

THE HOT TAKE

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SHOULD THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY EVER HAVE INTERVENED IN
AFGHANISTAN

IS THE UK BEING HYPOCRITICAL FOR
HOSTING **COP26**

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QUESTION ONE:

**SHOULD THE
INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY EVER HAVE
INTERVENED IN
AFGHANISTAN**

WHERE DOES AFGHANISTAN MOVE FORWARD: A TEST FOR THE UN?

*Written by a Research Fellow at the Center for Global Security and Governance
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To answer this question, it is necessary to clarify that the international community has never seriously intervened in Afghanistan affairs, even though it was imperative from time to time. Yet imperial powers have done so since the mid-19th century until the recent withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Afghanistan, but all ended with similar consequences—fiasco. Therefore, Afghanistan has been loosely termed as the “graveyard of empires”.

Today it is vital for the international community to intervene in this war-torn country which might be again turning into a source of refugees fleeing due to the civil wars and poverty, and more probably a haven of international terrorists. As China has reiterated, the frantic withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan has testified that military intervention and the imposition of any external political program does nothing to help solve any problem except creating more problems, and failure is the inevitable outcome.

Given the lessons from history, it is wise for the major powers concerned to honor their commitment to secure the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan and not to pass the buck to its neighbors or the wider international community. Now, the Afghan people need security in both traditional and non-traditional terms desperately. If the ongoing global pandemic and poverty have exacerbated, the uncertainties and instabilities will engulf peace and stability anywhere. The common priorities are to combat the pandemic in solidarity and watch closely on the potential links with any sorts of terrorism and extremism.

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Considering the scenario, the international community should uphold genuine multilateralism, strengthen coordination and work together to address them. Yet, the reality is that world politics is under the shadow of power politics, it is critical to take the core role of the UN, respect the sovereignty and independence of all countries and the development path chosen by the people of their own free will, and promote through diplomacy dialogue and consultation among the parties to overcome their differences. In brief, any hegemonic power and its allies trying to circumvent the Security Council as the core to impose unilateral coercive measures on the new governing body in Afghanistan has no basis in law, defies reason, and affront to common decency.

Regarding the Taliban-led government in Afghanistan, China has clarified its stance that it must make a clean break with all terrorist organizations, including the ETIM, and play a positive role in advancing common security, stability, and development in light of the UN Security Council resolutions in the region. To realize that end, China has advanced a major geostrategic prize with Russia, Pakistan and Iran to form a concerted institution like a “Quad”. In this respect, China has worked earnestly on intensified relations with Russia, Pakistan and Iran, and potentially inviting Afghanistan to be a full member of the SCO in the near future.

In brief, on the premise of respecting Afghanistan’s sovereignty and independence, the international community should take concrete actions among the major powers and all other relevant countries to help Afghanistan nation-rebuilding and transform into a neutral state like Switzerland. Compared to these two countries, Afghanistan seems to have all-natural and cultural legacies except a long peace and stable

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pray for the people of Afghanistan to embrace this historic opportunity bravely.

RUSSIAN ROULETTE INTERVENTIONISM

Written by an anonymous author

There seems to be a cognitive dissonance between the ideal argument and the realistic one for intervention in countries such as Afghanistan. On the one hand the repression and pain inflicted by terrorism should be enough to warrant at least some form of international response as no response severely undermines all common international goals that are supposed to be upheld by the international community.

We live in a globalised world where interconnectedness and enmeshment of countries and cultures is at this point an undeniable affirmation. Whether this is desirable or not is not the point of my argument, however because our globalised world is here to stay so many of the current issues we face are common requiring extensive international action and agreement. These common issues vary from the looming climate crisis or international terrorism. Arguing for no levels of intervention in Afghanistan seems like a dismissal of the need for common action and objectives such as protection of human rights or from ongoing terrorist operations.

On the other hand, it also seems that US interventionism in Afghanistan was driven by fear and thirst for vengeance masked as hubris. After 9/11 the decision to intervene strays away from meaningful change and regime stabilisation and remains a mere vendetta. A desire to use war and violence to maintain domestic support for the American military and justify the need for it while clinging to the last remnants of universal US power in a world becoming increasingly multilateral.

RUSSIAN ROULETTE INTERVENTIONISM

When stating that the international community, with particular significance given to the US, should have never intervened, people often use past failures such as Vietnam or Iraq to base their argument on. While there is validity to the failures interventionism led to, it is also worth noting past successes that include Germany, Japan, South-Korea and Kosovo. The difference is that with these operations the aim was to stabilise regimes and pave the path for meaningful peace and security. The early missteps of the Bush administration that did not fully take into consideration the obstacles in an Afghan reconstruction effort or the size of Afghanistan were pivotal. If the economic assistance per inhabitant of Kosovo amounted to 1600 USD per year, assistance for Afghan individuals amounted to a mere 50 USD per year. Fatal miscalculations regarding the resources needed for stabilisation led to the failure of intervention. While some level of intervention was in a lot of ways necessary it is undeniable that the US Afghanistan policy was severely flawed and poorly executed. Any success would have been mere luck.

RUSSIAN ROULETTE INTERVENTIONISM

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USE OF VIOLENCE DOOMED THE INTERVENTION FROM THE START

Written by a fourth year MA Politics student

The US reactions (and actions) that followed 9/11 can hardly be understood by observers as something else than American exceptionalism. The idea that American lives are worth so much more than others. The US decision to invade Afghanistan resulted in about 55 times the number of casualties of 9/11. If, considering the upper estimates, the War on Terror in Iraq caused the death of 400 times as many people as 9/11 did. And for what?

Terrorism has not truly been reduced by the initial War on Terror. Quasi-states like the Islamic State or Boko Haram have only been defeated or successfully fought against thanks to cooperation with local actors, not by invading said local actors.

Why do people resolve to terrorism? Well, first of all, not only individuals do; states do it too. Decades of Western covert -or overt- operations have fundamentally transformed the societies that suffered from them. As Galtung, father of Peace Studies, puts it:

“There are also some surprising parallels between Wahhabism, a fundamentalist branch of Islam that is the state religion of Saudi Arabia, and some of President Bush’s rhetoric: dualism, dividing the world into us vs. them, without neutrals; Manicheism (We are good; they are evil); and the inevitability of a final decisive battle to “crush” them, like vermin (Armageddon).”

The same way that the Bush doctrine and the US military-industrial complex could never have been victoriously fought against through violent means, the motivations for fighting the US could only have been

USE OF VIOLENCE DOOMED THE INTERVENTION FROM THE START

resolved by non-violent politics. Yes, some of the reasons for opposing the US of groups or regimes like the Taliban may be, say, religious extremism, but for most people, they are simply the realisation that the US is not acting for a greater good. While millions of people suffered from poverty, the US chose to spend 300,000,000\$ a day for a war they could never win. While many in the world demanded justice and auto-determination for the Palestinian people, the US supported Israel's colonisation strategies. If the US had decided to face its past and wrongdoings and fix those, "1.3 billion Muslims would have embraced America; and the few terrorists left would have no water in which to swim".

At the end of the day, the invasion of Afghanistan did not only lead to thousands of casualties, but it also led to the exile of hundreds of thousands, forced into poverty just to avoid death. It also led to a country being scarred for generations to come that will be raised in hatred of the US for having caused twenty years of war, while a peaceful dialogue and joint projects would have led to the exact opposite.

USE OF VIOLENCE DOOMED THE INTERVENTION FROM THE START

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LEGALISED INSANITY: WHY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD NEVER HAVE INTERVENED IN AFGHANISTAN

Written by an anonymous author

It has often been wondered what the hallmarks of failed public and foreign policy truly are. Is it good intentions that eventually run into the wall of reality, or is it when the best laid plans of Mice and Men go astray? One of the hallmarks of insanity has often been doing the same thing repeatedly, while expecting the results to change. Afghanistan and its multiple interventions can be thought as a prime example of this viewpoint in action.

After just under twenty years of military occupation, the collapse in Afghanistan comes as a shock for all of those who could not read between the lines. This being that those nations like Afghanistan would be much better if they had been left alone and are most likely doomed to be in some form of perpetual violence. Historically speaking interventionism by the International Community as an act is rather a mixed bag in contrast to being a certain point of positive help. On one hand, you have success in Bosnia, on the other you have Somalia, in a new Post-Cold War world.

Western Interventionism should not be a coin toss in its own success, and truth be told, war only goes in one direction when money is involved. It became very clear that the post-9/11 conflicts were not going to work. Afghanistan has shown that the Western Liberal Order is a house built upon sand and the idea that the West is a translatable model for other countries is a myth. The International Community, attempting to force these changes into the system, was only ever going to end in

LEGALISED INSANITY: WHY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD NEVER HAVE INTERVENED IN AFGHANISTAN

This legalised political insanity displays this perfectly.

What is sad is the fact that people cannot accept that some nations will always be doomed and do not want what the West is selling. Women's suffrage and religious toleration are not universal values, and the West should never have tried to enforce that onto certain nations, I am very sad to say. For example, according to Pew Centre research, within South Asia there exists "support making sharia the official law, including nearly universal support among Muslims in Afghanistan (99%)". For context, neighbouring nations are "Pakistan (84%) and Bangladesh (82%)". Alongside this, the same surveyed data showed that "In Pakistan (89%) and Afghanistan (85%), more than eight-in-ten Muslims who want Islamic law as their country's official law say adulterers should be stoned".

Alongside this, the total cost of the War in Afghanistan according to Brown University, tops out at "\$2.313 trillion in total". Out of which military expenditure "was \$825bn, with about another \$130bn spent on reconstruction projects", according to the BBC. To spend these sums of money on a nation that culturally will probably never adopt or even attempt at becoming westernised shows a level of legalised insanity amongst policymakers and those within power. What becomes more unacceptable is that within the International Community, the amount of money being spent while their own nations suffer. Think Baltimore or Detroit in America, or industrialized North of England and Scotland. What might those places have looked like, if the money spent on Afghanistan had gone there. For context, the \$2.3 trillion dollars spent in Afghanistan works out to be bigger than Italy's entire GDP (in 2020), according to the IMF.

LEGALISED INSANITY: WHY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD NEVER HAVE INTERVENED IN AFGHANISTAN

A cynic or sceptic would argue that the War in Afghanistan was never meant to be won, it was never meant to benefit the average Afghan and or the average American. Only time will tell if that is really true and to see what the future has in store for the nation under the Taliban.

In conclusion, the International Community should never have intervened in Afghanistan, the West's cultural outlook is not equitable with that of Afghanistan and the money could and should have been better spent at home. Thoughts against this view only further its own legalised insanity.

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QUESTION TWO:

IS THE **UK** BEING
HYPOCRITICAL FOR
HOSTING THE **COP26**

A WOLF IN WOLF'S CLOTHING

Written by an anonymous author

On November 1, all the countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1994 will meet in Glasgow for COP26 to discuss solutions to the biggest crisis that faces humanity today - climate change.

Much of COP26 will be to discuss the commitments made in the Paris agreement of 2015; commitments to reduce carbon emissions, keep the global temperature increase below 2 degrees celsius, and to spend 100 billion dollars to bridge the gap between richer and poorer countries. So far, almost every single country that signed the Paris agreement has failed to keep their promises and external analyses of the 184 pledges made showed that around 75% of them were wholly insufficient in the first place.

However, COP26 brings new promise to the global fight against climate change. 196 delegates will meet in Glasgow in what is the culmination of tireless work of reducing emissions, investing in renewable energy and holding big corporations accountable for their carbon footprints. Or is it?

Put bluntly, the COP26 is only the latest addition to the global farce of fighting climate change. Such a fight has never existed and will certainly not be led by the group of self-interested and short-sighted countries attending the COP26 in two months. This time around, the leader of that group is the UK.

The UK boasts of having grown the economy while simultaneously cutting emissions, Johnson has produced a cute Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution and Westminster has established that climate change is the country's 'foremost international priority'.

A WOLF IN WOLF'S CLOTHING

However, anyone with access to the internet and an ounce of critical thinking can see those statements for what they are: empty. The UK is investing in false solutions that bear the faintest hope of reducing emissions at some point in the future, and when it fails to do that it simply extradites its emissions to poorer countries. The host of COP26 is too busy beating the drum of British exceptionalism for it to recognise its painfully obvious hypocrisy.

However, the UK is not unique. It is just as hypocritical as the other rich countries who will be sitting at the table of COP26 - a table of wolves in wolves' clothing. Alok Sharma, the COP26 President-Designate, has 'real sympathy' for poorer countries for having to stand side by side with the industrial colonialists that were the engineers of the climate crisis. But sympathy is a poor cover up. Indeed, the pandemic provides a perfect excuse to continue to exclude less developed countries in discussions of climate change. As they grapple with vaccine inequity and costly quarantines, the richer delegates can revel in their hypocrisy without having to listen to the pleas of those with sea levels rising at their very shores.

Therefore, it is time to see COP26 for what it is. It is a wonderful tourism boost for a forgotten Glasgow, a pastime for thousands of self-righteous university activists, and an ideal PR opportunity for attention seeking politicians. But as long as the fight against climate change is led by a blabbering Boris Johnson, Greta Thunberg with a megaphone and students armed with infographics, it will never be won

A WOLF IN WOLF'S CLOTHING

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WE'RE BEYOND HYPOCRISY

Written by an anonymous author

The world is being hypocritical for hosting such a meeting, for pretending to care, for struggling to enact proper change. At its core there is a disconnect between what we see as our human world and what we view as the natural environment and how we attribute value to nature. We have removed ourselves from nature, and we have removed nature from its intrinsic value. Until that is remedied, we're all hypocrites.

There is definitely a level of complexity when it comes to climate change negotiations, conferences and pledges since world efforts need to be coordinated to tackle such an intrinsically global issue. Much of the debate however is on mitigation with greenhouse gas emissions limits, carbon capture and a transition to renewable energy. While these are essential to maintain a hospitable planet they do not solve the root cause of the problem that revolves around a severe disconnect in our values regarding the natural world. This disconnection can be directly attributed to economic and political systems geared around perpetual growth and overconsumption.

With the environmental disaster risks our world faces, the option remaining seems to only be 'adapt or perish'. The economics of climate catastrophe also look extremely dire. While this justification for addressing climate change is flawed, it hopefully will provide enough incentive for nations and corporations alike to adapt and mitigate their energy consumption and pollution levels.

Even if hosting a climate summit is definitely hypocritical from a country, such as the UK, with such a history of pollution, these summits are necessary if we hope to stop a climate catastrophe.

WE'RE BEYOND HYPOCRISY

The goal of such summits however should extend past mitigation and aim to solve the root cause of the problem: an economic system that does not value nature and only sees value in resources to be profited from.

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HYPOCRISY & HOPE

Written by an anonymous author

As the UK government is preparing for COP26 to be hosted in Glasgow in November, accusations of climate hypocrisy have followed a general lack of faith in the international community to address climate change. The UK, as its host, stands in the centre of it all. It has been called out for its shortcomings in the Paris agreement. It pumps up the figures of carbon footprint by outsourcing its emissions to poorer countries. It gives more subsidies to fossil fuel companies than any other country in Europe. It has cosy links between its oil and gas industry and North Sea regulators. Its MPs, some of them close to the Prime Minister, openly deny man-made climate change. It makes inspiring pledges to be a world leader in fighting climate change yet fails to take decisive action when it counts, such as the failure to block a new coal mine in Cumbria. Lastly, the UK accounted for 80% of global CO2 emissions during the industrial revolution and it would not be misplaced to argue that the UK, together with the global north, created the very crisis we are trying to solve.

So yes, the United Kingdom is being hypocritical for hosting the most important climate change summit of the year. However, that does not necessarily need to be a bad thing.

Disregarding the rather obvious argument that whatever country who were to host COP26 would be hypocritical in some way given the bleak track record of most countries when it comes to combating climate change; the UK should be called out for its hypocrisy. But the very reason we are aware of the extent of that hypocrisy is precisely because the UK has made the daring choice to host the summit. With the responsibility of hosting the COP26 comes an unprecedented level

PARADISE LOST: THE U.S. INNOVATION LANDSCAPE IN CRISIS

of scrutiny of the government's climate change policies and record. And that should be welcomed.

Thus, instead of viewing the COP26 as a meaningless charade for big countries to win political points, it should be seen as a meaningful opportunity to call out the big players for their lies. Figures should be questioned, promises challenged and politicians should be held accountable. Grass root activists, the media and the general public should continue to call out climate hypocrisy and advocate for its redemption.

So yes, the UK is being hypocritical. But let's not let that lead to climate inertia, let's use it as an opportunity for change.

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