

THE CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN: A WAKE-UP CALL FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY



A couple of weeks ago, Afghanistan endured a severe blow, reverberating all over the world. Not only did the Afghan government collapse and innocent people died, but the return of the Taliban implies a setback in people's freedoms, particularly women's rights, as well as an opportunity for terror to expand across the Afghan society. The withdrawal of American troops harmed a poor country in the midst of a humanitarian crisis. In addition, it opened a door for a terrorist group to regain control and increase their presence in the country, which should serve as a wake-up call for the international community.

Since he took office as president, Joe Biden promised to remove all troops before the end of the year; he even chose the iconic date of September 11, in reference to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The idea was not only predictable but expected by a large part of the population. However, poor planning and execution aggravated the problems that the withdrawal would put on Biden's shoulders.

A friend, Luis Ortiz Monasterio, who was The Ambassador of Mexico to Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, commented in a private meeting that the decision was flawed in many ways. He lived in various Asian countries but has a deep understanding of the Afghan people. By the way, he stated that Afghans have a great perception of Mexico. The link between the two countries is deeper since they both have suffered the ravages of organized crime. In addition, they have been constantly violated by foreign invasions. Finally, Afghanistan and Mexico are both tribal and very religious, thus bearing cultural similarities.



The longest war the US has ever faced represented expenses of over \$ 145 billion, but that is nothing to the lives lost. Furthermore, the goal of weakening the Taliban was not met, thus many Americans perceived the US presence in Afghanistan as a complete failure. However, the biggest mistake was not exiting, but the abrupt way in which it happened, without a containment plan or adequate preparation so that the Afghan defenses could dampen the Taliban's progress. Washington provided funding, technical cooperation, and training to the Afghan government. The process lasted two decades; although it may seem like a long time, it is little to build a new and distinct government. Democracy does not consolidate overnight.

Rival countries, like China, made the best out of the situation to strengthen their image and capitalize on Biden's mistake. At the national level, political opponents like Trump did not miss the opportunity to claim that a Republican government would have handled it much better and that Trump's plan was much more robust and efficient. This only shows that a crisis for Human Rights easily turns into a political issue.

International organizations have remained relatively quiet. The dimmed response from the UN, the OAS, and the Human Rights commissions, denotes a lack of interest in this humanitarian crisis, particularly considering the harsh conditions in which the Afghans live. Efforts similar to those put forth by Mexico to receive refugees from that country have done well. Asylum and hospitality towards immigrants are part of our tradition.

We, as global citizens, must not remain silent. Geographical distance does not mean that the people of Afghanistan are distant. In the face of a Taliban regime, women can lose the few freedoms they have relentlessly fought for; the extreme measures of a sharia regime would again become the norm; fear would flood the streets again. Empathy should be the flag under which we respond to this humanitarian crisis.