

Afghanistan: Can West Retreat Mobilize Muslims to Establish their Own Powerful State

News:

Commenting on America's abrupt exit from Afghanistan, Tony Blair, the former UK Prime Minister, had harsh words for the West. He said, "The pressure of short-term political imperatives is giving both allies and opponents of liberal open societies the belief that our time is over". [1] Blair is not alone in his criticism of America and other Western nations withdrawing from Afghanistan. The Economist remarked "America's war in Afghanistan is ending in crushing defeat". [2] The Conversation had this to say "Western powers must accept defeat and deal realistically with the Taliban" [3]

Comment:

While these are critical assessments about the downfall of the West in Afghanistan, America has suffered more than any other Western nation. The cost of America's 20 year war is estimated to be \$2.26 trillion dollars, which equates to \$300 million per day or \$50,000 for each of Afghanistan's 40 million people. [4] The human cost is far worse. Official figures state that 2,500 US personal lost their lives, while Afghan deaths totaled 167, 000—the real figures are much higher and may never be known. [5] But the real damage is to America's reputation as the world's ubiquitous super power. The defeat at the hands of 75,000 ill-equipped Taliban fighters is worse than what the British and Soviets suffered in Afghanistan. America's allies no longer know where they stand, whereas revisionist powers, like Russia and China, aspire to exploit America's demise.

Europe's trust in America to provide security has plummeted. The EU is accelerating efforts to establish a rapid reaction force to meet its security challenges. The chief threat emanates from Russia, which of late is troubled by America's repeated interference in its relations with Europe. Armin Laschet, Germany's conservative candidate to succeed Angela Merkel as chancellor, summed up the mood of Europeans as he says, "We must strengthen Europe so that we never have to leave it up to the Americans." [6]

Equally, US allies neighbouring China, which are reliant on American security must have deep reservations about Washington's commitment to their security. Biden's swift withdrawal from Afghanistan, and Trump's belittlement of longstanding allies like, South Korea. and Japan to pay for American security has provoked some disgust and anxiety. Conservatives in South Korea have voiced concerns that America could also withdraw from the Korean peninsula leaving them at the mercy of North Korea and China.

Russia and China may rejoice but it is doubtful both countries can benefit from America's exit from Afghanistan. Instability it is likely to fester in Afghanistan and this increases the probability of volatility in Central Asian states, which will keep Russia preoccupied and away from Europe. Similarly, China's border with Afghanistan is likely to fuel rebellion in Xinjiang. This will prevent China from concentrating its efforts on its Eastern front.

Additionally, it is difficult to imagine both countries invading Afghanistan to stymie protracted unrest. The Russians not only have a poor track record of sustaining occupation outside their borders, but the last time they tried they left Afghanistan broken and disgraced. China, despite its military superiority has never in its history occupied countries to the West of its border. Furthermore, the Peoples Liberation Army is untested compared to the armies of other great powers that have fought and lost in Afghanistan.

So if the West is in retreat and revisionist powers are apprehensive about intervention then who is likely to be the benefactor from Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan? According to Tony Blair the jihadist will benefit the most. He maintains that Islamism is the greatest security threat to the West. [7] But for Islam to threaten the West it must be embodied in a powerful state that implements sharia completely and comprehensively. The Taliban's announcement of an interim government styled on Western standards and their inability to articulate an all-inclusive constitution based on Islamic jurisprudence disqualifies them from the list of contenders.

If Muslim states neighbouring Afghanistan seize this geopolitical opportunity to permanently emancipate themselves from foreign powers and subsume with Afghanistan to establish a single unified state then this will end Western domination. It will also put an end to aspirations of revisionist powers to eclipse the West. This can only be realized if Muslims residing in these countries unify their efforts to re-establish the Khilafa State on the way of the messenger of Allah (swt).

#Afghannistan #Afganistan #افغانستان

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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