



War without end?

Posted at: 22/11/2018

War without end?-The horrific attack in Kabul must prompt greater momentum in peace talks

- The attack on a religious gathering in Kabul that killed 55 people, including several scholars and clerics, is another signal of Afghanistan's descent into chaos.
- The clerics had gathered to mark the birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammed when the suicide bomber blew himself up.
- The Taliban denied responsibility and blamed the attack on "seditious circles", alluding to the Islamic State.
- But beyond the specific reasons behind the attack, the fact that a major religious gathering in the Afghan capital can be so easily assaulted by terrorists is worrying.
- Despite repeated promises by the government, the security situation has deteriorated, and markedly.
- Afghan forces face a war on two fronts. One is with the Taliban, which is mostly attacking government offices and soldiers.
- It is almost certain, after 17 years of war, that the government cannot stabilise the country using force.
- This stalemate has prompted the Afghan government and its international backers to look for ways other than war to find a solution to the conflict.
- The Taliban insists on international troops being withdrawn from Afghanistan as a precondition and wants changes in the Afghan Constitution.
- The government wants the Taliban to accept the Constitution, while the Americans say a troops pullout is not a matter of discussion with the Taliban.
- Still, the Taliban has made it clear that it is ready for talks, which is in itself a change given the group's approach towards the conflict.
- The question is whether the government can seize the moment, strengthen its own counter-insurgency measures and negotiate from a

position of strength, with backing from international actors.

The Hindu

