

# Scenario 233

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## SECRET PAPERS ON US-AFGHAN WAR

### PROUDNESS & OTHER DEFEAT FACTORS

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#### ***IMPORTANT NOTE:***

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*Americans, at their own, analysed real causes of  
the US defeat in Afghanistan.*

*Here are briefs of some of those posts and comments;  
picked from ONLY the AMERICAN MEDIA with reference to  
the Secret Papers of and interviews by  
SIGAR - later compiled by WP's Craig Whitlock*

19 The Americans now admit that the US left Afghanistan after a blatant  
20 defeat; leave aside the trillions of dollars wasted in corruption and  
21 mismanagement. Every participant amongst the soldiers, administrators,  
22 and politicians stands equally responsible for this tarnished retreat.  
23 Since ending 2001, the records gathered from known archives described  
24 20 years of error, misconception, and deceit throughout the US military,  
25 State Department, White House, CIA and the Pentagon.

26 The America's decision makers, who had planned to land in Afghanistan,  
27 couldn't study their early histories of war. They fought to uphold its self-  
28 coined myth that the US is supreme. They should have recalled:

- 30 • The **KOREAN WAR** [June 1950 – July 1953] in which almost **40K**  
31 **Americans** were killed and more than **100K wounded**.
- 32 • Also the **VIETNAM WAR** [March 1965 – April 1975] in which  
33 **58,220 US** military fatal casualties occurred; Pentagon's '**Defence**  
34 **Casualty Analysis System [DCAS] Extract**' is referred.

37 The American experience in Afghanistan appeared virtually identical to  
38 the Russian experience in Afghanistan during 1979-89 which the  
39 Americans had avowed to avoid.

40  
41 [However, the journalists like **Craig Whitlock** would be very few in  
42 America who unearthed the whole truth while pin-pointing that - who  
43 screwed up, who was responsible for collecting and processing false

information, who caused strategic and tactical confusion and who 1 were responsible for despatching dead bodies of soldiers and civilians, 2 in most parts of the world and who decided to throw the US tax-payers 3 money away in vain.] 4

**Why do Americans did this - and so consistently?** There is no answer with the Americans even; except that it could be some in-built or manufacturing defect in its '**cultural genes**'. One can have an idea by analysing certain really global disasters imposed by the US over the rest of the world – in fact **Americans are idealists.** 5

**The Curse of American Idealism:** One learned Blogger explained this phenomenon in very factual way. He wrote on media pages that Idealists are taught to ignore the details of the current situation as these interfere with a vision for the future. Ignorance of other cultures, possible constraints on action, and determination in the face of resistance are idealists' virtues - they love power – and to achieve it by any means including usages of military, economic and political resources until these are entirely depleted. And that's why it's America – they [may] lie and believe themselves justified in doing so; that's how the achievements are exaggerated and setbacks minimised. 6

The US leaderships mostly hated the political process of discussion and compromise; see their history. Values like honesty, integrity, and solidarity were found often jeopardised thus fairly diagnosed as the causes of failure. 7

*"Whether on the Left or Right, among the Believers or the Atheists, optimism is the name of the game in America"; even most American think-tanks held it so."* 8

On 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021; a week before the Taliban's taking over Kabul, **Courtney Tychinski**, the Special Projects Editor at **PentaVision** [Pennsylvania], wrote: 9

*"....[fantastic] candid interviews recorded with high-serving US officials both in White House and the military, attained through the Freedom of Information Act. They provide an overview on **how no one truly knew what the US's goals were in the war in Afghanistan**. Just diminishing al-Qaeda following 9/11? Punishing Afghanistan for harbouring 9/11 conspirators? Nation-building? And when no one knows what the goals are, how do we measure 'success and effectiveness' of US & NATO troops there?"* 10

1       *.....it left me questioning more and more the rationale behind a war  
2       that never seemed fully logical."*

3  
4       **On 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021;** one US citizen **Murtaza** rated it amazing and  
5       added that the failure of the war in Afghanistan, an immensely costly  
6       and brutal two-decade long project of the American elite, revealed much  
7       about the way that the US government functions today. A jaw-dropping  
8       account of the North Korea-level lying engaged in by the US officials at  
9       the highest ranks, telling stories they knew to be completely false about  
10      the progress of the war, concealing massive financial corruption, and  
11      killing huge numbers of Afghan civilians while denying it till the last  
12      possible moment.

13  
14      This '**Secret Papers**' [**SIGAR**] compilation speaks that the US attempted  
15      to impose a political and security order on Afghanistan without even  
16      the most basic understanding of the country and its people. In the end  
17      the endeavour just became about throwing gigantic amounts of money  
18      down a black hole, much of it funnelled to '**connected** [?]' Afghan  
19      insiders were the unsavoury allies of America on the ground, and the  
20      lion's share to American & Afghan contractors who made fortunes out  
21      of the war.

22  
23      **On 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021;** Wick Welker – an American Doctor, writer and  
24      author of many books, wrote on media sheets - it was amazing.

25  
26      See an article titled **US 'LOST' the 20-year war in Afghanistan: top US  
27      General;** published on **FRANCE24** dated 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021:

28  
29      Gen Mark Milley, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, conceded  
30      before the House Armed Services Committee in a stark admission [on the  
31      same day of 29<sup>th</sup> Sep] that:

32  
33      *"The US 'lost the 20-year war in Afghanistan'. It is clear; it is  
34      obvious to all of us, that the war in Afghanistan did not end on  
35      the terms we wanted, with the Taliban in power in Kabul (again).  
36      The war was a strategic failure. It wasn't lost in the last 20 days or even  
37      20 months.*

38  
39      *There's a cumulative effect to a series of strategic decisions that go  
40      way back. Whenever you get some phenomenon like a war that is lost  
41      -- and it has been, in the sense of we accomplished our strategic task of  
42      protecting America against Al-Qaeda, but certainly the end state is a  
43      whole lot different than what we wanted.*

So whenever a phenomenon like that happens, there's an awful lot of causal factors. And we're going to have to figure that out. A lot of 2 lessons learned here."

## **THE US GENERALS ADMITTED DEFEAT....**

Gen Milley 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 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan.

The General also cited the 2003 decision to invade Iraq, which shifted US troops away from Afghanistan; not effectively dealing with Pakistan; and pulling advisers out of Afghanistan a few years ago.

Gen Milley and Gen Kenneth McKenzie, commander of US Central Command, told a Senate committee a day earlier [on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021] that they had personally recommended that some 2,500 troops should remain on the ground in Afghanistan.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Biden had received '**split advice**' about what to do in Afghanistan, which the US invaded following the 9/11 event of 2001. '*Ultimately, it's up to the commander-in-chief to make a decision,*' Psaki said. "***He made a decision that it was time to end a 20-year war.***"

**'Secret Papers'** was a timely publication about the release of candid interviews with many military personnel of various ranks and influence in the Afghanistan war. The people being interviewed thought they were giving an account for historical purposes not journalistic. And what was the general gestalt of the longest running war in American history - **unmitigated disaster**.

Craig Whitlock, by releasing the war-documents in open, gave the world a beautiful chronology of the **misinformed decisions to start the war up until the recent disastrous withdrawal** from Afghanistan. Under the garb of fighting with Al Qaeda, the US made war only to be **utterly confused about who their enemies actually were**. The Americans couldn't tell the difference between different factions of the Taliban; AND between the Taliban and Afghani civilians. Right from the first day, the US policy was to have zero diplomacy with the Taliban - something that proved to be an enormous mistake in the last.

1 **President Bush had no exit strategy.** He started a reckless war as a knee  
2 jerk reaction and everyone at the time supported him. Later, the US spent  
3 more on **'nation building** in Afghanistan than ever before. They created  
4 a **puppet Afghan government, mired by incompetence and corruption,**  
5 **which was wholly dependent on the US military to even survive.** The US  
6 tried to install the US like culture for those who didn't know how  
7 to behave with women in their own families, use a urinal, know the  
8 difference between left and right shoes etc etc. The US tried to force a  
9 way of life and government onto the people that were entirely  
10 unaccustomed and unmanageable.

11  
12 ***You can't just walk into a country and make a government within***  
13 ***18 months, or 5 years of whatever ridiculous terms were set by Bush,***  
14 ***Obama and Trump.***

15  
16 The US tried diplomacy with a host of warlords who had zero allegiance  
17 to anyone. So then the US just threw heavy bags of money at the  
18 problem, spending billions of dollars building roads, bridges and schools  
19 in a nation that had no means of maintaining such infrastructure.

20  
21 In the year 2000, the Taliban banned growing poppy in Afghanistan and  
22 it worked. As soon as the US came, it was seen widely as a legitimate way  
23 to have an income. **Once the Taliban were gone, Afghan farmers supplied**  
24 **about one third of the world's opium.** The US & the UK then paid  
25 farmers to destroy their crops which resulted in them growing even more  
26 poppy to sell and then make money off of destroying the crops, playing  
27 on both sides of the wicket.

28  
29 **Bush, Obama and Trump oversaw a culture of fabricating metrics,**  
30 **downplaying military involvement and continually propping up a failed**  
31 **puppet government** that they created. After 20 years, these leaders  
32 destroyed a nation and left it in the very hands of those they fought - the  
33 Taliban. President **Trump literally wanted Taliban leaders to come to**  
34 **White House for a photo op.**

35  
36 The bottom line is that the US has been doing this since 80 years,  
37 destabilizing countries and leaving them to rot.

38  
39 Next question should be that: **who profited from the war?** Who  
40 was sub-contracted? What companies were hired and **who the civil**  
41 **and military officials had financial interests in those companies -**  
42 **AND contractors - AND choosing warlords to get hefty amounts of**  
43 **Dollars.**

Most people know the answer; ***no doubt that few Americans too made a tremendous amount of money off of the Afghanistan war.***

### **AMERICAN INTELLIGENTSIA BLOGS:**

**Brandon Westlake** – an artist by profession wrote that:

Wow, what an eye-opening '**Secret Documents**' treat. The Americans do have feelings of what happened in Afghanistan and why, **and who the key players were**. The humiliating defeat shows what an outright tragedy it remained. A military escapade built on blunder and ignorance, mismanagement and stupidity. It has been a comedy of errors in fact, and one on a massive deadly scale - hard to miss the connection to Vietnam.

**Umar Lee** - an American writer and political activist from Missouri, wrote:

This is like watching a 20 years long movie when you already know the multiple heroes would suddenly disappear gutted with shame at the ending. Short and corruptive numerous missteps highlighted from successive American admin and the US military; missteps of the US military and often contradictory directives from the Pentagon. The retreat speaks about false beliefs of American idealism, ignorance of Islam as religion, criminal alliance with warlords, creating a class of corrupt Afghan millionaires, and a poorly choreographed counter-insurgency strategy. ***Twenty years were enough for unveiling cruel face of the American imperialism*** – Secret Papers were just some of the factors.

**Secret Papers unearthed some untold facts** that lot of Afghans liked and supported the Taliban as the deliverers of peace and order. The Taliban ended the opium trade and the US couldn't do so even in twenty years after spending billion of dollars [[\$9bn exactly]] on that menace.

**Secret Papers** told first time that Americans often neglected to avail the opportunity to negotiate with the Taliban and integrate them into the Afghan political system in 2002 and failed to do so thus unnecessarily extending conflict; consider US leaderships' own vested interests. Then the Taliban were in power again, and appear to be stronger, wiser, and more competent. Think Iraq; it's now politically-run by a sectarian government with strong ties to Iran – so whoever won the '**War on Terror**', most certainly went against America's philosophy and plans.

1 President Bush got us all into this mess; Obama knew this was a war that  
2 couldn't be won and so did Donald Trump; Joe Biden showed courage  
3 to finally pull the plug.

4  
5 Hold on! The US was [once more] mistaken – but it'll repeat it again; the  
6 Americans believe. Let there be some problem at some place on the globe,  
7 America will be there with its mercenaries and ample Tax-Payers' money.  
8 It'll translate their issue with its own liking – and war would start – Korea,  
9 Vietnam, Iraq and later Afghanistan were in fact not America's babies.

10  
11 ***Yeah, Americans know – as the Northern Virginia defence contractors  
12 and counter-terrorism strategists need to build more vacation homes;  
13 Tysons and Halliburtons need more expansion.***

14  
15 One **Alex Anderson**, an American television series host, and author of  
16 30+ books, wrote with distress that:

17  
18 *"....Conceit, cultural arrogance, blinkered worldview, lack of empathy,  
19 power without accountability, lack of empathy [artistic and otherwise],  
20 the inability to take others suffering as significant, form without  
21 substance-each new manifestation of the eternal devil turns another  
22 countenance...this arguably seems to have been the legacy of the United  
23 States since WWII as far as its military forays into other regions of the  
24 world are concerned."*

25  
26 Very painful but fact remains that '**winning**' is no longer the prime  
27 consideration for the American military commanders. However, the dark  
28 and conspiratorial thoughts do beg more that why the US wanted to change  
29 other regimes without understanding much about them; and repeated the  
30 same errors over and over again? Americans question themselves that:

31  
32 • *What is the basis of our standing and refusal to learn from history  
33 [our own and more about other nations']?*

34  
35 • *Why do we keep making these attempts at nation building only to  
36 succeed in creating failed states?*

37  
38 • *Why do we persist in dedicating our massive wealth to cause  
39 unimaginable destruction, devastation & deaths – in unknown poor  
40 communities?*

41  
42 The '**Secret Papers**' made an average American surprising, about the  
43 world's wealthiest nation waging futile war against one of the poorest

country on the globe – and availed dishonourable defeat after 20 years engagement there.

[Afghanistan has been called '***The Graveyard of Nations***' for a reason. The British were in there twice and lost. The Russians were in there for ten years and failed. America was there for 20 years...and what? What did it accomplish?]

The credentials of the Taliban have now been well established. With 20 years of fighting the world's premier military power, their credibility stands enhanced now; AND in magnitude, too. As an extra-added bonus, an unexpected bonanza, they have now replaced their outdated weapon caches with the state of the art military hardware weapon systems, courtesy of the American Taxpayer coupled with the successive US leadership.

But there comes more. This Defeat has put the US in an unenviable position where no other country would trust it or its loyalty be believed. Any promises of support, guarantees to be there when the going gets tough, or claims of kinship on ethical, moral or humanitarian grounds would be responded to with a laugh at best, bitter scepticism at the worst – **PAKISTAN is one example to be immediately quoted here.** Referring to Alex Anderson again:

*"A blanket of cynicism has been tossed over any pretension to even the most naive moral high ground. This attitude will be well-grounded on previous experience and contains interminable long-term consequence."*

The Afghan-war defeat is a chronicle of misconduct, corruption, malfeasance, dishonesty on the part of America. It is the cataloguing of criminal complacency, ignorance, stupidity, pointless death, waste, and a hydra's head of other evils of America's longest-standing war.

- This is the story of an astounding lack of planning, leadership, vision, discipline, responsibility and moral ownership.
- It is [Secret Papers] a document offering up to Americans dark chaos, a chronology of the bloody ignorance, monumental stupidity, cynical dishonesty, blind foolishness & arbitrary emptiness of it all.

But there is no answer to any question arising from this compendium of misfortune; Why? Wait for the time.

1 **AMERICA's SLOW MOTION FAILURE:**

2

3 An article titled as '**America's Slow-Motion Failure in Afghanistan**' By  
4 **Carter Malkasian** available at **FOREIGN AFFAIRS** of March/April 2020  
5 had timely warned the American government by saying that:

6

7 *"The United States has been fighting a war in Afghanistan for over  
8 18 years. More than 2,300 U.S. military personnel have lost their  
9 lives there; more than 20,000 others have been wounded. At least  
10 half a million Afghans—government forces, Taliban fighters, and  
11 civilians—have been killed or wounded. Washington has spent close  
12 to \$1 trillion on the war. No attack on the US homeland was seen  
13 since 9/11....."*

14

15 Numerous US officials conceded that they had long seen the **war as**  
16 **un-winnable**. Polls have found that a majority of Americans now view  
17 the war as a failure. Whatever the future brings, for 18 years the United  
18 States has been unable to prevail.

19

20 The obstacles to success in Afghanistan were daunting: widespread  
21 corruption, intense grievances, [alleged] Pakistani meddling, and deep-  
22 rooted resistance to foreign occupation. Yet there were also fleeting  
23 opportunities to find peace, or at least a more sustainable, less costly,  
24 and less violent stalemate. American leaders failed to grasp those  
25 chances."

26

27 **On 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021;** another American **Steve** started his comments  
28 by quoting saying of Gen John Allen, Commander of NATO forces in  
29 Afghanistan: '**This is what winning looks like.** - [Feb. 2013]'.  
30

31 Variations of the same hollow rhetoric, from virtually every major  
32 American military figure associated with Afghanistan, expressed for  
33 infinite times. And it isn't just the military, both Republican and  
34 Democratic administrations also chewed the same like phrases amidst  
35 deteriorating situations in Afghanistan.

36

37 From the very beginning, with the US invasion in 2001, no one knew  
38 what to do with the country after it fell. **Bush insisted that they were not**  
39 **there to nation build, but that's exactly what we were doing.** Obama  
40 continued many of the same policies; also pumped oceans of money into  
41 that country but with no meaningful plans. In the Vietnam conflict, the  
42 US had done the same mistakes – but the policy makers didn't learn a  
43 single thing from that earlier war.

Interestingly, at the very end, one political figure that had grown sceptical 1 of the Afghan war back in 2009 was the then Senator Joe Biden - and 2 finally came in a position to do something about the prolonged American 3 wastage - AND he did in his 1<sup>st</sup> available opportunity. 4

**On 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021; Ryan**, who was in Afghanistan for a couple of 5 years, and had compulsively, read almost everything, gave written 6 opinion 7

*“.....nothing in this was particularly surprising to me, but it’s [Secret 8 Papers Report] is an excellent presentation and, to my experience, the 9 accurate”.*

**On 10<sup>th</sup> Sep 2021; Steven Zeitshik** - a celebrity reporter of the 14 **Washington Post** held: The whole American intelligentsia agree - that the 15 debate of President Biden’s sermon regarding abrupt exit from Afghanistan 16 should be taken through a thorough and objective analysis of the past 20 17 years’ events since 9/11 – and it should be a serious demand, too. 18

There are number of books on the Afghan War in American market; 20 readers can choose from: 21

- Carter Malkasian’s THE AMERICAN WAR IN AFGHANISTAN: 23  
A HISTORY; 24
- David Loyn’s THE LONG WAR; 25
- Peter Bergen’s THE RISE AND FALL OF OSAMA BIN-LADIN; 26  
and 27
- Spencer Ackerman’s REIGN OF TERROR. 28

There are also a number of researches done and written over the last 30 decade like: 31

- Steve Coll’s GHOST WARS and DIRECTORATE S; 33
- Dexter Filkins’ THE FOREVER WAR; 34
- Anand Gopal’s NO GOOD MEN AMONG THE LIVING; and 35
- Lawrence Wright’s THE LOOMING TOWER. 36

In most of the above books and works, the contents, material, 38 observations and conclusions are the same or similar, according to their 39 time frames, as later revealed in the **Secret Papers**. However, the 40 successive US governments didn’t seize them seriously. One more factor 41 could be that the previous authors had no direct access to the narratives, 42 analysis, and insights based on those documentation and interviews of 43

1 key commanders, soldiers, government officials who played significant  
2 roles; as described in Whitlock's monograph since first day of the  
3 said war.

4  
5 **Secret Papers** judiciously pointed out that a military strategist is always  
6 told and trained to never start a war without having a plan to end it.  
7 Here in Afghan War, the Bush administration never articulated how the  
8 war would be ended. For years, the American people were always told  
9 that the US was winning; but Presidents Bush, Obama, and lastly the  
10 Trump cronies never measured up their so called success factually on the  
11 Afghan soils.

12  
13 It was Americans' hard luck that the swift and early American success in  
14 2002 turned out to be a curse when the Bush administration changed his  
15 war policy from hunting terrorists to nation building. Despite the  
16 arrogance of Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld, the war turned against the  
17 Americans while changing strategies and commanders on a regular basis.

18  
19 Another major problem the US troops faced was that they could not  
20 distinguish between the good guys and the bad guys. **For American**  
21 **troops Taliban and al-Qaeda were the same**, a gross error in that the  
22 Taliban followed an extremist ideology and were Afghans especially the  
23 *Pashtuns*, while al-Qaeda was made up of Arabs with a global presence  
24 who wanted to overthrow Middle Eastern autocrats allied with the US.  
25 By 2002, the Americans were fighting an enemy that had nothing to do  
26 with 9/11 which was the stated purpose of the war by President and their  
27 policy makers.

28  
29 America's early success also got deteriorated as the Bush administration  
30 shifted its focus to Iraq for the removal of Saddam Hussein from power.  
31 Troops, supplies, and funding dissipated quickly; numerous commanders  
32 got frustrated with Pentagon for their lack of interest and refusal to  
33 provide the necessary equipment, troops, and funding to continue with  
34 the war in Afghanistan so effectively.

35  
36 Such American errors, coupled with mass corruption of the Afghan  
37 government, and the refusal of the successive US leadership to face the  
38 facts on the battlefield had promptly enhanced the mess; obvious lack of  
39 goals and benchmarks added more fuel to the fire.

40  
41 Nation-building strategy in Afghanistan, together with idea of imposing  
42 an American style democracy, on a country where the people are  
43 accustomed of living in tribal cages since centuries, with nearly zero

education in rural areas, having no foundation or history of such notions 1  
 – thrusting US-like governmental system on them was idiotic from the 2  
 outset. Yet to unearth which advisor had guided President Bush to think 3  
 so – the White House team and their strategists were bound to re-write 4 their  
 failure in the coming times – thus the humiliating retreat in August 5 2021. 6  
 7

The Americans tried to handle an uphill task – **task of constructing** 8  
**Afghan army from scratch.** The entire episode heralded the results 9  
 witnessed in August 2021 when 300,000+ Afghan army collapsed and 10  
 faded away when confronted by the Taliban. The US strategists had zero 11  
 knowledge of the Afghan culture and their living priorities otherwise 12  
 they could have saved trillions of dollars, twenty years and an 13  
 embarrassing defeat. 14

**Steven Zeitchik** of the WP – once more commented: 15

*“Another key issue was the role of Pakistan which had its own agenda 16  
 visa vie the Taliban and indirectly its fears of India. By creating a 17  
 sanctuary for the insurgency, it made the American task very difficult.”* 18

Steven raised fingers on the ISI but the fact remained that the Islamabad 22  
 government knew how to play in changing situations in an un-necessary 23  
 prolonged war – that too without sincerity of purpose – that too to eat 24  
 the tax-payers’ billions dollars by keeping the ‘warlords and contractors’ 25  
 on the front for face-saving. Pak-Army played well as per their ‘**national** 26  
**strategy’** – not to become part of the collective and the highest corruption 27  
 in the history of mankind. 28

**Steven Z** himself admitted in the same article that: 29

*“American errors are numerous.....Flooding the country with money 30  
 for projects that were not needed or absorbable was very detrimental 31  
 to the American mission.* 32

*Support for Hamid Karzai and his corrupt regime, along with alliances 33  
 with murderous warlords were self-defeating.* 34

*Trying to eradicate the opium trade was high minded, but with no 35  
 alternate source of income.* 36

*Afghan farmers and warlords learned to manipulate the American 37  
 strategy to reduce the drug trade was very problematical.”* 38

## **AN OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS OF US FOLLIES:**

***Craig Whitlock***, in his compilation of the '**Secret Papers**', unearthed and introduced the major players in the war from Rumsfeld, Cheney, McChrystal, Petraeus, Obama, and Trump with all of the flaws exhibited by their thinking that led to failure. Whether implementing counter-insurgency, huge infrastructure projects, building inside enemy territory, and ***Petraeus' strategy of being 'hell-bent at throwing money at problems'*** was doomed to failure.

The bottom line as Lt Gen Douglas Lute, a Director of Operations for the Joint Staff at the Pentagon stated:

*....we were devoid of a fundamental understanding of Afghanistan - we didn't know what we were doing...What were we doing there? We didn't have the foggiest notion of what we were undertaking...There is a fundamental gap of understanding on the front end, overstated objectives, an over-reliance on the military, and a lack of understanding of the resources necessary."*

The Trump administration ran into the same roadblocks. His tough talk about 'winning', increased bombing that resulted in higher death counts for civilians; and did not accomplish much. It's on record that:

*"President Trump's promises to deliver **clear cut victory** had failed he ordered the state Department and Pentagon to engage in formal, face to face negotiations with the Taliban to find a way to extricate US troops from Afghanistan without making it seem like a humiliating defeat."*

For over a decade American policy makers and commanders knew that lasting military defeat of the Taliban was not possible at all as they were a Pashtun-led mass movement that continued to gain strength. However, the Bush and Obama made no attempt to engage the Taliban in the diplomatic process. They should have done it much earlier – after gaining victory in 2002 – but they couldn't understand the nature of that soil. In 2009, President Obama took a hard-line approach and sent more troops to Afghanistan instead of opening dialogues with the Taliban; thus dooming any hope to end the war.

Finally, President Trump negotiated a deal whereby all US troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021. However, he left an inheritance to Joe Biden who chose to oblige Trump's settlement with the Taliban to avoid further warfare. Many had chosen to blame President

Biden for an abrupt ending of the longest war and the Taliban's victory - however it was because of two decades of confusion and suffocation and a war strategy that was doomed to failure based on multiple factors enumerated above.

Now the Americans know what successes were repeatedly announced by Bush, Obama, and Trump and their buddies, in private they knew that Afghan security forces showed nil progress every where, the Taliban continuously marched at their pace, and corruption pervaded Afghan ruling puppets alienating the masses. The dominating theme, as Whitlock suggested, remained that:

*"U.S. leaders knew their war strategy was dysfunctional and privately doubted they could attain their objectives. Yet they confidently told the public year after year that they were making progress and that victory—winning was over the horizon.*

*It was impossible to square negative trends with the optimistic public messaging about progress, so US officials kept the complete datasets confidential."*

One contributor, **Chris Barsanti**, wrote in the WP dated 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021 with an interesting caption: **THE AFGHAN PAPERS REVEAL 'HOW NOT TO FIGHT A WAR'.**

*"Everyone had opinions about how the longest war in American history had been lost and who lost it.*

*It was Joe Biden. It was Donald Trump. It was Barack Obama. It was George W. Bush. It was corruption. It was opium. It was Pakistan. It was imperialism. It was too many troops. It was not enough troops.....one pinned the war's loss on **critical race theory**. Like the parable of the blind men and the elephant, many arguments [just] grasped a fragment of the truth; very few saw the whole....."*

The details of **Secret Papers on Afghanistan War** opened a big Pandora Box of the US supremacy and showed how three presidents in succession ignored all the evidence, avoided making tough decisions, and instead chose to bury their mistakes and let the war go with the wind. An interview with a Special Operations planner of the first bombing campaigns in October 2001 told that they had received some general guidance like, **'Hey, we want to go fight the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.'**

1 In fact, in the original plan, Taliban's regime change wasn't an objective.  
2 Feeling confident after the Taliban's quick collapse, President Bush  
3 *'jumped into the war with only a hazy idea of whom it was fighting'* and  
4 blurred the line between al-Qaeda [who had allegedly attacked America]  
5 and the Taliban who had a mutual support agreement with al-Qaeda but  
6 not an enemy.  
7

8 In fact, the Taliban were more interested in negotiating than fighting.  
9 Several diplomats described the American decision to hunt down the  
10 Taliban unnecessarily as start of the grinding guerrilla war. They  
11 definitely did not appear to understand that they were about to try and  
12 build a whole new Afghanistan; but in those days the policies were  
13 taking turn over nights. After the Taliban defeat, the US got possession  
14 of a largely rural nation – already devastated by the Soviets. The US  
15 diplomats and State Department officials argued that leaving Afghanistan  
16 in that shape was unwise, leaving a strategic vacuum.  
17

18 It was a task which Pentagon never wanted. The plan – to build an  
19 US-style government in Kabul under the control of an English-speaking  
20 tribal leader Hamid Karzai – made no sense in a tribal nation like  
21 Afghanistan; it was one hundred years job. It was not what Afghan  
22 masses needed; given the level of cultural ignorance the US policy makers  
23 had at that time. Americans did nothing to win hearts and minds of their  
24 subjects – the rural tribal masses.  
25

26 Thus in the absence of a cohesive counter-insurgency strategy, the  
27 Taliban continued to gain strength in the 2000s, aided by the rampant  
28 corruption and ineffectualness of the Karzai government and aided by  
29 Pakistan's tribal border-areas where their own *Pashtun* part-families  
30 were residing and providing them safe sanctuaries. Even Islamabad had  
31 no control over that TRIBAL BELT – it never remained so since the  
32 English-rule times.  
33

34 In 2009, President Obama approved the pointless military 'surge' that  
35 also failed to shatter the Taliban's determination. During 2008-10,  
36 billions in American aid flooded in without an organized spending plan;  
37 virtually the white elephants. One advisor said: ***'We were building  
schools next to empty schools.'***  
38

39 With that little strategic intelligence, one can see how the US held on to  
40 Afghanistan as long as it did. ***The Afghanistan Secret Papers*** made the  
41 Americans uncomfortable. Like the Pentagon Papers, the secrets  
42 contained here were not really secrets to the people running the war. One  
43

Army colonel said '*.....the war was started in confusion, erratically pursued, and concluded in chaos*'.

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**POST-SCRIPT:**

From the historical facts narrated above, one can understand that the relationship between the CIA and ISI was long established on firm footing during 1970s and 1980s. Then the USSR broke into pieces in 1989 – after the Soviet exit from Afghanistan – the decades old COLD WAR ended. The US lost its interest in the region especially in Afghanistan. The civil war amongst the various factions of *Mujahedeen* started because the America had pulled out itself leaving all those fighting factions at their own denying all the financial and other aids to them.

When the afghan tribal *Mujahedeen* groups were left astray without their bread and butter, they concentrated their attentions towards ISI alone. ISI was not in a position to withdraw itself all of a sudden like the US because they could jointly attack northern areas of Pakistan to snatch food from the poor villagers in border areas for themselves and their families. However, Pakistan and ISI stood by Afghans with their own meager resources.

Americans played the same game again while attacking Afghanistan after 9/11 event. He used the ISI in the same like manner as they did in 1980s – even then the ISI stood by them. But when the US felt during the on-going war that they were self sufficient – they again shun their relations with the ISI and Pakistan – and tilted towards India suddenly.

President Obama went too far into US-INDIA new relationship; he signed numerous pacts with India; had agreed for training of the Afghan Security Forces in India against an hefty payment of \$88 billion (approximately) – visited India to sign pacts and agreements without even discussing an iota of its war strategy with Pakistan which keeps 2500km long border with Afghanistan whereas India had not even a single inch to share.

Obama's that childish behaviour made a clear line drawn between the American friends and foes in its longest war of the US history – thus got a shameful and humiliating defeat at last – making CIA & Pentagon to walk back with their wet pants.

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