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That the United States cannot consign Afghanistan to Taliban medieval Islamist feudalism finally and ironically dawned yesterday on the United States with US President Trump calling off the US-Taliban Peace Dialogue in motion for over a year. It marks the 'Advent of the Inevitable'—that United States cannot abandon Afghanistan to yet another Civil War.

Inherent in the very process of United States negotiating a Peace Deal with the Taliban directly bypassing the Kabul Regime lawfully installed, was an inevitable failure as the Taliban despite eighteen years of subjecting Afghanistan to death and destruction had never acquired political legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan masses. In Afghan eyes and perceptions, the Taliban were illegitimate usurpers imposed on Afghanistan by Pakistan Army—the most hated entity in Afghanistan.

Despite all credible indicators pointing that a Civil War will revisit Afghanistan following a hurried US deal with Taliban, perceptually under US duress, the reality seemed lost on the policy establishment in Washington. The US President's obsession was that US Forces must exit from Afghanistan well in time before next US presidential elections.

Alarming were the admissions by the US President himself in his Tweets that Taliban leaders were headed to Camp David in United States for weekend parleys along with separate US meetings with Afghanistan President Ghani. President Trump asserted that he was forced to call off the Peace Talks at the last moment prompted by Taliban latest attacks in Kabul.

There is more to it than meets the eyes because President Trump could have taken these steps months earlier when Taliban were subjecting Kabul to more deadly attacks. Seemingly the dynamics of Pakistan's transactional deal with United States of the Taliban/Kashmir

mix changed on August 05 2019. Pakistan had no further interest in US transactional deal and hence cessation of Pakistan pressures on Taliban.

One wonders as to whom in Washington led US President Trump to believe that the Taliban would concede iron-clad guarantees to the United States on safe exit of US Forces from Afghanistan and that the Taliban would not rollback all that the United States had achieved in putting Afghanistan to embrace modernity.

The first inkling that all was not well was when two days earlier media reports indicated that US Secretary of State Pompeo had refused to approve the Draft of the Peace Deal brokered by US Special Envoy Khalilzad with the Taliban at Doha. US Secretary of State Pompeo had objected to the Deal as the Taliban had not incorporated guarantees demanded by the United States.

Intriguing again, as to how the US special Envoy could have arrived at the Draft Deal without reference to the State Department? Was the US Special Envoy exceeding his brief?

The United States side-lining the legitimate Kabul Regime was diplomatically demeaning for the United States. The United States by doing so sent multiple negative messages globally denting its Superpower image.

The US policy establishment failed to realise that in dealing with Taliban which has wreaked havoc in terms of lives and material damage on US Forces and Afghans creeping toward modernity, the United States as a Superpower was 'stooping' perceptually by dealing with the inveterate enemies of the United States and more significantly imparting political legitimacy to the Taliban.

Further, the United States by negotiating with the Taliban terrorists was sending wrong messages to other Islamic Jihadi groups like the ISIS and Al Qaeda remnants that the United States when put under pressure by Islamic Jihadis would tend to temporise and compromise its declared principles of not negotiating with Islamic terrorist militias.

Afghanistan Government has been held hostage for more than a year when United States Special Envoy on Afghanistan virtually side-lined the legitimate US-friendly Kabul Regime in hurried but misperceived eagerness to stitch a US deal with Taliban much before US presidential elections as directed by President Trump.

In many of my Papers, I have been persistently emphasising that the United States cannot afford to revert to US political expediencies of the last decade to temporise with the Taliban under control and directions of the Pakistan Army & its ISI. The Taliban has no genuine stakes in Afghanistan's secure and stable future. The Taliban is only focussed on loyally executing the blueprint of the Pakistan Army on which it depends on financing and military weapons and explosives to sustain its 'War Against the United States Forces in Afghanistan'.

Pertinent to note is also the reality that United States fighting Taliban for 18 years has not established and disclosed in the public domain as

to which nations are financing, providing weapons and military hardware to the Taliban to wage war against the US Forces in Afghanistan. China and Pakistan are the obvious patrons and historically the United States in the past has been permissive on Chinese and Pakistani delinquencies on Afghanistan.

Pointed out by me in the last decade were three significant original sins by the US Establishment. The first was that for nearly five years following US military intervention in Afghanistan, the United States did not deploy sizeable US & NATO Forces in Southern Afghanistan particularly in areas contiguous to Pakistan leaving Pakistan Army to virtually to re-subjugate these areas through the Taliban.

The second major blunder by the United States was to provide "Safe Air Corridors" to Pakistani Air Force from Kunduz in Northern Afghanistan to Pakistan to evacuate thousands of Pakistan Army regulars and Taliban guerrillas surrounded by Northern Alliance militias who would have exterminated them and removed the Taliban threat being manifested in 2019.

The third US blunder was again to please Pakistan Army sensitivities in not effecting expansion of Afghan National Army to 500,00 strength recommended by me again in last decade. If that had been done the Kabul Regime in 2019 would have effectively been militarily self-reliant in defeating the Taliban attacks.

These three original sins by the United States have placed the United States in the predicament of 2019 of engaging with erstwhile US confirmed enemies for a peace deal on Afghanistan to facilitate a safe exit of US Forces from Afghanistan.

All these United States policy blunders compounded by political micro-management by Washington of US Forces in Afghanistan by forcing them to fight with one hand tied especially on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border where Pakistan Army provided safe havens for Taliban and Haqqani group have led the United States to what could have been avoided to depths of despair on Afghanistan.

In view of the foregoing discussion the logical question that begs an answer is as to where does the United States proceed from here in terms of future of Afghanistan as a secure and stable nation which could be a strategic asset for the United States in a region of great geopolitical churn?

The United States needs to ponder seriously and with great deliberation on the political and military lessons of its last 18 years of its military intervention in Afghanistan since 9/11 aftermath. The historical lessons cannot be pushed under the carpet for reasons of political expediencies related to forthcoming US presidential elections.

The stark strategic reality that United States policy establishment has refused to face is that the Pakistan Army and Taliban are the core problem on Afghanistan and cannot be part of any solution for stable and secure Afghanistan. Afghanistan needs to be 'exorcised' from any influence or disruptive/destabilisation of Pakistan Army and Taliban. Other logistic routes are available to United States maintenance of US

Forces in Afghanistan. This would require the United States to shed existing shibboleths in the region.

The Afghan National Army needs to be built up into a 500,000 strong modern fighting force to effectively thwart the Pakistan Army and Taliban threats. This in turn will pave the way in three or four years to enable US Forces drawdown from Afghanistan. Towards this end, the United States could obtain training and materiel assistance from NATO and other countries like India who would be able to provide such assistance. India is already providing billions of dollars in reconstruction of Afghanistan to further its joint interests in Afghanistan with the United States.

China cannot be an honest broker or a honest participant in any multilateral initiative towards conflict resolution of Afghanistan merely because its strategic and geopolitical convergences with Pakistan and Pakistan Army are too intertwined. China cannot afford to pressurise Pakistan as the future success of its China Pakistan Economic Corridor and its Naval Baes at Gwadar depends on underwriting the Pakistan Army's blueprint and strategy on Afghanistan.

Concluding, it needs to be over-stressed that respecting the 'Advent of the Inevitable' that has emerged in 2019, the United States needs to drastically shed its propensity to jump to politically expedient and transactional initiatives to secure peace at any cost with Chamberlainisque contours. The end-game in Afghanistan for United States calls for the United States to develop the 'Political Will' to stay the course in Afghanistan for a long haul and the guts to impose deterrent punitive costs on Pakistan Army and Taliban to desist from imposing disruptive strategies on Afghanistan.

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