RISING TERROR OF TALIBAN AND OTHER NATIONS IGNORING IT?



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The Afghan collapse reflects not just a military and intelligence failure but the failure in 20 years to have built a more functional state. We all have seen apocalyptic scenes as the Afghans attempt to cling to the US Air force place get out of their own country. It is the fear that reminds the Afghans of the past. Those who have crossed every trace of oppression have returned. At the same time ruin has returned. Ruin of the country which has dreamed of progress in past two decades. Now Taliban has taken over the country and is trying to rule it.

Almost 20 years after the US intervention in Afghanistan to remove the Taliban from power, everything seems to be standing back at the same point as it was 20 years back. President Ashraf Ghani fled the country after the Taliban entered the capital Kabul.

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Fear, Terror and Much more

The Afghans are worried that the country could descend into chaos or the Taliban could carry out revenge attacks against those who worked with the Americans or the government.



They have the fear that the Taliban will reimpose the **cruel interpretation of Sharia law** that they suffered during their previous regime.



Although they have encouraged women to join their government but many Afghans believe that it is just a hoax. They distrust the Taliban and fear that their rule will be violent and oppressive.

One major concern is the breakdown of security after thousands of prisoners who are actually terrorists, were freed by the Taliban forces.

Taliban takeover and Life of Women

Afghan women have progressed and made major gains since the overthrow of the Taliban after American Invasion. They were free from any oppression and **gender-specific impositions**. But now many are worried that they will once again be confined to their homes. The Taliban have always been very conservative.

It is confirmed by the fact that days after the Taliban vowed to respect women's right, images of women's posters being spray-painted outside a beauty salon in Shahr-e-Naw in Kabul got viral.

Since the Taliban took over Kabul on August 15, at least two female journalists have been barred from broadcasting the news at Radio Television Afghanistan. They have attacked at least two members of the press while they covered a protest in the Eastern Nangarhar province.





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Reports stating that the Taliban kidnapping and forcibly marrying off teenage girls and young women to its fighters have made it worse.

People previously worked with the USA

As the US military is in a rush to evacuate American citizens, a majority of their allies are breathing with the hope that they would also eventually be lifted off.

Amid this, reports of Taliban visiting house-to-house and hanging people who worked with the US is ruining every hope.

In a viral video, two Afghan military commanders were being executed publicly in Kandahar stadium. Recently on 20 August, they have executed a regional police chief, who was on their priority list.

The brutal massacre of Hazara Community

Last month, the Taliban fighters massacred 9 ethnic Hazara men after taking control of the **Ghazni province**.

Very recently, the Taliban blew up a statue of popular Hazara leader Abdul. Ali Mazari in Bamiyan, which is considered the undeclared capital of the Hazara ethnic community.



These targeted killings and intense radicalism are proof that ethnic and religious minorities remain at high risk under the Taliban rule in Afghanistan.

Why are Nations ignoring this catastrophe?

In order to understand this, we first have to understand that the situation is such that there are two factions- the countries supporting the takeover and those who are opposing it.

For the countries supporting the Taliban back in power, they are **seeking an opportunity** to fill the gap after the US departure. No one actually cares, what a common Afghan needs, geopolitics is just a power and profit game. Pakistan and China are seen at the forefront of this race.



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Pakistan has an **unbreakable** relationship with the Taliban, right from the training of Taliban fighters to their medical treatment, it's our neighbors' responsibility.

Without Pakistan's shelter and support, they might not be marching through the streets of Kabul right now. The reason why Pakistan cares Taliban is that Pakistan never wanted a stable and strong Afghanistan.



Stable, Peaceful and Strong Afghanistan means trouble for Pakistan as Afghans have never accepted **Durand Line** (made during British rule in India) as that border of Afghanistan.

Stable Afghanistan means India-friendly Afghanistan and that would be a nightmare to the Pakistani military as it would be then a two-front scenario.

Furthermore, Pakistan also seeks help from the Taliban in the Kashmir issue.

In Search of Legitimacy

The first Taliban regime struggled for legitimacy, only 4 countries recognized their rule. This time around, the list is long. It has some new but frankly expected names.

Russia

Recently, it emerged that Russia's ties with the Taliban are warming too.

Taliban sources also confirmed that the group's representatives met Russians **inside Russia**. Recently Russia's envoy on Afghanistan said that Moscow will decide whether to recognize the new Taliban government based on its conduct.

Russia and Iran, both seem to be on the same trajectory- Neither has evacuated its embassy, and both nations' diplomats are **still working** in Kabul.

China

Almost a month before the re-invasion of Kabul, the Taliban officially said that it sees **China as a friend** of Afghanistan. They also assured Beijing that they will guarantee security for Chinese investments in the country.



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For Beijing, Human rights and religious extremism can take a back seat when money is concerned. Last month itself a Taliban delegation had visited Tianjin, China.

"We hope that the Afghan- Taliban will unite with all parties and ethnic groups in Afghanistan to build a broad and inclusive political structure", these are the words of **Hua Chunying**, the spokeswoman of the Chinese foreign ministry.

Everything is as clear as crystal. China is seeking profit from America's withdrawal by setting the narrative of American decline. Chinese propaganda missionary is working to exploit American unreliability and incompetence.

The Killing Silence of the West

Following the Taliban's recapture of Kabul, the West specially Europe has largely remained silent.

As far as going to war with the Taliban is concerned, any nation will avoid it. This is natural. Everyone has seen how the Soviet Union then and now American and NATO forces have **fallen flat**.

Recently UK government has taken a **U-turn on the Afghan crisis**. PM Boris Johnson said, his government is **willing to work with the Taliban** if necessary.

French President Emmanuel Macron has raised fears of uncontrolled migration to Europe by Afghans. As far as the crisis inside Afghanistan is concerned, European leaders are impotent. They have a very **minimal leverage** over the Taliban. Also, they are deeply reluctant to publicly criticize the US withdrawal decision.



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The Afghan war cost US \$2 trillion and its interest will surely pinch every American. In terms of lives lost, the cost is even greater. The US lost 2,448 of its service members while fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan.

At this point in time, the United States has very limited options. It may offer or deny the Taliban and their leaders' economic aid, formal recognition, sanctions relief and access to financial systems and institutions. None of this seems to be happening at this moment. But even if it happens, it can't alter the power and ground realities in Afghanistan.

The Great Confusion for India

India has never been a big player in Afghanistan as Pakistan, US or Russia. Delhi has always been involved in **improving cultural ties, growing Afghan infrastructure,** etc. India has always supported the democratically elected government in Afghanistan.



The main concern of India is the presence of its nationals and diplomats in Afghanistan.

Earlier Taliban had warned India against any military intervention in Afghanistan, saying that the Indian government will face serious consequences.

The biggest challenge India is facing is to recognize the Taliban regime amid the signs that Moscow and Beijing are ready to acknowledge the Taliban government in some form.

India never had any official channel of communication with the Taliban. It may now wish to put the past to one side in order to safeguard its interests and to ensure the region remains stable.



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There are concerns that militant groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba will be thrilled by the Taliban's success and plan and execute attacks against India.

History is Repeating

The possibility that the Taliban was going to overrun everything was not unprecedented. The Afghan collapse reflects not just a military and intelligence failure but the failure in 20 years to have built a more functional state.

A major fear is that the country will once again become a training ground for terrorism.

Incidents like the attacks of 9/11 and the 1999 hijacking of IC 814 are still roaming in our memories.

The German philosopher **Georg Hegel** famously said, "The only thing that we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history."

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