**Afghanistan: Mission unaccomplished**

[**Saleem Qamar Butt**](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/saleem-qamar-butt)

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It took four American presidents to finish the 20 year war in Afghanistan initiated by Bush. Obama’s decision to withdraw from Afghanistan looked more like one step forward and two steps backward. Trump’s consistent obsession with concluding all endless wars remained a non-starter due reasons unfathomable by the American politicians. Joe Biden’s wise decision, in the face of domestic political, economic and socio-psycho realities, to finish the withdrawal process was exacerbated by the disenchantment of NATO and other allies.

The American military and intelligence took a lot of pride in taking down big terrorists responsible for the 9/11 tragedy, without giving due credit to Pakistan’s sincere and costly military cooperation. Ironically, some major incidents by the U.S. intelligence went down in the history of bilateral relations as unforgettable debauched moves–the Raymond Davis incident exposed the spread of a sabotage network in Pakistan by the CIA, taking down Osama bin Laden by relegating Pakistan’s counter terrorism cooperation and the killing of two dozen Pakistani troops and officers at the Silalah post along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

[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)

Biden’s exit strategy for Afghanistan has not been taken well. Nevertheless, the change of mode and techniques of covert operations is already in play as witnessed by the quick and successive visits by the CIA chief to Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. The transit is considered very ominous in this regard. Without going into specifics, the refreshed narrative will once again be woven around Pakistan’s nuclear capability and the fear of nuclear weapons falling in the hands of the Taliban, Al-Qaeda or the ISIS. In the words of an intelligence veteran who served in Pakistan, “The U.S. now has no embassy and no military troops in Afghanistan. But, the intelligence community’s essential mission will remain the same. The Taliban, ISIS, and A;-Qaeda are still at war with our nation. Pakistan might be allied with the Afghan Taliban but the other two factions are ruthlessly focused on targeting Pakistan’s nuclear program and its civilian population. The CIA will carry on with recruiting of spies and stealing secrets within this terrorist mosaic but with a new, far riskier, operational paradigm. The Biden administration has been characterising their new counter-terrorism strategy as ‘over the horizon’, which obfuscates Afghanistan’s transformation into a terrorist state.

[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)

Nevertheless, despite granting space to the professional take of the quoted American intelligence wizard, Pakistan as a nation, government, military and intelligence services have to remain abreast with the evolving situation in the backdrop of the embryonic Taliban government in Afghanistan, reinvigorated narratives and somewhat malicious diplomatic overtures. Under no circumstance should Pakistan allow any dubious foot prints on its soil in the garb of temporary refugees, transit facilities, enhanced embassy staff, humanitarian workers, and military or intelligence cooperation traps without the strictest scrutiny. Efforts must be undertaken to move out all refugees and undesirable footprints lurching in our society for decades. Since hostile agencies are refocusing on the massive recruitment of informants inside Pakistan, attention also needs to be focused on the potential foreign moles in every department of the government with a view to get them and their networks terminated. The PM of Pakistan, military and intelligence chiefs should remember that a traitor only becomes one if their plot is discovered. The imposition of guilt means nothing to those who feign loyalty. More skilled conspirators wield treason as a clinical tool of regime change and political expediency. Then, writing history with their own hands, such traitors may wear the clothes of patriots. Decision making in Pakistan has traditionally remained ‘a day late and a dollar short’. The lack of foresight and inability to forecast and take timely decisions in the political, economic, law and justice, religious, health, education, agriculture, food security, sports, culture and even in security fields has cost Pakistan too dearly.

[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)

The US is likely to prevail upon President Joe Biden’s administration to exert even more pressure on Pakistan to cover up their failure in Afghanistan on all fronts, to hide their mega corruption and follow up both on failed as well as incomplete malicious agendas. While Pakistan’s armed forces and intelligence services are well poised to defeat the ever evolving threats both from outside as well as from inside, the government may also like to pay some heed to suggestions offered to counter hostile intelligence agencies’ treacherous moves through proactive diplomacy.