**Beseeching President Joe Biden for peace**

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June 18, 2021

The Afghan nation, from a child to an old man have been suffering for ages. The children born during the beginning of war have now become grandparents themselves. Young children are fearful of a possible eruption of civil war post withdrawal of American forces.

I have been giving my point of view through both electronic and printed media on the ground realities in Afghanistan. It is a fact that the suffering of our economy today can be attributed to the war in Afghanistan which has been depleting our resources both directly and indirectly. We are victims of the Afghan-USSR war followed by the growth of the Taliban, Al Qaeda and Daish which have been eroding our system. Hence peace in Afghanistan means peace in Pakistan.

As of now, the Taliban control 52 percent of the territory of Afghanistan as they have full control over 27 districts. The remaining 297 districts are partly controlled by both the government and Taliban.

The leadership council of the Taliban, known as the Rahbari Shura, makes decisions for all “political and military affairs” of the Emirate. It is currently led by Mawlawi Haibatullah Akhundzada who is a new Amir in place of Mullah Umer. Haibattullah (is supported by his 3 main deputies, currently Mullah Muhammad Yaqoub, Mullah Omar’s son, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar; and Sirajuddin Haqqani who is also acting head of the Haqqani Network and supervises the insurgency in Afghanistan; he is the most powerful like his father Mulana Jalaluddin Haqqani.

[Bangladesh seeks UN intervention to end Rohingya crisis](https://nation.com.pk/18-Jun-2021/bangladesh-seeks-un-intervention-to-end-rohingya-crisis)

The Taliban’s initiative to include Afghanistan’s ethnic minorities in the new coalition emerging in Kabul has been viewed favourably by Tehran and it can be clearly seen that the ice is melting between the two-arch rivals. Moreover, since the beginning of peace talks with the United States, several top Taliban leaders from the negotiating team have been to Tehran for consultations. It is also reported that Iran’s special representative on Afghanistan, Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian, has regularly interacted with the Taliban’s political leaders, as well as other Afghan political leaders, including Salahuddin Rabbani, the head of Afghanistan’s Jamiat-e Islami, and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, the chief of the Islamic Dawah organisation and former head of Islami Ittehad (Mujahideen Group).

These groups are all around Kabul and the battle for takeover can be triggered at any time. These factions are within the radius 20 to 25 kilometres and Kabul stands encircled today, creating fearful nights for the general public.

[Israel to send 1M vaccine doses to Palestinian Authority in swap deal](https://nation.com.pk/18-Jun-2021/israel-to-send-1m-vaccine-doses-to-palestinian-authority-in-swap-deal)

The Taliban assert their authority through checkpoints along key roads across the whole country. The Taliban members stop every passing car and passenger and question them, searching for people linked to the government and if they find any, they hand them over to their courts which is creating unrest. The Taliban believe victory is theirs and they feel they have won the war against America and are confident that they will have control over the capital within the next few months.

It is worth noticing that since the past year, the Taliban have also stopped attacks on international forces following the signing of the withdrawal agreement with the US, but they are consistently fighting the Afghan government. The question arises as to what mind has America made as the last strategy and it is to be seen which side the Americans will throw their weight behind; the Taliban or Ghani plus the Northern Alliance.

The US does not need any bases in Pakistan or Afghanistan. The US needs bay permission for warships to cover the range for their cruise missiles to any target in Afghanistan which will once again bring Afghanistan under fire. The anti-American group will once again start their terrorist activities and we will be back to square one once again.

[Pakistan army to modernise Artillery corps: COAS](https://nation.com.pk/18-Jun-2021/pakistan-army-to-modernise-artillery-corps-coas)

Let us presume that Kabul falls in the hands of the Taliban, that too with the consent of the US and other allies, then Pakistan will have to plan its strategy. It is no more a secret that Indian influence has crept in Afghanistan and it is giving $1 billion annually for its lobbies to help them keep a strong foothold. In addition, senior leaders of the Northern Alliance are regularly visiting India to seek guidance from the Modi government.

As far as Pakistan is concerned, a power-sharing arrangement would be beneficial in Afghanistan for every stakeholder. Pakistan cannot afford to have a pro-Indian, single-faction government.

Pakistan needs to make an effort before the fall of Kabul to avoid the complete control of government in the hands of this faction as the national government can be neutral to bring peace back to Afghanistan and keep better relations with its neighbours. I feel that passing a resolution or any religious approach by any country will be no more effective to convince the factions in Afghanistan for peace.

[Sindh, Punjab facing shortage of vaccines](https://nation.com.pk/18-Jun-2021/sindh-punjab-facing-shortage-of-vaccines)

Pakistan is the most critical regional player when it comes to ending the war in Afghanistan and the role of COAS Gen Qamar Javed Bajawa has been appreciated by all stakeholders including the US. The Taliban will not take any pressure from any stakeholder and their violence will increase in Afghanistan with every passing day.

We need to see how now the US adopts its further policy with reference to Afghanistan. We must be clear in our minds that the US wants to have a strategic presence in this region and it can go to any extent to achieve its policy line. We need to see if the US wants Pakistan as a strategic partner to bring peace or wants to repeat the policy of acquiring logistic support via ground or via sea. According to sources, US warships are already in the gulf near Pakistan since it already has permission from Gen Musharraf to use Pak airspace.

I once again repeat my suggestions with some additions to bring long-term peace after the withdrawal of US forces:

[Govt aims to preserve historic sites across country: PM Imran](https://nation.com.pk/18-Jun-2021/govt-aims-to-preserve-historic-sites-across-country-pm-imran)

The US needs to consider ensuring a one-to-one meeting of President Ashraf Ghani and Sirajuddin Haqqani with the pre-agreed future roadmap for the sake Afghan nation. The member states must ask the UN to deploy a peacekeeping mission to enforce peace. The US must consider working to establish an interim government in Afghanistan representing all factions and the present government and others. There should be an undertaking from the Taliban/others that they will not dismantle female schools and there should be a general amnesty. Let the interim government be there for one year and it should be headed by a mutually agreed non-controversial leader equally respected and having a good working relationship with all stakeholders.

India must be kept away from this withdrawal strategy to avoid its negative role. Pakistan, China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia may be taken on board as observers of peace. Sufficient rehabilitation funding should be announced for the rebuilding of basic infrastructure and educational institutions that have been destroyed in years of violence and war. The UN must pass a resolution prohibiting certain actions by the Taliban-led coalition government such as bombing, harassment, ethnic killing and violence against women etc.

My final advice for the American administration is to withdraw from Afghanistan but work out a withdrawal plan to block the internal tribal war before actually leaving Afghanistan.

I firmly believe that a common strategy adopted by the US and Pakistan can bring long term peace. Crushing the Afghan Taliban will bring destruction and this will not save the capital. It is likely that the US will continue to ask Pakistan to do more again while keeping India as its preferred nation. The US needs to show more sincerity towards Pakistan in view of the past sacrifices of Pakistan in this war of terror. I hope President Joe Biden will hear the cries of Afghan children for peace.

The views expressed are solely mine and do not necessarily represent the views of my party.