

## Scenario 228

### DOHA AGREEMENT FEB 2020

When President Donald Trump took office in January 2017, the Afghan war was on. He initially approved an increase of the US forces in Afghanistan to roughly 14K. Trump, as a person, disliked wars and especially bloody war in Afghanistan, and was looking for an exit. He started fresh negotiations with the Taliban in 2018 which ended in Doha Accord of **29<sup>th</sup> February 2020** though the level of violence and Afghan casualties' rates in 2019 were at par with those of earlier recent years.

#### **QATAR HOSTED THE TALIBAN EARLIER:**

IN 2010-12 the US missed a golden opportunity for peace in Afghanistan.

After nearly a decade's bloodshed in Afghanistan, the Taliban representatives secretly arrived in Qatar **in 2010** to talk to Western officials; the Americans were eager to secure a peace deal that would allow NATO a dignified exit from Afghanistan and leave the country stable and peaceful.

**In March 2012**, the Taliban suspended initial talks with the US on issue of prisoner exchanges. They wanted the release of five Taliban figures held at Guantanamo Bay in exchange for the freedom of US soldier Sgt Bowe Bergdahl who had been held by the Taliban since 2009.

*[There were more than 20 high-ranking Taliban members who had been living in Qatar with their families. Within those two years, Taliban had sent their representatives from Qatar in Japan, France, Germany and Iran to explain the 'cause of Taliban vision' about Afghanistan. Nearly all Taliban high-members had come to Qatar through Pakistan; thus in Doha, they were careful about their activities and movements.]*

Doha, capital city of Qatar, was not a big city and there were about 6,000 Afghan labourers and businessmen who had been living here since long. They lived in Doha in comfortable homes all paid by the Qatars; they had seen war and fighting for 30 years but then wanted to live in peaceful environment. As a confidence-building measure, providing

1 protection to those Taliban leaders participating in peace talks and  
2 finding solution of Afghan problem became a priority for the US and the  
3 Afghan High Peace Council.

4  
5 *The Afghan government was keen on opening an office for the Taliban*  
6 *in Turkey or Saudi Arabia, because those countries were more influential*  
7 *and had a closer working relationship with Kabul but the Taliban's*  
8 *preferred venue was Qatar because they considered it a neutral location.*  
9 *The US was also happy with this option.*

10  
11 President Hamid Karzai finally gave the green light to the office after  
12 receiving guarantees that it would work only as a venue for peace talks  
13 and on low profile. The president did not want Doha Office to be used  
14 for other activities, such as the expansion of Taliban ties with the rest of  
15 the world, recruitment or fundraising.

16  
17 Referring to *Dawood Azami's* essay at the **BBC World Service** website  
18 appeared on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2013:

19  
20 *"In addition to the prisoners exchange task, there were other compelling*  
21 *reasons too; mainly to reduce Taliban's dependence on Pakistan. The*  
22 *Afghan government wanted to create distance between the Taliban and*  
23 *Pakistan, and for Taliban members to be able to participate in talks*  
24 *without risking arrests by Pakistan. The Pakistani government also*  
25 *wanted to show that it did not control the Taliban and they were based*  
26 *in Qatar not in Pakistan."*

27  
28 The fact remained that Qatar was not one of the three countries -  
29 Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates - which recognised the  
30 Taliban regime in Afghanistan during 1996-2001 - rather it had 'cordial'  
31 relations with the militants. After the Taliban regime was toppled in  
32 2001, some of its high-ranking figures sought asylum in Qatar, but their  
33 requests were quietly declined or ignored for a number of reasons,  
34 including because their names were on the UN / US sanction list, or they  
35 were wanted by the US. Thus the opening of the Taliban office brought  
36 Qatar in the international limelight it always aspired.

37  
38 There stands a long US-history behind such US-Taliban talking chances  
39 in Doha or elsewhere. Imagine a question:

40  
41 **Why hasn't the US left Afghanistan earlier?** The answer is the  
42 combination of terrorism threats and the US electoral politics. In the  
43 post-9/11 world, US presidents had to choose between spending

resources at very low geo-strategic value and accepting some unknown 1 risk of a 2<sup>nd</sup> terrorist attack like of 9/11; nowhere had that dynamic been 2 more evident than in Afghanistan. 3

In the early years after the 9/11 attacks, the political atmosphere in the US was charged with fears of another assault. That was one reason why Bush, after seeing the initial defeat of al Qaeda and the Taliban, never considered calling back the troops home. Only after the surge and the death of bin Laden did withdrawal from Afghanistan became conceivable. 4

The terrorist threat receded during the first half of Obama's presidency, yet he, too, could not ignore the possibility. NO high-level Obama admin-official advocated such a move; intense criticism was seen all around. Only after the surge and the death of bin Laden a '**zero option**' could be considered. Days after bin Laden was captured and killed in May 2011, a Gallup poll showed that 59% of Americans believed the US mission in Afghanistan had been accomplished. 5

In 2014, the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq & Syria [ISIS] and subsequent string of high-profile terrorist attacks in the West made even modest drawdown schedule less feasible strategically and politically. After the setbacks of 2015, the US intelligence assessed that terrorist groups could once again establish safe havens in Afghanistan. Confronted with that finding, President Obama had accepted the advice of his top Generals to keep the US forces there in Afghanistan. 6

Same thing happened with President Trump; he had the least patience for the mission in Afghanistan. With Trump agitating for an exit, substantive talks between the Taliban and the US commenced in 2018. Earlier efforts between 2010 and 2013 had failed because the conditions were not ripe: the White House was occupied with other issues, negotiating teams were not in place, and Mullah Omar, the Taliban's leader, was in seclusion—and then died in 2013. By 2019, those obstacles no longer stood in the way, and Trump was uniquely determined to go ahead. 7

### **US-TALIBAN TALKS – DOHA DECLARATION:**

**In October 2018;** the US officials and Taliban representatives held their first meeting in Doha, Qatar. The talks continued into the next year for eight rounds. 8

Zalmay Khalilzad, the US special representative for Afghanistan, stood for Washington in the talks, while co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani 9

1 Baradar and Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, the head of the Taliban's  
2 political office in Doha, represented the Taliban group.  
3

4 *[As the talks were under way, violence spiked with 1,174 deaths and*  
5 *3,139 injuries between July and end-September 2019, showing a 42%*  
6 *increase over the same period compared with the year before. According*  
7 *to the data provided by the US Central Command Combined Air*  
8 *Operations Centre, the US air force dropped a record 7,423 bombs on*  
9 *Afghanistan – more than at any time in the last 10 years.]*

10  
11 More than 100,000 Afghans were killed or wounded since 2009 when  
12 the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan started documenting casualties.  
13

14 **On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019**, the US Secretary of State was presented the  
15 US-Taliban Pact, which was mutually agreed and drafted after detailed  
16 talks in numerous meetings between the two, but he declined to sign the  
17 pact. On one side America was expecting a deal with the Taliban that was  
18 designed to wind down its 18-year war in Afghanistan – BUT on the other  
19 hand the said final pact was termed a '**risky affair**' by the US government.  
20

21 The Defence Secretary Mark Esper discussed that Afghan deal with  
22 President Trump. Had the said deal approved, it could begin a  
23 withdrawal of 5,400 US troops, roughly a third of the then present force,  
24 from five bases within 135 days. The 'agreement in principle' was  
25 proposed by former US envoy Zalmay Khalilzad after nine rounds of  
26 talks with Taliban representatives in Qatar and was the first tentative  
27 step towards peace since US attack on Afghanistan in 2001.  
28

29 The US re-treat from Afghanistan had come on cards much earlier than  
30 this Doha Agreement of February 2020 or the actual withdrawal of the  
31 American forces ending on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021. The end game had actually  
32 been started when the '**Secret Papers about Afghan War**' appeared in  
33 limelight in which the whole American nation got astonished knowing  
34 that total lies were told, spoken or released by the respective leaderships  
35 during their tenures about the actual happening on Afghan soils.  
36

37 **See 'Documents Reveal US Officials Misled Public on War in**  
38 **Afghanistan'** By Thomas Gibbons-Neff; appeared in media on  
39 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019:

40  
41 The US special envoy Kalilzad, made quick progress by offering Taliban  
42 a timeline for the complete withdrawal of the US forces. The two sides  
43 worked towards a comprehensive cease-fire, and not aiding al Qaeda or

other terrorist groups. As said above, over the course of nine rounds of 1 talks, the two sides developed that draft agreement. The Taliban 2 representatives in the talks and the group's senior leaders had earlier 3 refused to meet all of Khalilzad's conditions - but then 'Give & Take' 4 bargain prevailed to reach the final agreement.

It fell apart. Although Trump toyed with the idea of holding a dramatic summit to announce a deal at Camp David in September 2019, he was torn between his campaign promise '**to end endless war**' and the possibility of a resurgent terrorist threat, which could harm him politically. During an interview with **Fox News on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019**, he was distinctly non-committal about fully withdrawing. He said:

*"We're going down to 8,600 [troops], and then we'll make a determination from there; a high intelligence presence would stay in the country."*

So when the Taliban escalated their attacks in the backdrop of this announcement, killing one American soldier and wounding many, Trump concluded that he was getting a bad deal and **called off negotiations** - thus another chance to end the war slipped away.

A popular conception prevailed that the US should have just left Afghanistan; President Trump was free to pull the plug as he pleased. In reality, getting out was nearly as difficult as staying. It was quite a different scenario when the moment arrived, see the uncertainties, weigh the political fallout of a terrorist attack, and still taking edge.

The proposed Afghan deal missed several crucial things; it didn't guarantee the continued presence of US counter-terrorism forces on Afghan soils and the survival of the pro-US government in Kabul, or even an end to the fighting in Afghanistan. No one spoke with certainty that war in Afghanistan would end with the signing of the said pact. A widespread notion, referring to the **TIME** magazine of **4<sup>th</sup> September 2019**, was:

*"It is all based on hope. There is no trust. There is no history of trust. There is no evidence of honesty and sincerity from the Taliban. Some intercepted communications show that they think they have fooled the US while the US believes that should the Taliban cheat, they will pay a hefty price."*

That explained why the then US Secretary of State, Mr Pompeo, had declined to put his name on the deal. The Taliban asked for Pompeo to

1 sign an agreement with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the official  
2 name of the government founded by the Taliban in Afghanistan in 1996.  
3 The US didn't want that de facto recognition of the Taliban as a  
4 legitimate political entity thus they refused.

5  
6 However, Pompeo's spokesperson told the media that '....he  
7 [Mr Pompeo] might sign if Trump and all parties struck a deal'.  
8

9 There were two alternatives; Khalilzad himself could sign it. Or the  
10 US and Taliban could issue a joint statement, supported in turn by  
11 the pro-US Kabul government with some countries like Japan, Russia  
12 and China's approval or guarantees. But who could guarantee the peace  
13 in Afghanistan after four decades of war. The stage was then being set  
14 for the withdrawal of most American forces by the end of November  
15 2020. As usual, the US tied strings with the deal document; to open  
16 negotiations with the US-backed President Ghani; reduce violence near  
17 areas under US forces control; and keep foreign militants out of the areas  
18 they control.

19  
20 The US military, intelligence officers and diplomats were worried that  
21 once a withdrawal agreed, it would be irreversible. Most bureaucrats  
22 termed it as Trump's stunt for 2020 US elections. Most of them were  
23 optimistic about their 'hard-won progress towards building a stable  
24 country over nearly two decades of war [?]. Some officers thought the  
25 result would be far worse than the status quo - a return to the total civil  
26 war that consumed nearly forty years of Afghanistan; which started with  
27 Soviet's occupation in 1979.

28 Days before, a deadly Taliban car bomb exploded in Kabul, just as  
29 Khalilzad was concluding an hour-long interview promoting the tentative  
30 peace deal to an Afghan news outlet. It was enough to remind the US  
31 that the proposed pact didn't require the Taliban to reject terrorism or  
32 stop attacking Afghan forces. The Taliban were sure that the US would  
33 withdraw all foreign troops within a year; Taliban officials also took the  
34 US strings [conditions] very casual. Bill Roggio, a simple soldier of the  
35 US army, correctly estimated that:

36  
37  
38 *"The Taliban's goals for Afghanistan have not changed. It seeks to eject  
39 the US, reestablish its Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and impose its  
40 Islamic government."*

41  
42 In fact, the said Doha agreement draft was the best deal; say 50:50. The  
43 US and its allies could get to head off a pre-emptive pullout of US troops

in time for the 2020 US elections. Military officials had long known they 1  
 needed to reduce the number of troops to a smaller, cheaper footprint to 2  
 mollify US policymakers tired of writing cheques after 18 years of war, 3 and 4  
 the US public in general. 5

Publicly, President Ghani had, though not officially, embraced the deal; 6  
 but privately there was an exchange of shouting between him and 7  
 Khalilzad in Kabul – the later telling Ghani that he got to accept this deal 8  
 because Afghanistan was losing the war. Afghan-born Khalilzad, the 9  
 American king-pin didn't show draft of the Taliban agreement to Ghani, 10  
 the elected Afghan president, and a university classmate of Khalilzad's. 11  
 Even though President Ghani had agreed to send a delegation to Oslo to 12  
 start talks with the Taliban in the last week of September. The 15-person 13  
 delegation included three women, but the names were not announced 14  
 until just before the talks – Taliban were likely to attack the 3-ladies as 15  
 per their philosophy. 16

BUT it seemed that the White House was ready to accept the deal 17  
 because they knew that they were not in a position to counter attack the 18  
 Taliban – thus inclined to decide for 'leave', but the American 19  
 bureaucracy didn't. However, no one wanted to take ugly decisions. 20

Following the suspension of the talks [*Trump had abruptly suspended 22  
 the talks with the Taliban following the killing of a US soldier 23  
 in Sep 2019*], the Taliban intensified attacks, with the last quarter 24  
 of 2019 becoming one of the bloodiest since the US invasion in 25  
 2001. Taliban spokesman *Zabihullah Mujahid* told the media openly 26  
 that Washington would regret turning its back on the talks – and so 27  
 it did. 28

In ending week of November 2019, during a trip to Bagram Air Field 31  
 in Afghanistan over the Thanksgiving holiday, President Trump said 32  
 the US would stay in Afghanistan '*until such time as we have a deal, 33  
 or we have total victory, [though] they want to make a deal very 34  
 badly.*' Trump had also reaffirmed that he wanted to reduce the 35  
 American military presence in the country to 8,600 troops, down from 36  
 about 13,000. 37

However, the bilateral talks resumed in December same year [2019]. The 38  
 secret war-papers and its report had also appeared in Dec 2019 in media 39  
 just as talks between the US and the Taliban had restarted for another 40  
 round of peace negotiations in Doha, Qatar. 41

1      **DOHA AGREEMENT VERBATIM:**

2  
3      **Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan**  
4      between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan  
5      which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is  
6      known as the Taliban and the United States of America  
7

8      **February 29, 2020**

9  
10     which corresponds to Rajab 5, 1441 on the Hijri Lunar calendar and  
11     Hoot 10, 1398 on the Hijri Solar calendar  
12

13     A comprehensive peace agreement is made of four parts:  
14

- 15     1. Guarantees and enforcement mechanisms that will prevent the use  
16     of the soil of Afghanistan by any group or individual against the  
17     security of the United States and its allies.  
18
- 19     2. Guarantees, enforcement mechanisms, and announcement of a  
20     timeline for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan.  
21
- 22     3. After the announcement of guarantees for a complete withdrawal  
23     of foreign forces and timeline in the presence of international  
24     witnesses, and guarantees and the announcement in the presence  
25     of international witnesses that Afghan soil will not be used against  
26     the security of the United States and its allies, the Islamic Emirate of  
27     Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state  
28     and is known as the Taliban will start intra-Afghan negotiations  
29     with Afghan sides on March 10, 2020, which corresponds to  
30     Rajab 15, 1441 on the Hijri Lunar calendar and Hoot 20, 1398  
31     on the Hijri Solar calendar.  
32
- 33     4. A permanent and comprehensive ceasefire will be an item on  
34     the agenda of the intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations. The  
35     participants of intra-Afghan negotiations will discuss the date and  
36     modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, including  
37     joint implementation mechanisms, which will be announced  
38     along with the completion and agreement over the future political  
39     roadmap of Afghanistan.  
40

41     The four parts above are interrelated and each will be implemented in  
42     accordance with its own agreed timeline and agreed terms. Agreement on  
43     the first two parts paves the way for the last two parts.

Following is the text of the agreement for the implementation of parts 1 one and two of the above. Both sides agree that these two parts are 2 interconnected. The obligations of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan 3 which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as 4 the Taliban in this agreement apply in areas under their control until the 5 formation of the new post-settlement Afghan Islamic government as 6 determined by the intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations. 7

## PART ONE 9

The United States is committed to withdraw from Afghanistan all military forces of the United States, its allies, and Coalition partners, including all non-diplomatic civilian personnel, private security contractors, trainers, advisors, and supporting services personnel within fourteen (14) months following announcement of this agreement, and will take the following measures in this regard: 10

A. The United States, its allies, and the Coalition will take the following measures in the first one hundred thirty-five (135) days: 11

- 1) They will reduce the number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan to eight thousand six hundred (8,600) and proportionally bring reduction in the number of its allies and Coalition forces. 12
- 2) The United States, its allies, and the Coalition will withdraw all their forces from five (5) military bases. 13

B. With the commitment and action on the obligations of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban in Part Two of this agreement, the United States, its allies, and the Coalition will execute the following: 14

- 1) The United States, its allies, and the Coalition will complete withdrawal of all remaining forces from Afghanistan within the remaining nine and a half (9.5) months. 15
- 2) The United States, its allies, and the Coalition will withdraw all their forces from remaining bases. 16

C. The United States is committed to start immediately to work with all relevant sides on a plan to expeditiously release combat and political prisoners as a confidence building measure with 17

the coordination and approval of all relevant sides. Up to five thousand (5,000) prisoners of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and up to one thousand (1,000) prisoners of the other side will be released by March 10, 2020, the first day of intra-Afghan negotiations, which corresponds to Rajab 15, 1441 on the Hijri Lunar calendar and Hoot 20, 1398 on the Hijri Solar calendar. The relevant sides have the goal of releasing all the remaining prisoners over the course of the subsequent three months. The United States commits to completing this goal. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban commits that its released prisoners will be committed to the responsibilities mentioned in this agreement so that they will not pose a threat to the security of the United States and its allies.

- D. With the start of intra-Afghan negotiations, the United States will initiate an administrative review of current U.S. sanctions and the rewards list against members of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban with the goal of removing these sanctions by August 27, 2020, which corresponds to Muharram 8, 1442 on the Hijri Lunar calendar and Saunbola 6, 1399 on the Hijri Solar calendar.
- E. With the start of intra-Afghan negotiations, the United States will start diplomatic engagement with other members of the United Nations Security Council and Afghanistan to remove members of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban from the sanctions list with the aim of achieving this objective by May 29, 2020, which corresponds to Shawwal 6, 1441 on the Hijri Lunar calendar and Jawza 9, 1399 on the Hijri Solar calendar.
- F. The United States and its allies will refrain from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Afghanistan or intervening in its domestic affairs.

## PART TWO

In conjunction with the announcement of this agreement, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban will take the following steps:

to prevent any group or individual, including al-Qa'ida, from using the 1 soil  
of Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and 2 its  
allies: 3

1. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by  
the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban will not  
allow any of its members, other individuals or groups, including  
al-Qa'ida, to use the soil of Afghanistan to threaten the security of  
the United States and its allies. 4
2. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by  
the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban will send  
a clear message that those who pose a threat to the security of the  
United States and its allies have no place in Afghanistan, and will  
instruct members of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is  
not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the  
Taliban not to cooperate with groups or individuals threatening  
the security of the United States and its allies. 5
3. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the  
United States as a state and is known as the Taliban will prevent  
any group or individual in Afghanistan from threatening the  
security of the United States and its allies, and will prevent them  
from recruiting, training, and fundraising and will not host them  
in accordance with the commitments in this agreement. 6
4. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the  
United States as a state and is known as the Taliban is committed  
to deal with those seeking asylum or residence in Afghanistan  
according to international migration law and the commitments of  
this agreement, so that such persons do not pose a threat to the  
security of the United States and its allies. 7
5. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by  
the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban will not  
provide visas, passports, travel permits, or other legal documents  
to those who pose a threat to the security of the United States and  
its allies to enter Afghanistan. 8

### **PART THREE**

1. The United States will request the recognition and endorsement of  
the United Nations Security Council for this agreement. 42

2. The United States and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban seek positive relations with each other and expect that the relations between the United States and the new post-settlement Afghan Islamic government as determined by the intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations will be positive.
3. The United States will seek economic cooperation for reconstruction with the new post-settlement Afghan Islamic government as determined by the intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations, and will not intervene in its internal affairs.

Signed in Doha.

Qatar on February 29, 2020,

which corresponds to Rajab 5, 1441 on the Hijri Lunar calendar and  
Hoot 10, 1398 on the Hijri Solar calendar,  
in duplicate, in Pashto, Dari, and English languages,  
each text being equally authentic.

## AFTER-EFFECTS OF DOHA ACCORD:

In 'The Financial Times' dated 13<sup>th</sup> August 2021, a columnist **Gideon Rachman** had correctly predicted that:

*“It is true that Trump set the US on the path out of Afghanistan and began the delusional peace talks with the Taliban that have gone nowhere. But rather than reverse the withdrawal of troops, Biden accelerated it.*

*The horrific results are unfolding on the ground in Afghanistan, as the Taliban take city after city. The final collapse of the government (in Afghanistan) looks inevitable.”*

The hasty withdrawal decision of President Biden's administration gave the Taliban a green light to move quick – as long as they did not attack the US and NATO forces. ***Lost in the bargain were the Afghan people*** who feared the breaking out of yet another extended but deadlier period of intra-Afghan fighting. Confronted with all-round criticism over the manner his admin cut loose from the Afghan mess, Mr Biden shifted the blame to his predecessor, Mr Trump.

If the manner of reaching the *Doha deal* with the Taliban's political *Shura* served as a dampener for the increasingly worried Afghan

government, the hurried withdrawal plan made the Ghani regime a 1 sitting duck, only counting the days towards its collapse. All of his pleas, 2 including a visit to Washington, could not make the Biden Admin move 3 from its intended goal. Afghan President Ghani spent the in between 4 go-time not for its country but in planning for his own future and 5 shifting his wealth and investment docs to safe places like Dubai. 6 7

Some political experts held that President Trump should own this debacle. 8 He and his Secretary of State Mike Pompeo started negotiating a 'peace 9 deal' with the Taliban; making concessions on behalf of the Afghan 10 government [including releasing 5,000 prisoners] without any participation 11 from the Afghan government. Trump gave the Taliban legitimacy, and 12 even, at one point, wanted to invite Taliban leaders to Camp David. 13 14

And as is typical of Republican presidents - ***Trump signed that peace deal with a withdrawal date after he wouldn't be in office.*** Bush did the 15 same in Iraq, signed a deal calling for the withdrawal of all US troops in 16 Iraq with a withdrawal date he knew would be after he was out of office. 17 18 19

**How the US created a disaster in Afghanistan** - And what the US military 20 was actually doing in Afghanistan all this time? To get answers to the 21 above questions one can find a video by an investigative reporter Azmat 22 Khan and former US ambassador to Afghanistan Michael McKinley who 23 explains what the US military was actually doing in Afghanistan, what it 24 got wrong, and why America's long intervention there was considered a 25 failure; see it at: 26 27

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLXo7UDZvByw2ixzpQCufnA> 28 29

How did the Afghan government collapse so quickly in August 2021? It 30 was primarily born out of uncertainty created by talks held in Doha, 31 Qatar, concluded on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020 between the US and the Taliban, 32 confirming a full American and allied forces withdrawal from Afghan 33 soils. US and Afghan military officials got demoralized, and described the 34 deal as the government's guaranteed defeat against the Taliban. Said an 35 Afghan Military Commander: 36 37

*"The forces saw that document as the end. The day the deal was signed we saw the change. Everyone was just looking out for himself. It was like [the United States] left us to fail."* 38 39 40 41

Conditions within the Afghan military quickly deteriorated thereafter, 42 marked by a ***combination of corruption and ill-discipline in all ranks.*** 43

1 The Americans were ready to leave Afghanistan just as the Soviets did;  
2 civil war was ahead with the Taliban eventually getting the upper hand  
3 and that the sitting Afghan government was to flee sooner; as it  
4 happened. The historians could foresee that there would be no  
5 compromise by the Taliban in accepting the *Islamic Shariah & Islamic*  
6 *Law* and that they would insist on calling their State as '**The Islamic**  
7 **Emirates of Afghanistan**'.

8 No surprise that the US Withdrawal was inevitable: Intelligentsia was  
9 ready to confront with this expected development; though most were  
10 actually surrounded by the most ill-informed gentry who were clueless  
11 and confused about the whole Afghan Spectacle. Headlines in papers  
12 started screaming that '*if the US withdraws, Afghanistan faces civil war*'  
13 – but was a bare fact; an unconcealed statement of the very obvious.

14  
15 Pakistan's **Gen [R] Tariq Khan**, in his article on media pages of 4<sup>th</sup> July  
16 2021, titled as **AFGHAN END GAME**, had predicted [*it was 41 days earlier*  
17 *to the actual fall of Kabul on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2021*] America's humiliating  
18 defeat; also before President Biden's speech of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021. He wrote:

19  
20  
21 "This was bound to happen and when Pakistan eagerly put its best foot  
22 forward and facilitated US-Taliban dialogue the possible implication  
23 should have been clearly understood then by everyone.

24  
25 First, that if there was no agreement [at Doha] a status quo would  
26 remain in Afghanistan and that the Americans would have to choose  
27 between continuing to stay till stability was achieved or to leave despite  
28 the violence it would be subjected to.

29  
30 ....as an agreement was arrived at, the implications were very obvious:  
31 Given the clearly stated Taliban position on their aversion to the new  
32 Constitution, their own perception on a power sharing formula, the  
33 name of the State, Islamic Law and system of governance etc., there  
34 was very little to negotiate or discuss."

35  
36 However, an agreement was arrived at despite the Taliban's inflexible  
37 position on their principal points. Such an agreement was predictably  
38 limited to a ceasefire arrangement between the Taliban and the US [**not**  
39 **the Taliban and the Afghan Government**] and that the US would be  
40 allowed and facilitated to withdraw unhindered from Afghanistan.

41  
42 Thus the civil war on Afghan soils was also on tips; the Taliban were not  
43 to reconcile with a Government that they felt had facilitated foreign

occupation – the US, UK and the NATO. The Taliban wanted to wrest 1 total control and there was no one to stop them; there was also an 2 element of vindication in an ethnic as well as ideological conflict. The 3 collapse of the Afghan National Army and the US framed security 4 apparatus that was constructed almost overnight was bound to fail. 5 The Taliban had seen the NATO combined forces and the US with 6 eye-to-eye – they had seen their hollowness and thus planned their total 7 defeat. They knew their enemy since the better part of 20 years. Gen 8 Tariq correctly narrated that: 9

*"This was a conflict waiting to happen in the wake of the US attempt at fiddling with the very essence of the Afghan National character and nature that was based on history, tradition, culture and geography. These elements the US ignored as they patched together an unrealistic 'Afghan Unity Government' and gave them a Westernised Constitution to put into practice which was obviously neither acceptable to the Afghan people nor did it have any place in the Afghan ethos."* 10

A fact that Ashraf Ghani's government had always demonstrated through its deep-seated hatred; with the [then] latest insult passed on by the Afghan National Security Advisor, Hamdullah Mohib, stating that '**Pakistan was a brothel**'. Ghani got nothing by such attitudes but lost his own honour and Pakistani mass's sympathy. Why would Pakistan assume that having ousted the US, it would interfere in the Taliban's governance? Since two decades the two Afghan regimes and the US made successive and hefty deals with India at the cost of Pakistan's integrity and security. Thus hopefully, even if there would be civil war in Afghanistan, the Pakistan would extend support to the Taliban none else. 11

Immediately after President Biden's speech of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021, the Taliban started sending their fighter groups to government-controlled rural outposts, striking deals with low-level officials through bribes or safety guarantees. The country's elite military units remained committed to safeguarding the government holdouts, but the local leaders and lower military personnel didn't stand by them - thus their efforts to defend the country failed. 12

After all, no one asked the US to withdraw from Afghanistan so hurriedly; it was their decision to do so having concluded that this was a **never-ending war that was not winnable**. In their haste to withdraw they abandoned their allies: the sitting government of Afghanistan as well as let down their strategic partner - India. 13

History of a Disgraceful Surrender [2021]

1 In their eagerness to negotiate some settlement with the Taliban, Pakistan  
2 was again pressed to convince the Taliban to talk to the US. Finally, the  
3 US secured a ceasefire between themselves and the Taliban BUT leaving  
4 Afghanistan at its own mercy.

5  
6 **.....AND thus the story of extending constant torture to**  
7 **Pakistan in the name of 'TERROR STATE' at the cost of**  
8 **pleasing the governments of Afghanistan and**  
9 **India ended with most horrific humiliation for America.**

10