16 March 2012, and an exploration and exploitation contract was signed between the winning company (Silk Road Mining and Development) and the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum of Afghanistan on 12 September 2018 (Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, 2019).

### **2.1.9. Contract for Totimidan Block of Amu Derya Oil Field and Turkish Petroleum, Çalık Energy and Bayat Energy**

The contract for the Totimidan block of the Amu Darya oil field was signed on 19 November 2015 between Afghanistan's Ministry of Mines and a consortium consisting of Turkish Petroleum, Çalık Enerji and local Bayat Enerji. This oil and gas project includes Faryab and Jawzjan provinces with vast oil and gas resources (Bayat Energy, 2022).

### 2.1.10. Peshgaman Sanat Majd Company and Herat Cement and Pahlavanan Coal Factory Contract

A contract was signed on 16.01.2012 between the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum of Afghanistan and Iranian Peshgaman Sanat Majd Company officials for establishing the Herat cement factory and extracting the Pahlavanan coal mine (Noori, 2012).

### 2.1.11. Xinjiang Central Asia Petroleum and Gas Co. (Capeic) and Taliban and Amu Derya Oil Field Agreement

On 05.01.2023, the Taliban-led government of Afghanistan (Yawar, 2023) signed an oil and gas extraction contract in Kabul with CAPEIC (CNN Turk, 2023) for the Amu Derya field, which covers an area of 4500 square kilometres in northern Afghanistan and includes Faryab, Saripul and Jawzjan provinces (Putz, 2023).

**Table 1. Companies and Countries Struggling to Get the Same Mining Contract**

No.	Minefield	Companies entering the tender	Enter the tender, country of companies
1	Blocks B, C, D of Haji Gak Iron Mine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACATCO</li> <li>SAIL</li> <li>KILO GOLDMINES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USA</li> <li>India</li> <li>Canada</li> <li>Iran</li> </ul>
2	Badakhshan Gold Mine and Balkhab Copper Mine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Afghan Gold and Mineral Company</li> <li>Turkish-Afghan Mining Company</li> <li>SILK ROAD MINING and DEVELOPMENT COMPANY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USA</li> <li>England</li> <li>Türkiye</li> <li>Canada\ Australia</li> </ul>
3	Amu Darya Oil Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC)</li> <li>Buccaneer Energy</li> <li>Tethys Petroleum</li> <li>Shahzad International</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>China</li> <li>Australia</li> <li>England</li> <li>Pakistan</li> </ul>
4	Exclusivity agreements regarding drilling and mining in 17 provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fortescue Metals Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Australia</li> </ul>
5	Aynak Logar Copper Mine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MCC</li> <li>PhelpsDodge</li> <li>Hunter Dickinson</li> <li>Spring Consortium</li> <li>Kazakh copper company</li> <li>Strike Force</li> <li>Leco Indian</li> <li>Zijin Mining</li> <li>Gazprom Export</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>China</li> <li>USA</li> <li>Canada</li> <li>Australia</li> <li>Kazakhstan</li> <li>Russia</li> <li>India</li> </ul>
6	Afghan_Tajik Oil Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dragon oil</li> <li>Turkish Petroleum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>United Arab Emirates</li> <li>Türkiye</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ghazanfar Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic company</li> <li>USA</li> <li>Kuwait</li> <li>India</li> <li>Pakistan</li> </ul>
7	Herat Shida Copper Mine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SILK ROAD MINING and DEVELOPMENT COMPANY</li> <li>AFCCO</li> <li>AMG (Afghan Mining Group)</li> <li>KEM (Kazakh development and mining)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canada\ Australia</li> <li>India</li> <li>United Arab Emirates</li> <li>Canada and Kazakhstan</li> </ul>
8	Totimidan Block of the Amu Darya Oil Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Türkiye OILS</li> <li>CALIK ENERGY</li> <li>STALE ENERGY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Türkiye</li> <li>Domestic company</li> </ul>
9	Block A of Haji Gak Iron Mine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KİLO GOLDMINES Ltd.</li> <li>ACATCO</li> <li>SAIL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canada</li> <li>USA</li> <li>India</li> <li>Iran</li> </ul>
10	Herat Cement and Pahlavanan Coal Factory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PESHGAMAN ART MAJD COMPANY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Iran</li> </ul>
11	Amu Darya Oil Field Agreement with Taliban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Xinjiang Central Asia Petroleum and Gas Co. (CAPEIC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>China</li> </ul>

**Source:** Created by the author.

**Table 2. Companies and Countries Receiving Mining Tenders**

No.	Mine Name	Companies that won the tender	The country of the company receiving the tender	Date the contracts were signed
one	Blocks B, C, D of Haji Gak Iron Mine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SAIL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India</li> </ul>	2011
2	Badakhshan Gold Mine and Balkhab Copper Mine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Afghan Gold and Mineral Company</li> <li>Turkish-Afghan Mining Company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USA</li> <li>England</li> <li>Türkiye</li> </ul>	2018
3	Amu Darya Oil Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>China</li> </ul>	2011
4	agreements regarding drilling and mining in 17 provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fortescue Metals Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Australia</li> </ul>	2020
5	Aynak Logar Copper Mine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MCC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>China</li> </ul>	2008
6	Afghan-Tajik Oil Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dragon oil</li> <li>Turkish Petroleum</li> <li>Ghazanfar Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>United Arab Emirates</li> <li>Türkiye</li> <li>Domestic company</li> </ul>	2013
7	Herat Shida Copper Mine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SILK ROAD MINING and DEVELOPMENT COMPANY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canada\ Australia</li> </ul>	2018
8	Totimidan Block of the Amu Darya Oil Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Türkiye OILS</li> <li>CALIK ENERGY</li> <li>stale energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Türkiye</li> <li>Domestic company</li> </ul>	2015

9	Block A of Haji Gak Iron Mine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KİLO GOLDMINES Ltd.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canada</li> </ul>	2011
10	Herat Cement and Pahlavanan Coal Factory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PESHGAMAN ART MAJD COMPANY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iran</li> </ul>	2012
11th	Amu Darya Oil Field Agreement with Taliban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Xinjiang Central Asia Petroleum and Gas Co. (CAPEIC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China</li> </ul>	2023

**Source:** Created by the author.

As seen in Table 1, almost all superpowers and rising powers in the world, especially the USA, China, European countries, Russia, Canada, and emerging countries such as India, Turkey, Iran, etc., have been intensively participating in the tender of Afghanistan's mines and these countries have shown great interest in investing and owning Afghanistan's mines. The mining contracts we have discussed and analysed here are among the mines with high economic value in the last 20-22 years, and it seems that many countries are competing to buy these mines. Although the American and European media talk about China's success and victory in the tender competitions of Afghanistan mines, according to the evidence and data obtained from studies and research, they have also seen the success of European countries, India, Turkey, Canada and the United Arab Emirates in these struggles. The absence or weak presence of the United States in these conventions may be surprising and questionable for many. However, research and data show that the United States is indirectly involved in many contracts through European and local companies. Contracts such as the Badakhshan Gold Mine and the Balkhab Copper Mine contract with the Afghan Gold and Mineral Company and the Turkish-Afghan Mining Company, and the Fortescue Metals Group contract for exclusivity in drilling and mining in 17 provinces (Loewenstein, 2022) are among the contracts signed under direct U.S. pressure on the government of Ashraf Ghani. In addition, the contracts that Canada has received seem to be somehow related to the U.S. government. According to a report published in ABN Dari, citing SIGAR (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction), the U.S. government gave \$8 billion in aid to the Taliban during the two years of Taliban rule in Afghanistan (ABN Dari, 2023). This can be interpreted as the U.S. government never giving up on Afghanistan and its underground riches and hopes and aspires to reach it in some way.

It should be noted that Afghanistan's mining tenders and contracts have always faced serious impasses due to widespread corruption in the political and economic structure of the government, the involvement of senior government officials with foreign elements, and the absence of the rule of law.

## Conclusion

Afghanistan is one of the countries that have been the turning point and centre of attention of the great powers in the last century due to its strategic location and substantial natural resources. Despite having great natural wealth, Afghanistan is considered one of the world's poorest countries. One of the main reasons for this poverty is the interventions and occupations of the world's great powers in the last 150 years. Having experienced almost all global hegemonies, including the British domination in the 19th and 20th centuries, the hegemony of the Soviet Union in the second half of the 20th century, and finally, the American hegemony in the 21st century, Afghanistan is a country that cannot stand upright and step into prosperity and freedom due to bitter and black experiences.

The invasion of Afghanistan by the United States of America in 2001 under the name of "Operation Long Term Freedom" has not only made Afghanistan a geography that suits the interests of the United States of America, but the slogan of "Operation Long Term Freedom", in the name of

establishing democracy and showing that Afghanistan is an independent country, has turned Afghanistan into a field of struggle between great powers and rising powers, each of which seeks to achieve its goals in Afghanistan through interaction and cooperation or struggle.

In 2001, with the establishment of the “Islamic Republic of Afghanistan” and the organisation and development of Afghanistan’s national development strategy, it was decided to extract Afghanistan’s natural resources and mineral wealth for the growth and development of the national economy. Thus, Afghanistan’s natural resources and mineral wealth were put up for tender. In this way, Afghanistan has become a field of competition between the great powers, regional powers, emerging powers and national and transnational companies affiliated with these powers. These powers and companies have tried to seize Afghanistan’s natural resources by entering into natural resource tenders and reaching agreements.

The intervention and concentration of forces in Afghanistan seem to continue on a large scale. This widespread intervention and concentration of forces in Afghanistan has forced the great powers and rising powers to cooperate and partner with each other. On the other hand, the tense and disorganised political and cultural atmosphere in Afghanistan has led different countries and powers to interact and get closer to various groups, masses and political parties. This desire and closeness with groups, masses and political parties paved the way for the entry and concentration of different countries and forces into Afghanistan. They encouraged different forces to implement various policies. The intensity of this intervention and the overcrowding of the forces have brought the political and economic atmosphere of Afghanistan to the extent of turning it into a collective battlefield, a battlefield won by any other country except Afghanistan. From this collective battlefield (Afghanistan), the forces struggled to extract the maximum possible spoils. As we have mentioned, any other power and country other than Afghanistan is victorious in this struggle and contest. Therefore, it is challenging to understand which power and which country has triumphed in the struggle between the great powers over Afghanistan’s natural resources. Consequently, it is not possible to determine the winner of the struggle between the great powers over Afghanistan’s natural resources after 2001.

## References

- ABN Dari (2023) America has provided 8 billion dollars of aid to Afghanistan in the last year and a half. ABN Dari. Available at: <https://twitter.com/afbdari/status/1638481225915539459?t=mh1j865hKuGEehhOt59jrQands=08> (accessed 10 November 2023).
- Aslanlı K (2023) Afghanistan’s Natural Resource Riches and the Struggle for Geopolitical Power. *Ulisa* 7(1): 28-39.
- Arredondas M (2021) Economic powers eye Afghanistan’s natural resources, now under Taliban control, with ambition. *Atalayar*. Available at: <https://atalayar.com/en/content/economic-powers-eye-> (accessed 10 November 2023).
- Al-Arabiya Persian (2018) Fatemiyoun Army: Iran Supports and Afghans Make Sacrifices. *Al-Arabiya Persian newspaper*: Available at: <https://farsi.alarabiya.net/views/>
- Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. (2024). Countries of the Asia-Pacific Region. *Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies*. Available at: <https://dkiapcss.edu/about/ap-countries/> (accessed 11 January 2024).

- Bayat Energy (2023) Afghanistan Ministry of Mines and Petroleum Finalizes Totimaidan Exploration Negotiations with Turkiye Petrolleri, Bayat Energy, And Calik Enerji Consortium. Bayat Energy Official website. Available at: <https://www.bayat-energy.com/pages-pr> (accessed 15 December 2023).
- Bayat Energy (2022) Bayat Energy. Bayat Energy Website. Available at: <https://bayat-energy.com/> (accessed 15 December 2023).
- BBC News (2013) Petroleum Contract of the Afghan-Tajik Field. BBC News, Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan/>
- BBC News (2014) Hamid Karzai explained the reasons for not signing the security agreement with America. BBC News, Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan/>
- BBC News (2021) Afghanistan; Putin's Warning About the Danger of Inflow of Radical Islamists. BBC News. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan->
- Braumoeller BF (2008) Systemic Politics and the Origins of Great Power Conflict. *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 77-93.
- Breslin S (2010) China's Emerging Global Role: Dissatisfied Responsible Great Power. *Politics* 30(1): 52-62
- Chegnizadeh GA (2007) China's empowerment: a theoretical approach to change in international politics. *Law and politics research* 9(2).
- CNN Turk (2023) Taliban Administration Signed an Oil Extraction Agreement with a Chinese Company. CNN Turk, Available at: <https://www.cnnturk.com/ekonomi/taliban-yonetimi-cinli->
- CNPC (2024) CNPC official website. Available at: access: <https://www.cnpc.com.cn/en/> (accessed 15 January 2024).
- Dağ R and Tüfekçi Ö (2022) *Great Power Politics in Greater Eurasia, Regional Alliances, Institutions, Projects, and Conflicts*. London: Lexington Books.
- Daultrey S (2016) *Great Games for Great Prizes: Afghanistan's Mineral Wealth and the Regional Security Complex*.
- Demir S (2021) Global Hegemony, the USA, and the Covid-19 Pandemic: An Analysis of the Global Power Transformation Effect of the Pandemic. *Novus Orbis* 3(1): 14-19
- Deng Y and Moore TG (2004) China Views Globalisation: Toward a New Great-Power Politics? *The Washington Quarterly* 27(3): 117-136.
- Euro News (2021) A New Estimate of the Expenses of the 20-Year-Old Asset: America Must Pay for the War in Afghanistan by 2050. Euro news, Available at: <https://parsi.euronews.com/2021/08/17/war-afghanistan->
- Farhadi A and Bekdaş A (2021) *Afghanistan's Lithium as Strategic U.S. Focus in the Great Power Competition*. Oxford: Springer.



- Hardt M and Negri A (2001) *Empire*. Translated by: Abdullah Yılmaz, Third Edition, Istanbul: Ayrıntı Publishing.
- Hasnat SF and Awan Z (2016) Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a Platform for Regional Understanding: Its Economic, Political and Security Potential. *Center for Strategic Research* 21(1): 83-100.
- Hasht Sob (2012) Extortion and looting of Afghanistan Mines. *Hasht Sob Newspaper*, Available at: افغانستان معادن چپاول و تاراج | روزنامه ۸ صبح ( 8 am.media)
- Held D and McGrew A (2014) *Global Transformations, Great Globalisation Discussion*. Second edition, Ankara: Phoenix publications.
- Horowitz J (2021) The Taliban are sitting on \$1 trillion worth of minerals the world desperately needs. *CNN Business*, Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/18/> (accessed 15 December 2023).
- ICE (2022) Amu Darya Basin. Afghanistan Inter-Ministerial Commission of Energy (ICE). Available at: <https://sites.google.com/site/iceafghanistan> (accessed 15 December 2023).
- Ikenberry GJ (2018) The End of Liberal International Order? *international Affairs* 94(1): 7–23.
- Iqbal M and Khan Afridi MK (2017) *New Great Game in Central Asia: Conflicts, Interests and Strategies of Russia, China and United States*. *The Dialogue* 12(3): 229-246.
- Kennedy P (2001) *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. Translated by Birtane Karanakçı, Eighth Edition, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Kim W (1992) Power Transitions and Great Power War from Westphalia to Waterloo. *World Politics* 45(1): 153-172
- Kloby J (2005) *The misery of globalisation; Inequality, Power and Development*. Translation: Orhan Düz. First edition, Istanbul: Current Publishing,
- Kupchan CA (2019) On Great Power Conflict: Entangled or Untangled Alliances? *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 13(4): 3-9
- Larson DW (2015) Will China be a New Type of Great Power? *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 8(4): 323-348.
- Levy S L (1983) *War in the Modern Great Power System: 1495-1975*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Loewenstein A (2022) Britain And Australia's Resource Grab in Afghanistan. Declassified U.K., Available at: <https://declassifieduk.org/britain-and-australias-> (accessed 25 February 2024).
- Mandegar (2012) Amu Darya Oil Meets Internal Needs. *Mandegar Newspaper*, Available at: « آمو نفت | ماندهگار روزنامه | « کندی مرفوع را داخلی های نیازمندی یاد (mandegardaily.com)
- MCC (2024) MCC Official Website. Available at: [http://www.mcc.com.cn/mcc\\_en/aboutmcc/aboutus/](http://www.mcc.com.cn/mcc_en/aboutmcc/aboutus/) (accessed 09 December 2023).



- Mibedi PM and Khushkar AA (2018) Criticism of the book: The Tragedy of the Politics of Great Powers. *Critical Review of Humanities Texts and Programs*. 17th year, No: 8.
- Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (2018) Geological Survey History. Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, Available at: <https://momp.gov.af/dr/> (accessed 11 December 2023).
- Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (2008) Mining Sector Strategy. Ministry of Mines and Petroleum. Available at: Microsoft Word - Mining Sector Strategy- (accessed 11 December 2023).
- Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (2019) Mining Sector Roadmap. Ministry of Mines and Petroleum
- Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (2019) Brief Report of Shida Copper Project. Ministry of Mines and Petroleum. Available at: گزارش مختصر پروژه میدا؛ ش مس پروژہ مختصر گزارش | یداء؛ ش مس پروژہ مختصر گزارش (momp.gov.af) (accessed 17 December 2023).
- Mohammadi B (2020) Democratic Republic of Afghanistan; From the Different Beginning of Taraki to Najib's Surrender. *Etilaat Roz Daily*. Available at: <https://www.etilaaetroz.com/108071/democratic-republic/>
- Montgomery SL (2021) Afghanistan has vast mineral wealth but faces steep challenges to tap it. *The Conversation*, Available at: <https://theconversation.com/afghanistan-has-vast->
- Mohammadi VG and Aram A (2023). Regionalisation of the Intervention of Great Powers and Russia's Middle East Policy. *Iranian Journal of International Politics* 11(2): 1-18
- Najafizada E (2021) U.S., Afghan Study Finds Mineral Deposits Worth \$3 Trillion. *Bloomberg*. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/>
- Noori H (2012) The Contract to Establish a Herat Cement Factory with an Iranian Company was Approved. *Pajhwok News Agency*. Available at: <https://pajhwok.com/fa/2012/01/16/%D9>
- Noorzai R (2021) "What's Keeping Afghanistan's Mineral Wealth Underground?", *VOA News*. Available at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/what-s-keeping-afghanistan>
- O'Donnell L (2014) China's Mcc Turns Back on US\$3b Mes Aynak Afghanistan Mine Deal. *South China Morning Post*, Available at: [China's MCC turns back on US\\$3b Mes Aynak](https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/china/article/2014-07-23/china-mcc-turns-back-on-us-3-billion-mes-aynak-afghanistan-mine-deal)
- Olsen GR (2015) Great power intervention in African armed conflicts. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 28(2): 229-245
- Orris GJ and Bliss JD (2002) Minerals and Mineral Formations of Afghanistan. U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Available at: Microsoft Word - OF02110tst.doc (archive.org) (accessed 11 January 2024).
- Pasricha A (2023) "Russia Steps Up Presence in Indian Ocean", *VOA News*, Available at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/russia-steps-up-presence-in-indian-ocean-/7378276.html> (accessed 11 December 2023).
- Payam Aftab News Agency (2012) Iran is Establishing a Cement Factory in Herat Province. *Payam Aftab News Agency*. Available at: <https://www.payam-aftab.com/fa/news/17115/>

- Putz C (2023) Taliban Settle Oil Deal with Chinese Company. *The Diplomat*, Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2023/01/taliban-settle-oil-deal-with-chinese-company/> (accessed 11 December 2023).
- Rasler K and Thompson W (2015) *Global War and the Political Economy of Structural Change*. Handbook of War Studies.
- Rosato S (2011) Europe's Troubles Power Politics and the State of the European Project. *International Security* 35(4): 45–86
- Ross RS (1999) The Geography of the Peace, East Asia in the Twenty-first Century. *International Security* 23(4): 81-118
- Rostami A (2013) Investigation Report: There is Widespread Financial Corruption in the Ministry of Mines. Pajhwok News Agency, Available at: [دارد وجود معادن وزارت در مالی ه گسترده فساد: تحقیقی گزارش](#) – Pajhwok Afghan News
- Sani Abadi ER and Attar S and Farsi F (2018) Review of Russia's foreign policy based on Mersheimer's theory of great power politics. *Central Eurasian Studies* 12(1): 57-73
- Sediq MI and Sharqi A (2016) European Union and Great Powers. *International Studies Journal* (3): 121-129
- SIGAR (2024) Quarterly Report to The United States Congress. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). Available at: <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2023-01-30qr.pdf> (accessed 11 January 2024).
- Simsek I (2019) Global Governance in the International System and the G20. *International Journal of Economic Research* 5(4): 29-40
- Spanger HJ (2021) *Great Power Predicaments and Their Role in the Caucasus Conflicts*. CAandC Press AB.
- Stuenkel O (2020) *Emerging Powers and BRICS*. Oxford Bibliographies.
- The Economist (2023) How China's Belt and Road Initiative is Changing, the Many Motivations Behind Xi Jinping's Key Foreign Policy. Available at: <https://www.economist.com/the-economist> (accessed 03 January 2023).
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (2024) The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Available at: <https://eng.sectso.org> (accessed 11 March 2024).
- Varshan A (2018) Signing of the Contract for Afghanistan's Two Large Gold and Copper Mines in Washington. VOA (Voice of America), Available at: [واشننگتن در افغانستان مس](#) (darivoa.com)
- Wendt A (1992) Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics. *International Organization* 46(2): 391-425
- Wright T (2004) How do great power democracies cope with adverse power shifts in the international system? For The ISA Annual Conference, Montreal 2004.
- Yawar MY (2023) Afghanistan's Taliban Administration in Oil Extraction Deal with Chinese Company. Reuters, Available at: [Afghanistan's Taliban administration in oil](#)

Zaki M (2015) Afghanistan's Mines, Contracts and Challenges. 1st Edition, Wazha Publishing.

Zia S (2022) War and peace in Tajikistan: Is the risk of repeating the events of 30 years ago serious? BBC News, Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/persian/world>



[www.cesran.org](http://www.cesran.org)

Tower Court, Oakdale Road, York YO30 4XL, UK

the  
rest  
Journal of Politics and Development

ISSN 2632-4911

## Call for Papers

*The Rest: Journal of Politics and Development* endeavours to become the foremost international forum for academics, researchers and policymakers to share their knowledge and experience in the discipline of international relations and its subfields: international security, international political economy, international organisations, foreign policy analysis, political history, etc.

*The Rest: Journal of Politics and Development* is an open-access, double-blind peer-reviewed journal. The journal is published at its own website <https://therestjournal.com/The Rest: Journal of Politics and Development> welcomes submissions of **articles** from related persons involved in the scope of the journal as well as **summary reports of conferences and lecture series** held in social sciences.

Prospective authors should submit 4.000-9.000 words articles for consideration in Microsoft Word-compatible format. For more complete descriptions and submission instructions, please access the Author Guidelines and Style Guidelines pages at the website <https://therestjournal.com/> Contributors are urged to read the author guidelines and style guidelines carefully before submitting articles. Articles submissions should be sent through the "MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION" page at the website.

*Editors-in-Chief:*

**Dr. Ozgur TUFEKCI**

**Dr. Rahman DAG**

# *Leadership*

***Honorary President***

Ken Booth



***Director-General***

Ozgur Tufekci



***Deputy Director-General***

Rahman Dag



**cesran** international  
CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS - CESRAN



think-tank ■ consultancy ■ research-institute

[www.cesran.org](http://www.cesran.org)

the

nest

**Journal of Politics and Development**

ISSN 2632-4911