**Regrettable improvidence**

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Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, addressing the inaugural session of the ‘Pakistan-Afghanistan Bilateral Dialogue’ in Islamabad on Tuesday, was right on the money to assert that peace in Afghanistan was a shared responsibility and no failure or mistake should be blamed on Pakistan.

Pakistan has played a key role in the conclusion of a peace deal between US and Taliban as well as in facilitating the commencement of the intra-Afghan dialogue which has been duly acknowledged and appreciated globally. But regrettably, there has been no substantive progress towards finding an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation in that war-ravaged country. The tempo of hostilities between Taliban and the Afghan government, instead of decreasing, has assumed alarming proportions. The situation suggests a possible relapse of Afghanistan into factional fighting if the dialogue between the Taliban and the Afghan government fails to firm up a consensus-driven political arrangement for the future.

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

In the backdrop of the peace deal between the US and the Taliban, it was basically the responsibility of the Afghan government and the Taliban to restore normalcy in the country. Unfortunately, while the regional countries including Pakistan are striving hard to see the return of normalcy in Afghanistan and a settlement between the Taliban and the Afghan government, there are certain elements which are out to spoil the chances of peace in the country.

India is playing the role of a spoiler by providing support to terrorist outfits in Afghanistan and forging a nexus with TTP, ISKP and NDS. A stable Afghan-Pakistan border is against her interests. A corrupt Afghan leadership is also thwarting the chances of peace in the country. A selected elite in the Afghan government and NDS is clinging to power even at the cost of peace. The Afghan government has no credibility as under it, the country has seen unparalleled violence and instability. The inflexibility shown by the Taliban and their refusal to suspend hostilities is also a hindering factor.

[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)

Pakistan surely has a pivotal role in facilitating peace in Afghanistan before the US pullout and in the post-withdrawal era and it is globally recognised that there can be no peace in Afghanistan without support from Pakistan. However, the Afghan leaders, in spite of sporadically acknowledging positive role of Pakistan in pushing Afghanistan towards peace and stability, continue to look askance at its links with the Taliban and from time to time keep making unsavoury remarks about it, notwithstanding the fact that Pakistan has made several moves to build an ambience of trust. Prime Minister Imran Khan is on record to have announced that the concept of ‘strategic depth in Afghanistan’ is dead and buried.

Recently General Qamar Javed Bajwa visited Kabul and met the Afghan leaders Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah. In his meeting with President Ghani, British Chief of Defence Staff Gen Nicholas Patrick Carter was also present. Reportedly the COAS during the meeting reiterated “A peaceful Afghanistan means a peaceful region in general and a peaceful Pakistan in particular. We will always support the ‘Afghan-led and Afghan owned’ peace process based on mutual consensus of all stakeholders. Restoration of the Emirate or dictatorship by the Taliban is not in anybody’s interest in the region, especially Pakistan.”

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

However, the Afghan President in an interview with a German magazine ‘Der Spiegel’ a day later seemed to have gone back on his words of appreciation for Pakistan’s positive role in the Afghan peace process. Responding to a question, he asked European allies to play a role to get Pakistan on board. He said that Germany could do a lot in the peace process with the Taliban and Pakistan as a state has to make an important decision on Afghan peace.

As if what the Afghan President said was not enough, the Afghan National Security Advisor Hamdullah Mohib, in a public speech in the eastern province of Nangarhar last week, not only accused Pakistan and its spy agency of supporting and directing the Taliban’s insurgency in Afghanistan but also called Pakistan a ‘brothel house’.

This continued ambience of mistrust is not going to help in achieving the objective of a durable peace in Afghanistan. The Afghan leaders must think beyond their own political agenda and try to establish peace in the country. Both sides need to show flexibility in ending the conflict. They owe it to the people of Afghanistan who have suffered enormously during the last three decades of fighting. The improvidence exhibited by the Taliban and the Afghan government is indeed very much regrettable.