**Plight of Afghanistan vs Haqqani net emerging rulers**

[**Senator Rehman Malik**](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/senator-rehman-malik)

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The Taliban is increasing pressure by every hour and after the complete takeover of the rural area in Afghanistan, they are now heading towards the provincial headquarters. They have seized key districts in Badakhshan and Kandahar provinces and the Afghan troops have fled into neighbouring Tajikistan. It is surprising to note that the Taliban did not have a stronghold on the Northwest part of Afghanistan yet they could capture provinces there easily. There was a stronghold of Ahmad Shah Massoud and Abu Sayyaf Group. It needs to be seen who has helped them or given them freeway. Traditionally speaking, the Taliban had a stronghold in the Southeast.

Afghanistan has now landed in the worst situation because of the non-compromising attitude by both, the Taliban and the government, whereas the USA also did not play a decisive role to install an interim government before the withdrawal and to avoid the possibility of bloodshed and civil war. Let us review a few of the factors which are acting and reacting to worsen the situation. The Taliban, over time, have transformed into tough negotiators and strategic worriers. Mullah Omer could not handle the Americans and 9/11 brought a different dimension. Although Afghanistan was not involved in the 9/11 attack, the USA still attacked Afghanistan and Pakistan was forced to associate with this war on terror.

[At least 54 dead after COVID hospital in Iraq catches fire](https://nation.com.pk/13-Jul-2021/at-least-54-dead-after-covid-hospital-in-iraq-catches-fire)

The Taliban are marching towards Kabul with the intent of ruling it. History will be witnessing the second rule of the Taliban. Let us see how the Taliban play their cards and if they refrain from massacring their opponents. It looks like the Taliban will take steps to stabilise the country and are wanting to join civilised society. They will make mistakes if they follow the line of action of India as India has set a big trap for the Taliban to use them in the neighbourhood.

The Indian intelligence, under Ajit Doval, is helping the Afghan government and contacting the Taliban confidentially. The involvement and the interest of Indians can be judged by the fact that India is assisting and cooperating with the Afghan defence and security forces.

Fawad Aman, Deputy Spokesman for the Ministry of Defence, said yesterday that the Indian ambassador had met with the Secretary of Defence Bismillah Mohammadi and confirmed that India was assisting the Afghan defence and security forces and staying with the Afghan people. At the same time, the Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs met the senior leadership of the Taliban in Doha twice. According to confirmed sources, India wants the Taliban to take over even at the cost of immense bloodshed. The Taliban need to play their cards wisely by not becoming stooges in the hands of India. Pakistan tried its best to bring about peace and our efforts will continue.

[UN sends 50 truckloads of humanitarian aid to Ethiopia’s Tigray](https://nation.com.pk/13-Jul-2021/un-sends-50-truckloads-of-humanitarian-aid-to-ethiopia-s-tigray)

Meanwhile, Tehran’s efforts ended after two days of negotiations in a meeting between the Taliban delegation and the Afghan political delegation with the issuance of an agreement on this issue. The important aspect of this is that the delegations commended the efforts and goodwill of the Islamic Republic of Iran in securing peace in Afghanistan and appreciated its hospitality. Second, both sides agreed on the dangers of continuing the war and the damage it would do to the country’s health, agreeing that war was not the answer to Afghanistan’s problem and that all efforts to reach a political and peaceful solution should be justified. Both sides decided to discuss issues that need further consultation and clarity, such as establishing a mechanism for the transition from war to permanent peace, the agreed Islamic system, and how to achieve it during the next meeting. The parties consider the Tehran meeting as a new opportunity and ground for strengthening the political solution to the Afghan problem. Iran has taken a good initiative to get both the parties on the table. Let us hope both parties understand the language of peace and avoid the use of violence to resolve their disputes. Let us hope this meeting becomes the first step towards long term peace.

[COVID-19 deaths on the rise again globally: WHO chief](https://nation.com.pk/13-Jul-2021/covid-19-deaths-on-the-rise-again-globally-who-chief)

Similarly, Russia has shown its concern over the ‘swiftly degrading situation’ in Afghanistan. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said Russia will do its utmost, including using the Russian military bases on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan to prevent any aggressive raids against its allies. He stated that Russian President Vladimir Putin had a conversation with the leaders of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as well as other Central Asian partners about the Afghanistan issue and that Russia remains committed to its obligations under the Collective Security Treaty. This suggested military help in case one of the signatories were to be attacked. In reality, the deteriorating security situation has prompted Iran and some other countries to close their consulates in the northern Afghan province of Balkh with diplomats moving to Kabul. In response to the Russian concerns, Tajikistan has called on members of a Russian-led military bloc to help it deal with security challenges emerging from Afghanistan, since Moscow has already pledged to defend its regional allies affected by the unrest.

[FM Qureshi, Tajik counterpart review bilateral ties](https://nation.com.pk/13-Jul-2021/fm-qureshi-tajik-counterpart-review-bilateral-ties)

Meanwhile, the Indian External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar is visiting Russia with a one point agenda of ‘Taliban in Afghanistan’ and a stopover in Tehran.

Addressing the China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Foreign Ministers’ Dialogue, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that the current international and regional situation is undergoing complex and profound changes. He noted that foreign troops are pulling out of Afghanistan at an accelerated pace, the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan is under attack, armed conflicts and terrorist activities are becoming more frequent, and the security and stability of Afghanistan and the region are facing new challenges. Wang Yi said that under the current circumstances, it is all the more necessary for the three countries to strengthen communication and cooperation so as to bring the development of Afghanistan’s situation in line with the region’s common interests.

Unfortunately, Afghanistan will remain in focus internationally because of the Taliban takeover and President Ashraf Ghani will have no choice to submit to the advancing Taliban or to flee away from the capitol unless he gets American or Indian protection.