**Afghanistan realities**

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India, UNSC president for the month of August, laid bare its malice and frustration by rejecting Pakistan’s request for participation in a meeting convened to discuss Afghanistan.

At their saber-rattling worst, this meeting was used by officials from India and Afghanistan to level malicious accusations against Pakistan, implying that the Taliban offensive was propelled with Pakistani support. Shameless as they are, these allegations are devoid of logic and ground realities. In twenty long years, the collective military juggernaut of the West could not achieve what were absolutely unrealistic and mind boggling expectations from the Afghan forces.

Despite housing three million Afghan refugees for decades and suffering devastation as fallout of the Afghan war, Pakistan has helped tremendously in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table and enabling a safe coalition withdrawal. However, our sacrifices and efforts were reciprocated with Washington and Kabul’s insensitivity, lack of trust and accusations.

Sanity and prudence demanded accommodation and acceptance of our sacrifices. Washington’s unbridled arrogance, aped by Delhi and Kabul, has been the exact opposite – leaving no stone unturned to accuse and undermine Pakistan. To its credit, Pakistan’s resolve for Afghan peace remains undiminished despite consistent hostilities, sponsored terrorism and the relentless machinations of the many agent provocateurs from India and Afghanistan.

Afghanistan’s history regarding installed leaders is telling, and counsels realism. It was back in January 2008 that The Telegraph wrote: “Mr Karzai must live with the knowledge that every one of his predecessors for the past (long before the ISI) 107 years, whether kings or presidents, was overthrown violently. You have to go back to King Abdul Rahman, who died in 1901, to find an Afghan leader who managed to avoid being ousted or assassinated”.

It is a fact that, in the last four decades, of the ten men who have served as Afghanistan president four were murdered. President Najibullah, a virtual prisoner at a UN compound in Kabul for four and a half years and his brother Shahpur Ahmadzai were brutally disemboweled and strung up from a concrete traffic-control post at the gates of the presidential palace in Kabul. Nobody in the Western world batted an eyelid as this gruesome act was the culmination of 14 years of civil war against the Soviet-backed communist government.

Throughout the years, deceitful claims of military victory and public statements of faith in Afghan democracy were coupled with private expressions of despair and defeat. Lord Paddy Ashdown, an outspoken veteran diplomat said in 2008 that “defeat (in Afghanistan) is now a possibility”. He had to withdraw his candidature for UN envoy to Afghanistan due to Karzai’s vehement opposition. Understandably so, because Ashdown’s declared priorities were working towards winning over the people by pursuing strategies based on ground realities, tackling corruption and working within the tribal structures of Afghanistan.

With the vanquishing of the Western military might, it is imperative that the collective aim should be of peace in Afghanistan. Delhi and Kabul have acted as dangerous spoilers who want an Afghanistan without the Taliban, something the military might of the West could not achieve in twenty years. Portraying a doomsday scenario for Afghanistan, India could do well by reining in their brutal brigades in Occupied Kashmir and RSS goons in India.

In 1808, King Joseph of Spain presented a constitution offering peasants to retain their harvests, an independent judiciary and abolition of Church privileges. The Spanish peasantry chose to ignore it. They, instead, obeyed the priests who motivated them to fight against the foreign invader’s ungodly innovations. This was because Joseph was Napoleon’s brother, placed on the Spanish throne by French troops. That was what mattered to the Spaniards, not the ideal constitution to better their lives but the perception about the installed man behind it. In Afghanistan, as elsewhere, these perceptions are realities.

China, Russia and Iran have by recently hosting the Taliban demonstrated that they acknowledge the ground reality in Afghanistan. China has already announced that its Belt and Road Initiative will extend to Afghanistan. If Washington chooses to connive through Delhi, it shall simply cede the whole region to China and Russia which, compared to the Washington-led warmonger coalition, have emerged as trustworthy allies and global peace-makers.

The Oxford Research Group paints an absolutely different picture of the fundamental threats that the world faces. In ‘Beyond Terror: The truth about the real threats to our world’, it warns that the real global threats emanate from four interconnected trends: climate change (the recent UN report on climate change is a stark code red for humanity); competition over resources; marginalization of the majority world; and global militarization. Washington, deeming itself the leader of the world, has miserably failed the planet on all four counts – meting out nothing but utter devastation and human misery.

Post 9/11, the US created a world based on good and evil and “with us or against us”; no paradigm could be so apocalyptically flawed. Afghanistan is a battleground, not between good and evil but between Washington trying to forcibly transform Afghanistan into a made-to-order satellite state and the reality of Afghanistan. Washington erred in believing the Afghanistan war was an atrocity it could direct and persist with; it was an even greater mistake to think it could force a scripted end.

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