

Scenario 221

DON'T BLAME PAKISTAN-I

As Washington ponders how the US lost its
longest war in Afghanistan.
....worth considering that it was the America's own choice
to jump into the Afghan sand-grave.

- **The world media's FALSE cry:** Pakistan, nominally a US partner in the war, had also been the Afghan Taliban's main patron.

Now find the answer below –

see the *Washington Post* of 27th September 2021 with a big caption:

PM Imran Khan: Don't blame Pakistan for the outcome of the war in Afghanistan

It's PM Khan's **reality-opinion** over the gloomy ending of America's longest war in Afghanistan. The PM said that:

- '....I was surprised to see that no mention was made of Pakistan's sacrifices as a US ally in the war on terror for more than two decades. Instead, we were blamed for America's loss.'
- Let me put it plainly. Since 2001, I have repeatedly warned that the Afghan war was un-winnable. Given their history, Afghans would never accept a protracted foreign military presence, and no outsider, including Pakistan, could change this reality.
- Unfortunately, successive Pakistani governments after 9/11 sought to please the United States instead of pointing out the error of a military-dominated approach.
- Desperate for global relevance and domestic legitimacy, Pakistan's Gen Musharraf agreed to every American demand for military support after 9/11. This cost Pakistan, and the United States, dearly.

- The United States asked Pakistan for help to train certain Afghani groups, jointly by the CIA and our intelligence agency, the ISI, to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s.
- Back then, these Afghans were hailed as freedom fighters performing a sacred duty. President Ronald Reagan even entertained the *mujahedeen* at the White House.
- Once the Soviets were defeated, the United States abandoned Afghanistan and sanctioned my country, leaving behind over 4 million [*on documents; illegal entrants may be double*] Afghan refugees in Pakistan and a bloody civil war in Afghanistan. From this security vacuum emerged the Taliban, many born and educated in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan.
- Fast forward to 9/11, when the United States needed us again — but this time against the very actors we had jointly supported to fight foreign occupation against the Soviets. Gen Musharraf offered Washington logistics and air bases, allowed a CIA footprint in Pakistan and even turned a blind eye to American drones bombing Pakistanis on our soil.
- For the first time ever, our army swept into the semi-autonomous tribal areas on the Pak-Afghan border, which had earlier been used as the staging ground for the anti-Soviet *jihad*. The fiercely independent *Pashtun* tribes in these areas had deep ethnic ties with the Taliban and other Islamist militants.
- For the Afghan people, **the United States was a ‘foreign occupier’ of Afghanistan just like the Soviets, deserving of the same treatment.**
- As Pakistan was now America’s collaborator, we too were deemed guilty and attacked. This was made much worse by over 450 US drone strikes on our territory, making us the only country in history to be so bombed by an ally.
- These strikes caused immense civilian casualties, riling up anti-American [and anti-Pakistan army] sentiment further.
- The die was cast. **Between 2006 and 2015, nearly 50 militant groups declared *jihad* on the Pakistani state, conducting over 16,000 terrorist attacks on us. We suffered more than 80,000 casualties and lost over \$150 billion in economy.**

- **The conflict also drove 3.5 million of our citizens from their homes.** 1
- **The militants** escaping from Pakistani counter-terrorism efforts 2
- entered Afghanistan and were **then supported and financed by** 3
- Indian and Afghan intelligence agencies, launching even more** 4
- attacks against Pakistan.** 5
- Pakistan had to fight for its survival. 6
- A former CIA station chief in Kabul wrote in 2009, Pakistan was 7
- "beginning to crack under the relentless pressure directly exerted by 8
- the US." 9
- Yet the United States continued to ask us to **DO MORE – DO** 10
- MORE** for the war in Afghanistan. 11
- In 2008, I met the then Senators Joe Biden, John F Kerry and Harry 12
- M Reid [among others] to explain this dangerous dynamics. 13
- President Asif Zardari, undoubtedly the most corrupt man to have 14
- led my country, told the Americans to continue targeting Pakistanis 15
- in the name of '**collateral damage**' – for no reason. 16
- Nawaz Sharif, our next prime minister, was no different. 17
- While Pakistan had mostly defeated the terrorist onslaught by 2016, 18
- the Afghan situation continued to deteriorate. 19
- Why the difference? Pakistan had a disciplined army and top 20
- intelligence agency, both of which enjoyed popular support of the 21
- general populace of Pakistan [*– in fact the whole world*]. 22
- In Afghanistan, the lack of legitimacy for an outsider's protracted 23
- war was compounded by a corrupt and inept Afghan govt, seen as 24
- a puppet regime without credibility, especially by rural Afghans. 25
- **Tragically, instead of facing this reality, the Afghan and Western** 26
- governments created a convenient scapegoat by blaming Pakistan,** 27
- wrongly accusing us of providing safe havens to the Taliban.** 28
- If it had been so, would the United States not have used some of the 29
- 450-plus drone strikes to target these supposed sanctuaries? 30

- Still, to satisfy Kabul, Pakistan offered a joint border visibility mechanism, suggested biometric border controls, advocated fencing the border [which we have now largely done on our own] and other measures.
- Each idea was rejected. Instead, the Afghan government intensified the **'blame Pakistan' narrative, aided by Indian-run fake news networks** operating hundreds of propaganda outlets in multiple countries.
- A more realistic approach would have been to negotiate with the Taliban much earlier, avoiding the embarrassment of the collapse of the Afghan army and the Ashraf Ghani government.
- Surely Pakistan is not to blame for the fact that 300,000-plus well-trained and well-equipped Afghan security forces saw no reason to fight the lightly armed Taliban – numbering c 60,000+ only.
- The underlying problem was an Afghan government structure lacking legitimacy in the eyes of an average Afghan.
- We must look to the future to prevent another violent conflict in Afghanistan **rather than perpetuating the blame game of the past.**
- Had we done this right, we could achieve what the Doha peace process aimed at all along, where Afghans could finally dream of peace after four decades of conflict.
- **Abandoning Afghanistan** — has been tried before. As in the 1990s, it will inevitably lead to a meltdown, Chaos, mass migration and a revived threat of international terror.

NOW BEHOLD: Much before the Taliban's re-capture of Kabul in August 2021 -

On 8th June 2021; SHASHI THAROOR, AN INDIAN MP AND THEIR CELEBRITY STATE MINISTER, wrote for the media that:

"With the Taliban more powerful than ever and poised to reclaim power in Afghanistan, the only external victor will be Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency [ISI]."

India knew the facts since long. BUT it's astonishing that the mighty CIA 1 of
America had not advised Obama in 2009 to refrain choosing India as 2 their
strategic partner while letting down Pakistan. 3

Once the head of Pakistan's powerful ISI agency, late **Lt Gen Hameed Gul**, was found boasting that: 4 5 6

*"....when Afghanistan's history would be written, it would record that
the ISI, with the help of America, defeated the Soviet Union. And next,
very shrewdly, historians would also state that the ISI, with the help of
America, defeated America."* 7 8 9 10 11

Gen Hameed Gul's boast was not the shallow words; he was right to
argue that it was the ISI's policies - arms supplied and financed by the US
- against the Soviets in Afghanistan that forced the Kremlin to withdraw
at last un-ceremonially. During the same days, America came on the back
of *mujahedeen* of 1980s out of which the Taliban appeared as a separate
faction being PURE *PASHTUNS* but much later; ultimately took over
Afghanistan and ruled for 1996-2001. 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

President Biden announced that US forces would withdraw completely
from Afghanistan by 11th September [2021], the 20th anniversary of
9/11 attacks - but Taliban's speedy victories in other parts of Afghanistan
forced the US to retreat and vacate their lands nearly a month earlier. 20 21 22 23 24

Indian Minister **Shashi Tharoor** had rightly commented; [again] much
earlier on 8th June 2021, that: 25 26 27

*"Whatever, face-saving successor arrangements the US may put in
place to mask its capitulation, its withdrawal from Afghanistan, with
none of its long-term objectives achieved, is a defeat."* 28 29 30 31

[.....but INDIA had not believed in his own Minister's words.] 32 33

PAKISTAN's ON-GROUND PRIORITIES: 34 35 36

The ISI had long been obsessed with the idea that friendly government
in Afghanistan would give Pakistan the '**strategic depth**' needed to
challenge its main adversary, India. A Taliban regime [or even a Taliban-
dominated coalition government] in Kabul could be the best guarantee
of that. But the ISI Generals were wise enough to tone down their
celebrations on various counts. 37 38 39 40 41 42 43

1 Mainly that, as the ISI knows, the problem with taking sides and
2 sponsoring militant groups may go un-controllable; they don't always
3 remain under one's charge – think the **'Pakistani Taliban'**; while the
4 Afghan Taliban needed Pakistani refuge, the Pakistani Taliban started
5 attacking their own erstwhile godfathers on the wake of insufficient steps
6 taken by Pakistan governments to make the country a True Islamic State.

7
8 President Trump reviewed its plans to manage the war in Afghanistan;
9 Washington was on track to modestly increase the number of military
10 personnel deployed to Afghanistan as a stop-gap measure indicating that
11 the US presence in the country was unlikely to end soon. Secretary of
12 Defense Jim Mattis was named for delegated decision making on the
13 Afghan war and chalk out a suitable strategy.

14
15 Referring to an article of **Kassel and Philip Reiner** at foreignaffairs.com
16 dated 14th July 2017; this strategy was based on:

17
18 *".....it is clear that the Taliban [group] is better equipped, funded and*
19 *more operationally efficient today than ever before and that senior*
20 *Pakistani military leaders are well versed in how to support such*
21 *groups covertly. Evidence of the ISI's direct support for the militants is*
22 *thin, but ...it is through the ISI that these groups, which have targeted*
23 *American, Afghan, and coalition forces, survive and operate."*
24

25 The intelligentsia could read in between the lines that the US had no
26 direct evidence of Pakistan's negative involvement in the Taliban's
27 uprising but propaganda was being fed to media by the US and India's
28 agencies. The US had never asked India to help them in Afghanistan with
29 identifying and locating the Taliban's hide-outs or planning strategies. It
30 was an 'out of bound' area for the successive US military commanders
31 posted there because the India was shielding their lions' shares of corrupt
32 \$88bn spending in the name of **'Training Afghan Security forces in**
33 **India'** – that trained force could not stop, even for an hour against the
34 Taliban's taking-over the whole of Afghanistan including Kabul.

35
36 President Obama administration became increasingly critical of Pakistan
37 over his entire tenure in office; however, Trump's strategy didn't fully buy
38 Obama's arguments and policies. The Trump administration's approach
39 remained mostly unclear – till it announced for DOHA NEGOTIATIONS
40 in ending 2018. But it was clear that any approach would be a mistake
41 to manage the war in Afghanistan without addressing the role and
42 concerns of Pakistan was bound to fail – and it happened so at last. Some
43 observers, such as the former US National Security Advisor Stephen

Hadley and the political scientist Moeed Yusuf, had argued that the US ¹ must address Pakistan's insecurities with respect to India to gain its ² cooperation in Afghanistan – however, President Trump didn't bother ³ to heed.

President Trump was also advised by some so-called media gurus who were quite ignorant of the Afghan-Pak history that:

“....combination of carrots and sticks has been considered but never pursued by previous administrations. It would help eliminate the militants' safe haven and preserve bilateral ties by addressing Pakistan's fear of India.”

But the subsequent developments and ultimately the America's humiliating exit from Afghanistan proved that those Indian sponsored media people were living in fool's paradise.

However, the mainstream Pakistanis mostly thought positively; the other way around. Let the Taliban settle down; peace would be restored, and the Pakistani Taliban would stop targeting Pakistani army installations and convoys, and would assure the ISI to lead a peaceful life. It was a 50/50 possibility – Pakistani Taliban's viewpoint was straight that if Afghanistan could be run as an Islamic emirate, then why can't they do the same in Pakistan? Let us wait for the time to decide. May be true, the Pakistani Taliban – without a state sponsor of their own – has less chance of success than their Afghan counterparts but, of course, could still do considerable damage.

Just a day after the Taliban took Kabul on 15th August 2021, their flag was flying high above the RED MOSQUE in Pakistan's capital; conveying an open message to the people that the US-Afghan War was won by the Pakistani Taliban [TTP] as well. It was also a gesture intended to tease the Pakistan's ISI and the defeated Americans both. But who were the real victors in that Afghan war which aimlessly lasted for long ‘Twenty Years’, remained a question to answer by any.

Pakistan was supposedly America's partner in the war against Al Qaeda and the Taliban. The US contended that the Pak-Army had got billions of dollars in US-aid over the two decades; whereas Pakistan argued that the US still owed their bills for the military operations which were accomplished either jointly or solely with US-planned strategic roles. Also that instead of paying off Pakistan's due bills, the US had chosen India for those strategic operations knowingly that India was NOT able

to deliver any performance being at a far off place. However, many alleged that:

'.....the American Generals adopted this policy to make the US money disappeared into unaccounted sinkholes; both parties enjoyed the booty smilingly.'

See **Jamie Dettmer's** essay at voanews.com dated 25th August 2021:

*"President Obama revealed publicly after he left office that he ruled out involving or informing Pakistan of the raid on bin Laden's hideout because it was an open secret that certain elements inside Pakistan's military, and especially its intelligence services, maintained ties with the jihadists, sometimes using them as strategic assets **against India** and regionally.*

In 2018, the Trump administration stopped military aid to Islamabad, accusing Pakistan of failing to take action against the Taliban. Pakistan denied harbouring terrorists (- AND Taliban were not terrorists)."

That was the level of trust between two 'war-allies', then how a partnership could survive. Trust is a two way game. Pakistan was not so foolish state not to understand such below the belt hits.

It was a story of divided interests; the US blamed that the Afghan Taliban were fighting on Pakistan's intelligence service [ISI]'s planning and control whereas the ISI contended that Pakistan's military aided the US forces as per their plans whatsoever.

In media gurus' opinion, even most Americans didn't know about the secret '**Afghan-War Papers**' released after investigations & interviews by an American watchdog from 2014-19, the SIGAR, while documents were first released in Dec 2019. In an overall assessment the US military lost war due to lethargic, incompetent, sluggish and inept Afghan Army on which the US spent \$88 billion for getting it trained.

Secondly the defeat came speedily than expected because the US and Indian intelligence agencies deployed in Afghanistan proved them totally useless. **Gen Stanley A. McChrystal**, the then commander of all American troops in Afghanistan, told in an interview that:

*".... But the facts were that the fledgling Afghan military performed poorly in the field and [thus] the American '**clear, hold, build**' counter-insurgency strategy had little hope of succeeding."*

The tension between rosy public statements and the reality on the ground had been one of the enduring elements of that war. **Jeffrey Eggers**, a former Navy SEAL and later an Adviser to Gen McChrystal, told the SIGAR investigators that:

"One of McChrystal's hardest lessons was his government-in-a-box program which typified the American wartime machinery, and he thought you could simply wave a magic wand and POOF!"

Barnett Rubin, a senior Adviser during 2009 to 2013, described the American strategy in much starker terms; saying in 2017:

"....But we were doing counter-insurgency as colonial power. Afghans [army commanders] knew this influx of funds wouldn't last, and they wanted to make the best of the windfall without endangering themselves. It was a fantasy that we could do that."

'**Pakistan's ISI**' may not be the correct reason for American failure in Afghanistan. One would have to dig out the real causes; see the following paragraphs in this context.

US vs TALIBAN IN RURAL AFGHANISTAN:

In '**the Washington Post**' dated 5th October 2021, see an article penned down by *Sudarsan Raghavan* titled as '**Everyone here hated the Americans: Rural Afghans live with the Taliban and a painful US legacy**', in which he openly admitted after visiting the Afghan villages named *Sinzai* and *Samarda* in *Wardak* province, 25 miles southwest of the Afghan capital – that the general populace were happy with the Taliban.

In *Wardak* province, the US military, the CIA and the ruthless Afghan militias, armed and Indian trained, fought against the Taliban for years, but trapped in the crossfire were villagers and farmers. Many became casualties of US counter-terrorism operations, drone strikes and gun battles.

What was the state of affairs in rural Afghanistan; how the Taliban won hearts in the respective areas of rural Afghanistan — why the white flags fluttered in the apple orchards of this calm settlement in between ringed mountains – it's a point to ponder.

The columnist *Raghavan* wrote that the Afghans had marked the precise spots where US air-strikes in 2019 killed 12 villagers and their families.

1 In the village centre still the destroyed shell of a big building stands that
2 once housed shops; down the road was a mangled, rusted car – AND
3 there were white flags, too. Such reminders of legacy the US left in many
4 rural areas across Afghanistan would remain there; **Raghavan** noted his
5 opinion:

6
7 *“The US military murdered civilians and committed atrocities. In*
8 *Kabul and other Afghan cities, the US will be remembered for enabling*
9 *two decades of progress in women’s rights, an independent media and*
10 *other freedoms. But in the nation’s hinterlands, the main battlegrounds*
11 *of America’s longest war, most Afghans view the US primarily through*
12 *the prism of conflict, brutality and death.”*
13

14 *Sinzai* and the surrounding *Nerakh* District offered a glimpse of life in a
15 post-American rural Afghanistan, home to nearly three-quarters of the
16 population, where peace emerged in 2021; after 20 years of war. The
17 visit offered clues to how the Taliban would govern the country and it
18 helped explain how the militants were able to seize power across the
19 rural areas so swiftly.
20

21 The towns and villages were abetted by the harsh tactics of US forces and
22 their Afghan allies and by the corruption and ineffectiveness of the
23 US-backed Afghan government. No justice or compensation from the US
24 military or the government for the killed civilians - thus the killings of
25 their relatives and the lack of accountability drove many villagers to
26 support the Taliban – and it seemed plausible.
27

28 Rural Afghan society is largely conservative, and residents mostly agreed
29 with the Taliban’s harsh interpretation of Islam. They never got to see the
30 face of American aid because hardly a dollar out of the billions was spent
31 in *Sinzai*, less than two hours’ drive from Kabul. Reconstruction efforts
32 outside the capital were thwarted by insecurity, corruption and inefficiency
33 - the homes in *Sinzai* and nearby villages still don’t have power or
34 running water.
35

36 The Americans left nothing for the villagers of Afghanistan – but only
37 the empty bases. With the departure of US forces and the fall of
38 President Ghani’s government, there was calm unlike the villagers had
39 experienced in two decades. ***With the conflict ended and the Taliban in***
40 ***control, the violence disappeared; and brutal killings of the people***
41 ***totally stopped.*** The village imam, said in front of a mosque peppered
42 with bullet holes. “*You can move freely now anywhere. Death has*
43 *disappeared.*”

WP's **Lorenzo Tugnoli** reported another factual position:

"The family of Sher Mohammed was inside their home in the village of Sarmarda in April 2019 when Afghan forces raided the compound. When his son, Mohammed said, refused to come out an air-strike was called on the house. His son, his son's wife, their three children and two other relatives were killed at the spot."

However, the security relief got tempered by new miseries. The Taliban takeover triggered freezing in funds in Afghanistan's Central Bank and elsewhere abroad. Humanitarian aids finished; international charities got pulled out of the district, and the economy seen in free fall. One villager sadly explained that:

"There are no air-strikes, no night raids, no bombings - but the problem now is there is no work and no money. People here are facing hunger."

This villager named Haideri's shop and 16 other people businesses were air-bombed years before and the people of Wardak were stuffed with resentment. Occasion was that nationwide protests had erupted in 2009 after US soldiers allegedly burned Qur'an, Islam's holiest book, during a raid in Wardak. Thereafter an Army Special Forces teams raided at different times and killed at least 18 Afghan civilians during 2012-13, prompting President Hamid Karzai to order the said team out of Wardak and the Pentagon to launch an investigation – but with no results.

MORE AMERICAN ATROCITIES:

See a high profile research paper, written by John H Akins and published in 2019 by an accredited American University:

"ABSTRACT: *Nearly two decades after the declaration of the War on Terror, global terrorist attacks have increased. Beginning in 2005, the levels of domestic terrorism have drastically increased while international terrorism has not. This is a result of U.S. counter-terrorism policy shifting towards 'dis-aggregation' in which the US government would focus on breaking up the global al Qaeda network into disconnected groups....*

Domestic terrorism within partner states rose as a result of revenge attacks from the targeted communities and groups in the periphery in

response to the offensive military actions of the state, especially when they resulted in civilian casualties.....

This led partner states to sink deeper into a terrorism trap. This study uses quantitative analysis of a global dataset and case studies of Pakistan, Yemen, Mali, and Egypt to demonstrate and test the terrorism trap theory."

Referred to **the Terrorism Trap: the Hidden Impact of America's WOT** by John H Akins University of Tennessee, Knoxville USA published in August 2019.

On 5th August 2011, Taliban fighters shot down a Chinook military helicopter in the *Tangi* Valley, killing 31 US military personnel, seven Afghan National Forces members and an Afghan interpreter. By 2015, US forces had quit that province. The Taliban, since then, controlled much of the *Nerkh* district. The government was entrenched in the district's centre and the villagers were caught in between. ***'Whenever we left our homes we told our families - goodbye, we didn't know whether we would return home alive'***.

One villager confided:

[Even mundane tasks become matters of life or death here. If Haideri shaved, for example, would the Taliban consider him loyal to the foreigners and the government? If he grew out his beard, would the government or the US forces consider him a Taliban?]

Whenever the Americans conducted raids or any operations against the Taliban in that geographic area, they indiscriminately fired at anyone. That's why they all supported the Taliban. The Americans were killing the people while the Taliban protected them.

In Kabul, Afghans were waiting to see how the Taliban would govern; but in Wardak province the residents already knew it; by strict *Sharia* law — which the villagers embrace. *'It is acceptable here as it is divine and according to our Afghan values,'* said Omar, the imam.

Sudarsan Raghavan - referred earlier, narrated facts in his article which are not known to many Westerns. He wrote [shortened to save space]:

"The Taliban has a 3-level court system and a police force, typically fighters not in uniforms. Thieves who are first-time offenders are given

public whippings – not by amputating a hand. The Taliban regime taxes the villagers, usually 10% of their farm production or store revenue.

The Taliban are relatively lenient by its hard-line standards to avoid alienating villagers. Villagers may listen to music or watch movies inside their homes or on smart-phones.

The militants have not enforced a requirement that men grow long beards. The Taliban's morality police patrol the village, but they preach about their dictates rather than use force, residents said."

The Taliban victory was an achievement for the rural masses. One villager, Shafiqullah Zakir of Sinzai said:

".....he was so enraged by the night raids and air-strikes that he joined the insurgency to wage jihad against the Americans. People who haven't seen each other in two decades are now travelling to far-flung areas to see relatives."

But he [Zakir] acknowledged the challenges faced by the Taliban – foremost stands **'poverty'**, deeply rooted here since long. *'A few Western aid agencies that provided food, health care and other necessities have left; medicines are scarce.'*

Some people were hardly getting food for their families; many had to boil potatoes and eating for days to survive. That made villagers more resentful of the urban elites in Kabul; watching millions of dollars flow to shady contractors and corrupt politicians in the capital. They knew that those who left Kabul, they did not leave Afghanistan due to hunger - they collected a lot of wealth – so that's why no one liked the Americans here.

America's legacy kept on haunting one Shukrullah Khail whose younger brother, Nasratullah, was victim of the US unit. The Special Forces unit raided their home and grabbed him on a cold night and took him to the US base. *Two days later, they found Nasratullah's body near a bridge, badly tortured.* Months later, the remains of 10 missing Afghan villagers were uncovered in graves near the base. Two years later, a criminal investigation was opened but the Pentagon never responded to his emails. *'There was no justice done. What can we do now when they have all gone?'*

Coming back to **Jane Perlez's** assessment in **NEW YORK TIMES** dated 26th August 2021:

“During the whole Afghan war the Americans had no choice, preferring to fight a chaotic war in Afghanistan **to frighten the nuclear-armed Pakistan** - **EVEN** though, Pakistan’s ports and airfields provided the main entry points and supply lines for American military equipment needed in Afghanistan; **AND** the official bills of Pak-Army were only partially paid.

Though Pakistan was supposed to be an American ally, it mostly worked toward its own interests, as nations should do. Those interests did not include a large American military presence on its border. It was basically autonomous Afghanistan’s, with a democratic government, responsibility and prerogative to act for its interests.

Truly, Pakistan’s one goal in Afghanistan was to keep an eye over activities sponsored by its enemy, India – as the later always used separatist groups like the Balochistan Liberation Army [BLA], operating from havens in Afghanistan, to stir dissent in Pakistan.”

The Pakistani army believed that the US encouraged India to support the American-backed Afghan governments after 2001, and a fact too, which inter-alia fuelled the Pak-Army’s suspicion. The Pakistanis had also felt bitter when President Obama visited India in 2015 but conspicuously boycotted Pakistan. Then Pakistan preferred to go a mile forward.

[During a visit to Washington in spring 2021 (the Taliban took over much after), Moeed Yusuf, the national security adviser to Pakistan’s PM Imran Khan, stressed the need to eliminate the Indian presence in Afghanistan,]

While Indian diplomats were among the first foreigners to evacuate from Kabul, their departure was played correctly in the Pakistani media as a singular victory.

Douglas London, a former CIA counter-terrorism Chief for South and Southwest Asia, however, felt bad about the reality factor that the Taliban had taken over the government in Kabul. He said:

“All the time Gen Bajwa [Pak-Army Chief] was pressed by the US to give up Khalil Haqqani and two other Haqqani leaders, and all the time, Bajwa would say, ‘Tell us where they are.’ My favourite quote was when Gen Bajwa said: You just have to come to my office and we will go in a helicopter and pick them up.

The Afghan Taliban would not be where they are without the assistance of the Pakistanis."

It remained a fact that Washington's relationship with Pakistan cooled as per Obama's 'other' priorities but touched its heights after Navy SEALs killed Osama bin Laden [OBL] in May 2011 in Pakistan. Top American officials stopped visiting Pakistan and its bill-payments stopped. In the mean time, Pakistan stopped American war supplies from transiting Pakistan, increasing the cost of the war for America. However, it proved to be a temporary measure; in countries where rogue and corrupt leaderships like Zardaris sit in Presidency – every facility comes on sale.

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