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Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)**Implications on Regional Peace After US Departure From Afghanistan****Muhammad Asad Qureshi**

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ayeshakhadim077@gmail.com**Abstract**

The sovereign purpose of this paper is to look analytically on the aftermaths which are inevitable to be confronted after USA ends its military presence in Afghanistan. South Asia a region which due to two long standing issues i.e one between Pakistan and India which is Kashmir, and second the issue of Afghanistan have been presenting grave challenges as far the durable peace is concerned. The polarization in Afghanistan started in 1979, and after Soviet Union withdraw from Afghanistan, the region plunged to almost non existent in peace terms as interventions by different countries by secretly supporting elements of war for their open interests. The paper shall focus on how the regional countries suffer as a result of regional instability when the invaders leave the area . Invaders mostly economically strong , but the conquered and its adjacent countries are often seen having a sub-sistence economy .

USA , as had the thought of leaving Afghanistan had started negotiations with Taliban for peace in Doha . From these meetings it was hoped that a peace in some form and shape can probably be restored in the region as peace accord was signed between the concerned parties. It should not be forgotten as well that Pakistan as a responsible state did play its central role in making these sessions for peace possible. The paper shall also investigate the role of Pakistan in this regard as well the implications on Pakistan on US withdrawal from the region.

Introduction

Leaving Afghanistan can have some unthoughtable consequences not only for the regional peace , but security of USA can also be once more under threat as Taliban after regaining the territorial control in Afghanistan will think of inflicting the same wound on USA as they had done in the year 2001. Afghanistan is a hub of terrorist activities as different groups either on local or international level has remained actively busy in downing its opponent group by using all means . The country which was the most adversely affected in the past due to instability in Afghanistan as USA left from Afghanistan in the 90s' after when Russia was defeated in Afghanistan by militants supported by USA. These militants

finding ground for themselves established their government and forced people to follow their imposed law which proved drastic for peace and demolished morality in the name of promoting and upholding the true essence of humanity and humanism. It is geared again that this time around the withdrawal may also again leave the heart-rending precautions on Pakistan as 3 million Afghan refugees are already present in Pakistan, and withdrawal by USA is invariably to cause social unrest in Afghanistan and massacre on huge scale is bound to happen as history stands as a witness that whenever irresponsible groups having their own agenda in the name of religion have come into power, unjust revenge has remained their primary motive. If people in Afghanistan fearing their lives flee to Pakistan, an already suffering economy can further trickle down which can make the security situation even more grim. USA as had almost completed its withdrawal did remain in negotiations with Taliban in Doha and at some other centres of the world, and has tried to reach to an agreement which may make its exit safe and may also to an extent guarantees reasonable peace if not sustainable in the region. An agreement was reached as a result of these Pakistan mediated sessions, but breach of clauses of various sections of this peace accord between USA and Taliban has also been seen frequently as both accused each other for violation. USA security policy introduced in the year 2017 expresses full support to the military of Afghanistan in wake of any misadventure by non state actors violating the national laws or attempting to occupy the land or by using unfair hysterical means to terrify the people to bow to their imposed law shall be dealt immediately and with full might for nipping the evil in the bud. This security policy by USA also exerts pressure on Pakistan to do more in the fight against terrorists as people in USA believe that Pakistan is not doing enough to do away with the terrorists. Pakistan, truly speaking has done more than its share in this fight. DG ISPR Babar Iftikhar addressing the national and international media said, Pakistan has lost 86 thousand nationals in the war on terror. This number does not include the military personnel.

But USA has always remained adamant that Pakistan must disallow the militants from using its soil for terrorist activities. USA being well aware of the facts that ending military presence in Afghanistan can lead to one more severe regional turmoil remains tough on its leaving stance. 20 years of military intervention if it is ended in such irresponsible manner, it can erupt a new wave of violence, social disorder, carnage and an uncontrollable worldwide chaos.

Human wit is unable to comprehend that what remained unachieved despite 20 years of military presence in Afghanistan, is it possible to achieve that having no physical military presence in the region by USA? War if on one hand seems not a solution, but on the other hand keeping in view the past history it seems that use of power it is by no other means possible to keep those groups in control which are not supported by the public and yet want to impose their rule upon the people by threatening them with fire consequences if their will is not followed. Therefore when these mischievous elements were initially controlled by the might, it is also reasonable to maintain peace and respect the sacrifices rendered by the security forces for upholding the flag of humanity for the good of the world to somehow keep vigilant check on these groups. Otherwise years labor can be dissipated.

Though USA has been having negotiations with Taliban which aims to promote harmony among local Afghan groups to live in peace by understating and compromising on their differences and allowing

everyone to breathe in an environment of their own belief. The talks also aim on peaceful withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan. USA has insisted during the talks that soil of Afghanistan shall not be used by any militant group for encouraging anti religious sentiments , yet it seems that these core points will be hard to achieve in true spirit and letter for the history is replete with violation of ceasefire once too many times by the concerned groups for once too many reasons.

Foreign Policy of USA for South Asia though associates pivotal significance to Afghanistan, yet its inclination and leanings towards India creates doubts for Pakistan is one major player in the region. Without taking Pakistan into confidence the CBM (Confidence Building Measures) between America and Afghanistan will hardly yield fruits. America's two pronged strategy to keep its interests safe in the region by keeping warm and cordial relationship with India in order to neutralise the increasing economic and political influence of China in the world. America sees China as one invincible emerging economy of the world which can challenge its authority in the future to come as currently it is alone USA that is calling the shots and reshaping and remolding the world in facets of its own will and aspirations. How USA will protect Indian interest in Afghanistan as India has invested in the war affected country. US withdrawal could also mean that Indian investment in Afghanistan could kick the bucket. DG ISPR Babar Iftikhar told media the other day that Indian capital invested in Afghanistan is likely to sink.

Pakistan has been in close economic ties with China as CPEC is thought to be a game changer in the region. Both USA and India have serious reservations about the project. The concept of CPEC was propounded and proposed in the period of Gen PervaizMusharaf (The former military ruler of Pakistan). India fearing the scope and economic implications of the project immediately entered into a trade of Chahbahr with Iran.

Keeping in view this delicate situation of the region and US withdrawal from Afghanistan , Pakistan has to be extremely careful in drawing its foreign policy to counter the aftermaths of USA departure from the region ,and to safeguard national security and interests by keeping the economy on track and by all means ensuring the early and smooth completion of giant CPEC project.

The present modern world's interests are based on geopolitical scenarios . Powerful countries of the world wherever they deem their interests either political, economical , geographical and security and stability in terms of preemptive strikes, they don't hesitate in acting aggressively. A country economically and politically weak has no option other than to support the super power in its designs of all sorts. Pakistan being an economically fragile country offered its all support to USA after 9/11, and thus became an ally of a cunning partner in her fight against global terrorism.

International body UNO which works according to its universal charter that sovereignty and integrity of all countries be equally honored. But, ironically this body becomes absolutely helpless in voicing for the captured and attacked countries by the powerful. Nepotistic attitude by the responsible world organization endangers the peace of the world . UNO discriminative behaviours has created a divide in the world which has sparked a debate on identity and ideology, marginalized and privileged.

Background to the study.

Afghanistan had and has been in a volatile situation for long. It almost dates back to 1979 when international rift started in Afghanistan. Russia in the beginning had little border encounters with Afghanistan as it had in mind the expansionist designs of USA to encroach Afghanistan to prevent Russia from reaching to the hot waters in South Asia and gulf. As USA had fears that if Soviet Union captures oil reserves in the gulf, it will result in non supply of oil to America and other European countries which could really hamper the development and prosperity of these areas ,and Russia then can alone control the control of the world . Such a world scenario was totally unacceptable to USA and Europe. Therefore, USA and Russia confronted each other in proxy wars on various fronts in Afghanistan. One reason for this disturbance in Afghanistan is that the locals there in power have never been able to develop unity among themselves, and the foreign invaders kept interfering taking advantage of their inner differences. Though , Afghanistan had and has a central government, but its complete authority has always remained a question for different armed pockets backed by international players have always created disturbances for the government in centre, and the government in centre found itself incapacitated to establish its rit across the country by powerfully demolishing these non state actors playing in the hands of invaders. Pakistan has always voiced for durable peace in Afghanistan by asking all the players involved to sit on a table of negotiations and find out a peaceful and acceptable solution of this problem.

National Power Structure

There is a so called central government with Ashraf Ghani as the president . Taliban for of the reason that Ghani's education is from America, therefore don't accept him as an elected president rather take him as a pro American and a puppet. Ghani has been holding the presidential office for the last 3 years as he came into power in June 2019.

A recent wave of negotiations by USA with local Afghan elements for peaceful withdrawal aims to satisfy the power list of all the sections of Afghanistan as these talks not only include Taliban, but also opposition political parties of Afghanistan. The opposition parties main concern is to hold power and have influence in the country. These opposition political parties have their sway on considerable parts of the country. Taliban is one more party in the negotiations. It seems a thought of insane to associate a concept of democracy with Taliban. Though in talks promises are made by all sides to abide by the peace accord, but violations are often seen after wards. In ongoing talks Taliban have expressed the resolve to stand by the peace commitment , but years gone by do reveal to us that Taliban in their peace promises have always deviated for their own interests in the name of settling the issues. Therefore, trust deficit still exists and strong apprehensions are also present that this reached peace deal may not keep its features intact in the future.

Afghanistan a country for many

Afghanistan is a country where lies the interest of many international players. One foreign player comes to Afghanistan, and after grinding the axe leaves in an helicopter. Neighbouring countries like Pakistan, China and Iran have their own interests directly linked to the stability and instability in Afghanistan. These countries fear that instability in Afghanistan can derail their economies, and they also fear huge influx of people from Afghanistan into their territories due to civil war. It is difficult for these countries

to stop these people coming into their land for of humanitarian crises as refugees include people from all age groups. There is also a threat to the security of these countries for terrorists wearing masks of refugees can also enter which can spread extremism, terrorism and can bring defamation to their land internationally.

Iran and USA have been locking horns for many years . Iranian nuclear program which is a cause of serious concern to USA and its strategic partner Israel. Iran fearing the presence of USA in the region always feels uncomfortable, and therefore secretly or openly has been trying to use its influence on different elements fighting in Afghanistan.

China also feels insecure as India in Afghanistan has invested a lot in cooperation with USA and Israel. Though China by technology and ammunition is far more advanced than India, yet Indian nexus with USA and Israel sounds threatening to it. What is important in this regard is USA fear that China may soon come parallel to it in terms of economy and weapons making. Therefore, USA keeps cordial relationship with India for keeping China under pressure. Therefore, China also has a role to play in Afghanistan either willing or unwillingly. Pakistan as has been one prominent country affected by the condition in Afghanistan has suffered a lot not only in terms of economy, but also in terms of physical loss. Pakistan, therefore , has to be vigilant in playing its role keeping in view the developed or developing scenario in the region.

Russia on the other hand fears that if Taliban comes into power in Afghanistan, it may lead to a scenario which will spread radical Islamists ideology in the region that may impair the regional stability especially in Central Asia as Russia has already experienced establishment of Chechnya in form of Islamic state.

Peace in Afghanistan in presence of these international players is only possible when the Afghanistan wakes to the fact that this is their land ,and they have to protect it. Pakistan and India are both thought to actively endeavouring to keep their interests protected in Afghanistan. India over the years has been trying to malign Pakistan by convincing the international community that Pakistan provides safe heavens to the terrorists to spread polarization in Afghanistan. But, lately the world political critics have raised doubts over Pakistan's influence on Taliban.

Pakistan and American Foreign Policy.

Pakistan has long been used by USA as a tool and a toy in protecting her national interests in South Asian region. Ever since USA and Russia have been in cold war , Americans since then have been using Pakistan as an instrument in curtailing the Russian influence in the region, and to stopping Russian government from reaching to hot waters in the Gulf . USA has always asked Pakistan to do more in return of aid given to Pakistan. Pakistan has great geographical significance , but unfortunately the Political instability and bad governance by Pakistan's political parties has always kept Pakistan begging from international donors to keep the wheel of economy going. USA and other major international players have been manipulating the feeble , corrupt and coward minded minded political parties of Pakistan to gain their interests in the region. To Americans the best concept of democracy lies in their own interests. Wherever America feels its interests , it in the name of democracy funds , assists and brain washes the people there. In the name of civilizing them , they colonize them. (It is natural for the powerful to treat the weak as sub altern as the powerful takes pride in its power. History is replete with such incidents when the weak in the name being made civilized have been manhandled ,and their potentials and resources

have been captured and occupied. If the invaders are resisted, they in the foolish pride of their might don't hesitate in undertaking the mass massacre. Bosnia Herzegovina is one example of such blood shed as when few groups of patriots agitated the invasion, they were brutally and ruthlessly murdered . Numerous mass graves were found , numerous such mass graves sadly remained unfound as massacre was done in a manner of leaving no signs and traces behind for the bereaved . The silence of the world community and those who cry everywhere for democracy is a matter of great cunning shame).

It is interesting to see that USA funds those countries which are economically poor , politically a hub of instability and militarily fragile in the sense of differences between political parties and military. For USA in this regard Pakistan was a proper country to use as a tool for her western interests as there is lately a serious row has been observed between one political party and military. In the past MQM chief had played in the hands of Britain, India and USA in destabilising Karachi in particular. A recent meeting of former Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif with Afghan national security advisor in London has also raised serious concerns among ranks of Pakistan intelligence agencies . Different apprehensions have been expressed about this meeting. I.e to create chaos in elections of Azad Kashmir, to somehow attempt to relate elections in AJK with elections in IOK. Whatever the motives be, the principal motive seems to create unrest in Pakistan and widen the gulf and differences between military and political parties. Israel and India with USA as a patronage have been attacking Pakistan in Hybrid War. A recent Israel Spy Wear attack on Pakistan is considered as an attack on national security of Pakistan by the Pakistan national security advisor Shahzad Akbar.

Pakistan is seen as a country directed and steered by USA for of its excessive economic dependence on it. Political instability has given Pakistan in the hands of USA. A slaved nation unable to decide its matters and fragile to stand on its own feet is often treated like wondering sheep. Paulo Coelho a Brazilian novelist says: "If you don't know how to speak , it is better for you to be among the sheep". Allama Iqbal says: In slavery neither works the tricks nor the swords,

But boiling passion accompanied by the invincible belief frees the chained minds.

So, Pakistan has to identify its worth and must frame its foreign policy in accordance with the principles of national esteem. Allama Iqbal remarks: For of demise of self esteem in the east,

There could emerge none to empathise with the street walkers.

Pakistan may stop relying on USA for financial aid fearing Indian threats to its security. Pakistan may look around as there are countries in its neighbourhood which can help Pakistan by providing soft loans on flexible conditions. Importantly a leader in the centre must have a sound understanding of the regional ground realities along with strong mental state of patriotism even better and stronger than Louis Pasteur (Who donated all his worldly wealth to his country, and devoted himself to his land till his last breath by working wonders in the field of medicine) in writing the foreign policy of the country. A leader responsible for foreign policy of the country must rise above hate, religious differences and caste discrimination.

Probable Scenarios After Withdrawal.

The peace talks between USA and Taliban were also taking place when Donald Trump was in the office. Joe Biden the president elect now has decided on urgent basis to withdraw his troops from Afghanistan. It is announced that by August 1st , America will end its military presence in Afghanistan in all forms. If

it happens as it is planned which has already started to happen , and as a hasty and irresponsible withdrawal of USA paves the way for Taliban to re capture the lost territories either by force or as a result of local surrendering to these religious groups. It seems it will be difficult for the international donors and those international companies working on different projects for development of Afghanistan to continue their work operations as withdrawal comes close. All the work done in major cities of Afghanistan in promoting awareness among the people to voice for their rights and in bringing peace to the war affected country is likely to be dissipated as withdrawal is likely to further divide the already divided country. Peace now can be transformed into probably indefinite chaos as it was seen in the year 1994 when religious people had government in Afghanistan.

Withdrawal can result in reversal of education process which started after USA took over Afghanistan. The conservative and out dated system of imposed Sharia education can again find roots in Afghanistan, which can be pose threats to the world peace. Joe Biden the president elect addressing a news conference was asked a question by a journalist that Do you trust Taliban? In reply the president said " is it a serious question"? and answering the question he said , I don't trust them at all.

In the same media briefing on another question by another journalist that do you think Mr. President that Taliban will take over Afghanistan? The President replied, no, I don't think so. He further said that it will not be possible for Taliban to fight the army consisting of 3 million troops equipped with modern weapons as any other well trained army of any country of the world has. He added that Taliban are 75 thousand in number ,and will remain unable in re occupying Afghanistan. The President said : We did not go Afghanistan for nation building . It is the duty and responsibility of Afghan people to decide that how they need to run their country. President told media that our military mission will come to an end on 31st of August 2021, and we are proceeding towards the safe and sound return of our security personnels.

The peace in this un-communicated withdrawal seems impossible. It will lead to unemployment in the country. It may trigger again the trade of drugs in the country, and people can again fall a victim to the addiction of drugs, and country can go into the hands of irresponsible and incompetent people. There is also a fear that Daesh can also be active in Afghanistan in carrying out its militant activities in different areas of Afghanistan and can go beyond its borders as well. Different factions will highly one another, and as a result it can bring further segmentation to Afghanistan. The gains could be reversed, and this reversal could also become irreversible until an unprecedented use of power is once more demonstrated by the powerful countries who believe in the notion of pre emptive strike in case of sensing rationally or irrationality threats to their national security.

Probabilities .

There is a possibility that if there is no settlement reached between USA and Taliban in ongoing negotiations soon , and if USA runs out of patience and fearing undue delay withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, it may lead to a scenario of chaos and widespread civil war in Afghanistan.

2: Another probable situation could be that USA keeps nominal military presence in Afghanistan in order to stop Taliban from gaining power and harassing the citizens for accepting and submitting to their Sharia law. This small scale presence may also aim to stop Taliban from terrorist activities.

If America in case the peace accord is not signed between USA and Taliban , keeps troops from its allies with in Afghanistan, it may add energy to its tank in fight against terrorists.

3: Another possibility is that if USA for ensuring peace in Afghanistan, and respecting its own toil done over the years may leave Afghanistan not at once rather withdraw its troops in phases keeping in view the political situation. A hasty withdrawal is certainly to raise and create multiple peace problems for the region.

4: One more likely thought is that USA may develop friendly relationship with all the neighbors of Afghanistan in order to fight Taliban without giving them time in form of having dialogue with them.

Different Actors Role in Peace Making

First of all in this regard the Afghan nationals, Afghan government, Afghan opposition and Taliban will have to form a working synergy in order to let peace prevail in Afghanistan. Joe Biden the president elect has said that they didn't go to Afghanistan for nation building. It is rather a responsibility of Afghan people and government to work for their prosperity and development the president added. Taliban being adamant to have large share in the government , to have dominant presence in Afghanistan, their stance to have a constitution like Iran and Saudi Arabia where there is principal role of religion in making national rules. But now both in Saudi Arabia and Iran amendments have been made in the constitution which give significant religious as well as social freedom to the citizens to exercise their fundamental human rights. But , Taliban in Afghanistan are arrogant to have only their thought Sharia law which is a huge obstacle in establishing peace in Afghanistan. If factions will continue to fight in a fragmented society, peace shall then remain a dream until something extraordinary from Divine lands on the Land and sets things right once for all. Neighbouring states of Afghanistan also have equal responsibility in bringing stability in the country. For example India who has large scale interests in Afghanistan, but it works and launches projects in Afghanistan not for development of Afghanistan, but to somehow promote anarchy in Pakistan and encourage the locals in Afghanistan to wage a war against Pakistan. India will have to show sincerity in having un hybrid foreign policy for sustainable peace in the region . Russia shall help Afghanistan in building proper educational infrastructure to make people understand by the power of education that how precious is the motherland. It is to live in peace, unity and congenality. It is not to create fuss and to shed blood. Only by stabilising the educational institutions and by raising the standard of education , a nation can achieve pedestal of glory and self esteem. Russia can play a vital role in this regard , and so other countries as well. Pakistan can ask Afghanistan to participate in trade activities such as CPEC, and other national projects of trade and business. Pakistan can also help Afghanistan to build sports infrastructure as Afghanistan have talent in cricket, and its national cricket team has performed reasonably well at International level. India as has good film industry can help Afghanistan in bettering its film industry to enlighten the minds of people by particularly focusing on their culture, history and traditions in movies. India can offer its expertise to Afghanistan in this regard. Iran as it shares history with Afghanistan can also help it in building roads, raising nicer buildings which attract attention of international community. This all needs a collective sincerity by all neighbouring states. All neighbouring countries have always associated peace in their respective countries to the

peace in Afghanistan, but in real sense their concerns for peace with in Afghanistan are seemingly slim to none. Daesh can only be stopped in Afghanistan if the local actors and these international players develop among themselves a sincere working synergy for one "United Goal". It is expected that if such a coordinated effort is lacked, it will pave the way to proxy wars in Afghanistan which shall keep the unrest and chaos loud . And who knows that deafning violence awaits Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Withdrawal will have its sure dire consequences . It is worth observing to hear from American President that we didn't aim for nation building in Afghanistan. Now, it proves that they came here to annihilate Taliban. The question is , did they? Taliban are still present in Afghanistan , still a force , still are feared . Did American accomplish the mission they came for? A big question mark ??? Had they accomplished the mission, the fear on withdrawal would have not been as threatening as they are now. Either the withdrawal is timely or not, in very short time the world may come to know about it. Dreadful apprehensions are looming large about reversal of gains. Withdrawal either could be like a dream come true as far peace is concerned or it could be a start of one unimaginable blood shed. If one more such incident as took place on 9/11 happens again, will America not regret its withdrawal or will America once again play the old foolish blame game by putting the burden on Pakistan for providing safe heavens to the culprits? America came to Afghanistan for revenge ,and leaving probably to come again for one more revenge , and probably the revenge next will be even bitter than the previous one. This withdrawal is for one more arrival.

The future of Afghanistan with relevance to withdrawal is concerned looks grim , yet there is a optimism that everlasting peace is near to prevail . How will it prevail ? A mystery which is unfolding by and by. One element of this everlasting mysterious peace is the current pandemic.

Fingers crossed for the best!

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