

Now, it is clear that the US forces along with its NATO allies are finally leaving bag and baggage from Afghanistan by the 20th Anniversary of the Taliban facilitated al Qaeda terror attack in 2001 on the world's then only superpower, the US. And this is about to happen without accomplishing the forces' much tom-tommed assignment of cleaning the landlocked nation from the clutches of dreaded Islamic terror such as al Qaeda, Taliban, Islamic warlords and recently added ISIS spread over the length and breadth of mountainous country, and setting up the sustainable administrative and security mechanisms along with democratic governance.

It is not that during the long two decades of external forces presence in the civil war ravaged country, no attempt has been made to bring normalcy in Afghanistan. Among the major achievements of the forces were ferreting out Arab Islamic terror organization al Qaeda's head Osama bin Laden -responsible for planning, coordinating and executing September 11, 2001 attacks- leaving with his family in Waziristan Haveli 1,300 meters away from high profile Pakistan Military Academy and surrounded by houses of Pakistan army's retired officers in Bilal Town, Abbottabad, and gunning down of him apart from setting up national security set up, democratic government and democratic governance mechanism. In the meanwhile, many supporting infrastructures such as Parliament House, hospitals, dams, educational institutions, sports complexes, etc. have been built with enthusiastic support from a majority of the country's population.

Western/NATO forces under the leadership US forces have tried their best to remove and destroy the terror elements and terror infrastructures through direct fights wherever and whenever necessary, that caused 2500 deaths among them, and through hundreds of raids based on available intelligence, that caused huge loss of lives of both terrorists and innocent civilians at a cost of more than \$800 billion to the US alone so far, but failed to bring the much-shouted normalcy mostly due to (1) uncompromising commitment of Sunni Islamic terrorists to Islamic religious philosophy -scripted based on 7th Century Arab peninsula social value- they have been wedded to, (2) land-locked uneven terrain which greatly supports dreaded Islamic guerrilla warfare, and (3) continued political, diplomatic, financial, logistic, intelligence and military support to terror elements from the vested interest that is Pakistan, which has long mountainous porous border and border dispute with terror ravaged country.



Image source: cfr.org

As a last-ditch effort to bring normalcy or one can say as the last resort -may be purposefully to save US taxpayers money and lives of allies' men in uniforms, later is found very unpopular, wasted in assumed no-win war, the Donald Trump Administration had initiated a negotiation with leading terror outfit that is Taliban ignoring country's elected government objection. Even the Trump administration during the last months of its presence in The White House post-2020 Presidential election -he lost- had pressurized the unwilling Afghan government to let loose hundreds of dreaded Taliban terrorists under its captivity in Kabul's high-security jail though the terror attacks have not been eased.

When no power in the world sincerely interested to bring normalcy in Afghanistan can't do anything in so far as the geographical character (Ref: point 2 above) of the nation that immensely supportive to terror activities, the same could do a lot in so far as the religious de-radicalization of Afghanistan rural pockets that has been fertile ground for recruitment of terror foot soldiers by terrorist outfits (Ref: point 1.) and could force vested interest Pakistan (Ref: point 3.) to stop supports to the rugged elements. These efforts may not be fruitful in a short period. However, the Western powers had not tried their hands on these issues -for reasons best known to them- during their long two decades of presence relying on only military solution despite knowledge of Islamist Arab has deep-rooted hatred towards

them.

In the meanwhile, India invested approximately \$3 billion in building Republic's Parliament, economic and social infrastructures such as dams, hospitals, roads, schools, facilitating livelihood projects, and even sponsoring the nation's cricket teams, training the country's youths and organizing their matches back in India. In the process, although, India won the hearts of Afghans, yet she was not spared from mock of super power's President Donald Trump who had gone to the extent of saying, "You know what that is? That's like five hours of what we spend. And we're supposed to say, 'Oh, thank you for the library.' I don't know who's using it in Afghanistan." It is not that India's achievements were possible without the security supports of the Western Forces backed Afghani Military and Police. But this author's point is: Has the Western Power followed India's policies supporting Afghanistan social, political, economical, cultural, etc. developments along with security provisioning to fight terrorists, fundamentalists and their support bases, the situation might have improved if not fully normal by now.



Image source: Getty

Now, the US leaves the hapless fragile Republic creating a vacuum to be certainly filled by the Taliban supported by the latter's mentor that is Pakistan Army like seen in the

mid-1990s within few years of the Red Army departure of its one and half decades' failed occupation that founded the nation's civil war which killed lakhs of Afghans, wounded lakhs, displaced millions and destroyed the social life, economic, cultural, etc. of the once vibrant peaceful nation beyond recognition, and yet to cool down despite more than four decades of ravage.

But, unlike the 1990s, this time another force is about to join the Taliban and Pakistan Army (the de facto ruler of Pakistan) duo that is Communist China -known as Pakistan's iron brother- which has already entrenched bankrupt Pakistan government through doles of billions of dollars. As per several sources, a nexus among the three -known for their disregards to human rights, international peace and tranquillity and international rules and regulations- is building up. Lately, China is found much interested in the crisis as she is looking for a land transit to Iran on the western border of Afghanistan where she has under her Belt and Road Initiative an investment plan of \$400 billion. But, here the potent question is: will Islamist Taliban and highly Islamized Pakistan population appreciate China having control over infrastructures in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is a known fact that the influential Islamists in Pakistan oppose Chinese projects in their country accusing China of de-radicalization of Muslims in the country's western Xinjiang province. For time being, the Taliban and its sympathizers in Pakistan may join hands with China and Pakistan Army to get ride-up Western forces from the region. After that, the fight among them may not be ruled out resulting expansion of the civil war not only in Afghanistan but also in the additional geography that is Pakistan. Going by Soviet Union occupation history in Afghanistan, it is difficult to predict Chinese success fighting against Islamic terrorists in the rugged territory of Afghanistan and in Western provinces of Pakistan through which much of the Chinese BRI project will pass through. And, again, will the US and her allies, which entered the region in the early 1980s to stop Soviet Russia's march towards the strategically significant Indian Ocean via Afghanistan, remain silent when Communist China marches to the same via Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran?

In view of this, how long peace and tranquillity of the region will continue to remain elusive nobody can say now. Therefore, the Afghanistan crisis is one step forward and two steps backwards.

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