

Headlines:

- **Turkey Holds Keys to U.S. Afghan Pullout, a Potential Problem for Biden**
- **Pakistan Leverages US military Co-operation to Win IMF Concessions**
- **China has Created a Dystopian Hellscape in Xinjiang, Amnesty Report Says**

Details:

Turkey Holds Keys to U.S. Afghan Pullout, a Potential Problem for Biden

President Biden's plans for a U.S. and allied withdrawal from Afghanistan will face a potential challenge next week when he meets Turkey's leader, who is expected to seek concessions in return for continuing to provide for security at the Afghan capital's airport. Among concessions Turkey wants is an agreement from the U.S. that allows Ankara to keep and operate a Russian air defense system, according to people familiar with the discussions. The U.S. has bitterly opposed Turkey's acquisition of the system, which has caused a major rift between the two North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies. The meeting with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, during a NATO summit in Brussels, will center on Turkey's longtime role in securing Kabul's airport, located at high altitude in the Hindu Kush mountains. Afghanistan is landlocked and roads are dangerous, making the airport a critical access point for international staff as well as millions of Afghans. Turkey, however, has said it might end its airport security mission and leave Afghanistan as Mr. Biden winds down U.S. and NATO involvement in the country by as early as July. Officials say no other country or company can quickly or readily replicate the security service, and Turkey's departure could force embassies and international organizations to close, threatening the disbursement of billions of dollars in aid that keeps the Afghan government and military running. The U.S. also had hoped to keep a residual military force nearby, but has failed to secure an agreement with any neighboring country. Russia would likely strongly oppose any new base in Central Asia, and a deal has yet to be reached with Pakistan. Instead, U.S. support will be limited, for now, to MQ-9 Reaper drones stationed in Al Dhafra, United Arab Emirates, that will fly over Afghanistan to share intelligence with U.S.-backed local forces, defense officials said. The Biden administration hasn't decided how to support Afghan forces after troops leave but the Pentagon is expected to make formal recommendations as early as this week, officials said. The U.S. military says it has withdrawn more than 50% of its equipment from Afghanistan. [Source: Wall Street Journal]

The reality of America's primacy is that it derives its scope and magnitude from the support of Muslim countries, and this is also shaping America's exit from Afghanistan. Turkey's ability to secure Kabul Airport, Pakistani territory to conduct clandestine operations in Afghanistan, and UAE bases to provide intelligence underscore America's reliance on Muslim countries to retain some influence in Afghanistan after two decades of fighting. If these three countries not only ended their support but also joined forces to permanently efface US from the region, what could Biden possibly do to retain influence in Afghanistan?

Pakistan Leverages US Military Co-operation to Win IMF Concessions

Pakistan's finance minister said military co-operation with the US over America's withdrawal from Afghanistan had given Imran Khan's government "some space" to delay unpopular IMF reforms. Islamabad is in talks with the IMF to release the next tranche of

funding as part of a \$6bn loan programme as Pakistan struggles to tame inflation and recover from the shock of the pandemic. Officials are seeking US support in the form of financial backing from the Washington-based international financial institution in exchange for helping President Joe Biden withdraw all US troops by September 11 and bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table. Shaukat Tarin, Khan's fourth finance minister in three years, said the IMF had been receptive to Islamabad's request to hold off raising power tariffs and sales taxes that have hit Pakistan's poor hard. "What we do not need is more burden on our poor people," said Tarin. "We have been talking to the American officials and they're willing to help." Tarin, who took office in April, has returned to the post after negotiating an IMF bailout in 2008 when Pakistan-US co-operation was at its height. Pakistan's poor have been hammered by double-digit inflation, and their discontent with the economy is a political liability for Khan's government. "The [economic] growth this year will probably be 4 per cent, but we need more," said Tarin. Pakistan had made progress in addressing its financial challenges but the fallout from the pandemic and political turmoil risks derailing the reform agenda, said rating agency Fitch last month, holding its outlook on Pakistan stable at B-. Islamabad has been able to access external funding in part because of its compliance with the IMF programme and its progress in addressing terrorist financing. Pakistan is on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force, the world's top anti-terrorism monitoring group. Islamabad was "near to completion" on meeting FATF requirements, said people with knowledge of the talks. "As President Biden is withdrawing troops, Pakistan's leverage on the US has improved," said Asfandiyar Mir, a South Asia analyst at Stanford University. [Source: FT]

This is not the first time that US has used the IMF to get Pakistan to do its bidding. The IMF programmes during Zia and Musharraf's rule were linked to Pakistan supporting American foreign policy against the Soviets and for the global war on terror.

China has Created a Dystopian Hellscape in Xinjiang, Amnesty Report says

The human rights organisation Amnesty International has said China is committing crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, the north-western region that is home to the Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities. In a report published on Thursday, Amnesty called on the UN to investigate, saying China had subjected Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslims to mass detention, surveillance, and torture. Agnès Callamard, the secretary general of Amnesty International, accused Chinese authorities of creating "a dystopian hellscape on a staggering scale". "It should shock the conscience of humanity that massive numbers of people have been subjected to brainwashing, torture and other degrading treatment in internment camps, while millions more live in fear amid a vast surveillance apparatus," Ms Callamard said. She also accused the UN Secretary General António Guterres of "failing to act according to his mandate". Mr Guterres "has not denounced the situation, he has not called for an international investigation", Ms Callamard told the BBC. "It is incumbent on him to protect the values upon which the United Nations has been founded, and certainly not to stay silent in front of crimes against humanity," she said.

The West is using Xinjiang issue to pressurize China, but remain silent over 'Israel's' treatment of Palestinians and India's oppression of Kashmiris. The selective application of human rights is driven by West's material interests and nothing else. The West exploits Muslim abuses to further its global hegemony.