**Sound and fury across the border**

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The sound and fury emanating from the other side of Pakistan’s border is deafening. One might be excused for thinking that this alludes to Afghanistan; but the way 300,000 Afghan National Army (ANA) troops have capitulated to the Taliban blitzkrieg—without having engaged in anything other than minor skirmishes—is more a case of going out with a whimper, rather than a bang.

No. This is a reference to its other border; with India. India’s ire—and the hue and cry emerging from various quarters is a testament to this—is understandable. It had invested billions of dollars in a place where it really had no interest, other than using it as a springboard for directing hostilities against Pakistan. It had forged a relationship with a forcibly-implanted Ashraf Ghani-Hamdullah Mohib-Amrullah Saleh regime in Afghanistan that slinked away like thieves in the night, at the first sure sign that their rule was coming to an end; allegedly, with briefcases stuffed full of cash. It had hitched its wagon to the star(s and stripes) of the US; which—after having spent 2 trillion dollars on this war, with reportedly 180 billion dollars of these having gone on raising, training and building the “capacity” of the ANA—abandoned Afghanistan with the abruptness of a Dunkirk; a vanquished foe looking to salvage what vestiges of pride it might be able to, rather than a combatant that declared “Mission Accomplished” many years earlier. It misread events on the ground that were ominously apparent to anyone watching closely enough. Yes. India’s ire at its own folly, is quite understandable.

[Taliban appoint new leaders of two provinces in Eastern Afghanistan after deadly attacks](https://nation.com.pk/21-Sep-2021/taliban-appoint-new-leaders-of-two-provinces-in-eastern-afghanistan-after-deadly-attacks)

What isn’t quite as easily understood, though, is why its vitriol should be directed against Pakistan; and it levies a number of accusations and directs many half-truths against Pakistan in its litany of complaints. Judging from India’s past record, one is forced to wonder whether this too, is anything other than a case of venting their frustration over their staggering ineptitude, towards their favourite scapegoat; Pakistan.

If these complaints are to be believed, Pakistan is behind the Taliban’s stunning sweep to power in Afghanistan. This is quite incredible, and would mean that it used the Taliban to defeat the Soviet Union decades earlier, and recently used them to defeat the US, too. At this point, India would do well to read up on history. As far back as 1842—well over a hundred years before Pakistan came into being—the Army of the then-major power of the world—the British Empire—was routed and annihilated in and around Kabul. The sobriquet “Afghanistan is the graveyard of empires”—and the source of this is disputed—would seem to ring true to this day. The UK, USSR, and US were routed and slinked away from Afghanistan because of resistance from Afghans, and no one else. History bears witness to this; no matter how much one might wish to spin, or contort, or twist facts. Let that sink into those fevered, conspiracy-theorist, blame-gaming minds who would think otherwise.

[NY apartment case: IHC to hear bail plea of Asif Ali Zardari today](https://nation.com.pk/21-Sep-2021/ny-apartment-case-ihc-to-hear-bail-plea-of-asif-ali-zardari-today)

Much mention is also made of Pakistan’s alleged duplicity—as though it were a firefighter and arsonist of sorts—at the same time. Of course, this too, is propaganda. Pakistan was a refuge for 4 million Afghans for 40 odd years. It has strived to maintain relations with whoever has been in power in Afghanistan since its birth; for a number of reasons. It shares a long (2640 kilometres), porous border with the country—and India doesn’t. It shares religious affinities with Afghanistan; all of Afghanistan, not a select few or a particular group—and India doesn’t. It shares ethno-linguistic ties across the Pak-Afghan border. And lo and behold; again, India doesn’t. Pakistan doesn’t have the luxury of choosing “sides” in Afghanistan; it is bound to keep ties with regimes of all colour there. It can ill afford to patronise one, and antagonise the other; as long as its own core interests are unaffected. Of course, whenever these are threatened it is obvious that Pakistan should—and will—act in a manner to counter such threats; and all options to this effect, will, understandably, be very much on the table.

[US to mandate all foreign visitors show proof of COVID vaccination](https://nation.com.pk/21-Sep-2021/us-to-mandate-all-foreign-visitors-show-proof-of-covid-vaccination)

Our friends in India would also do well to remember that Pakistan has been in a fight against its own iteration of the Taliban, the TTP; and most of the militants on its “Most Wanted” list, were given sanctuary in Afghanistan during the reign of the recently-disintegrated, India-friendly Ashraf Ghani regime. Peace in Pakistan’s border regions has not come easily. We have paid in blood to prevent hardliners assuming control of our country.

And in the meanwhile, as the international media is saturated with images and videos of the US abandoning Afghanistan, India abandoning Afghanistan, and other countries abandoning Afghanistan—and soundbites of US President Joe Biden saying that it was never America’s envisaged mission to “rebuild” Afghanistan, and it was to “only” remove any threats from it that might be directed at the American homeland—perhaps it is time for these routed countries to introspect and analyse their own failures that led to this ignominious exodus; that has left a generation of Afghans plunged into uncertainty of its future. India must engage in this exercise, too, rather than seek to apportion blame where it cannot possibly be due.