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The Afghan Army's Collapse... Why?!?

By Terence Ward

Total collapse. Complete surrender. No fighting, no resistance. Why? After, a trillion spent. Why didn't Afghans fight? This great mystery now confounds the Washington elite.

Let's first agree that training Afghans to fight is like teaching Greek islanders to fish or Neapolitans to make pizza. The fact is that Afghans are some of the most formidable fighters on earth. However, last week, in surreal fashion, all the western-trained soldiers chose to lay down their arms and melt away? Why?

Afghans live in extended families, clans with elder leaders meet, discuss, and make deals to benefit the collective. Each clan and family had fighters on both sides – with the Afghan army and the Taliban. After Trump's agreement with the Taliban last year, the future was clear. America was leaving. Pompeo gave his thumbs up, signing the deal - US military exit by May 2021.

The elders read that writing on the wall. And they planned for this. They discussed, they debated and reached their decision - *Stand Down*. Each Taliban commander knew they could walk into the numerous provincial governors' offices and take power. It all happened with surprising ease. Westerners were shocked, not the Afghans. In the end, no US-trained Afghan soldier was prepared to die for loathed corrupt politicians imported from the West, like Hamid Karzai, or the mafioso warlords. In the end, all the "US treasure" of blood and dollars were squandered on an illusion.

The tragedy is that even today, the American CIA, US generals and State Department still have no clue. In fact, they never had a clue, could not speak the language, and did not know Afghan culture. They viewed this endless war as a gravy train for promotions, career paths, and higher budgets. And their greenbacks bought loyalty. Or so it seemed.

Perhaps a few realized, but they never publicly confessed how unpopular and illegitimate the Western-backed government was. They repeated the big lie: "*We are training the Afghans to fight for their country*" which circulated for 20 years. And colonels were promoted to generals, journalists got hardship pay, consultants made fortunes, and contractors raked in profits. All pretended that the "American democracy project" was on firm ground, not shifting sands.

Seven years ago, a disillusioned Afghan-American NGO consultant told me that women seeking divorce under the Karzai regime, found themselves in front of judges who, not only demanded bribe money, but also sex. Her friends said: "Under the Taliban, there was law, however harsh, and we could get divorced with no payment..." That crystalline moment crashed in for her and the corrupt regime came into full focus. She understood that poor Afghan women preferred Taliban law to sleazy judges who demanded money and sex in return for granting them freedom from abusive husbands.

Of course, there were luminous activists who brought light and promise to some Afghan women. There was a mission to bend ultra-conservative male culture to new mores, to open opportunities when before there was none. Innocent Western soldiers bled and died in a war far away, in a land

that had always resisted foreign occupation. The tragedy remains. Twenty years of lies masked a terrible truth.

This conflict must be left to the Afghans to sort out. Their clans, their elders across the country unanimously made their decision to stand down. No one fought. No one lifted a finger. The Taliban swept the country's provincial capitals, flushing out the corrupt regime. It was total capitulation. Only lying US generals and self-serving politicians can have the audacity to place blame on US President Biden. Like it or not, the Afghans made their decision months ago.

The world has witnessed this week the Afghan national referendum on the "American project", and the truth is painfully clear. The Afghan people just delivered a unanimous vote of no-confidence. It is time to leave them to decide their future. And don't forget, Osama bin Laden brought us there. He was a Saudi, all the hijackers of 9/11 carried Saudi passports. Once the foreign Arab Al-Qaeda fighters were flushed out, America should have left Kabul and taken the real battle to the homeland of the Wahhabis, ground zero of the jihadi movement, Saudi Arabia. Not in Afghanistan, nor in Iraq. This staggering display of capitulation confirms that the US left 19 years too late.

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