

and former warlord politician Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to deal directly with the Taliban in Kabul. Its purpose was to prevent chaos and to better manage the affairs related to peace and the peaceful governance. The Taliban didn't respond to the group. The US officials kept their focus on the evacuation and were seen '*not interested in the Afghan-to-Afghan talks*'.

The news of Taliban's quick advance to Kabul spread when helicopters were seen landing at the US Embassy early Sunday [15th August 2021] and armoured diplomatic vehicles were seen leaving the compound. Diplomats scrambled to destroy sensitive documents and smokes seen from some embassy's premises.

The Pentagon deployed another 1,000 troops to Afghanistan from a brigade combat team with the 82nd Airborne Division resulting in a total of 6,000 US troops on ground at Kabul International Airport which had already taken over air traffic control at the airport. Even then the US government was struggling to get real-time information. There was a big chaos at the Kabul airport and around – details are given elsewhere on these pages.

Bagram and Sorobi districts in Kabul province also surrendered without shots being fired; the militants had made '**political deals**' with Afghan government officials and the local leaders – like in Mazar e Sharif and Jalalabad earlier. On the same day morning [15th Aug] Afghan forces handed over Bagram air base — once the US military's high-ranking important airfield in the country — to the Taliban; the air base was then holding 5,000 inmates in the prison – which were all released at once. Other prisons were also taken over by Taliban immediately and most inmates released.

Biden's statement 'washing hands of Afghanistan is one of the most shameful moment in US history': Left and right-wing media got united in condemnation of 'America's chaotic retreat' and 'betrayal' of Afghan people; some glimpses are detailed on other pages where appropriate.

As the Taliban entered Kabul – countries like Germany, Denmark and Norway said they would suspend operations. The British ambassador was scheduled to be airlifted the next day evening. Iranian officials said its embassy in Kabul would be evacuated by next day [Monday]. Other governments, including Russia and Turkey, said their missions would continue to operate; some neighbours like UAE & Pakistan helped evacuation process.

1 On the very next day of Taliban's take over, the world media started
2 approaching friends and foes of Afghanistan for its future plans.
3 Responses from 3 neighbouring countries were hereunder.

4
5 **PAKISTAN:** In Pakistan – long accused of aiding the Afghan Taliban –
6 PM Imran Khan said:

7
8 *“....the Taliban had broken the chains of mental slavery in
9 Afghanistan.....the Taliban have freed their country from superpowers”.*

10
11 PM Khan was not alone in portraying the Taliban's victory as a triumph.
12 Influential religious clerics and senior Pakistan military generals also
13 celebrated publicly. Siraj ul Haq, the chief of Pakistan's *Jamaat-e-Islami*
14 [JI], an Islamic political party, said in a speech:

15
16 *‘...it was a historic win over a superpower and would create an
17 exemplary Islamic government in Afghanistan’.*

18
19 Pakistan had pushed for peace during the Doha negotiations [2019-20],
20 but many believed the main priority for Pakistan remained keeping the
21 Taliban onside. However, it could be a two edge-sword; the strength of
22 the Taliban's resurgence could further embolden already powerful
23 radical Islamist groups in Pakistan and thus make it more vulnerable.

24
25 As the Taliban swept across Afghanistan, some Pakistanis saw it as a
26 reason to celebrate. Islamist organizations in a number of Pakistani cities
27 doled out sweets to locals. On social media, some people crowed over
28 the failure of the US war effort and nation-building project next door.
29 Raoof Hasan, Special Assistant to Pakistan's PM, mocking the assessments
30 of Western experts on South Asia, tweeted:

31
32 *“Afghanistan witnessed a virtually smooth shifting of power from the
33 corrupt Ghani government to the Taliban. The contraption that the US
34 had pieced together for Afghanistan has crumbled like the proverbial
35 house of cards.”*

36
37 Pakistani PM Khan's government, however, refrained from recognizing
38 the new Taliban's government in Kabul. PM Khan was a vocal opponent
39 of the American '**WAR ON TERROR**' in the region and blamed it for
40 stoking a parallel Pakistani Taliban insurgency, then stressed the
41 importance of all sides working to secure an inclusive political solution.
42 He had truly cited Pakistan as a victim of cycles of regional unrest and
43 conflict - by the interventions of the US especially.

Pakistan's National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf explained it more vividly in an interview [August 2021]:

"We under no circumstances are prepared to see protracted instability that in the past has caused spill-over into Pakistan. We suffered all of these 40 years."

Referring to **Ishaan Tharoor**'s allegations dated 18th August 2021 at 'Today's World View' newsletter:

"For years, the Western media and the US bemoaned the support afforded to the Afghan Taliban by Pakistan's military establishment and through its Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI]"

But if it was so, none of the media agency or the US State department ever bothered to go deep into the basic root-cause that US had continuously backed Afghan Presidents KARZAI & GHANI in association with Indian government and that:

- **India's RAW & TTP had launched about 1S,000 terrorist attacks on Pakistani soils after 2005.**
- **Especially hit Pakistan's Tribal areas and Balochistan killing more than 80,000 soldiers and civilians.**
- **.....Caused over \$150 billion loss in Pakistan's economy.**
- **.....Also drove 3.5 million of Pakistani citizens away from their homes.**

The Western media claimed that the Taliban's long-running insurgency and its rapid takeover of Afghanistan were linked to Pakistan – **but who created Al-Qaeda and Taliban – it was the US who created them**, backed them with cash finance and military equipment during 1970-80s to oppose the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan; see the details in preceding chapters of this book.

For its allies in the Pakistani establishment, the Taliban's appeal was both political and strategic, thus Pakistan served as a major US ally during and after the 2001's invasion of Afghanistan – but the US betrayed.

The situation turned around at 180 angles when **the US started preferring India, sending them huge funding** in the name of training of Afghan

1 Security Forces there; total bill paid: nearly \$88bn. As a result, India
2 planted those trained Afghani groups at the Pak-Afghan border to attack
3 Pakistani territories labelling them as Pakistani Taliban [TTP] killing
4 about[see the above lines again for details].

5
6 With so enhanced loss of military and civilian lives, especially with the
7 notorious pinching instructions of **DO MORE; DO MORE**, Pakistan
8 had to react in its own way – so the world has seen the end of the
9 LONGEST US WAR with so humiliating defeat.

10
11 **LESSON:** *in wars, powerful partners should deal with the allies*
12 *sincerely and whole-heartedly. The basic Islamic philosophy is 'Friend*
13 *of your friend is friend AND the friend of your enemy is Enemy' –*
14 *one can analyse these words in recent past of the troika of the US –*
15 *Pakistan – India.*

16
17 **ISI's GEN HAMID GUL PREDICTION:**

18
19 Now recall famous words of late Pakistani Gen Hamid Gul, known as
20 the Godfather of Pakistani geo-strategic policies, televised in 2014 – so
21 why crying that **the ISI defeated the Soviet Union in Afghanistan with**
22 **the help of America – and then the ISI, with the help of America,**
23 **defeated America.**

24
25 It's no secret that under President Trump's pressure, Pakistan had
26 released Abdul Ghani Baradar — the political key-figure of the Taliban
27 - from prison in 2018 so he could participate in peace negotiations held
28 in Doha, the Qatari capital. In June [2018]'s **Washington Post:** PM Khan
29 had argued that he and his government did the '*real diplomatic heavy*
30 *lifting'* to bring the Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table and urged the
31 US and Afghan governments to '*show more flexibility*' in the talks.

32
33 In Pakistan, new influx of Afghan refugees was [and still is] endangered
34 on top of the more than 3 million it has hosted since the waning days of
35 the Cold War. The Taliban takeover does not dim the threat of anti-
36 Islamabad militancy, and it could also encourage Islamist extremist
37 movements and ethnic *Pashtun* separatists operating within Pakistan.
38 Meanwhile, Western frustrations with the Pakistani connection to the
39 Afghan Taliban could only intensify in future.

40
41 These developments would probably take Pakistan further away in all
42 developmental fields, perpetuating dysfunction at home and locking it
43 into a foreign policy defined by more dependence on China – but the

people were happy to keep the US away calling it treacherous and deceitful.

RUSSIA: Russia reacted to the Taliban's return to power with cool real politik. Zamir Kabulov, Russia's presidential envoy to Afghanistan, said on state television on 16th August 2021 that:

"If we compare the negotiability of the colleagues and the partners, I have long since decided that the Taliban is much more able to reach agreements than the puppet government in Kabul."

Russia has long criticised the US intervention in Afghanistan. In February 1989, the Soviet Union evacuated its troops while crossing over the Friendship Bridge into Uzbekistan. This August [2021], US-allied warlords and their fighters were forced to flee over the same bridge.

In Afghanistan, the Russia's policy went different than in Syria and Iraq; Russia was seen ready to engage if the Taliban could ensure security for the diplomatic community and prevent militants from launching assaults against its neighbours such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

The Russian envoy to Afghanistan, even hinted the possibility that Russia would recognise the Taliban government – but depending upon the behaviour of the new rulers. However, the Taliban promptly took the Russian embassy under protection, and its ambassador, Dmitry Zhirnov, told about the Taliban's promise that *'not a single hair will fall of Russian diplomats'*.

CHINA: Since long China, no doubt, was feeling uneasy about the US military engagement in Afghanistan. Then astonishingly, it also blamed the US for its *'irresponsible withdrawal'* from Afghanistan. In recent times, the continued presence of the US in Afghanistan was seen as a lesser of two evils but Beijing adopted a careful line in its policy towards the new Taliban regime. Chinese media called Afghanistan a '**graveyard of empires**' and Beijing never opted to be mired in this Great Game. China's foreign ministry spokeswoman said:

'.... [we're] ready to develop good-neighbourly, friendly and cooperative relations with Afghanistan but Afghanistan would not serve as a staging ground for acts detrimental to China'.

China would, however, plan to participate in the post-war reconstruction and provide investments etc. On 16th August 2021; China's spokesperson, Hua Chunying, reiterated that:

1 *“Beijing welcome the Taliban’s promise that they will allow no force to*
2 *use the Afghan territory to engage in acts detrimental to China and its*
3 *expression of hope that China will be more involved in Afghanistan’s*
4 *peace and reconciliation process and play a bigger role in future*
5 *reconstruction and economic development”.*

6 For many years, China remained concerned about its far-west Xinjiang
7 Uyghur region while demanding the Taliban refrain from hosting any
8 Uyghur groups on their territory.

9 Referring to **Simon Jenkins** in the **Guardian** dated 16th August 2021:

10 *“The fall of Kabul was inevitable. It marks the end of a post-imperial*
11 *western fantasy. Yet the west’s reaction beggars belief. Call it a*
12 *catastrophe, a humiliation, a calamitous mistake, if it sounds good.*
13 *All retreats from empire are messy. This one took 20 years, but the end*
14 *was at least swift.*

15 *The US had no need to invade Afghanistan. The country was never a*
16 *‘terrorist state’.... It was not at war with the US; indeed the US had*
17 *aided its rise to power..... The Taliban had hosted Osama bin Laden*
18 *in his mountain lair through his friendship with the Taliban leader,*
19 *Mullah Omar... (but not as terrorist entity)”*

20 After the 2001 invasion, the US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld
21 demanded that George Bush should **‘punish and get out’** but neither
22 President Bush nor UK’s PM Tony Blair listened. For reasons never fully
23 explained, Blair declared a **‘doctrine of international community’** and
24 pleaded for Britain to be in the first bombing run over Kabul.

25 In 2006, British army of 3,400 volunteered to suppress resurgent Taliban
26 rebels in *Helmand*, a southern province of Afghanistan. Secretary
27 John Reid held that only remnants of the Taliban remained there and
28 that *‘not a shot needed firing’*. Gen David Richards said it would be
29 *‘just another Malaya’* – but seven years later, **British troops had to leave**
30 **defeated and wounded**; the local *Pashtuns* are masters at humiliating
31 outside powers.

32 *[The then PM Tony Blair and his cabinet could have known their*
33 *history that the same Pashtuns had slaughtered nearly 17,000 British*
34 *men, women, and children when they were evacuating Kabul ending*
35 *the First Afghan War 183E-42 and the British Empire was defeated;*
36 *had to leave the whole Afghanistan.]*

- 1 • China pre-emptively invited and started a dialogue with the Taliban
2 and peacefully chalked out the future; NO rifts there either.
3
- 4 • Pakistan fenced off its border months earlier with Afghanistan and
5 absolutely stayed away from its internal matters thus there was no
6 conflict between the Taliban and Pakistan – thus NO Civil War.
7
- 8 • The Indian investment [in Afghanistan] of billions of dollars fizzled
9 out; and the Indians fooled the US that they had a stronghold in
10 Afghanistan. India even lost its bet in post American withdrawal
11 from Afghanistan; they couldn't handle the situation – all their
12 narratives went to the dogs as well.
13
- 14 • Americans are angry and annoyed with the Indians for misleading
15 them - more than they are with the Afghans.
16
- 17 • Afghan government was a puppet to begin with and the Americans
18 knew it because they are the ones who IMPOSED them on the
19 Afghan people.
20

NOW AFTER...?

- 21 • Now after America losing India falling on its face,...the entire war is
22 going to be fought in the news and with narratives.
23
- 24 • **No bombs, No bullets, No bunkers. A war of brains.....**
25
- 26 • India will try to delude the world with wrong narratives. They are a
27 wounded Jackal - And a wounded jackal is more DESPERATE.
28
- 29 • Pakistan has won. Pakistan is Stronger than before. Pakistan is on a
30 more solid diplomatic ground than it has been in the past 19 years
31 of this war.
32
- 33 • The world should be ready for a peaceful region where China,
34 Pakistan, Iran and access to Central Asia through Afghanistan will
35 define a new Chapter in the future of CPEC. CPEC only had one
36 obstacle and that was unhindered access to Central Asian countries,
37 it is here now. And it being here is the death of INDIA. A stronger
38 region with Pakistan leading in it is a nightmare for India.
39

40 But get ready to hear the screams of BLA, PTM and all other Afghan
41 based Indian supported rogue elements. They will be dying along with
42 Afghan puppet regime.
43

GOOD DAYS ARE HERE – and AHEAD

Historians of Afghan-US relations held that the Taliban and al-Qaeda 1 were inseparable; their joint training sessions were known to all. 2 Moreover; the Taliban were not a centralised and unified force; some 3 leaders wanted to lead a peaceful life then but hardliners were reluctant 4 to break links with al-Qaeda and other affiliated factions. There was a 5 regional branch of the **Islamic State** group - ISKP [*Khorasan*] – used to 6 oppose the Taliban regime but how would they behave in changed 7 scenario – was not clear. 8 9

Like al-Qaeda, ISKP was also degraded by the US and NATO; they were 10 able to re-group again during the post-withdrawal period. Its fighter 11 numbers were estimated as less than 2000 but it would try to gain 12 footholds in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and parts of Tajikistan, which 13 could be a serious regional concern in the near future. 14 15

Let us re-visit the issue once more. 16 17

Many factors were responsible for this catastrophe, an unexpected event 18 called fall of Kabul. Firstly; the melting of the Afghan National Security 19 Forces [ANSF], which were well-armed as well as well-trained by the 20 Americans themselves and having five times numerical superiority over 21 the Taliban militia, allowed the latter a free passage across the various 22 cities and district HQs. 23 24

Secondly; the **performance of the US intelligence remained zero** since six 25 months at least; they fell flat, showing how detached, lazy and casual the 26 US administration remained about the ground situation in Afghanistan. 27 The US lost interest in Afghan affairs after the Biden Administration 28 announced the withdrawal plan in April 2021. 29 30

The world intelligentsia failed to comprehend the rapidity of how a 31 20-year old multinational Afghan project led by the world's sole 32 superpower could be wound up in few weeks – and that too forced by a 33 militia of little more than 60,000. It would take time the world feel about 34 the deeper implications and envisage the whole spectrum of consequences 35 of this episode. 36 37

Among all the stakeholders, no one got affected by the disaster as 38 profoundly as the Afghan people. The images and video clips of the then 39 prevailing chaos and anarchy in the streets, roads, bus stops, and Kabul 40 Airport were heartbreakingly. These scenes of human helplessness and 41 pessimism will continue to shame the world for failing the people of 42 Afghanistan. 43

1 Referring to Amanat Chaudhry's essay titled '***The fall of Kabul and***
2 ***beyond***' in daily '***theNews.com.pk***' dated 19th August 2021:

3
4 *"When the history books get written, the myopic and lopsided policies*
5 *pursued by the Biden Administration will characterize the legacy of the*
6 *'experienced' president for all the wrong reasons. He will not be able*
7 *to shrug off the questions about the Americans leaving the people of*
8 *Afghanistan to fend off for themselves.*

9
10 *Worthy of equal blame is the now-deposed Ghani administration that*
11 *kowtowed to its foreign masters and built up an empire of corruption,*
12 *incompetence, and unpleasantry, practically alienating the Afghan*
13 *people....."*

14
15 The Taliban takeover was celebrated by some people in Pakistan at full
16 bloom – forgetting that the Taliban philosophy and democracy lie at two
17 opposite polls – one have to make one choice.

18
19 With Kabul overtaken by the Taliban, all the previous peace deals
20 including the Doha Agreement and regional efforts as well as the
21 expectation from the Taliban to keep them dissociated from so-called
22 terror outfits like Al-Qaeda had practically gone dead. That was why the
23 Taliban-run Afghanistan needed international legitimacy and financial
24 assistance to be viable; as noted by Mullah Baradar: '*....the Taliban's*
25 ***test has just begun***'.

26
27 **BLAST AT KABUL AIRPORT – 13 KILLED:**

28
29 **On 27th August 2021;** thirteen [13] US service members and at least
30 60 Afghans were killed and 140 wounded in two bombing attacks
31 outside Kabul's airport. The deadly blasts came as the US and other
32 countries raced to complete a massive evacuation of their citizens
33 following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Eighteen US service
34 members were also injured.

35
36 ISIS in Khorasan, known as ISIS-K, claimed that an ISIS militant carried
37 out the suicide attack and President Biden immediately ordered US
38 military commanders "*to develop operational plans to strike ISIS-K*
39 *assets, leadership and facilities.*"

40
41 US officials had warned over the past week that a threat of a terror
42 attack at the airport was becoming more acute; the US diplomats in
43 Kabul warned American citizens to immediately leave several gates of the

airport, citing security threats. The risk of potential suicide attacks by ¹ ISIS-K had already led the US to establish alternative routes to Kabul ² airport before the evacuation operation started.

Thousands of Afghans gathered, in hopes of being evacuated, at the airport's gates after Taliban's take over of Kabul on 15th August 2021. The social media, after the explosions, showed chaotic scenes of crowds of people trying to help the wounded amid bodies on the ground. Pentagon held that one of the explosions happened at the airport's Abbey Gate and the other at or near the Baron Hotel, a short distance from Abbey Gate.

Abbey Gate is the main entry point to the airport and primary security there was being provided by US Marines. The area around that gate had been used for holding refugees after they passed through the Taliban check points outside the airport, and before they were allowed to go to airport.

Baron Hotel was used by British soldiers and other allies as an evacuation handling centre to process evacuees, before moving them up to the Abbey Gate. Over 95,700 people were evacuated since 15th August and over 101,300 since the end of July. Even after the attack, scores of people continued to gather at the airport - ahead of US' 31st August 2021 deadline for the final exit from a 20-year war ridden Afghanistan.

Several European countries, including Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Poland, New Zealand and Canada completed their evacuation missions till then. The UK continued its evacuation operation despite attack; 13,146 people -- including embassy staff, British nationals, those eligible under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy program and a number of nationals from partner nations -- were evacuated by the UK.

Abdullah Abdullah, the Chairman of Afghanistan's Reconciliation Committee under the previous government condemned the said attacks; the Taliban had taken away security from the former Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Abdullah Abdullah.

On 31st August 2021; the Taliban practically took over the whole country except a negligible resistance in Panjsher valley but the resistance could not last more than 4 days. All of the Afghanistan was under Taliban control. It marked the end of an era: America's longest but humiliating war was over; America suffered multiple losses. It happened fast, stunning the world and leaving many in the country racing to find

1 an exit. But even among those surprised by the way the end played out,
2 many knew the war was destined to end in bad tone. See further:
3

4 *“.....the seeds of disaster were planted back at the war’s very beginning.*
5 *Soon after the US landed in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks, the*
6 *successive US governments struggled to answer exactly why the*
7 *military was there. In the very beginning, the goal was relatively clear:*
8 *to capture the perpetrator of the attacks, OBL, but almost immediately,*
9 *the goals went blurred rather got scratched.”*

10 [Rajaa Elidrissi’s essay of 1st September 2021
11 at vox.com is referred]

12 On the same day of **31st August 2021**; EU countries vowed to dole out
13 an unspecified amount of funds to significantly beef up financial support
14 for Afghanistan’s neighbors to manage the refugee crisis at their borders.
15 But they also pushed back discussions on the bloc’s own role in accepting
16 Afghani asylum seekers, citing various reasons.

17 In 5-hours long meeting in Brussels, EU interior ministers adopted a text
18 that pledged financial support to relevant international organizations and
19 neighboring countries of Afghanistan to reinforce their capacities to
20 provide protection and sustainable livelihood for Afghan refugees. Exactly
21 how much money they offered to Pakistan and Iran; no one divulged.

22 This financial support was in fact a broader strategy for keeping Afghan
23 migrants away from EU countries amid fears of another surge. The
24 Interior Ministers of the EU countries signed a statement saying:

25 *“Based on lessons learned, the EU and its member states stand*
26 *determined to act jointly to prevent the recurrence of uncontrolled*
27 *large-scale illegal migration movements faced in the past, by preparing*
28 *a coordinated and orderly response - incentives to illegal migration*
29 *should be avoided.”*

LAST AMERICAN SOLDIER LEAVES KABUL:

30 On **31st August 2021**; the US Army shared an image, taken with night-
31 vision optics, of the last US soldier to step aboard the final evacuation
32 flight out of Kabul — Maj Gen Chris Donahue, Commander of the 82nd
33 Airborne Division was the person in focus.

34 America’s longest war took the lives of 2,400 plus US troops and an
35 estimated 240,000 Afghans, and costing them more than \$2 trillion:
36 www.dawn.com/news/1643653 dated 31st August 2021 is referred.

Celebratory gunfire echoed across Kabul as Taliban fighters took control 1
 of the airport before dawn on 1st September 2021 following the 2 withdrawal
 of the last US troops, ending 20 years of war that left the 3 group stronger
 than it was in 2001. Shaky video footage distributed by 4 the Taliban showed
 fighters entering the airport after the last US troops 5 took off a minute before
 midnight, marking the end of a hasty and 6 humiliating exit for Washington
 and its NATO allies. Taliban Qari Yusuf 7 said at Al-Jazeera TV: 8

*“The last US soldier has left Kabul airport and our country gained
 complete independence.”* 9

Although the US succeeded [in 2001] in driving out the Taliban from 10
 power and stopped Afghanistan being used as a base by Al Qaeda, it 11
 ended with the Taliban group controlling more of the country than they 12
 ever did during their previous rule from 1996 to 2001. Those years are 13
 still known for the Taliban’s strict interpretation of *Shariah*, and the 14
 world was aspiring to see whether the Taliban could form a more 15
 moderate and inclusive government in the months ahead. 16

In 2021; thousands of Afghans fled fearing Taliban reprisals. A massive 17
 but chaotic airlift by the US and its allies over the two weeks succeeded 18
 in evacuating more than 123,000 people from Kabul, but tens of 19
 thousands who helped Western states during the war were left behind. 20
 About 100 to 200 Americans wanted to leave but were unable to get 21
 on flights. 22

Gen Frank McKenzie, commander of the US Central Command, 23
 told a Pentagon briefing that the Chief US diplomat in Afghanistan, 24
 Ross Wilson, was out on the last C-17 flight. Gen McKenzie told 25
 reporters: 26

*“There’s a lot of heartbreak associated with this departure. We did not 27
 get everybody out that we wanted to get them out. But I think if we’d 28
 stayed another 10 days, we wouldn’t have gotten everybody out of that 29
 country.”* 30

As the US troops departed, they destroyed more than 70 aircrafts, dozens 31
 of armoured vehicles and disabled air defenses that had thwarted an 32
 attempted Islamic State rocket attack on the eve of the last US departure. 33

President Joe Biden, in a statement, defended his decision to stick to the 34
 given deadline for withdrawing US forces. He said: 35

1 *"The world would hold the Taliban to their commitment to allow safe
2 passage for those who want to leave Afghanistan.*

3 *Now, our 20-year military presence in Afghanistan has ended."*

4 Biden thanked the US military for carrying out the dangerous evacuation.
5 He added that the US long ago achieved the objectives it set in ousting the
6 Taliban in 2001 for harbouring Al Qaeda militants who masterminded the
7 11th Sept 2001 attacks on America – however, he had to entertain heavy
8 criticism from Republicans and some of his fellow Democrats for his
9 handling of Afghanistan since collapse of the US-backed government.

10 Senator Ben Sasse, a Republican member of the Senate Intelligence
11 Committee, called the **US withdrawal a national disgrace** that was the
12 direct result of Biden's misadventure, cowardice and incompetence.
13 However, one Democratic Senator Sheldon Whitehouse tweeted:

14 *"Bravo to our diplomats, military, and intelligence agencies. An airlift
15 of 120,000 people in that dangerous and tumultuous situation is
16 something no one else could do."*

17 Blinken said the US was prepared to work with the new Taliban govt if
18 reprisals against opponents in the country would not be the Taliban's
19 policy. He said:

20 *"The Taliban seek international legitimacy and support. Our position
21 is any legitimacy and support will have to be earned. The Taliban must
22 revive a war-shattered economy without being able to count on the
23 billions of dollars in foreign aid that flowed to the previous ruling elite
24 and fed systemic corruption."*

25 The population outside the cities was facing what the UN officials called
26 an acute **catastrophic humanitarian situation** worsened by a severe
27 drought. One local opinion appeared:

28 *"Our culture has become toxic; we see Russian and American influence
29 everywhere, even in the food we eat. That is something people should
30 realize and make necessary changes. This will take time but will
31 happen."*

32 **On 2nd September 2021**; after the Taliban got firm footing in Kabul,
33 there was a sudden surge at the Spin Boldak - Chaman land border
34 crossing, which lead to the deadly stampede killing one person after the

unprecedented number of people started fleeing from war-torn 1 Afghanistan to Pakistan. Pakistan had closed its border due to excessive 2 influx of unwanted Afghan refugees from Taliban terror. A 64-year-old 3 man from Afghanistan named Safi Ullah died in the incident as confirmed 4 by his son Shahid Ullah to the CNN reporter - *“Me and my father were 5 trying to cross the border with the rest of our family, I lost my father in 6 the stampede, later we found him dead.”*

On 29th September 2021; a top US General conceded openly that the US *‘lost the 20-year war in Afghanistan’*. **Gen Mark Milley**, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the House Armed Services Committee that:

“It is clear; it is obvious to all of us, that the war in Afghanistan did not end on the terms we wanted, with the Taliban in power in Kabul. The war was a strategic failure; it wasn’t lost in the last 20 days or even 20 months. There’s a cumulative effect to a series of strategic decisions that go way back; We accomplished our strategic task of protecting America against Al-Qaeda, but certainly the end state is a whole lot different than what we wanted.”

Gen Milley was correct to mention that a lot of lessons were learned here. He listed a number of factors responsible for the US defeat going back to a missed opportunity to capture or kill Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden [OBL] at *Tora Bora* soon after the October 2001 US invasion. In 2003, the US troops should not have been shifted to Iraq from Afghanistan. President Biden, in April [2021], ordered a complete pullout of US forces from Afghanistan by 31st August because an accord had already been reached with the Taliban by former president Donald Trump – called the Doha Agreement of 29th February 2020.

Gen Milley & Gen Kenneth McKenzie, Commander of US Central Command, had personally recommended that some 2,500 troops should remain on ground in Afghanistan but Biden had received ‘split advice’ about what to do then. Ultimately, it was up to the commander-in-chief to make a decision so he announced ***that it was time to end a 20-year war.***

TALIBAN’s ARMED PARADE IN KABUL:

The new Taliban ruling team held a military parade in Kabul on Sunday, the 14th November 2021, using captured American armoured vehicles and Russian helicopters in a display that showed their ongoing transformation from an insurgent force to a regular standing army.

1 History of a Disgraceful Surrender [2021]

2 Referring to daily '**DAWN**' dated 18th November 2021:

3 *"The Taliban operated as insurgent fighters for two decades but have
4 used the large stock of weapons and equipment left behind when the
5 former Western-backed government collapsed in August to overhaul
6 their forces.*

7 *The parade was linked to the graduation of 250 freshly trained soldiers
8 of Afghan army."*

9 The Taliban's Defence Ministry spokesman Enayatullah Khwarazmi told
10 that the exercise involved dozens of US-made armoured security vehicles
11 driving slowly up and down a major Kabul road with MI-17 helicopters
12 patrolling overhead. Many soldiers carried US made-M4 assault rifles.
13 Most of the weapons and equipment the Taliban forces were carrying
14 and using were those supplied by Washington to the American-backed
15 Ghani's government in Kabul in a bid to construct an Afghan National
16 Force capable of fighting the Taliban – but that day never appeared.

17 Those forces melted away with the fleeing of Afghan President Ghani
18 from Afghanistan — leaving the Taliban to take over major military
19 assets. Taliban officials also told that pilots, mechanics and other
20 specialists from the former Afghan National Army would be integrated
21 into a new force, which had already started wearing conventional
22 military uniforms in place of the traditional Afghan dress normally worn
23 by their fighters.

24 *[According to a report of late 2020 by the Special Inspector General for
25 Afghanistan Reconstruction [SIGAR], the US government transferred
26 to the Afghan government more than \$28 billion worth of defence
27 articles and services, including weapons, ammunition, vehicles, night-
28 vision devices, aircraft, and surveillance systems, from 2002 to 2017.]*

29 Some of the aircraft were flown into neighbouring Central Asian
30 Countries by fleeing Afghan forces; the Taliban were on the way to get
31 them back.

32 33