

# Time for the UN to take the lead

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Jagdish Batra

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## Jagdish Batra

Dr Jagdish Batra is a senior academic, currently working as Professor of English at O.P. Jindal Global University, India. He has nearly four decades of teaching and research e [... MORE](#)



The recent events in Afghanistan have raised serious doubts about the peaceful installation and functioning of a viable government under the aegis of the Taliban. The allocation of ministries to leading jihadists does not auger well for Afghanistan or for the world at large. It raises doubts about the capability of the Afghan dispensation to deliver on its promises disallowing terror activities against other countries from its soil and giving freedom to Afghan women to get education and do work outside home. At the same time, its profession of providing security to personnel of embassies has come asunder so soon and as such, extending it to foreign nationals seems very unlikely which is going to affect work on projects meant to boost infrastructure.

It is not only India but the entire world is concerned not only about the second life that the terror outfits across the world have received with the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, but also about the potential spurt in the opium smuggling which will in any case be the only source of income for the Taliban simply because the chaotic situation created by it will not add to production. Besides, the UN aid is not forthcoming and the Afghanistan assets in the US have been frozen. Experts believe Afghanistan would be economically in dire straits as early as September this year.

To this economic mess staring the new dispensation in Afghanistan can be added the resistance that it faces from other factions. There are pressures from the factions like TTP willing to take on Pakistan or the other faction willing to take on China. With the ISIS-Khorasan flexing its muscles to steal march over the Taliban and the resistance from the first Afghan Vice President Amrullah Saleh-led Panjshir valley to the Taliban, there are clear signals of the impending civil war. Once such a thing starts, there is no knowing how far the other factions will like to be led by the Pashtun-dominated and Al Qaeda-supported Taliban.

Dealing with Afghanistan in that state will become a bigger headache for the world. America has got egg on its face following its ignominious exit on the basis of empty promises made in the Doha agreement alongside recapitulation of the Ashraf Ghani regime and Afghan National Army. From the very start, America had a myopic vision of terrorism as it focused on saving its own skin without realizing that terrorists posed danger to all countries including America. It also failed to stem the vicious ideology behind terror and also act against Pakistan which has been the breeding ground of terror

despite its having been exposed in sheltering Osama Bin Laden. Now that Joe Biden has vowed action against ISIS-K for killing US soldiers at the Kabul airport, it would hardly enthruse its other western partners. Any further attempt by it to aspire to lead a coalition or wage a war singlehandedly will not be a practical proposition for it.

Under the circumstances, only a neutral body that enjoys the trust of different stakeholders is needed. It is time for the UN to assert its legitimate role as a peacekeeper and guarantor of human rights. The UN has been playing the role of a peacekeeper for a long time and its multinational forces have had experience in working in countries ravaged by conflicts like Lebanon, Eritrea, Sudan etc. Even in Afghanistan, it has been involved for long in certain operations. United Nations Assistance in Afghanistan (NAMA) was created in 2002 through the Security Council resolution 1401 primarily to implement the Bonn Agreement but the mandate has been revised over the years. In 2020 too, the role of this body was reiterated “in support of Afghanistan’s full assumption of leadership and ownership in the security, governance and development areas” and with the understandings reached between Afghanistan and the international community in the several international conferences held over the years.

The present fraught situation demands deployment of UN peacekeeping force for which a separate Security Council resolution will be needed. Even though the stand of the veto-wielding China appears doubtful, yet it is in her own interest to rein in the Taliban in order to insulate the Uighur Muslim population from the fundamentalist virus. Even Russia would be concerned about the rise of fundamentalism in its Muslim-dominated regions. It appears therefore, that the UN Security council is best placed to send a peacekeeping force to Afghanistan. America and other nations would do well to act under the UN mandate than taking action on their own. As head of the Security Council, India can play a meaningful role.

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