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Part -2

A Glance at the cause of failure of two Decades US Occupation of Afghanistan

What is the failure of the US in Afghanistan? Khalilzad, his money should be assessed., experts say.

Abstract of what the people of Afghanistan earned of the US war on terrorism:

Doubts about Khalilzad's neutrality: Analysts believe that while the agreement forced the Taliban to stop attacks on the US and coalition forces, it did not explicitly oblige them to oust al-Qaeda or stop attacks on the Afghan army. While meeting with then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo gave them legitimacy, there were also discussions about their presence in the United States to meet with Trump.

The United States left Afghanistan without a ceasefire or even a framework for a future peace process that was necessary to secure a settlement at the end of the war. Some analysts believe that Khalilzad, meanwhile, instead of compromising with the Taliban in the months following the agreement, put more pressure on the Afghan government, forcing the government to release thousands of Taliban prisoners. Overall, the deal left little time for the Afghan government to manoeuvre, given the timing of Trump and Biden's departure. However, Ashraf Ghani and the Taliban had relations a long time before. The military forces were not allowed to conduct offensive operations against the Taliban. Khalilzad and Ashraf Ghani both wanted to bring the Taliban into power, fearing that the power should not pass to other ethnic groups, to Tajiks.

Two days before the Taliban took control of Kabul on August 15, Michael Waltz, a US lawmaker, and veteran of the Afghan war wrote a letter to Biden questioning Khalilzad's actions.

He wrote: Khalilzad has given you poor advice and his diplomatic strategy has failed dramatically. Due to this tragedy, the representative (Khalilzad) must resign immediately or be removed from office.

On the same day, Khalilzad tweeted that he was urging the Taliban to withdraw their fighters as they approached Kabul.

Although some analysts say that his actions were the end of two decades of the US war in Afghanistan, many believe his mission failed and he signed an agreement in Doha in February 2020. He failed to bring about political reconciliation. According to this belief, the agreement was a clever move by the Taliban to gain legitimacy and political credibility. Khalilzad pursued a specific political program to promote his personal and family interests.

Since “the Bush administration handed control of Afghan policy increasingly to Zalmay Khalilzad in April 2003, he flew to Kabul to meet Engineer Arif, the Afghan intelligence chief. Arif reported that I.S.I. clients were working in Kandahar and Jalalabad.... providing free passage to terror elements to cross into and out of Pakistan in vehicles loaded with arms. “Arif warned the Bush administration that Pakistan was now” promoting instability in Afghanistan.” (1)

“There were about four thousand American and allied soldiers at Kandahar Airfield., their mission was not peacekeeping, but terrorist hunting. They needed reliable local security forces to protect their base and patrol. They had few proven allies in the Taliban heartland. Governor Sherzai filled the gap. For a fee for N.A.T.O. troops maintained an inner ring of security around the airbase. The governor’s militia maintained an outer perimeter under contract.” (2) Now he is the newly appointed governor of the Taliban in Kandahar.

Khalilzad is said to have established close ties with the Taliban delegation during months of talks in Qatar. Images released of the talks, showing Khalilzad smiling and shaking hands with Taliban negotiators, sparked discontent in Afghanistan.

At the same time, he believes, there are previous business dealings with the Taliban that call into question his honesty and impartiality. Khalilzad worked as an adviser to US oil giant UNOCAL in the mid-1990s, negotiating deals with the Taliban before becoming the United States' top figure in Afghanistan. At the time, he was in talks with the Taliban about the possibility of building gas and oil pipelines through Afghanistan.

In 2014, Khalilzad's financial resources were investigated in Austria for blocking his wife's accounts in the European country, according to the US Department of Justice, on suspicion of money laundering Trade activities in Iraq and the UAE led.

Before he was appointed US Representative to Afghanistan, some of the people in Afghanistan signed a petition accusing him of "previous actions motivated by ethnicity" an indirect reference to "his support for Pashtun rule after the US invasion."

In an interview with the Turkish network, Kamal Alam, a senior non-resident member of the American Council of the Atlantic Council, called Khalilzad one of the perpetrators of the chaos and destruction across Afghanistan, adding that he should never be able to clarify his political ambitions in Afghanistan. There was mediation between the United States and the Taliban. Khalilzad is said to have wanted to challenge Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan's 2009 elections but missed the deadline to register his candidacy.

He said: "How can an American official be neutral when he is running for the presidency of another country called Afghanistan?" While he is an active participant in the "Great Afghanistan Game", he is by no means able to act as an independent consultant.

According to this analyst, Khalilzad shows the severe failure of US policy in Iraq and Afghanistan in the past 15 years. "Khalilzad's biggest failure was lying to people and telling different stories to everyone just to please Trump because Trump told him to just get me out of here (Afghanistan)," he said. "I do not care about anything else."

Mr Ghailani one of the Mujahidin leaders also said, "When the Mujahidin leaders were in Pakistan whenever Khalilzad was meeting them he was lying and using the divide and rule policy."

Referring to Khalilzad's continued tenure as US envoy to the Biden administration, he said that even after the US's hasty departure, Khalilzad's political value in Washington increased because he was believed to be the only man who could talk to the Taliban.

- **Drug Cultivation and Use:** "The U.S. and international partners have continued to pull out and not addressed poppy cultivation," the official said on condition of anonymity. "What you're going to find is that it has exploded."

"We've stood by on the sidelines and, unfortunately, allowed the Taliban to become probably the largest funded non-designated terrorist organization on the globe," said a U.S. official with knowledge of Afghanistan's drug trade.

The Taliban and public officials have long been involved in the narcotics trade, experts said. The United Nations and Washington contend the Taliban are involved in all facets, from poppy planting, opium extraction, and trafficking to exacting "taxes" from cultivators and drug labs to charging smugglers fees for shipments bound for Africa, Europe, Canada, Russia, the Middle East, and other parts of Asia.

According to the Guardian, "The United States spent more than \$8 billion over 15 years on efforts to deprive the Taliban of their profits from Afghanistan's

opium and heroin trade, from poppy eradication to airstrikes and raids on suspected labs. Afghanistan remains the world's biggest illicit opiate supplier and looks certain to remain so said current and former U.S. and U.N. officials and experts.”

The estimated all-time high for opium production was set in 2017 at 9,900 tons worth some \$1.4 billion in sales by farmers or roughly 7% of Afghanistan's GDP, the UNODC reported. The UNODC estimated the country’s overall illicit opiate economy that year at as much as \$6.6 billion.

U.N. officials reported that the Taliban likely earned more than \$400 million between 2018 and 2019 from the drug trade. In May 2021 U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan (SIGAR) report quoted a U.S. official as estimating they derive up to 60% of their annual revenue from illicit narcotics.” (3)

A survey on Drug Use in Afghanistan, issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), showed around one million Afghans 9 age 15-64) suffer from drug addiction. Therefore, opium addiction has followed the same hyperbola growth of opium production. “Many Afghans are taking drugs as a kind of self-medication against the hard ships of life. After three decades of war-related trauma, unlimited availability of narcotics and limited access to treatment a major, and growing problem in Afghanistan., “said UNDP executive director.

It was estimated 1 million in 2010, by now it is estimated that around 3 million of population suffer from drug addiction. At least 3 percent were drug addicted in 2009, a number the Un considered to be low, because addiction can be easily concealed and underreported. By 2015 it had risen to 9.5 percent. Addiction among children wasn’t properly counted until, when the U.N. reported that 9.2 percent of children up to 14 years old tested positive for one or more type f drugs and were likely to be active drug users. The main question is that what were the benefits of US presence in Afghanistan backing the most corrupt governments of Karzai and Ghani, but the whole population were exposed to systematic annihilation and devastation. Finally bring back the Taliban criminal gangs who were given a haven in Pakistan. What the operation against Bin laden and Taliban did not take place in Pakistan.

"Much has been said, and written, about Afghanistan as a leading producer of drugs, causing health havoc in the world." It is time to recognize were involved in this creating such a disastrous atmosphere. (4)

The United States can investigate and find out the amount of Afghanistan's high ranking official in foreign banks, including their NGO and assess the income and expenditure. The high ranking official in corruption should be prosecuted, their money should be confiscated and spent for the poor. Likewise, Ashraf Ghani and Hamid Karzai, who were the cause of failure and the terror groups of Haqqani should be prosecuted, as they were the cause of hundreds and thousands of people in Afghanistan because of their mismanagement and incompetency as the US puppets. Also, Khalilzad should be prosecuted. He is responsible for the killings of Afghans and Americans.

- **Afghanistan in a difficult situation**: Afghanistan amid Taliban animosity and the danger of a regional war. After the fall of Kabul and the subsequent silence of all governments about the future of Afghanistan, we are once again experiencing a sense of bitterness and suffering.

The Doha agreement was signed only by the United States and the Taliban terrorist group, which put Kabul in the hands of the illegal Taliban. Surprisingly, the legality of the signing and implementation of the Doha Accords was not challenged in US courts.

Afghanistan is made up of different ethnicities and religions. But among the Tajik and Pashtun tribes, based on the composition of the population, there is a possible difference of one to two per cent, being somewhat higher than the rest of the ethnicities. Afghanistan is a country of minorities. The Taliban is made up of different branches of Pashtun sects. Power is divided between those rooted in the great province of Kandahar and the Haqqani network, which has its roots in Loy Paktia. Both provinces stretch from the border of Afghanistan to Pakistan.

While the Taliban have their roots in Kandahar, the Haqqani network is from Pakistan-controlled Paktia. Kandahar leaders like Mullah Omar and Abdul Ghani Baradar have not much interest in ISI (Pakistan Military Intelligence). This is

while the organization controls the Haqqani and at the same time wants to play a role in the new government of Afghanistan. While the Kandahari are nationalists and may be willing to make peace agreements and form a comprehensive government with other Afghan ethnic groups. The Haqqani are Wahhabis and extremists, and from the very beginning, they have been the biggest supporters of ISIS in Khorasan, al-Qaeda, and other terrorist groups.

The predominantly Punjabi-led ISI has so far supported most Taliban leaders who have been in exile since 2001. Relations with the Taliban date back to the Soviet occupation when Afghan Mujahideen were staying and trained in Pakistan.

In any case, for the international community and for Afghans who still believe in the moderate Islamic Republic in Afghanistan, a government that, if supported internationally, would have both the power and the tools to negotiate directly with the Taliban. Otherwise, there is a danger that no stance will be taken after the ISI chief ignites an Afghan-Pashtun civil war in the hope that Pakistan can take advantage of its tries to add fuel to the fire.

➤ **Pakistan succeeded apparently to install its proxies,**

The rapid mobilization of the Taliban movement, which led to the complete overthrow of Ashraf Ghani's government, on the surface indicates the glorious success of Pakistan's long-standing efforts to consolidate its preferred government in Afghanistan. Islamabad has been pursuing this ultimate strategic goal for more than 25 years since the establishment of the Taliban movement and deserves admiration from terrorists' organisations for its long-term design and implementation. Faced with growing global concern over the fate of Afghanistan and Afghans under Pakistani rule, Pakistani leaders have sought to remain on the sidelines and generally speak of the need for and importance of forming a comprehensive and inclusive government in Kabul. They bring recent dramatic developments in Afghanistan that have also given credibility to the idea of Pakistan emerging as the first beneficiary of recent developments, and to Pakistan's overly optimistic assurances of guaranteed close engagement with Afghanistan, which is dominated by the newly installed group. It is considered a proxy of Pakistan.

The successful phase of overthrowing the Kabul government in favour of a new era of Taliban rule will undoubtedly be accompanied by serious challenges, facing Islamabad in the long run. Pakistan's influence over the Taliban movement, on the one hand, and Islamabad's ostensible cooperation with the US and allied

military movements in Afghanistan. This persuaded the major players in Afghanistan to continue the policy of tolerance and engagement with Pakistan, despite the glorification and hidden grievances about the nature and essence of Pakistan's two-pronged policy towards Afghanistan. As the issue of Afghanistan fades in the context of international engagement with Pakistan, global attention to Islamabad will inevitably decline. These actors will now have more leeway to shift the weight of their balanced regional approach to New Delhi, given the lesser compulsion they face.

Given Pakistan's shaky economy and the vitality of continued foreign investment, loans, and grants from predominantly Western countries, as well as Western-influenced financial institutions, Islamabad will inevitably have to rely on fewer and fewer economic and trade partners. Moreover, the hostility of the people of Afghanistan is not something to be ignored.

➤ **Afghanistan under Taliban domination:** Afghanistan under the Taliban cannot expect to benefit fully from the financial and development assistance that has helped the modernization and rehabilitation of the country's infrastructure over the past two decades. The emerging events paint a bleak picture of the deteriorating national economy, declining living standards and welfare, and the expected influx of Afghan refugees into neighbouring countries, including Pakistan, with major social and economic consequences for Islamabad. Also, to help the “Islamic Emirate!?” during the unpredictable transition period and until the available alternative financial resources are needed to run the country on a day-to-day basis, Pakistan will have to participate in providing some of these resources, despite the financial problems ahead.

Contrary to hopes and expectations in Pakistan, it is unlikely that the re-establishment of the Pashtun-dominated Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan will open a golden chapter in Islamabad-Kabul relations. The chronic Pakistan-Afghanistan territorial dispute, Afghanistan's special relationship with India, and Pakistan's ambitious idea of establishing itself as the sole channel of foreign trade, as well as Central Asian energy exports, are important factors in Pakistan's Afghan policy design. And they have justified the Pashtuns in Kabul.

At the same time, the long-standing paradox that the existence of a Pashtun favoured by Pakistan to occupy Kabul is the same claimant in the territorial dispute case remains unresolved. Since the establishment of Pakistan, no Afghan government, including the Taliban, has expressed the slightest desire to recognize the Durand Line as the official and agreed on an international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Given the growing number of Pashtuns living in Pakistan over the number of Pashtuns living in Afghanistan, as well as the inviolable ethnic ties between Pashtuns on both sides of the border, the presence of a Pashtun regime in Kabul could create grounds for separatist tendencies in Pashtun areas of Pakistan. In terms of relations with India, Pakistan's hopes for a consensus with the Taliban government on Islamabad's vision for engaging with New Delhi are unlikely to materialize.

- **Fearful of continued international isolation:** Taliban leaders have expressed their desire to establish and maintain friendly foreign relations on various occasions. "India is of great importance to the subcontinent in the region. We call for continued cultural, economic and trade ties with India," senior Taliban leader Shir Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai said on August 29. "We are the same as before." This message of friendship, along with previous overt or covert contacts by Indian government envoys with senior Taliban officials and assurances of mutual goodwill, has cast serious doubt on any presumption that Pakistan and the Taliban's future policy towards India is one-sided.

With particular attention to Pakistan's internal security, Taliban domination of Kabul will inevitably motivate separatist or terrorist groups with similar ideological origins and goals similar to the Taliban. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is the most notorious and dangerous group of its kind, which has been responsible for major terrorist attacks since its inception in 2007, particularly in Peshawar and Quetta. Although Pakistani security forces have largely succeeded in thwarting the group's terrorist capabilities, the possibility of organized links between the two movements on both sides of the border and the resumption of the group's terrorist activities in Pakistan remains Islamabad's serious concern. With security threats as well as managing relations with Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

The consolidation of the Taliban government in Kabul and the passage of several critical months needed to consolidate its power base will answer the serious question of whether Pakistan's steadfastness in achieving vital strategic depth in Afghanistan has ultimately paid off, or whether this investment excessive and long-term doomed to failure in terms of their initial success.

➤ **To be continued.**

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