

SUMMARY OF THE DEFEAT PROCESS

President Biden's decision of early QUIT was not unanticipated, even if 4 the timing and extent of the drawdown were not settled until the last 5 minute. The US was initially motivated after the 9/11 attacks to defeat 6 al-Qaeda, then got based in Afghanistan but lost its whole honour, 7 prestige and history after two decades. Referring to **Dhruva Jaishankar's** 8 analysis in **Hindustan Times** dated 13th July 2021: 9

“.....intervention resulted in over 2,400 US military deaths [one can add 13 American soldiers killed in two suicide attacks on Kabul Airport on 27th August 2021], some 20,000 US troops injured, and over \$776 billion spent between 2001 and 2019 according to the Pentagon.....the Taliban have returned [again]” 10

The US misadventure in Afghanistan did not necessarily have to end this way. Let us look into the past: The initial US troop commitment after 2001 was small but soon after increased enormously. In 2003, a sizeable army from here was moved to Iraq leaving only 8,000 troops on the Afghan grounds. After 2006, Washington's relations with allies and the Afghan government grew strained on the issues related with '**Taliban resurgence**'. 16

The 2011-13 periods marked another phase of transition. After OBL's killing, President Obama announced the beginning of troops' withdrawal, intra-Afghan negotiations restarted but suddenly the former Afghan President and peace negotiator Burhanuddin Rabbani was assassinated. Pakistan boycotted the **Second Bonn Conference** due to its own reasons or preferences. By 2013, the US and NATO handed over primary security responsibilities to the Afghan National Security Forces [ANSF], and the US military limited itself to special operations, missions and training. 25

President Trump initially announced [in 2017] a redoubling of efforts amidst increasing suicide bombings in Kabul and the growing profile of the Islamic State [IS]; but subsequently he reversed the course, indicating his preference for a US withdrawal before the 2020 elections. In February 2020, the US signed the famous **Doha Accord** with the Taliban telling the whole world about total withdrawal from Afghan soils. Moreover, hasty transfers of resources to NATO and the ANSF proved fatal for the core US policies of finding strong footing in Asia. 34

1 Another crucial factor remained the **under-estimated hidden power of**
2 **Pakistan, its ISI**, which had record of the most successful activities and
3 achievements in Afghanistan during initial five years of the War on Terror
4 – of course in association with the CIA but at the cost of its own high
5 human losses in Pakistan. The US could have acknowledged the Pak-Army
6 & the ISI seriously [and NOT hypocritically or dishonestly]; particularly
7 thinking about troubled US relations with Iran and Russia then.
8

9 Pakistan deserved truthful recognition due to realities on ground that all
10 military and food logistics were coming into Afghanistan through them.
11 On the contrary, knowingly that Pakistan is also a nuclear power, the US
12 preferred far-off placed **India as its 'Strategic Partner'** developing a false
13 belief that the Pak-Army and the ISI could be cajoled or coerced into
14 cooperation by filling coffins of its corrupt ruling political elite.
15

16 In 2017-18, in an arena of high relations between President Trump and
17 Imran Khan, the writing on the wall was noticeable for India. Then
18 Trump's reversal had confirmed that a complete US withdrawal was only
19 a matter of time. After the US, India was amongst the largest investors
20 in Afghanistan but its widespread consular contingents and the RAW
21 couldn't go deep into the ground realities. Indian security presence on
22 Afghan soils was politically undesirable for Afghan masses. Especially
23 when India's geographical access to Afghanistan was limited; they could
24 go there only via air, Iran, or some Central Asian corridors.
25

26 For 20 years, India posed itself as major trade partner of Afghan
27 governments at Kabul. The Taliban's sudden takeover this time resulted
28 in an abrupt meltdown of India-Afghanistan trade; the Taliban preferred
29 to shut the trade routes immediately while ending bilateral trade worth
30 \$1.5 billion. During these years, India had emerged as an important
31 destination for Afghan exports such as dry fruits. Likewise, India's
32 exports to Afghanistan, totalling almost \$1 billion, included tea, cement,
33 sugar, and pharmaceuticals – but all vanished within days because of the
34 sudden fall of Kabul. *'As a solution [and revenge] India opted to agitate
35 the international law to hold the Taliban accountable for the illegal
36 shutting down of the trade routes. Let us wait for the outcome'; Prabhash
37 Ranjan's essay on media pages dated 3rd September 2021 is referred.*
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39 The world order phenomenon is changing rapidly. America's old world
40 order has moved back into crawling phase. Russia is re-appearing on the
41 globe as a loud voice for the under-developed while **China** has emerged
42 as a **New Super Power** and as if the America is winding up its chaotic
43 fronts to retain its survival – starting from Afghanistan.