

Call for Submissions

Indigenous Perspectives on the Collapse in Afghanistan

Book and Symposium

Date: September 15, 2023
Leipzig University, Leipzig, Germany

The Symposium and Book on Indigenous Perspectives on the Collapse of Afghanistan's Republic, organized by the Afghanistan Forum in Germany and the Center Communication for Social Change at Leipzig University, aims to gather Afghanistani intellectuals and researchers currently residing in exile. The primary objective of this event is to thoroughly analyze and scrutinize the recent collapse of Afghanistan's republic. As a result of the symposium, a comprehensive book will be published, emphasizing a wide range of indigenous perspectives on the collapse of Afghanistan's republic.

The two decades of the republic in Afghanistan presented a significant opportunity for the country's development and political stability. However, despite considerable efforts and investments made, tangible results were not achieved. European countries, including Germany, dedicated substantial resources to support this fragile and conflict-ridden country. Currently, Afghanistan's predicament remains a prominent concern for Germany; Parliamentary Commissions and various institutions have been tasked with examining Germany's twenty-year presence in Afghanistan, as well as the country's current situation. Nevertheless, there is a noticeable absence of indigenous perspectives and insights from Afghanistan's researchers, which has resulted in limited significance being placed on the thoughts and analyses of the country's intellectuals.

This lack of emphasis likely contributes to the inadequate research conducted on the collapse of Afghanistan's republic on August 15, 2021. Moreover, the explanations regarding the Taliban's resurgence are broad, often ambiguous, and have not been compiled into a comprehensive collection. It is essential for both the people of Afghanistan and the donors, including Germany, to comprehend why their efforts to build a modern state in Afghanistan ultimately failed, leading to the resurgence of one of the most radical ethno-religious groups, the Taliban.

Equally vital is the inclusion of indigenous perspectives on the collapse of the republic, drawing upon indigenous knowledge, lived experiences, and firsthand data from within the former republic. The viewpoints of Afghanistan's intellectuals and political elites regarding the collapse on August 15, the political system during the twenty-year republic, governance methods, opportunities, threats, and their role in the state's collapse hold immense significance for two reasons. Firstly, these intellectuals and political elites resided in the country, experiencing events firsthand, and the gradual decline of Afghanistan's republic has deepened their understanding of the country's complexities. Secondly, unpacking society, culture, and politics through indigenous perspectives is crucial in incorporating local knowledge.

Furthermore, the collapse of Afghanistan can be viewed and explained from diverse perspectives. Secular intellectuals may analyze it through the lens of secularism, while political elites might attribute it to ethnic factors. Similarly, leftist writers and religious conservatives will offer distinct explanations of the causes of collapse. By bringing these varied views together and examining them comparatively, we can gain a more profound understanding of the twenty-year republic, the collapse of the state, and the present opportunities and threats. Religious conservatives, secular and leftist intellectuals, and political elites hold four distinct perspectives on the twenty-year experiment with democracy and its eventual downfall. Consequently, this symposium aims to gather intellectuals from these spectrums and paradigms to unpack the collapse of the state in Afghanistan, and by comparing and integrating their views, publish these articles as a book.

The production of indigenous knowledge and the comparison of dominant indigenous discourses, while acknowledging the importance of local knowledge, will enrich the current discourse on Afghanistan in the Western world, including Germany. This integration of indigenous and Western discourses will deepen our understanding of Afghanistan's complex situation and the collapse of the former republic. Therefore, all intellectuals and writers from Afghanistan are invited to participate in this symposium by sharing their thoughts and perspectives in a paper.

Main themes

- What were the underlying reasons for the failure of Afghanistan's twenty-year experiment with transitioning to democracy, ultimately resulting in the Taliban's takeover?
- How did the Taliban successfully regain control of Afghanistan, and what role did religious extremism play in their resurgence?
- Was the collapse of Afghanistan's state a straightforward defeat or a result of covert agreements? What is the true narrative behind it?
- What are the implications, both in terms of opportunities and threats, following the collapse of the state in Afghanistan, and why did peace talks ultimately fail?
- What historical factors contribute to the recurring issue of state collapse in Afghanistan, and why is the country prone to such instability?

Outcomes and outputs of the Symposium

- The production and consolidation of indigenous perspectives and knowledge on Afghanistan, focusing on its twenty-year experiment with democracy and the critical internal issues contributing to political instability and state collapse. These perspectives will be compiled and published as a book in Germany.

- Comparative analysis of the dominant discourses surrounding the collapse of the state in Afghanistan that have emerged in the public sphere and social media. Afghan intellectuals and political elites will examine these discourses from distinct angles and perspectives.
- Enriching the ongoing discourse on Afghanistan in Europe, particularly in Germany, by providing a deeper understanding of the country's complexities. This symposium aims to bridge the gap between indigenous and Western discourses, facilitating a unified and comprehensive analysis of Afghanistan's failed transition to democracy and the resurgence of the Taliban.

Submission guidelines

This symposium is scheduled to take place on September 15, 2023, in Leipzig, Germany, with the aim of bringing together Afghan writers who will have their papers already submitted to the Symposium to share their thoughts on the collapse of Afghanistan's republic. Authors are encouraged to submit papers in their most fluent language, but all papers will eventually be translated and published in English. During the symposium, participants have the option to present their papers in Persian or Pashto.

The requirements for the papers are as follows:

- The paper should address a specific issue related to the main themes of the symposium.
- Academic referencing should be observed.
- The paper should be a minimum of 10 pages but no longer than 15 pages.
- The paper does not need to follow a strict academic format, and authors have the freedom to write in their own style.
- As the paper is intended for a foreign audience, all concepts should be well-explained.
- The paper should include an introduction, a main question, analysis, and conclusion.
- The deadline for paper submissions is September 1, 2023.

About the organizers

This symposium is organized by the Afghanistan Forum in Germany and the Center Communications for Social Change at Leipzig University. The Afghanistan Forum in Germany is a Leipzig-based non-profit organization dedicated to enriching Afghanistan's diaspora community in Leipzig and Germany. They have previously organized various social and cultural events for Afghan immigrants. The Center Communication for Social Change is a research organization affiliated with Leipzig University that focuses on media and communications research for social change. Recently, the institute initiated an academic project on the public sphere and media system in Afghanistan, led by six researchers from Afghanistan. It is worth noting that the project's design and implementation were entirely carried out by the Afghan researchers themselves.

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