

# The making of a quagmire

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Order 541251 Topic: The Making of A Quagmire America must stay in Afghanistan I categorically that America must stay in Afghanistan. This war cannot be compared to the wars that America fought in Vietnam or Iraq. America is not interested in making international quagmires. It is true that various governments in Afghanistan failed due to their own faults—the irreconcilable position adopted by various factions in the country. That these factions belong to the same religion makes the issue further complicated. The liberal ones, who advocate that religion should be kept out of politics, do so with noble intentions. They do not wish to harm politics or religion, when they ever thus. But in Muslim countries like Afghanistan, religion is politics. That is the genesis of majority of the issues, and the unity of the country remains threatened, life and property of the common man is not safe, economic development takes the back seat, and utter chaos prevails in the country. Afghanistan is ravaged from wars for the last over two decades. It is strategically placed, bordered by the countries that are hostile and not so friendly to America. The prime objective of America is to reconstitute public order and avert humanitarian disaster in the country. A stable and democratic Afghanistan is in the long-term strategic interest of America—for its neighboring countries are Iran, Pakistan, USSR, and China. Some are hostile, some superficially friendly and some unpredictable. International rivalry amongst Afghanistan's many neighbors exists already, and if it escalates due to territorial and economic aggrandizement, a complicated international situation may develop, which may be difficult to control from America, through diplomatic channels, sitting at Washington. So, strong American military presence and an advisory think-tank in Afghanistan are a must, to take prompt decisions and quickly execute them. At present Taliban

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is defeated, and Al-Qaeda is on the run, but that is no permanent solution of the issues that confront Afghanistan. America must ready itself for a protracted stay, till such time the task of economic reconstruction is over. Taliban and Al-Qaeda have sympathizers and supporters all over the world. Even an independent and fairly progressive country like Pakistan that has a standing as an independent country for the last 64 years, and an well-equipped armed force, finds it difficult to tackle insurgency, threats from Taliban and other Muslim fundamentalist Organizations. Such forces would like a weak Afghanistan, to carry out their nefarious activities. American presence is a strong deterrent to them. Firstly they have to plan for their own survival and secondly think of plans to dent the Afghan defense. American administration and the current leadership of Afghanistan must clearly understand that the presence of American forces is not a stop-gap arrangement. Afghanistan must attain stability and America must emerge triumphant, and outsmart moves of alliances of some neighboring countries. With the challenge of abiding tribal loyalties and political factionalism and to find a peaceful settlement for them is a daunting task. Economic infrastructure and a government that is accountable and will administer as per the rule of law is non-existent. Marauders have a field day. Tackling the refugee crisis is a daunting task, and a big economic liability. Unless a healthy political process finds its proper place, the events of the 1992-1996 may repeat, and Afghanistan may roll back to square one, with no hope of building a healthy and violence-free society. So, the American forces should not create a situation where they will feel trapped along with other forces from allied countries as happened in Yugoslavia. They must take sustained action, taking all the perspectives into account. Protracted stay necessary

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even if America has to face a politically hostile atmosphere from the international communities. Some of the countries may do so for their own political compulsions. Terrorism must be defeated permanently from the soil of Afghanistan, and that is possible by including as many factions as possible in the future set up of Government of Afghanistan. A broad-based, educated leadership is the only solution. Towards this end, American international policy framers must work, to solicit support for a broad-ranging program of economic reconstruction and to build democratic institutions in Afghanistan. So, the views expressed by Halberstam in Chapter 10 of the book, "A Slow Change in American Policy" needs to be understood in the present context of international politics. What he wrote in 1967, at the young age of 30, as a reporter is not acceptable in the current situation. From a position of strength and by establishing solid military bases in Afghanistan America should negotiate with Afghanistan's neighbors, Iran, Russia and India and advise them against any unilateral moves that will complicate the issue. Considerable tension already exists in the relations of Pakistan and America, and a complicated political climate in Afghanistan will only further aggravate the tension in Pakistan. Afghanistan cannot afford to go through another bout of major internal strife. American international political leaderships is facing an acid test in the soil of Afghanistan, and it is necessary for America to emerge politically and militarily victorious. Conclusion: Afghanistan's internal weaknesses perhaps have no parallel, in the history of any other country. No one can think of conquering Afghanistan on a permanent footing. Such efforts can only further devastate the country. The leaders of Afghanistan must understand their responsibility, make united efforts, and best use of the foreign help should be made. American presence in

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Afghanistan is needed for achieving this objective. So, the proposal to send additional troops to Afghanistan must be viewed in the above context, and the American Military Generals, President Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, and the Republican leadership in the Congress is right. America has an attainable objective in Afghanistan, and this war cannot be compared to the wars in Vietnam, Yugoslavia or Iraq. Obama will not go down; he will emerge victorious in this war of peace and stability will usher in Afghanistan. Works Cited Halberstam, David: The Making of A Quagmire: America and Vietnam; McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages; 1 edition, October 1, 1987.