Twitter Thread by Harpreet



Harpreet
@CestMoiz

/Thread/

Folks, sharing some thoughts on the Afghanistan situation as it unfolds.

Been trying to gather my thoughts for the past few days, but events have been happening just too fast for that. So, I'll just do this thread on the go.

Here goes ..

Firstly, the issue is not whether or not Kabul will fall.
The real issue, IMO, is what happens AFTER Kabul falls, since it is more or less a given.
This is what I hope to delve upon in this thread.

Firstly, let me plug a thread from Feb 2020 when there was talk about Indian troops going to Afg.
With the rapid rout of US military in Afg, I think that folks who were thinking about sending Indian troops there would have by now changed their opinions.
https://t.co/NOHe0DOdTl

> Ok folks, so this tweet has generated quite a few reactions on my TL as well as DMs.
> In light of this, let me share my own thoughts on the topic of Indian troops for Afghanistan.
> Thoughts are still unstructured, but here goes!https://t.co/ipGMFV4VGn
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) February 12, 2020

Yup, in case you noticed, I used the word ROUT for what has happened to the US military in Afghanistan.
To that end, I'll just let these two pics - one from Saigon in 1975 and one from Kabul earlier today, make my point.
Call it whatever, but I'll say they've been ROUTED.
Period.



Sneaking out of their biggest military base in the middle of the night without bothering to tell the hosts didn't exactly look like a victory march out of Afghanistan now, did it?
Well .. but they ARE the strongest military in the world, atleast in their own opinion, no?

Well, in terms of hardware, software & manpower, they do make a compelling case for being the strongest that there might be. But in terms of how their administration put these assets to use, one surely shakes his head, wondering about the logic they might have used to justify it!

While on the topic of logic of force application, I'll just leave this 9.5 year old tweet of mine out here. Mind you, this was amongst the first 50 or 100 tweets of mine when I joined this medium.
https://t.co/fTw7mrbbvp

> Quran protests in Afg. Yanks will never get the honorable exit that they r looking for.Guess now they realize they attckd the wrong country!
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) February 26, 2012

Of course, I've said this many times since Feb 26, 2012 as well. It also figured in this thread quoted below that basically talked about the heads so far up the 'Foggy Bottom' in Washington DC that they thought that Soviets were still around!
https://t.co/RKelFxEFoq

> 17/n
> But for a minor fact - they invaded the WRONG country!
> Taliban, and by extension, al Qaeda, was mince meat if not for the protection..
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) May 5, 2016

But then, with the American rout from Afghanistan more or less complete, all these 'I told you so' kind of tweets make no sense, especially when after two decades of willfully looking the other way, they are ok with the humiliation being heaped upon them

So let me now try and make sense of what MIGHT happen next.
Mind you, no one can say for sure how the Afghan cookie will crumble this time round. So at best, I'll offer my own guesses on the same.

Since the US has lost the two decade long war, it might be fair to start by asking who is it that has actually WON it?
A mighty difficult question, no?

On my part, I did try to answer this question as far back as March last year. It formed part of a really interesting chain of thoughts in light of the recently concluded US-Taliban deal under the Trump administration. Do have look if you have 5 mins spare.
https://t.co/v0F5yiwkSY

> Which brings me to the question whether it is Pakistan that has won this war.
> Well, they do come close to being the ones who have 'won'. The simple reason for this being that they will get yet another opportunity to place yet another friendly regime in Afghanistan.
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) March 2, 2020

But moving on to what might happen next, I'd say the decade of the 90s does offer a template of some sorts. Even though there are newer stakeholders this time round, the principal actors remain unchanged - Taliban and Pakistan Army.

Why principal actors?
Well, I'll just leave this tweet here without any further comment.
https://t.co/lZUzzT4834

> Remember the cruise missiles that Bill Clinton sent cruising via Pakistan into Afghanistan to target Osama bin Laden after the Tanzania and Kenya embassy bombings?
> Amongst those killed were LeT terrorists as well as a number of ISI personnel.
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) March 2, 2020

Well, after Kabul fell in the mid 90s, came a wave of terror attacks around the world, mostly on American targets, ending up ultimately with the 9/11 bombings that brought the US back into the region with Operation Enduring Freedom.

Unfortunately, the operation was neither Enduring, nor did it bring about any Freedom!
The reason for that has already been mentioned above in the thread.

In the days immediately after 9/11, America had famously asked Musharraf whether he was with them or against them. I guess they finally know the answer to that question atleast, even if at the cost of more than a trillion dollars and so many lives.
https://t.co/dz3f1CFeG7

> Q: What is the one common factor between the Soviet and the US withdrawal from Afghanistan?
> A: BOTH were accomplished by a combination of American money sent into Pakistan and Pakistan sponsored + Pakistan based 'enemy'!#JustSaying
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) July 19, 2021

Of course, India too witnessed a surge of terror attacks in Kashmir as well as outside in rest of the country as a cocky Pakistan, drunk on the recent 'victory' in Afg, channelized part of the terror machine towards us.

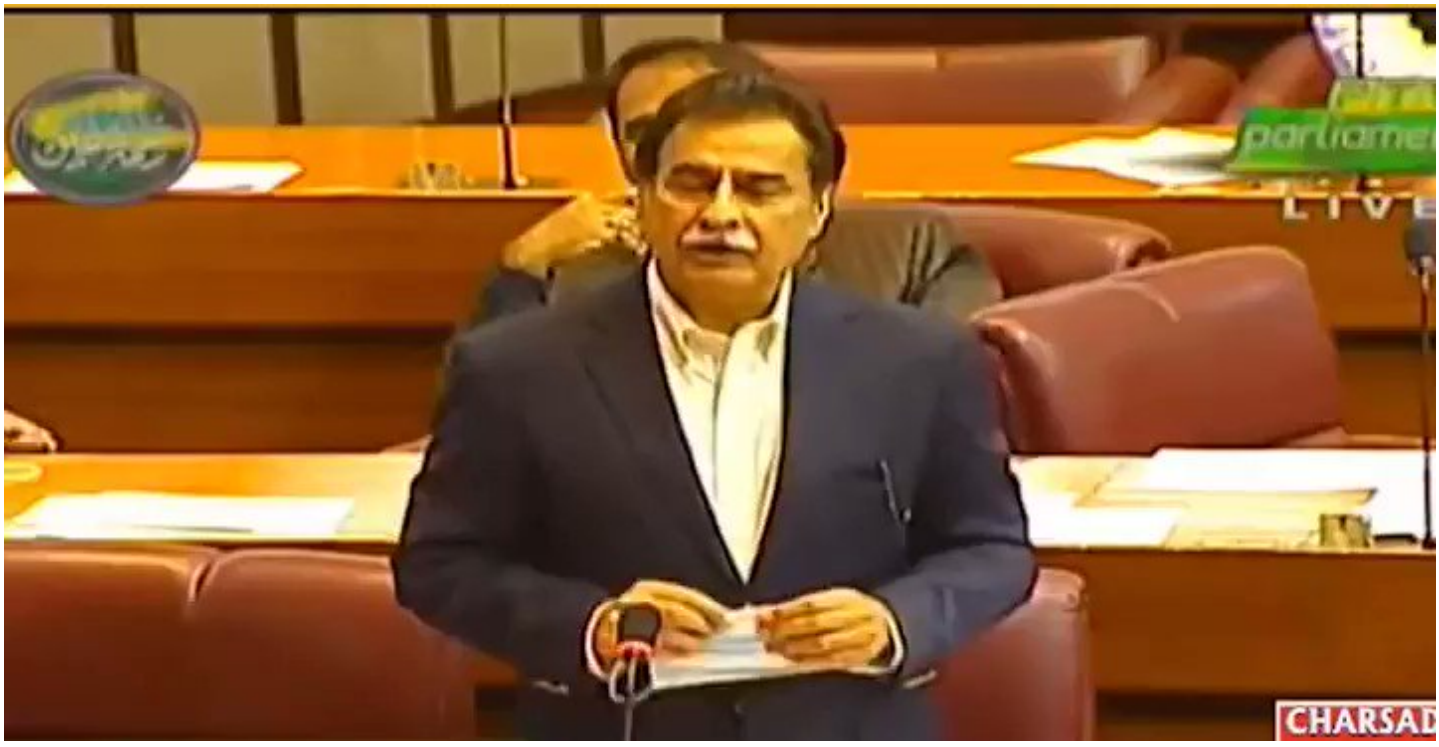
I remember reading newspapers during college days and for some time after that in the 90s, talking about Afghans and even Somalis fighting in Kashmir. At that time I couldn't really fathom the reason why. But it became amply clear later on as I read more into the subject.

And then with the US finally back in Afghanistan, came the J&K Assembly bombing, the Parliament attack, the Kaluchak Massacre, countless bombings in the hinterland and finally the 26/11 attacks.
Part of the reason why India didn't take overt military action against Pakistan ..

.. after the Parliament, the Kaluchak and the 26/11 attacks was thought to be the presence of Americans in Afg and how diverting Packie military away from 'helping' them might impact their own war.
Well, the results are there for all to see.

So what is different now?
.
.
Well, first and foremost, there is a Govt in Delhi which will simply NOT accept terror attacks any more. From the BSF plastering the Pakistan rangers in Oct 2014 all the way till Abhinandan shooting down an F-16, they have shown that they are ..

.. willing to walk the talk.
I'm sure the brown panted ones have not changed the colours of their pants for so long because they know it is good for .. err .. camouflaging .. their panic induced involuntary bowel movements.
So to that end, I don't worry too much.



Mind you, I'm not saying that there won't be any more terror attacks inside India, or on Indian interests abroad. In fact, knowing whatever little I do about the Paakis, I am actually COUNTING upon them to oblige sooner rather than later, of course with a fig leaf of deniability.

The euphoria of a 'victory' in Afghanistan is likely to result in a terror attack or two on India in the coming days and months. But then, what comes back towards them in the aftermath is perhaps a topic for another thread some day. However, I am willing to bet that sovereign ..

.. Indian territory stands a good chance at expanding by whatever degree it does, in case of a future attempt at being a bit too clever by the Brown Panted ones.
But then, it is just a personal opinion!

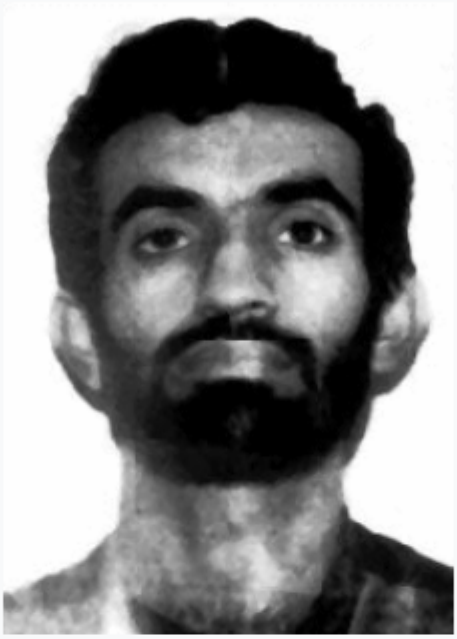
So back to Afg, reports just coming in that President Ghani has made good his escape. A wise decision, I'd say, especially since his so called 'ally' too has run away, leaving him alone.

What comes next in Afg is a vacuum.
Why a vacuum, when the Taliban are likely to establish a govt, you ask?
Well, because they cannot sustain an independent country based merely on terror and drug trade. They couldn't do so in the 90s, and they can't do so now.

At that time, it was Pakistan that was their surrogate mother - feeding them to the extent it could, and reaping a rich harvest from the terror factories for export to India and elsewhere.
Mind you, the first major attempt on the World Trade Centre had a Packie mastermind!

Ramzi Ahmed Yousef

رمزي احمد يوسف



FBI photo of Ramzi Yousef.

Born	20 May 1967 or 27 April 1968[1] Iraq, Kuwait or United Arab Emirates
Arrested	7 February 1995 Islamabad, Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence and Diplomatic Security Service
Citizenship	Pakistani[2]
Detained at	ADX Florence, Colorado, U.S.
Alternate name	Abdul Basit Mahmoud Abdul Karim Ramzi Mohammed Yousef *and many others* [3]

Back to the vacuum now.
Who might try & fill it up this time, is a question being asked far and wide.
China seems to be the obvious 'winner' in this debate, & for good reason too. A hubristic, self-anointed 'Chairman for Life' who has no option but to appear 'strong' rules China!

He wouldn't want to be seen as shying away from leading the Middle Kingdom use its Mandate of Heaven to restore order in the 'Barbarian' nations on its periphery!
So what if his much hyped PLA is just that - Hype!
Feel free to disagree, but do read this ■

https://t.co/uIYQWydkAB

> #PLA_Myths
> 3
> But it is the second part of the headline that caught my eye \u2013 CHINESE TROOPS ABANDONED THEIR POSTS RATHER THAN ENGAGE IN FIGHTING AND PROTECT CIVILIANS!
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) May 26, 2019

Add to that the fact that the Chinese have been eyeing the seemingly HUGE natural resources deposits in Afghanistan AND have the money power to make their play, makes them a viable alternative to fill in the vacuum.

Add to that the fact that they already have a direct land route via Gilgit-Baltistan to Afg, and this makes all the more sense.
If fact the bomb attack on Chinese workers in Dasu in NW Pakistan too might have been an initial salvo in trying to lay down rules of 'engagement' by ..

.. the Packies and their Talibani 'friends', for all I care.
But then, how might this affect India, is the question that bugs me at times.
Well, the answer that I am coming round to, is that it hardly has any material effect on India!

In fact, it will divert Packie energies away from own borders for the near future atleast, as they try to get the game to settle down to their advantage before looking elsewhere.
It was easy in the 90s since Russia and China had absolutely no role to play.

But now, the USA, though having run away from the immediate battlefield, is unlikely to let the new benefactors of Taliban have an easy run, especially if they are the ones that bow to a certain Mr Xi.

Once the dust settles after the battle to formally capture Kabul is finally over, our brown panted 'friends' might just discover that they are caught bang in the middle of a shadow war between their two biggest clients!
Reminds me of this epic moment from the good old 90s!



This possibility of a shadow war leads me further to a conspiracy theory.
Feel free to dismiss it as a figment of my imagination, but I'll still say it out loud here because .. well .. I can!

What are the odds that the sheer quantum of fully serviceable American military equipment falling into the hands of the Taliban isn't merely a coincidence, but instead, a ploy to make things more difficult for the next superpower that tries its luck in Afghanistan?

However, that STILL doesn't take away the fact the the USA has literally run away from battle. This tweet came to me via a DM earlier this evening and basically stole my thunder since I was thinking about saying pretty much the same thing in this thread!
https://t.co/LdcTnYF4fu

> @nitingokhale same as Vietnam for US. Tellme, one war that they won since WWII? (War includes peace).
>
> — Sniper (@avarakai) September 21, 2012

But then, the US does have a few military victories since WW2. Three, to be more precise.
These were in Nicaragua, Panama and Iraq (Gulf War 1).
The reason why they 'won' was simple - They pulled out in time!

I know there might be some who might be thinking this 'pulled out' thing is an attempt at inserting a pun in the middle of this thread.
Well, all I will offer to such folks is that you are entirely correct!
No bastards spawned out of these campaigns, atleast militarily!

In the current context too, pulling out after killing Osama might have been an honourable way out, regardless of who ruled Afg thereafter. But time for that is long gone.
Then there are some who talk about Afg being a graveyard of empires - mostly the Soviet & the American ones.

To them, all that I will offer is this tweet once again, for them to find the common factor!
https://t.co/dz3f1CFeG7

> Q: What is the one common factor between the Soviet and the US withdrawal from Afghanistan?
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> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) July 19, 2021

As far as successful foreign rule over Afghanistan goes, the last empire to rule Afghanistan successfully was that of Maharaj Ranjit Singh. So it is not something that has not been accomplished before.
But for the time being, this point is moot.

Of course, China may ultimately choose to simply NOT to enter Afg, either directly or thru proxies. But knowing them, this is unlikely to be the scenario.
Whether they like it or not, they are most likely to get sucked in, either willingly or unwillingly.

The recent bomb attack on Chinese engineers in Pakistan is quite likely to have been just the first of some more attacks that Chinese interests in Pak and Afg are likely to come under, in the near future.
Whether Paakis can control this or not, remains to be seen.

I say this because I know for a fact that Afghans are no fans of Pakistan. Heck, even the Taliban regime of the 90s refused to acknowledge the Durand Line despite Pakistan being one of the only three countries that recognised them!
https://t.co/zRlelizyU5

> @ashokkmrsingh Even the Taliban Govt didn't recognise Durand Line.Pashtun nation extnds rite upto Punjab's doorsteps.Definitly catastrophic!
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) June 26, 2013

Oh, and this too happened less than two years ago!
https://t.co/hXukMl3FjV

> 2/2
> Oh, and here are some visuals from 09 Oct 2019 when the Afghan ambassador unfurled the Afghan flag in Peshawar City, claiming it to be a part of Afghanistan.
> On an 'unrelated' note, the Durand Line agreement lapsed in 1993.#JustSaying pic.twitter.com/KtEziTATbZ
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) October 13, 2019

The marriage between Taliban and Pakistan is merely a marriage of convenience, for neither own the Afghan Nation that never wanted to recognize Pakistan in its current form as far back as 1947!
https://t.co/dftI9LIOj4

> Q: Which was the ONLY country to vote against the inclusion of #Pakistan in the UN in 1947?
> A: #Afghanistan
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) April 16, 2014

Mind you, acrimony that Afghans feel towards Paakis goes beyond mere govt levels. It is a feeling that runs throughout much of the Afg population who know for a fact that Paaki meddling in search for 'strategic depth' is the biggest reason for their misery
https://t.co/8HV9EXSZ2Q

> Historical baggage at Kabul airport https://t.co/eoM33DzwZH
> A Pakistani wonders why he's made to feel unwelcome in Afghanistan
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) March 26, 2016

To that end, I'd rather say that Afghanistan is indeed a strategic depth .. but for India!
Yup, feel free to read that again.
An Afg that sucks in Packie energies and resources is always good for us. It will continue to be so for atleast another year or so, if not more.

Of course, there will be some spillover across the LoC into India .. perhaps even in the hinterland. But then, all that will serve to do is to give another reason for the Indian military to overtly punish Pakistan as has been the trend lately.

A terror factory will be of hardly any use in case the Indian Army or the Air Force or the Navy come calling across the LoC or even the IB. They've shown it before during the surgical strikes and the Balakot attack, followed by the shooting down of the PAF F-16.

I'm sure the Packies know this.
Or maybe in their hubris, they might still try and overreach .. who knows.
But one thing is for sure - it is China that is going to have another front active, in addition to the Himalayan front and the South China Sea / Taiwan fronts!

THAT is something which needs to be looked out for.
THAT is something that I am eagerly awaiting to see happen & then to see how things progress from thereon.
THAT is something which I wish to see Packies try to turn into their favour with both their baaps as I mentioned earlier!

THIS is what the game is in the medium to long run in the days, weeks, months and years to come, as the wheels of history churn towards another turning. And as they say, wheels of history require blood to give them motion.
Thus far it was American blood.
Will it be Chinese next?

Like I said, we will need to wait and watch for how things pan out.

But then, one more thing that I don't see may folks discuss is the fact that aside from the fact that the US is out of one war, this also means that the next war is just a matter of time, given their history!
Tweeted this more than two years back!
https://t.co/LPikuz0F0G

> Adding on to the thoughts above.
> We've mostly been seeing the US withdrawal from Afghanistan as merely a withdrawal.
> I wonder how many might be seeing as a re-mustering of troops for application elsewhere ..#JustAsking
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) May 27, 2019

All said and done, what I await next in the immediate future is the visuals of the Taliban taking over American embassy in Kabul.
Hopefully, such visuals will not be as gory as in the case of Libya and the US staff will have been successfully evacuated by then.

Oh, btw, these beautiful visuals of the Chinooks that I tweeted earlier in this thread just led me to thinking where will these Chinooks go after evacuating the Americans .. Will they not go across the Durand Line into Pakistan?
https://t.co/aCUuoY2o5K

> Yup, in case you noticed, I used the word ROUT for what has happened to the US military in Afghanistan.
> To that end, I'll just let these two pics - one from Saigon in 1975 and one from Kabul earlier today, make my point.
> Call it whatever, but I'll say they've been ROUTED.
> Period. pic.twitter.com/VFzE0nNYzH
>
> — Harpreet (@CestMoiz) August 15, 2021

Especially since American planes targetting Taliban continue to freely fly over Pakistani airspace even today?

Btw, those who are aware of the Kunduz Airlift might also want to draw some parallels with this currently underway evacuation of American personnel from Afghanistan!
Yup, give it a thought and you might find some newer insights as well!

As far as India goes, people getting alarmed at what might happen to us now, may want to relax a bit because what is fated, must be endured, but all I'll offer is that we've endured much worse at a time when we were much weaker and much isolated and yet we lived to tell our tale.

So I conclude this thread by offering this single statement:
The 2020s are a bit .. different.
#AanDeyo, is what I feel about the emerging situation, partly due to the fact that it is inevitable and partly due to the fact that the 2020s are a bit .. different!

Hope this long ramble has made some sense for those who cared to read!
Cheers!
:Fin: