**The west in Afghanistan**

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After nearly two decades of the global war on terrorism by the United States and NATO forces, more than 6,000 American lives lost, over 100,000 Afghans killed and more than $2 trillion spent by the US, the speed of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan has shocked the entire world. Reuters reported few days back that a US defence official saw Afghanistan’s capital, Kabul, falling in 90 days. Instead, that happened peacefully on August 15, less than 10 days after the first provincial capital of Zaranj was taken by the Taliban. It not only refers to the US failure in Afghanistan but the biggest intelligence failure of it as well since the Tet Offensive during the Vietnam War in 1968.

After 9/11, the US launched a major offensive named ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ against the Taliban forces as Mullah Omar refused to hand over Osama Bin Laden, and by virtue of its military might, the US was able to easily overthrow the Taliban regime. During the last twenty years, the US made massive investments along with its NATO allies to raise, equip and train the 300,000-strong Afghan army to support the quasi-democratic government in Afghanistan and counter militant forces. But in reality, as the situation unfolded, the Afghan army melted away without giving a fight and the government of Ashraf Ghani is all set to be replaced by a Taliban-led government which seems to enjoy support in the largely rural areas.

[PM Imran urges int’l community to support Afghans to rebuild their country](https://nation.com.pk/05-Sep-2021/pm-imran-urges-int-l-community-to-support-afghans-to-rebuild-their-country)

Historically, US interventions in different countries are well remembered more for their failures than successes. The pictures of US forces withdrawing from Vietnam in April 1975 still remain a memorable but tragic chapter of history. Despite the death and destruction that characterised the military adventure in Vietnam, it failed to break the will of the Vietcong. During the 1960s, Cuba too under Fidel Castro and successive regimes resisted US domination despite having to pay a heavy price. The irony is that generally countries such as Iran or Venezuela—where the US has brazenly intervened militarily or pressured through economic strangulation and strategic isolation for refusing to accept its dictates—have turned inwards and further tightened their hold on their people. So, it is essentially the people of these countries that are its worst sufferers and not the regimes intrinsically. Pakistan too had a taste of US sanctions, not once but frequently, and here too our experience was that the thrust of the punitive measures was borne by the masses.

[Hamas calls for protests against settler incursions into Al-Aqsa](https://nation.com.pk/05-Sep-2021/hamas-calls-for-protests-against-settler-incursions-into-al-aqsa)

Not stepping back from the evacuation deadline of August 31 by the Taliban created a sense of fear among the western countries to evacuate people in a short span of time. During this critical time Pakistan came to the forefront to carry out daring rescue missions. “Right now, the biggest base in the immediate vicinity of Afghanistan for evacuation of foreigners is in Pakistan,” Major General Babar Iftikhar told reporters at a press briefing. In total, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), has shuttled more than 2,100 Afghan nationals, 314 Turks, and 470 people belonging to different countries in Europe. Last week, on one of its special missions, the national airline ferried 293 members of the World Bank Group’s Kabul-based staff and their immediate families to Islamabad. The special flight also rescued members of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) team in the Afghan capital. Out of the 3,191 evacuees, more than 1,600 are still in Pakistan. For this process, the government of Pakistan has arranged accommodation for people in hotels and universities. Finally at midnight before the aforementioned deadline, the last US soldier left Afghan soil.

[Iraq to host conference to recover stolen funds](https://nation.com.pk/05-Sep-2021/iraq-to-host-conference-to-recover-stolen-funds)

The world not only recognised Pakistan’s courageous efforts but thanked the Pakistan government for its efforts. The Managing Director of IMF lauded Pakistan for its support. “Pakistan’s efforts at the highest levels were absolutely critical to the safe and swift evacuation of IMF staff and their families from Afghanistan. My heartfelt thanks to Imran Khan for Pakistan’s exceptional assistance in very difficult circumstances,” said IMF’s Managing Director, Kristalina Georgieva, in a public message on Twitter. Several European leaders, including the Prime Minister of Belgium, Germany, Brussels and the list goes on, took to Twitter to thank Islamabad for its support during the difficult situation in neighbouring Afghanistan.

India’s failure in strategy in Afghanistan is inevitable. The shift in Afghanistan hit its covert attempts of using Afghan soil against Pakistan by funding and training the non-state actors and destabilising Pakistan through the concept of a two-front conflict. The fear of India can not only be seen through the closing of its embassy in Afghanistan with other western nations, but through the creation of a narrative to defame Pakistan and its grand project namely CPEC and its intelligence institutions by its media. Whether its print or electronic media to keep Pakistan on the FATF greylist or blacklist. The best instance of this is the twitter trend run by India, #SanctionPakistan and their websites.

[Punjab suspends public transport in 15 districts amid rising COVID cases](https://nation.com.pk/05-Sep-2021/punjab-suspends-public-transport-in-15-districts-amid-rising-covid-cases)

It is too short a time to judge the actions of the Afghan Taliban. After assuming power, they granted “general amnesty” to all those who fought or collaborated against them. They ensured the safety and evacuation of diplomats and foreign citizens. They endeavoured to meet all preconditions for international legitimacy: bringing violence to an end; not resorting to reprisals; adherence to Sharia law; safety of diplomats and foreign citizens; and not allowing their territory to be used as a base for exporting terrorism. All of this portrays the updated version of the Taliban and the world must recognise them and help them in making a stabilised Afghanistan rather than impose their own socio-cultural values.

The west, including America, has created a power vacuum by ending its so-called longest war, which is going to be filled by regional nations namely China, Pakistan, Russia, Iran, Turkey and the states of the Central Asian Region (CARs). A similar pattern is emerging in Afghanistan with China in the lead and Russia, Iran and Pakistan likely to facilitate the regime’s acceptance followed by its recognition. For China, having good relations with the Afghan government is vital for the BRI programme. Besides, China is obviously not concerned about ‘promoting democracy’ as it considers this to be an internal matter. A recent example of this was witnessed when Beijing rushed to assist Myanmar’s military-led government when the Western countries had imposed strict sanctions for overthrowing an elected government.

[Russian security forces arrest more than 50 people in Crimea](https://nation.com.pk/05-Sep-2021/russian-security-forces-arrest-more-than-50-people-in-crimea)

These aforementioned regional countries must help Afghanistan internationally to acquire recognition from the western world as well as to run the country effectively to get rid of its seizure of reserves by western countries and its institutions. The Biden administration froze about $9.5 billion of the Afghan government’s reserves in US banks along with the World Bank and the IMF which halted aid and SDR reserves of $440 million of Afghanistan.

The United States of America was undoubtedly defeated directly in Afghanistan, but indirectly it can still be a hardline player and can go to any extent to quench the thirst of its foreign policy objectives. One of these is to destabilise the region to prevent China in completing its grand project, namely BRI and CPEC. As the stability of Afghanistan is directly proportional to the regional stability which is mandatory for interconnectivity through BRI. India will not step-back in its illegitimate attempts to destabilise Afghanistan, as it will continue the advocacy to its own created version of ISIS in Afghanistan and the recent blast indicated India behind it, which will surely be explicit in the upcoming days. Pakistan, on the other hand, will not only have to look-after the refugee’s issue thoroughly as it already provided shelter to 4-5 million Afghan refugees in the past, but will have to make a perfect strategy for upcoming internal and external challenges along with the international pressure whose intensity would surely be more than the past