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YouTube:- CSS A2A: Aspiration To Achievement

- I. Ideology of Pakistan-----definition and elucidation, historical aspects: Muslim rule in the Sub-Continent, its downfall and efforts for Renaissance. Movements for reforms-- Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi, Shah Waliullah, Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed, Aligarh, Deoband, Nadwah, and other educational institutions-----Sindh Madrassah and Islamia College Peshawar. Ideology of Pakistan in the light of Speeches and statements of Allama Iqbal and Quaid- i Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.
- II. Land and people of Pakistan----- Geography, Society, Natural resources, Agriculture, Industry and education with reference to characteristics, trends and problems.
- III. Pakistan and Changing Regional Apparatus
- IV. Nuclear Program of Pakistan, its Safety and Security; International Concerns
- V. Regional Cooperation Organizations (SAARC,ECO,SCO) and the Role of Pakistan
- VI. Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan
- VII. Economic Challenges in Pakistan
- VIII. Non-Traditional Security Threats in Pakistan: Role of Non-State Actors
- IX. Pakistan's Role in the Region
- X. The Palestine Issue
- XI. Changing Security Dynamics for Pakistan: Challenges to National Security of Pakistan
- XII. Political Evolution Since 1971
- XIII. Pakistan and US War on Terror
- XIV. Foreign Policy of Pakistan Post 9/11
- XV. Evolution of Democratic System in Pakistan
- XVI. Ethnic Issues and National Integration
- XVII. Hydro Politics ; Water Issues in Domestic and Regional Context
- XVIII. Pakistan's National Interest
- XIX. Challenges to Sovereignty
- XX. Pakistan's Energy Problems and their Effects
- XXI. Pakistan's Relations with Neighbors excluding India
- XXII. Pakistan and India Relations Since 1947
- XXIII. The Kashmir Issue
- XXIV. The war in Afghanistan since 1979 and its impact on, and challenges to Pakistan in the Post 2014 era.
- XXV. Proxy Wars: Role of External Elements

Topic: Pakistan and Changing Regional Apparatus

Afghanistan: New Developments in the Region

XXIV: The war in Afghanistan since 1979 and its impact on, and challenges to Pakistan in the Post 2014 era.

The fall of Kabul

- The Taliban, who in less than eight weeks have swept through Afghanistan taking all major cities **including Mazar-i-Sharif**, Kandahar and Herat among others
- KANDAHAR AND HERAT, Afghanistan's second- and third-largest cities, had been under assault for days.

The fall of Kabul

- On August 12th both fell into the hands of the Taliban.
- Lashkar Gah, in Helmand province in the south, and Ghazni, near Kabul, the capital.
- That includes territory in the north and west, traditional strongholds of resistance to the Taliban.



Taliban threat to provinces, Aug 13th 2021

Low
 Moderate
 High
 Controlled by Taliban

Source: *FDD's Long War Journal*



Taliban threat to provinces, Aug 15th 2021

Moderate
 High
 Controlled by Taliban

Source: *FDD's Long War Journal*

The fall of Kabul

- America has spent \$2trn in Afghanistan
- More than 2,000 American lives have been lost, not to mention countless Afghan ones.
- America failed to turn Afghanistan into a democracy.
- To dismantle al-Qaeda's main base of operations
- To achieve Nation-building

Developments towards fall of Kabul

- Yossarian syndrome - Joseph Heller's second-world-war novel, "Catch 22"
- Similarly, the *Washington Post* quoted one Afghan officer explaining why his soldiers would not stop the Taliban:
- "Brother, if no one else fights, why should I?"

Developments towards fall of Kabul

- Troops Withdrawal:
 - Scaled down its garrison, from around 100,000 troops in 2011 to fewer than 10,000 by 2017.
 - little more than 2,000 soldiers by the time Mr Biden took office

Developments towards fall of Kabul

Fickle and Short-sighted Policy [Stag-Hunt Concept]

- Robert Gates, who was secretary of Defence under the president, Barack Obama.
Mr Gates, in “Duty”, his memoir, added for Joe Biden:
- “I think he has been wrong on nearly every major foreign-policy and national-security issue over the past four decades.”

American's Stance

Blame Game: US Versus Afghanistan

- President Biden also blamed Afghan leaders who “gave up and fled” and Afghan security forces who did not fight.
- The velocity of the collapse, he said, showed he had made **the right decision.**

American's Stance

- **Realist Perspective: Total Loss**
 - “American troops cannot, and should not, be fighting in a war, and dying in a war, that Afghan forces are not willing to fight for themselves.”
- **Corrupt Officials/ Dilapidated Institutions**
 - Mr Pompeo also apportioned blame to the Afghan president, Ashraf Ghani, calling him more interested in accumulating American money.

Challenges to Taliban

Recognition of Government

- The Taliban have won the war — now they have to govern Afghanistan.

Lack of trust

- The last time the group was in power from 1996 to 2001, it imposed a harsh interpretation of Islamic law.
 - banned women from education and public spaces
 - brutally executed political opponents
 - massacred religious and ethnic minorities such as the Hazaras

Challenges to Taliban

Economic, humanitarian catastrophe

- International assistance was more than 40 per cent of GDP in 2020.
- Most of it is now suspended, with no guarantees about the rest.
- The Taliban also do not have access to Afghan central bank funds held in the United States.

Challenges to Taliban

- The Washington Post:
 - Any central-bank assets the Afghan government have in the United States will not be made available to the Taliban.
- Taliban need to figure out how to pay government employees and keep running critical infrastructures such as water, power and communications.

Challenges to Taliban

- The World Bank reportedly halted aid to Afghanistan.
- Marcela Sanchez-Bender, a World Bank spokesperson said:
 - “We have paused disbursements in our operations in Afghanistan and we are closely monitoring and assessing the situation in line with our internal policies and procedures.”

Challenges to Taliban

Brain drain

- Taliban face another critical shortage: skilled Afghans.
- Afghans with skills, experience and resources headed for the exits.
- They included bureaucrats, bankers, doctors, engineers, professors and university graduates, all terrified of life under the Taliban.

Challenges to Taliban

Diplomatic isolation

- The Taliban's first regime was largely a pariah on the global stage.
- The group has contacts with regional powers such as Pakistan, Iran, Russia and China, as well as Qatar — which hosted the Taliban's political office for years.
- But none have recognized them yet, and the United States has said any legitimacy “will have to be earned”.

Challenges to Taliban

ISIS terror threat

- Their rival, the militant Islamic State group (IS), has already carried out a deadly suicide attack in Kabul, killing more than 100 people at the airport during the evacuation operation.
- The Taliban and IS are both hardline extremists, but the latter has an even harsher and brutal interpretation of Islamic law.

Challenges to Taliban

- IS has said it will continue to fight in Afghanistan, and its statements have described the Taliban as apostates.
- The Taliban now face a sharp role reversal:
 - They have to defend the Afghan people from the kind of attacks their own fighters carried out for years.

Who Lost? Who Won

- Three countries have lost as the Taliban have taken control of Afghanistan.
- They are United States, Britain and India.
- Three countries have come out on the winning side.
- They are China, Russia and Pakistan.
- Nikki Haley:
 - “China and Russia have already cozied up to the Taliban, as they believe a terrorist-run Afghanistan weakens and endangers the United States.”

Why America Lost?

Undue promotion of Democracy

- Any such sociopolitical experimentation has never been crowned with success and only led to the destruction of states, and degradation of their political and social systems.

Why America Lost?

- It is necessary to stop the irresponsible policy of:
 - Imposing other people's values from outside
 - The desire to build democracy in other countries, not taking into account either historical, national and religious characteristics
 - Completely ignoring the traditions by which people live.

Did America Achieve Anything?

- **The primary goal of the 2001 invasion was to prevent the creation of a sanctuary for international jihadism.**
- It was successful in those terms, and it is doubtful that the Taliban will allow Al-Qaeda to reconstitute itself on Afghan soil, if only because this would jeopardize any prospect of international assistance.

Challenges for Pakistan

Tehrik Taliban Pakistan

- Now, the most direct threat to Pakistan from the Taliban is the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).
- Afghanistan as a safe haven for TTP
 - Some of them were arrested by the authorities in Kabul.

Challenges for Pakistan

- The Taliban began to release them and many Pakistanis now fear the attacks that bloodied the Pashtun Belt, but also Lahore, Karachi and even Islamabad at the turn of the 2010s, will resume.
- The return of this kind of violence would signal Pakistan's weak influence over the Taliban.

Challenges for Pakistan

- It will lead to a further influx of militants and Al-Qaeda fighters into Pakistan.
- It will also overstretch Pakistan's forces in having to protect the supply lines.
- It would produce a spike in violent reprisals on "mainland" Pakistan.

Challenges for Pakistan

- It could lead to the influx of more Afghan refugees, with further destabilizing effects in the NWFP and Baluchistan.
- Most importantly, it could erode the present fragile political consensus in Pakistan to fight militancy.

Opportunities for Pakistan

- **Friendship Zone: Strategic Depth**

- There is no doubt that given Pakistan's past involvement with the group, a Taliban-led administration in Kabul would be friendlier towards Islamabad.

- **Wakhan Corridor**

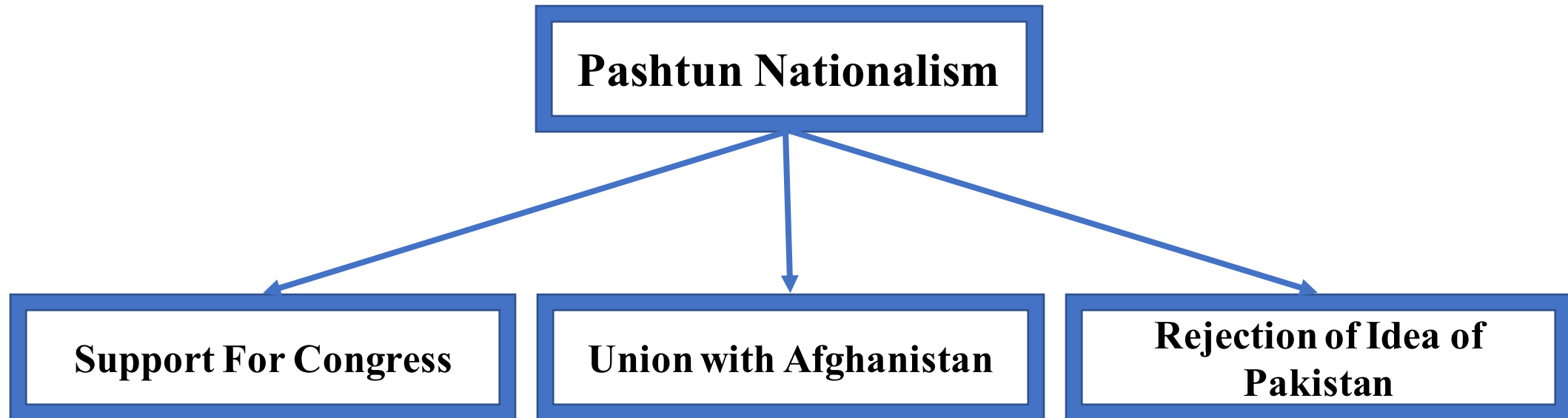
- Close cooperation on infrastructure projects that would closely knit Pakistan with Afghanistan but also with the landlocked countries of Central Asia.

Opportunities for Pakistan

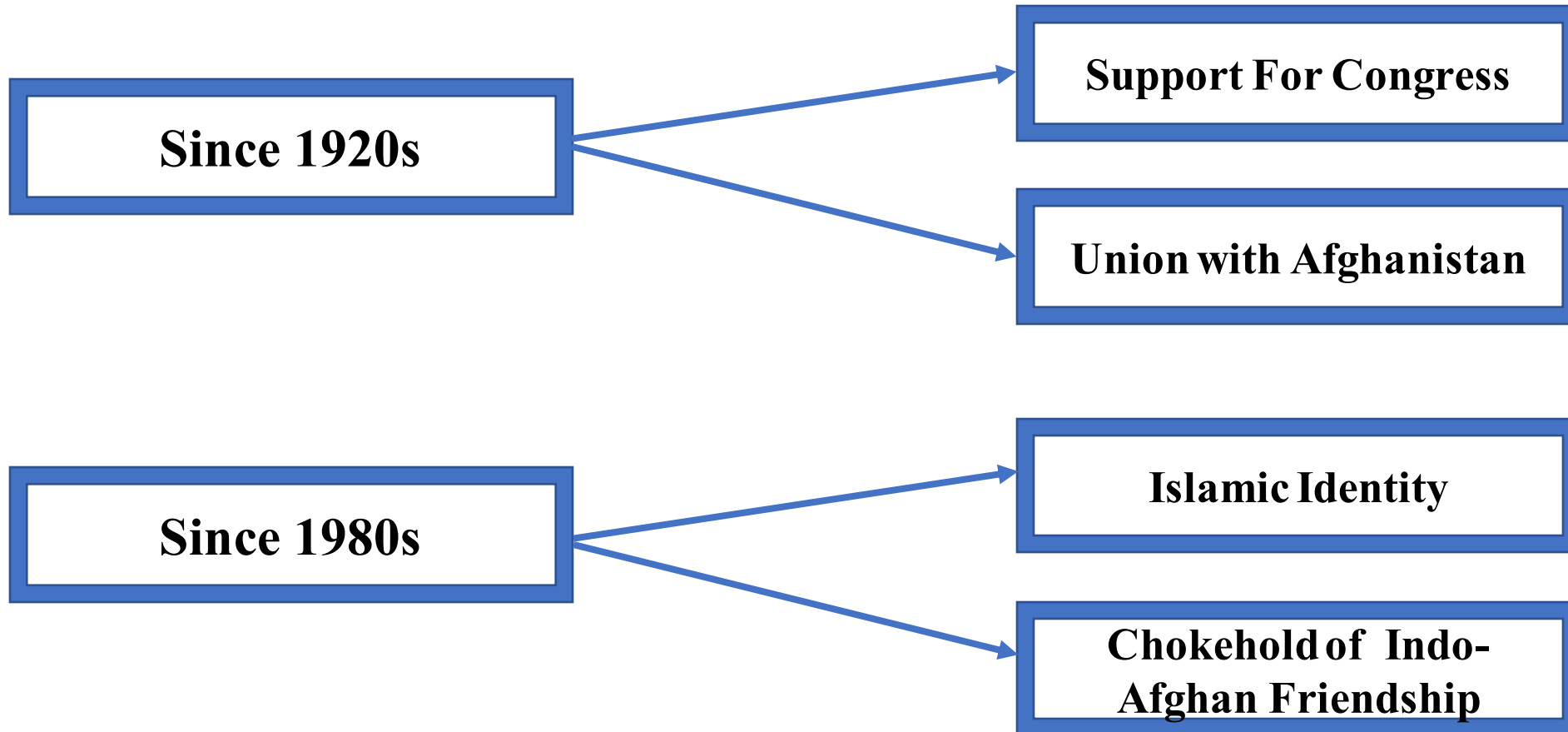
- **Extension of CPEC**

- If this were to happen, China would be interested in extending CPEC into these landlocked states.
- The under-development port of Gwadar could become a major port on the Arabian Sea.

Elimination of Pashtun Nationalism



Elimination of Pashtun Nationalism



India's Position

Strained Relations With Taliban

- The rise of the Taliban in 1996 was an immediate disaster.
- Afghanistan was becoming a hotbed of Islamism, with jihadists likely to strike in Jammu and Kashmir.
- India saw the post-9/11 war as an opportunity to regain a foothold in Afghanistan, establishing itself along the tracks of Western advances.

India's Position

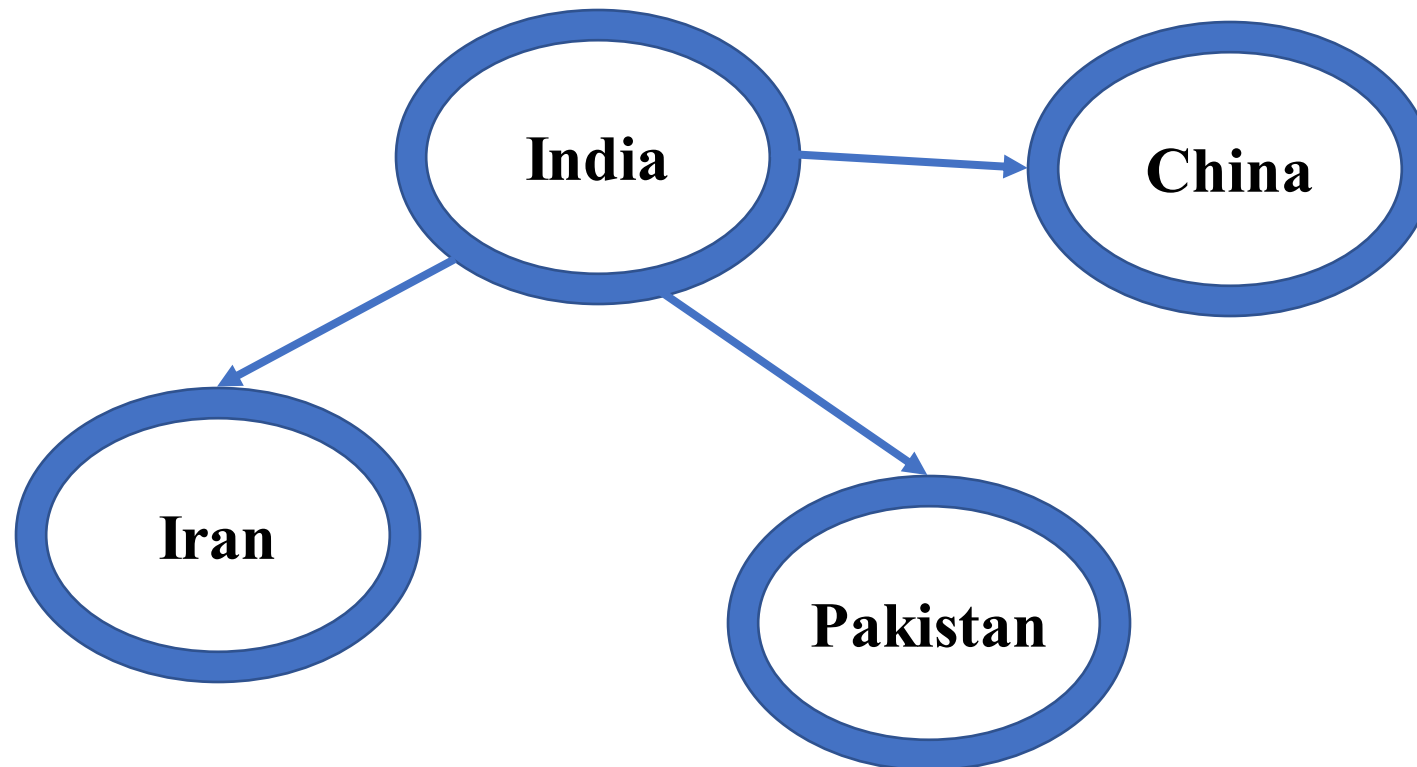
- The return of the Taliban is an undeniable setback.
- It is all the more bitter because it reflects and accentuates a certain isolation, both diplomatic and geopolitical.

India's Position

- At the diplomatic level, this isolation was highlighted by the fact that India was kept out of:
- The **Doha talks** (in which the Americans participated).
- The **Moscow talks** (orchestrated by the Russians).

India's Position

- Geopolitically, India has been weakened in more ways than one by this entanglement with three regional powers.



China and Taliban

China's Economic Stakes

- China says it has won assurances from the Taliban that Afghan territory will not be used as a staging ground for attacks inside China.
- For China, a lot is at stake.
- If the Taliban victory leads to a surge of regional instability, it could disrupt China's "Belt and Road" program to finance and build infrastructure across the region, which has largely sidestepped Afghanistan because of the war.

China and Taliban

- Beijing is concerned about the security of other countries near Afghanistan: Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.
- An attack last month on a bus carrying Chinese workers in Pakistan, killing nine of them, has since been attributed to assailants operating from inside Afghanistan.

China's Coming Afghan Policy

- The speed and extent of China's adjustment in its Afghan policy raises the question of China's future Afghan strategy - an issue for both regional and global stability.
- On July 28, China widely broadcast official photos of China's Foreign Minister greeting Taliban leader Ghani Baradar and his crew.

China's Coming Afghan Policy

- China, with its pitiless actions in Xinjiang and zero refugee policy, has far less to fear than the West from imported terrorism.
- Any Western policy of isolation and sanctions is going to increase that dependency - as it did with Iran.
- Example: Freezing of Foreign Reserves of Afghanistan

Regional Impacts

- Alleviation in Cross Border Terrorism
- Strategic Depth for Pakistan
- Diplomatic Isolation for India
- Kashmir Question
- China-Centric Policies: All-out Influence of China

Global Impacts

- Motivation for Global Jihadists
- Re-balance in Foreign Policy of Key players
- China's Paternal Role against US
- Quad Vs SCO Politics
 - Quad (US, Australia, Japan, and India)
 - SCO (i.e. China, Russia, Pakistan)

Global Impacts

- Full-Fledge Focus on China-Containment Policy
- New start of proxy war among competing powers
- Patronage of Illegal Trade of Drugs by Taliban
 - If Talibans were not given access of frozen assets.

Questions to Ponders

- Who Lost? Who Won?
- America Lost or Afghan People Lost?
- Status of Women: Bleak or Positive?
- Are Taliban of today different from Taliban of 1990s?
- Why did Kabul fall so fast?
- Did America achieve anything?

Readings

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