

# The collapse of Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and India's approach

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## Background

Afghanistan has once again been overtaken by the Taliban after 20 years of U.S presence in the country. With the announcement of Trump with regard to complete withdrawal and subsequent follow up on the same lines by the Biden administration, the withdrawal of the United States security forces in a jeopardised manner has only brought more miseries for the Afghans and the collapse of the Afghan security forces which was still in its nascent stage, yet had evolved to a larger extent. At the same time, the Taliban-U.S negotiations that started in 2019 in Doha can be regarded as mere hogwash, given the circumstances that unfolded in the first two weeks of August 2021 at the rapid scale at which the Taliban captured territories. One of the outcomes of the hasty withdrawal of the US forces was the abject surrender of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, without any substantial resistances on many instances, in the face of a rapid onslaught of a ruthless and determined Taliban.

The Afghan National and Defence Security Forces strength as per an April 2021 report of Special Inspector General of Afghanistan (SIGAR) was 3,00,699 of which Afghan National Army and Afghan Air Force comprised of 1,82,071 and the personnel strength of the Afghan National Police was 1,18,628. These numbers were of officially enrolled security personnels.<sup>1</sup> However, this official strength of the ANDSF appeared completely hollow in the face of Taliban's attack whose strength was around some 60,000 ground fighters with support from militias and support groups almost exceeding their total strength to 2,00,000 estimated by the U.S Combatting Terrorism Centre, West Point.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the recent turn of events led to Afghan political establishment and Afghan National Defence and Security Forces facing the wrath of entire global community as well as from its own citizens for not resisting the march of Taliban to power in Afghanistan that happened within a matter of weeks. The rapid scale at which the circumstances unfolded have been beyond comprehension, but it becomes imperative to explore the reasons behind the failure of Afghan security forces.

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