

Afghanistan and Mexico: The relationship dynamics of the two Countries adversely affected by the US Imperial State

Afganistán y México: La dinámica de las relaciones entre los dos países afectada negativamente por el Estado imperial estadounidense

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ABSTRACT

The study analyzes relevant literature on factors that led to the US wars of aggression on Afghanistan and Mexico and establishment of diplomatic and trade and business relations between Afghanistan and Mexico. The paper proposes that fostering strong relationships between peripheral states can lead to their empowerment in the face of challenges by core powers like the US seeking to maintain control. Afghanistan and Mexico share certain similarities in their political history. The United States has intervened militarily in both countries, albeit for different reasons. Mexico, having experienced US intervention in its own history, has shown solidarity with Afghanistan, which faced 20 years of US occupation. Following the US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, Mexico offered humanitarian visas to Afghan refugees and facilitated entry visas for journalists facing danger in Afghanistan, demonstrating a commitment to supporting those affected by conflict.

Keywords: Afghanistan and Mexico relations, humanitarian assistance, us war of aggression, occupation, trade relations.

RESUMEN

El estudio analiza la literatura relevante sobre los factores que llevaron a las guerras de agresión de Estados Unidos contra Afganistán y México y el establecimiento de relaciones diplomáticas, comerciales y empresariales entre Afganistán y México. El artículo propone que fomentar relaciones sólidas entre los estados periféricos puede conducir a su empoderamiento frente a los desafíos de las potencias centrales como Estados Unidos que buscan mantener el control. Afganistán y México comparten ciertas similitudes en su historia política. Estados Unidos ha intervenido militarmente en ambos países, aunque por diferentes razones. México, que ha experimentado la intervención estadounidense en su propia historia, ha mostrado solidaridad con Afganistán, que enfrentó 20 años de ocupación estadounidense. Tras la retirada de las tropas estadounidenses de Afganistán, México ofreció visas humanitarias a los refugiados afganos y facilitó visas de entrada a periodistas que enfrentaban peligro en Afganistán, demostrando un compromiso con el apoyo a los afectados por el conflicto. Colombia, in addition to the validation of 31 variables that should be considered in the process.

Palabras claves: Relaciones entre Afganistán y México, asistencia humanitaria, guerra de agresión de Estados Unidos, ocupación, relaciones comerciales..



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1.- INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan and Mexico, despite the vast geographical distance between them, have a shared experience as victims of colonial and imperial states. As of 1839, the British colonial empire initiated armed conflicts against Afghanistan and imposed puppet leaders to safeguard the empire's interests. The British intervention continued until Afghanistan asserted its sovereignty in 1919. In the 1980s the Soviet imperial state invaded and occupied Afghanistan and after it was forced to withdraw its troops in February 1989 the country experienced civil conflict as the US-backed Islamic fundamentalist groups fought each other for control of the country.

In a parallel fashion, the Spanish colonial empire overtook Mexico in 1519 and subjected the nation to harsh domination, including the eradication of the Aztec population and its civilization and its native language and forcing Mexicans to learn and speak Spanish. The Spanish colonial empire in Mexico also “began a systematic exploitation of its gold and silver deposits to swell the coffers of the Spanish king, Charles V, who was always looking for further revenues to finance his innumerable wars in Europe and North Africa.” (Carlton, 1992, p. 99).

Afghanistan and Mexico suffered under the occupation of the US imperial state - US aggression and occupation. Afghanistan was used as a strategic foothold by the US, allowing it to gain access to the Central Asian markets and contain its rival imperial powers, Russia and China. Similarly, Mexico was treated as a backyard by the US, giving it imperial rights to occupy the country. The infamous US-Mexico war in 1846 was driven by a desire for expansion of slavery. As a result, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848, leading to the annexation of half of Mexico's territory, including Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Wyoming.

In late 2001, the United States formed a coalition of military force against Afghanistan, citing the dismantling of the Taliban regime on the accusations of harboring Osama bin Laden, the leader of the infamous Islamic fundamentalist group, *al-Qaeda*. Bin Laden was condemned by the US for orchestrating attacks on American embassies in Africa, as well as the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in Washington, utilizing commercial airplanes as weapons of mass destruction (Emadi, 2010, p. 205).

The US's aggressive and occupying actions in both countries, Afghanistan and Mexico resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of innocent lives, destruction of property, and disruption of daily living for many civilians.

The purpose of this article is a comparative study of two peripheral states - Afghanistan and Mexico. Conducting a comparative analysis of Afghanistan and Mexico poses numerous challenges due to their geographical distance, language barriers, religious differences, and distinct political systems. Despite these significant disparities, both countries share a history of being targeted by colonial and imperial powers, as well as experiencing imperialist-led development. This article delves into the impact of imperialism on nationalist and anti-imperialist movements in both nations, despite their divergent outcomes.

The paper also aims to analyze the how Afghanistan and Mexico established diplomatic relations between them and delves into Mexico's efforts to assist citizens of Afghanistan seeking refuge from their perilous situation and striving for a better future for their children. Drawing from its own experience as

a victim of US imperialism, Mexico implemented policies to offer sanctuary and extend a warm welcome to those in danger in Afghanistan. The piece explores the potential for enhancing the trade and business relations between Afghanistan and Mexico, as the two countries try to modernize their infrastructures. It asserts that uniting peripheral communities globally can create a robust counter-cultural and political movement, ultimately breaking the hold of imperial powers such as the US over peripheral nations. As I am not an expert on Mexico and my inability to read literature in Spanish restricted my research to English sources, which offer a vast and comprehensive pool of information.

2.-THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Core and Peripheral States

One concept commonly explored in the social sciences is the Core-Periphery theory, which explores the dynamic interplay between dominant nations (core) and their surrounding regions (periphery). This theory highlights the structure of global inequality, where peripheral countries rely on core nations for financial support and are influenced by their political, economic, and cultural development policies. As a core power, the US maintains its imperial domination by pressuring peripheral states to adopt its developmental strategies.

Possession of vast capabilities by the US imperial state especially highly sophisticated warfare machinery poses an imminent threat to security and stability of peripheral states. In any dealing and interaction with peripheral state the US has advantages over them and forces them, directly or indirectly to surrender and follow its dictates. In power politics analyses, there is a recognition of the importance of relative power - the comparison of an imperial state against that of a peripheral state – an important factor in understanding the outcomes of conflict between the two states. The power of the US military proved instrumental not only in easily conquering peripheral and weak states like Mexico in 1846 and Afghanistan in 2001 but also in ultimately dismantling their governments and imposing their political will upon the occupied people. At the outset of these conflicts, brute force and violence yielded swift victories. However, the use of sheer force may not always be the most effective means of establishing control over conquered territories and toppling local ruling groups, the desires and aspirations of people, the underlying motivations that drove them before their defeat, will begin to resurface and people will challenge the occupying force and fight for their freedom. It is argued that an incomplete victory cannot truly be considered a victory unless the defeated people are uprooted or their fundamental compulsions are fundamentally altered (Gaddis, 1982, pp. 39-40). Although imperial powers wish to do so, it is the people who will ultimately prevail against the occupiers and take their destiny into their own hands.

The US War on Mexico in 1846 and Afghanistan in 2001-2021

After the US launched a war of conquest on Mexico and seized its northern territories in 1846 it promised to provide a compensatory payment of \$15 million to Mexico as a result of the expansion of American borders, while also assuming responsibility for settling the debts owed by the Mexican government to U.S. citizens. Additionally, the agreement included measures to safeguard the property and civil rights of Mexican residents living within the newly acquired territory, as well as a commitment from the US

to maintain border security and the use of compulsory arbitration for any future conflicts between the two nations (The National Archives, 2022). Mexicans on both sides of the current border between the US and Mexico maintain that Mexicans who are US citizens are treated as second-class citizens and the US did not abide by the promises it made to the Mexican government.

The US also worked to further subjugate the people of Mexico through the imposition of financial compensation on the government of Mexico. The US maintained that the Mexican Revolution (1910-1921) had caused greater losses to the US companies operating in Mexico. The US forced Mexico to compensate for the losses causing the Mexican government to sign the Bucareli Treaty on August 13, 1923 to arrange for compensation to the US companies – an imperial policy intended to suffocate economic growth in Mexico and make the country dependent on the US. On the political arena, the US worked to force the leadership in Mexico not only to abandon their progressive and radical political agendas but also to revise the Mexican Constitution of 1917 as it contained socialist and nationalist oriented articles. People in Mexico strongly believe that the treaty imposed a ban on the production of specialized machinery (such as engines and aircraft), leading to a delay in the country's economic progress for years (Carbajal, 2024).

Radical and nationalist groups supported the government's revolutionary policies of development. The Community Party of Mexico which later became known as the Socialist Workers' Party was established in 1917 by Manabendra Nath Roy, an Indian national in exile. In 1923, the party endorsed Plutarco Elías Calles as a presidential candidate. During his reign as president (1924-1928) and as a de facto leader (1929-1934, a period known as the Maximato) Calles reciprocated the communists for their support and granted the party 14 positions in the Ministry of Agriculture and provided travel funds. However, rather than giving the party a platform for influencing policies, these public roles tied them to government favoritism and the federal bureaucracy.

The Soviet Union also remained supportive of the radical change in Mexico, established diplomatic relations with Mexico in 1924 and appointed Stanislav Pestkovsky as its ambassador to the country. The Soviet ambassador tried to garner support for the Mexican community party by funding communist publications and supporting a strike by railroad workers' union organized by the communists in 1926. It is reported that:

The Soviet Embassy also became a lighthouse for Latin American revolutionary opposition to dictatorial regimes supported by the United States. The Cubans were opposed to Gerardo Machado, for example. The Venezuelans opposed the presidency of Juan Vicente Gomez. At the time, the Venezuelan opposition was preparing the overthrow of Gomez, and needed arms and the means to transport them to Venezuela. While, according to Pestkovsky, the government of Mexico promised the arms, the insurrectionists asked the Soviet ambassador for a ship, or at least US\$7,000 to rent one. Pestkovsky promised to inquire with his government about the possibilities of such assistance (Spenser, 2016, p. 90).

The leadership in Mexico was unhappy with the Soviet ambassador's active involvement in the country's politics. President Calles expelled Pestkovsky from Mexico for interfering in domestic affairs.

The US viewed political development in Mexico to be counter to its imperial interest and worked to counter Soviet policies and radical activities with the intention to influence the direction of developments there. It used carrot and stick approach to persuade the leadership in Mexico to alter its

policies especially the policy regarding oil export to the US. When Calles assumed office on December 1, 1924 he met with American Ambassador Dwight Morrow and Calles agreed verbally to comply with the Special Conventions. However, he soon rejected the Bucareli Treaty and proceeded to develop a new oil law that strictly adhered to Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution. Calles's statement that "Mexico is for Mexicans" and the introduction of legislation that aimed at restricting the privileges of foreign petroleum interest sparked an immediate reaction from the US government, with the American ambassador to Mexico, James Rockwell Sheffield, labeling Calles a "communist" and the US secretary of state, Frank Billings Kellogg (Frank, 2021), issuing a threat against Mexico on June 12, 1925.

The US regarded Mexico as its back-yard and did not wish the country to expand its relations internationally especially with its arch rival - the Soviet Union. The opening of the Soviet embassy in Mexico strained US-Mexico relations especially after the Soviet ambassador in Mexico claimed that no other country bore more similarities to the Soviet Union than Mexico. Members of the US government even began referring to Mexico as "Soviet Mexico," viewing its leader as a communist (Wikipedia, 2024). The debate over the new oil law intensified with US interests vehemently opposed to any changes. Despite these tensions, the new law was enacted in 1926 and in January 1927, the Calles government cancelled permits for oil companies that did not adhere to its provisions. Through strategic diplomatic efforts, Mexico was able to avoid war and establish a direct telephone hotline between Calles and US President Calvin Coolidge. Additionally, Dwight Morrow was appointed as the new American ambassador to Mexico.

US-Mexico relations remained tense during Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas leadership (1934-1940). On March 18, 1938 Cardenas declared the Mexican oil expropriation, leading to the creation of PEMEX, after a series of disputes with foreign oil companies and initiated nationalist development policies. Although the Mexican communist party was banned and remained outlawed until 1935, the party viewed the emerging nationalist policies of the regime as a progressive, and supported Cárdenas and his allies (Gonzales, 2014).

Mexico was troubled by the forceful actions taken by the US in relation to their country, which led Cardenas to escalate his progressive development initiatives. He also extended political protection to Leon Trotsky, a Russian political figure in exile. Upon Trotsky's arrival in Mexico in January 1937, Cardenas graciously received him. Trotsky resided in the Coyoacan neighborhood in Mexico. Trotsky actively promoted his version of global socialist revolution, known as permanent revolution, which aimed to spread beyond national borders. He and his followers strongly criticized Western imperial powers and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, denouncing Stalin as a power-hungry dictator who betrayed the principle of socialism. Mexico's nationalist leaders skillfully leveraged Trotsky's fiery anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric to subtly rebuke the US's aggressive interventions in Mexican affairs, using his words to indirectly condemn American heavy-handedness and assert their own nation's sovereignty. Trotsky remained in Mexico and continued his political activities. In May 1940 gunmen attacked his house but Trotsky survived and later Ramon Mercader, a Spanish communist who won his trust assassinated him in August 1940 (Daniels, 2024).

In a similar manner to its involvement in Mexico to protect its imperial interest, the United States' active involvement in Afghanistan began immediately after the pro-Soviet client party of *Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan*, also known as the Peoples' Democratic Party of Afghanistan, the PDPA took control through a military coup in April 1978. The US saw this client state as a threat to its spheres of influence in neighboring countries such as Iran and Pakistan – both of which were American

allies in the region. In order to defeat the Kabul regime and gain control, the US provided military, financial, and political support to Islamic fundamentalist groups, known as *Mujahidin* or Islamic warriors.

The Soviet Union responded to the impending collapse of the Kabul regime by deploying their army to Afghanistan in December 1979 to establish a new leader loyal to them. The US saw this as an opportunity to rally Islamic fundamentalists from around the world to join in the fight against the Soviet occupation. However, the Soviet Union was unable to maintain their hold on the country and ultimately withdrew their troops in 1988. This led to the collapse of the Kabul regime and the establishment of an Islamic state in April 1992, resulting in a destructive civil war as different US-backed Islamic parties vied for power.

During this period, the emergence of the Taliban was accompanied by their conflicts with rival Islamic groups and their seizure of territory across the nation. The US provided indirect support to the Taliban in its struggle against their enemies. Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar invited Osama bin Laden and his Islamic organization to come to Afghanistan and aid the Islamic Emirate against their adversaries. However, the US demanded that the Taliban hand over bin Laden for trial, claiming he was responsible for the 9/11 attacks. The Taliban's refusal to comply led to the US forming a coalition to overthrow the Taliban and establish a puppet state in Afghanistan, with long-time CIA consultant Hamid Karzai at its helm. Despite the US occupation, the Taliban continued to fight against it, leading to negotiations after 20 years and the US facilitating their return to Afghanistan before withdrawing their forces in August 2021.

The Beginning of Afghanistan-Mexico Relationship

Because of the vast geographical distance between Afghanistan and Mexico, the relationship between the two nations never developed into one of high priority. However, Afghanistan and Mexico were eager to expand trade and commerce with countries around the world and both countries established diplomatic ties on June 27, 1961. Since then, bilateral relations have mainly been conducted at international forums such as the United Nations.

In 1962, Mexico accredited its first ambassador to Afghanistan, resident in Delhi, India. The ambassador Octavio Paz was Nobel Prize winner and during his tenure as ambassador in India until 1968, he kept a journal of his travels to Afghanistan writing about his journey from New Delhi to Kabul and his experiences in the region. He presented his credentials to Afghanistan's former King Mohammad Zahir. Paz turned his journal into a book titled *Viento Entero* which was published by the Caxton Press in India in 1965 with its famous line "El presente es perpetuo" or the Present is perpetual (Paz, 1965).

From 1980 to 1981, Mexico was on the United Nations Security Council and voted in favor of the UN Resolution 462 condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. When Mexico was again a member of the UN Security Council from 2002 to 2003 it voted on numerous occasions in favor of maintaining Afghanistan's independence and sovereignty of the country (Resolution 1444 and Resolution 1453) and extending the US Assistance Mission mandate in the country (Resolution 1471). From 2009 to 2010, Mexico again as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council voted in

favor of UN Resolution 1868 and UN Resolution 1890. Ever since the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, there has been a significant increase in the number of people migrating from Afghanistan to North America. However, the perilous journey through the Mediterranean Sea to reach Western European countries has resulted in numerous fatalities.

The migrants expressed a strong interest in finding alternative routes to reach North America. Due to the involvement of various cartels in human trafficking between Iran and Turkey to Mexico, numerous migrants from Afghanistan have made their way to Mexico with the goal of entering the United States. Some have utilized the services of local human smugglers while others have relied on international mafia and cartel organizations in Afghanistan. It has been suggested that certain Mexican drug cartels have been operating in Afghanistan under the guise of “front” companies, using smugglers to transport drugs and weapons from Afghanistan to Europe and the US. While many refugees successfully crossed the Mexican border into the US, others are forced to wait in Mexico as their asylum cases are reviewed and processed in the US.

In August 2021, when the United States withdrew its military forces from Afghanistan and allowed the Taliban to regain control through the Doha Agreement, numerous families departed from Afghanistan and sought refuge in Europe and North America to avoid the restrictive regime of the Taliban. Recognizing this, Mexico announced the issuance of refugee visas, with a focus on women and girls, to those fleeing Afghanistan from their embassy in Tehran, Iran. As a result, around 2,000 refugees have since arrived in Mexico. The Hazara World Council, which represents the Hazara ethnic group living in exile, negotiated with Mexican authorities to grant visas from the Mexican embassy in Tehran, Iran, for a significant number of Hazaras to settle in Mexico. However, to the dismay of Mexican government after these people travelled to Mexico City and stayed there for a short time they crossed the border into the US and many of them went to Canada (Bena, 2024).

The diplomatic relationship between Afghanistan and Mexico has persisted, with Afghanistan's embassy in the US now also recognized by Mexico. However, the embassy was subsequently shut down on March 16, 2022. Furthermore, Mexico has remained committed to aiding and supporting refugees and migrants from Afghanistan who have sought entry into the country.

Trade Relations between Afghanistan and Mexico

Although Afghanistan and Mexico may seem geographically distant, the two countries established trade and business relations. As a developing nations both countries experienced wars of aggression and invasion by colonial and imperial powers that impacted the process of national development in the two countries. Although Afghanistan and Mexico adhere to the policy of peaceful coexistence with their neighbors and regard stability pre-requisite for economic development and prosperity, the two countries have a common potentially destabilizing force, the drug cartels and mafias - supported by parent institutions in the US and its government despite its rhetoric of war on drug cartels (Eisner, 2017, March 18). These cartels in Afghanistan and Mexico employ brutal tactics to further their political influence and assert control over their respective territories.

A UN document confirms an increase in opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan from 163,000 to 224,000 hectares (402,780 to 553,500 acres) between 2019 and 2020, with no eradication efforts made

in 2020. Mexico, on the other hand, has a thriving illegal narcotics industry, with multiple cartels vying for control. The Sinaloa Cartel, in particular, dominates areas known for profitable poppy cultivation, making them a potential rival to the drug mafias in Afghanistan. However, their different target markets could potentially lead to collaboration rather than competition. Despite being illegal, opium poppy production in Mexico is lucrative, with the Sinaloa Cartel holding a near-monopoly on the US heroin market according to the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The Pentagon estimates their presence in 60% of countries worldwide, including those where drugs from Afghanistan are also sold. While the Mexican cartels may currently focus on South American cocaine and synthetic drugs, it is not uncommon for competing organizations to unite to increase profits and political influence (Hernandez, 2022). The trading partnership between Afghanistan and Mexico remains ongoing.

On June 2, 2024, Mexico held its presidential election which resulted in the victory of Claudia Sheinbaum, a Jewish woman and a member of the ruling elite of the left-wing political party Morena. She has been elected as the president for a six-year term and has expressed her commitment to continuing her predecessor's policies of implementing socio-economic reforms. Furthermore, she has voiced her plans to strengthen Mexico's international trade relations and fight drug cartels and mafias and effectively deal with the influx of migrants from Latin America and Asia into the United States via Mexico.

The United States was dissatisfied with Mexico's nationalist approach to development and continued interfering in the country's internal affairs including the judiciary. The traditional process in Mexico for appointing Supreme Court justices involves nomination by the president and confirmation by the senate, with justices serving for life. However, a government initiative has proposed a change to this system, advocating for judges to be elected through popular votes and the establishment of a disciplinary tribunal to oversee their activities. In August 2024, the US strongly opposed the Mexican government's attempt to reform the judiciary. Ken Salazar, the US ambassador, responded to the proposed reform by stating that "it is a major risk to Mexico's democracy." (Pomero & Mega, 2024, August 27).

Salazar warned that transforming the judiciary system in Mexico could result in a situation similar to that in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the US-occupied Afghanistan, the supreme court judges are selected by the president and approved by the legislature. Unfortunately, this system has allowed powerful individuals to manipulate the justice system, resulting in lengthy delays for common citizens seeking justice. As a result, many have turned to local tribal elders or even Taliban commanders to resolve their disputes, as these alternatives often provide a quicker and more fair resolution without the need for bribes or expensive legal fees.

Salazar failed to acknowledge that the efforts of the U.S. to revamp the judiciary system in Afghanistan ultimately led to corruption of epic proportion. The U.S.'s motive for this reform was to further its own imperialist agenda, rather than prioritizing the well-being of the people of Afghanistan. As a result, the judiciary system remained plagued by corruption under U.S. occupation, as the Afghan people had no voice in the reform process or in the election of justices.

Despite this, Mexicans have chosen to pursue judiciary reform. However, the U.S. views reforms that prioritize the needs of the people as a threat to its imperialistic goals and policies. By drawing a parallel between the judiciary reforms in Afghanistan and Mexico, the U.S. aims to persuade

Mexicans that their judiciary system in Mexico, which is touted as independent and similar to that in the U.S., does not require any changes.

In Afghanistan the Taliban government adopted a repressive policies of governance, closed downs schools for girls and women, restricted women's movement in the public sphere, dismissed former government officials, judges and army and security officials. They established Islamic courts, appointed clerics to government posts that included judges to resolve cases on the basis of the Islamic Sharia law. To gain legitimacy and support of the people, the Taliban has identified combatting organized crime, drug trafficking, and narcotics smuggling as key priorities. One notable accomplishment claimed by the government and appreciated by the citizens is the restoration of stability, leading to improved safety for travelers across the country. Previously, individuals often faced harassment and intimidation by highway robbers, thieves and thugs affiliated with various political groups in the government. Additionally, in Kabul, the Taliban has demolished unauthorized structures and concrete barriers and chicanes that encroached on sidewalks and public roads, which were built by powerful individuals in the puppet government, foreign embassies and international non-government organization during the US occupation period. The Taliban also initiated the expansion of public roads in Kabul, which involves demolishing unauthorized private houses to facilitate the flow of traffic. The Taliban also embarked on infrastructure development, the 115-mile Qush Tepa canal in the northern region aims to redirect 20 percent of the Amu River water across the arid plains that is expected to irrigate 550,000 hectares of land making the country self-sufficient in food production.

In 2023, bilateral trade between Afghanistan and Mexico amounted to US \$6 million. The primary import from Mexico to Afghanistan was telecommunication devices such as mobile phones and network equipment, with a total value of US \$738k. The majority of these imports originated from Jalisco (US \$764k), Baja California (US \$228k), and Michoacán de Ocampo (US \$132k).

Conversely, the main products purchased by Mexico from Afghanistan in 2023 were components for electrical circuit protection, including high voltage apparatus and control panels, with a total value of US \$1.98M. Chihuahua (US \$3.62M), Jalisco (US \$514k), and Aguascalientes (US \$274k) were the top destinations for these imports (Gobierno de México, 2021).

Mexico's Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan Refugees

In 2021, a large number of individuals and families from Afghanistan were airlifted to the US after the Taliban regained control. This event was followed by a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, exacerbating preexisting problems and creating challenging living conditions for those who were unable to leave. Most individuals were attempting to flee to Europe through Iran and Turkey. However, a growing number of people are now traveling to Mexico and Brazil in hopes of reaching the US, and sometimes Canada. They are aided by human traffickers and smugglers in their dangerous endeavors.

Many individuals from Afghanistan travel to Brazil on humanitarian visas. This South American country offers a two-year residency, work and study rights, and the ability to apply for refugee status. Since September 2021, around 4,000 individuals from Afghanistan have arrived in Brazil on humanitarian visas. From there, many migrants continue their journey to the US and Canada. In 2022, nearly 2,200 migrants from Afghanistan traveled to the US through a hazardous land route from

Colombia and Panama. This is a significant increase compared to just 24 Afghanistan citizens who took this route in 2021. Additionally, some people have been crossing back and forth across the US-Canada border to find some type of work to make ends meet. Most migrants are weary and tired of waiting for US authorities to decide their asylum application, have chosen to cross into Canada, while there have also been instances of individuals moving in the opposite direction. Under the Taliban's rule, living conditions in Afghanistan have deteriorated and the country has been hit with sanctions. As a result, it is the common citizen of Afghanistan and the educated population who bear the brunt of life in Afghanistan (Kumar, 2023).

After the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, Mexico is seeing unusual spike in migrants from Afghanistan who are seeking asylum or traversing through the country. According to US federal court documents, 410 adults were processed in January 2023 – a more than 1,200 percent increase compared to May 2022. Since 2001, migrants from Afghanistan received general health services information in Mexico City from Doctors Without Borders – nearly equaling the total number of people served by the organization in all of 2022.

Private and state agencies provide a wide variety of informational and mental health services, including information on shelters, human rights, and social services. Given the relative rarity of migrants from Afghanistan in Mexico, there is often a language barrier for services intended to assist migrants. However, translation services in English is available to them. Following Mexico's humanitarian tradition of protecting and promoting human rights, in 2021 Mexico received a group of women from Afghanistan who asked for help to leave their country given the current situation there. After receiving a confidential call from various organizations that were concerned about the young women's welfare, the Foreign Ministry took the necessary diplomatic and consular steps to ensure their safe passage to Mexico.

Included in the group is five members of an all-girl robotics team. The girls are part of the “Afghan Dreamers” team, known internationally for building ventilators for COVID-19 patients from used vehicle parts. The team also received a special award at an international robotics championship, and has become a symbol of the pursuit of women's human rights in Afghanistan (Johnson & Esposito, 2021).

On their arrival in Mexico, Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard said that Mexico has a long tradition of taking in refugees. He pointed out that, despite the fact that we are very distant from what is happening in Afghanistan, “this human cause, protecting the values and causes that make us Mexicans who we are today, has led us to commit to bringing them here today.” The Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, Martha Delgado, stated that “since 2019 Mexico has conducted a feminist and human rights foreign policy. The Mexican government firmly believes that defending human rights in Afghanistan is vitally important, especially for women and girls and groups in vulnerable situations.” (Gobierno de México. 2021, September 21). Delgado stated that “the young women's arrival is consistent with the Mexican government's feminist foreign policy and its interest in protecting children. She added that, “an institution based in Mexico (which, for security reasons, will not be named) has offered food, lodging and basic services, free of charge.” (Johnson & Esposito, 2021).

One of the young women, Fatemah, said that “the reason why we chose (to come) to Mexico was that we consider it to be a country with freedom and solidarity.” In her message, she highlighted the value of her team's work in promoting women's access to science and technology in Afghanistan, as well

as their international achievements. “It makes us nervous that it is precisely these achievements that now put our families in danger” (Johnson & Esposito, 2021).

At the event attended by Cristopher Ballinas, the Foreign Ministry's Director General for Human Rights and Democracy, and Judit Arenas, Senior Director and Senior Adviser at APCO Worldwide, who took the diplomatic steps and coordinated with social organizations to arrange for the group's safe passage to Mexico, the Foreign Secretary concluded his remarks with a clear message stating that: “In Mexico, we say “*Están en su casa*” – “This is your home.” And today we want to say those words to you from the bottom of our heart: This is your home. Mexico honors its tradition and the future we want to have. You are very welcome and you can count on us.” The Government of Mexico reiterates its readiness to give protection and assistance for humanitarian reasons to people whose lives and safety are in imminent danger, in accordance with its capabilities and applicable international and national law.

Due to its humanitarian assistance to refugees Mexico also welcomed 124 media professionals and their family members from Afghanistan on August 25, 2021. This group included journalists from the New York Times and other media outlets. Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard was present at the international airport to receive them, reaffirming Mexico's commitment to supporting human rights and humanitarian visas for those seeking refuge and asylum. Ebrard facilitated the journalists' departure from Kabul, organizing a stopover in Qatar before their final destination in Mexico (Romero & Rodríguez, 2024). This swift action contrasts with the red tape faced by those seeking asylum in the United States. The Wall Street Journal also received visas to relocate its staff from Afghanistan to Mexico.

Unfortunately, the Taliban's actions towards journalists and their loved ones paints a grim picture. The German public broadcaster, Deutsche Welle, reported that the Taliban raided the homes of media workers' relatives and killed a family member of a reporter. In another tragic incident, Reuters journalist Danish Siddiqui lost his life while on assignment in a Taliban-controlled area. (Grey et al. 2024). In light of these threats, Reuters was forced to evacuate 73 people, including its employees and their families, to Pakistan. (Daniel & Garrison, 2021).

Refugees from Islamic countries face challenges in non-Muslim countries and often try to find members of their own community in exile or Islamic centers that cater to their needs. In Mexico Muslim refugees encounter various problems related to their faith and one refugee stated that even in the vast megalopolis of Mexico City, despite its size, the Muslim community is only a minute fraction and has a lone mosque. Finding halal food is a challenging task. Modaqiq shares that his wife and daughters prefer to avoid public spaces due to the unwelcoming stares they receive for adhering to the traditional Islamic attire of veils or *hijabs*, as well as speaking their native language, Dari. He yearns for them to connect with fellow countrymen and Muslims in the US, but is growing increasingly disheartened by the current situation.(Fredrick, 2023)

3.- METHODOLOGY

The research methodology utilized for this study comprises two components: 1) a review of existing literature on the common experiences of Afghanistan and Mexico under the colonial and imperial occupation and domination and an examination of multilateral relations between Afghanistan and

Mexico in the post-occupation period and 2) a dialogical approach to complement literature review. Relying solely on published materials would limit the researcher's ability to challenge existing perspectives and offer new insights. To gain a deeper understanding of the subject and explore different perspectives, a dialogical research approach was adopted, which included fieldwork in Mexico in July and August 2024 in order to verify information on the subject matter.

This provided the opportunity for firsthand involvement, exchanges, and discussions with knowledgeable individuals in the region. This further affirmed the results of the research that found the negative impact of US domination on the development trajectory of Afghanistan and Mexico. It also highlighted the potential of multilateral cooperation among developing countries, such as Afghanistan and Mexico, as an alternative approach to relying on imperial powers to dictate political, economic, and technological advancement in the developing world. Such a partnership allows for the sharing of experiences and collaboration between the people of Afghanistan and Mexico, as well as with other countries, in order to reduce the direct or indirect interference of the US in their political and economic progress. It shows that collaboration among peripheral states can be beneficial, as it allows people to use their shared knowledge to improve their situations. By working together, they are better equipped to face future challenges.

4.-CONCLUSION

The pursuit of national development strategy was the driving force that prompted Afghanistan and Mexico to resist foreign aggression and interference in their internal affairs. Despite lacking equal military and technological capabilities, both countries successfully overcame colonial and imperial powers in their struggle for modernization of their countries. Their determination to advance proved vital in enduring the increasing direct and indirect intervention by colonial and imperial powers.

Afghanistan and Mexico have shared a similar historical experience due to their involvement in wars of aggression initiated by the United States. Mexico faced land loss and the imposition of development policies by the US, which aimed to destabilize the country's unity among its people and indigenous communities. On the other hand, the US continually portrays Mexico as a center for organized crime and drug cartels, despite providing political, economic, and military support to such elements globally. Similarly, the US presents Afghanistan as a backward nation and its people as extremists, using this to justify their occupation of the country as an effort to root out terrorism, modernize and integrate it into the capitalist world system. However, the reality is that the years of US occupation have not resulted in the country's modernization. Instead, it has facilitated a corrupt system of governance, allowing fascist leaders, war criminals and mafias, including drugs, arms, and human trafficking, to control and exploit the country.

After ending the unjust US-Mexico Treaty, which hindered Mexico's economic and technical advancement for more than a century, Mexico is now paving its own path of development. With a new president elected, Mexico plans to establish policies that will strengthen its relationships with countries worldwide. As a country that has suffered from US imperialism, Mexico has extended support to the people of Afghanistan, who have been impacted by US occupation. Mexico has also welcomed refugees from Afghanistan, who are fleeing from the Taliban's oppressive policies.

Collaboration between the people of Afghanistan and Mexico can significantly contribute to the development of both nations. By joining forces, more effective, efficient, and sustainable solutions can be found. Multilateral diplomacy also fosters dialogue and understanding between the people of both countries, allowing for the resolution of issues that transcend national borders. Moreover, cultural exchange and educational support to citizens of Afghanistan trying to study at institutions of higher education in Mexico facilitates the exchange of ideas and promotes a rich diversity of cultures. This can also provide opportunities for individuals to travel to distant destinations and for consumers to access a wider variety of affordable goods and services.

By building stronger connections and multilateral relations peripheral societies would be in a position to alter the domination-subordination relationship imposed by imperial powers. This relationship has been used to exploit peripheral countries and their natural resources, sustaining a neo-slavery system in the world. Together and with unity peripheral societies could rend asunder the chains imposed on them by imperial powers and pave a new path for the progress and prosperity of their respective nations.

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