



## The Decline and Fall of Republican Afghanistan

By Ahmad Shuja Jamal & William Maley

ISBN 9781787388017 • HB • 304pp • Pub: Feb'23

Publisher: Hurst

Feelbooks Special Edition: Rs. 2395



'A definitive account, including mistakes of US diplomacy that contributed to the debacle, which will be invaluable for policymakers seeking to make sense of the disaster and learn lessons for the future.'

— *Lisa Curtis, Director of the Indo-Pacific Security Program,  
Center for a New American Security*

'Distinguishing between the gradual weakening, and the sudden collapse of the Republic of Afghanistan, this is a must-read. Jamal and Maley are uniquely well-informed, engage interestingly with relevant theory, and are unmistakably critical of those who have advocated peace with the Taliban.'

— *Kristian Berg Harpviken, Research Professor, Peace Research Institute Oslo*

**A searing indictment of how Afghan elites and the Western powers pulled the rug on the Afghan people, abandoning them to their fate.**

The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 was the result of declining active support for the government, and of waste and inefficiency in aid delivery. Yet, while corrosive, these problems were not in themselves sufficient to have brought about a collapse. To a significant degree, they were the result of early failings in institutional design, reflecting an American inclination to pursue short-term policy approaches that created perverse incentives-thus interfering with the long-term objective of stability.

This book exposes the true factors underpinning Kabul's fall. The Afghan Republic came under relentless attack from Taliban insurgents who depended critically on Pakistani support. It also suffered a creeping invasion that put the government on the back foot as the US tried and failed to deal with Pakistan's perfidy. The fatal blow came when bored US leaders naively cut an exit deal with the enemy, fatally compromising the operation of the Afghan army and air force and triggering the final collapse, with top leaders at odds over whether to make a final stand in Kabul.

The Afghan Republic did not simply decline and fall. It was betrayed.

### About the Authors

**Ahmad Shuja Jamal** was director-general for international relations on Kabul's National Security Council (2019–21). He was previously a Fulbright scholar (Georgetown University), and worked for Human Rights Watch.

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