

# CENTRE FOR JOINT WARFARE STUDIES



## AFGHANISTAN WATCH

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## **AFGHANISTAN**

### **Afghanistan Needs India's Help 'Desperately' to Secure Peaceful Environment: Taliban Interior Minister Haqqani**

**(<https://www.news18.com/news/world/exclusive-afghanistan-needs-indias-help-desperately-to-secure-peaceful-environment-taliban-interior-minister-haqqani-5670295.html>)**

Just two days before the death of most wanted terrorist Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri – the mastermind of September 11, 2001 attacks — CNN-News18 spoke exclusively to chief of Haqqani network and interior minister of Afghanistan Sirajuddin Haqqani, around 1 km from Sherpur location where Zawahiri was killed in a US drone strike. Afghanistan's interior minister Sirajuddin Haqqani in an exclusive interview to CNN-News18 stressed that Afghanistan needs Indian government's help in restarting developmental works, which would be an immense help for the beleaguered country.

**Comments.** Delhi's decision to re-open the embassy in Kabul and deploy technical experts, further points towards its intent to re-establish people to people connect. Based on this traditional policy, India must renew reconstruction initiatives for the Shehtoot Dam in Kabul, which will provide access of clean drinking water to almost 2 million residents. Re-emphasizing on India's historical link with the people, India must undertake renovation initiatives of the Bala Hissar Fort through the Aga Khan heritage program.

The bilateral trade partnership between India & Afghanistan was recorded to over \$1.3 billion in 2019-2020. Using the two air corridors — Kabul-Delhi and Herat-Delhi, India must focus on increasing the trade partnership in the light of Chabahar's absence of connectivity from the port to the Afghan border. India's exports were recorded approximately \$900 million, while Afghanistan's exports to India are about \$500 million. Trade volumes are miniscule. Now with a technical team on ground, New Delhi must focus on identifying mechanisms to increase trade initiatives.

### **What Ayman al-Zawahiri's killing means for Al-Qaeda and international security.**

**(<https://www.indiatoday.in/india-today-insight/story/what-ayman-al-zawahiri-s-killing-means-for-al-qaeda-and-international-security-1982978-2022-08-02>)**

In May 2011, then US president Barack Obama made a televised announcement to the world about the killing of Al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden in an operation by US Navy SEALs in Pakistan's Abbottabad. Eleven years on, US president Joe Biden, on August 1, issued a similar statement from the White House. The successful target this time was Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, who Washington says was one of the masterminds of the 9/11 attacks, which claimed nearly 3,000 lives in the US and triggered the protracted 'global war on terrorism'.

**Comments.** Zawahiri's killing is a likely blow to al-Qaeda supporters and its affiliates in India, but more than that Taliban sheltering him in Kabul further showcases the continued use of infrastructure and other facilities by terror factions targeting us. Zawahiri's death will dent the momentum of propagandist campaigns conducted by Al Qaeda and their factions in India. It may further temporarily halt their efforts to rebuild the al-Qaeda organisational machinery in the country.

This is a one-time opportunity for Saif al-Adel and Abd al-Rahman al-Maghrebi from the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ahmed Diriye of Al-Shabaab, to stake their claim for leadership popularly known as Umma. That said, it is yet to see Al-Qaeda will respond to the killing of its topmost figure.

### **Taliban 2.0, One Year On: Humanitarian Crisis Worsens in Afghanistan**

**(<https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/taliban-2-0-one-year-on-humanitarian-crisis-worsens-in-afghanistan-3255386>)**

The Taliban marked the first anniversary of their return to power in Afghanistan with a national holiday Monday, following a turbulent year that saw women's rights crushed and a humanitarian crisis worsen. Exactly a year ago, the hardline Islamists captured Kabul after their nationwide lightning offensive against government forces ended 20 years of US-led military intervention.

"We fulfilled the obligation of jihad and liberated our country," said Niamatullah Hekmat, a fighter who entered Kabul on August 15 last year just hours after then-president Ashraf Ghani fled the country.

**Comments.** In accordance to the clauses on the rights of women and access to education and work in the Doha Agreement, it continues to violate women rights through systematic state sponsored gender discriminatory practices. As long as Taliban does not adhere to all clauses/sections discussed in the Doha accords, international aid agencies must not engage with them in future dialogues.

India provided 27 tonnes of emergency relief assistance for the people of Afghanistan in the aftermath of the 5.9-magnitude earthquake in June last year. India has time and again provided critical humanitarian aid which must remain continuous in an effort to provide some respite to the local Afghans.

### **Another drone fires missiles in Afghanistan days after Zawahiri's killing**

**([https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/another-drone-fires-missiles-in-afghanistan-days-after-zawahiri-s-killing-122080700026\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/another-drone-fires-missiles-in-afghanistan-days-after-zawahiri-s-killing-122080700026_1.html))**

Days after a US drone strike killed Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri in Kabul, another drone fired missiles in the Andaro area of Ghazni Province in Afghanistan and it seems that this one is also a HVT (High Value Target). A High-Value Target (HVT) is a target (a person or resource) that an enemy requires for completion of a mission. The term has been widely used in the media for Osama Bin Laden and high-ranking officers of Al-Qaeda and are considered essential to the completion of enemy operations.

**Comments.** Days after Al Zawahiri's killing, there is not much of a speculation on Washington's continued ISR of the region. The Taliban's refrain from commenting on any further killing, the modus operandi or perhaps an investigation regarding the same, point towards some suspicion on their current engagement with the US. That said, it is unlikely that Taliban was surprised and was completely caught off guard.

This operation, re-confirms that the United States retains some capacity to make a strike against high value targets in Afghanistan. Washington still controls on-the-ground human intelligence networks and it will harness it to find, fix, and target members of terror factions operating within the region.

## **Pakistani Militant with \$3 Million US Bounty Killed in Afghanistan: Report**

**(<https://www.news18.com/news/world/pakistani-militant-with-3-million-us-bounty-killed-in-afghanistan-report-5714737.html>)**

A senior Pakistani militant with \$3 million U.S. bounty on his head has been killed along with three aides in neighbouring Afghanistan, three militant commanders and an intelligence official said on Monday. Pakistani officials said the death of Abdul Wali, also known as Omar Khalid Khurasani, could deal a blow to nascent peace talks between Pakistan's Taliban, known as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP, and the Pakistani government after meetings facilitated by the Taliban rulers in Kabul.

**Comments.** At the hindsight the killing of the TTP commanders appears to be more indicative of an internal rift within the TTP than any outside factors. There were earliest reports of both Hassan and Dawlat's allegiance with the IS-K, post an internal rift had joined the TTP. On this note, Hassan had been previously accused of having ties with the then Afghan government and this killing resonate on-going internal tussle within the TTP. That said, the transfer of a senior Pakistani army officer who was allegedly architect of the peace process has been transferred from the northwestern city of Peshawar in the wake of the killings.

It is unlikely that the killings of the top commanders will put this peace deal on a halt. Moreover, it is not in the interest of Islamabad for TTP to restart its military campaign. It is yet to see as to how TTP leaders will now react to this peace negotiation.

## **China's envoy on Afghanistan visits India, hold talks with senior official**

**([https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/china-s-envoy-on-afghanistan-visits-india-holds-talks-with-senior-official-122080501876\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/china-s-envoy-on-afghanistan-visits-india-holds-talks-with-senior-official-122080501876_1.html))**

China's Special Envoy for Afghanistan Yue Xiaoyong paid a quiet visit to India this week during which he held talks with a senior Indian official on ways to ensure peace and stability in the war-torn country. People familiar with the development said on Friday that the Chinese envoy held wide-ranging talks with the external affairs ministry's point person for Afghanistan J P Singh.

It was Yue's first trip to India which came over four months after Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Delhi. On Twitter, the envoy described his visit as "good" and said both sides agreed to "encourage engagement, enhance dialogue and give positive energy for Afghan peace and stability".

**Comments.** New Delhi's decision to send a technical team to be stationed in Kabul was not only praised by vivid stakeholders in the South Asian region, but also by the Taliban leadership which openly thanked India's commitment in previous development programs/initiatives. India must retain its commitment by engaging in vivid dialogues with partnered humanitarian aid institutions operating in Afghanistan among other regional stakeholders.

## **Afghanistan receives \$40 mn humanitarian aid in cash, forex reserve soars.**

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/afghanistan-receives-40-mn-humanitarian-aid-in-cash-forex-reserve-soars-122080300144\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/afghanistan-receives-40-mn-humanitarian-aid-in-cash-forex-reserve-soars-122080300144_1.html)

Afghanistan has received \$40 million in cash as humanitarian aid, the Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), the country's central bank, said in a statement.

"As part of a series of humanitarian aid, the country received 40 million dollars in cash that arrived in Kabul today (Tuesday), the second batch in three days," the statement was quoted as saying Xinhua news agency. The cash package has been delivered to a commercial bank, said the statement. The DAB thanked the international community for the aid, and asked for the continuation of interaction and cooperation with the people of Afghanistan in other fields.

**Comments.** Afghanistan is rich in copper, nickel, cobalt, and rare earth elements, all estimated to be worth between \$1 trillion and \$3 trillion (as of 2020). China already controls a significant share of mineral processing capacity and this relief package may seem to be a downstream investment to maintain its control over these and other minerals. Beijing may also use this relief to open multiple investment avenues in infrastructure to make mining projects feasible. Afghanistan lacks quality roadways, railways, and electricity. Railway infrastructure is necessary for the transport of ore to foreign markets and with Beijing's investment, it could gain access to cheaper foreign energy and minerals in exchange for raising living standards in Afghanistan. This could potentially challenge India's on-going and future investment opportunities in the region.