

**The
Economist**

**EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION**

Beit Hanoun Prep Girls A School, Occupied Palestinian Territory

The Morley Academy, United Kingdom

Tarun Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Nepal

Lake Bank Pioneer Preparatory, Tunisia

Asmaa Prep School, Occupied Palestinian Territory

TOPICAL TALK 2021-22 • PROJECT 2



AFGHANISTAN



**TOPICAL TALK
PROJECTS**



Afghanistan's turbulent history has made it a regular focus for global news – and for the last 20 years, the spotlight has been on its relationship with America. Recently, America withdrew its troops from Afghanistan and the Taliban seized control. The chaos that followed was watched by the world.

Through November and December, students shared their opinions about the topic on the Student Hub and answered the question: should American troops have left Afghanistan?

In this edition of Hub Highlights we showcase some of the best contributions from the discussion.

Some entries have been edited for clarity.

flowing_clarinet

Should America have left Afghanistan?

UNITED KINGDOM
The Morley Academy

Flowing_clarinet, from The Morley Academy, United Kingdom used their learning from the Project to tackle the big question - and started a great discussion.

Following the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, we have seen the effects on not only the Afghan people, but the country as a whole. America chose to leave, ending 20 years of war in Afghanistan — the longest war in American history. However, how did Afghan people feel about this?

On the one hand, it's debatable whether Afghanistan ever had full trust in America. Saleh Mohammed Saleh, a former member of the Afghan parliament, told journalists that "Afghan people do not trust America" because troops stayed in Afghanistan even after they had killed Osama bin Laden.

On the other hand, because American troops were in Afghanistan for so long, it's understandable that others were nervous about them leaving. When Zahra Hussein, an Afghan activist, heard the news, she said she "had this bad feeling that it would result in the Taliban's return to power rather than in peace." And this is exactly what happened. ■

Comments

aware_painting

Shouka Prep Girls School, Occupied Palestinian Territory

America's withdrawal from Afghanistan and the ongoing presence of the Taliban is a terrible blow to America's credibility. Wasn't America going there to save Afghanistan from the Taliban that controls it, its resources, people and borders? Didn't America go there as a partner because it is the guardian of morals in the world?

smart_physics

Upton Cross Primary School, United Kingdom

I think that America should have left Afghanistan. A survey by Pew Research showed that most American citizens wanted their troops to be withdrawn and it's important to think about what American people want too. Withdrawing their troops will also save America millions of dollars which they can invest into their own country.

pioneering_wlldog

Jabalia Prep Girls A School, Occupied Palestinian Territory

The Taliban has taken control of Afghanistan and America has left, but does this mean the end of the war? I think the answer is no. I believe this period is the calm before another storm. I think that Afghan opponents may appear and turn against the Taliban. It will be very difficult for Afghanistan to achieve real stability.

healthy_antelope

Shine a light on the women

OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY
Beit Hanoun Prep Girls A School

For the people of Afghanistan, life has changed a lot since the Taliban seized control. healthy_antelope chose to focus on the plight of women.

There is great fear in Afghanistan because of the return of Taliban control. But let us put a spotlight on the victims whose political, economic and social rights have been stolen away once more: Afghan women.

When American troops were in Afghanistan more girls went to school, more women became involved in politics and the number of women in the Afghan armed forces doubled. When the Taliban government took control of Afghanistan again, women's education was prohibited and, according to Sky News Arabia, the Taliban government issued a statement saying that women cannot work in high positions.

Education is one of the most important rights defended by the United Nations because of the difference it can make to a person and a country. So what about Afghan women and girls? How long will their right to education be stolen for? And when will people realise that the ban on women's education is one of the reasons for a downturn in a country's economy? We must talk about the issue of gender inequality in Afghanistan because we are part of this world. We have to shine a light on what is happening, so that these women do not suffer alone in poverty imposed under the control of unfair governments. ■

Comments

independent_technology**Jabalia Prep Girls A School, Occupied Palestinian Territory**

Afghan women should start doing what they want and not be afraid of anything and go out with protests and demonstrations, and this is how their voice will reach the world. We too could carry out campaigns and demonstrations for them.

Expert: Mary Lawlor

If an Afghan woman or an Afghan girl or a man were to speak out about what's going on in Afghanistan, they would be at very big risk because if the Taliban found out what they are doing, they could arrest them.

THE EXPERT VIEW

Best of the questions

**caring_personality, Shouka Prep Girls' School, Occupied Palestinian Territory**

asked Mary Lawlor, United Nations Special Rapporteur

Does the Taliban movement in Afghanistan respect the rights of all its citizens?

**amazing_walrus, School of Excellence Sector-23 Rohini, India**

asked Naveed Noormal, diplomat at the Embassy of Afghanistan, London

What is your strategy to unravel "unseen Afghanistan" to the world?

**agreeable_speech, Lake Bank Pioneer Preparatory, Tunisia**

asked Chris Sands, South Asia Editor, New Lines Magazine

Have you ever felt in danger as a journalist?

Naveed Noormal

The unseen Afghanistan

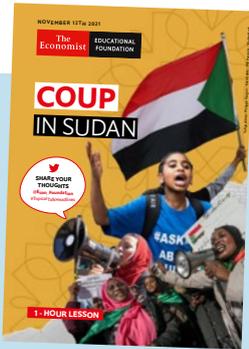
Naveed Noormal, one of this Project's experts, started a great discussion when he said, "The biggest flaw we have in Afghanistan is the misrepresentation...the aspects the outside world is exposed to through media is mostly war and killings. They're so far away from the reality on the ground – the positive side of the country...which I call the unseen Afghanistan."

excited_agency**Tarun Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Nepal**

Knowing just the negatives like wars and violence will lead to misconceptions. The world will not see Afghanistan as a cultural and beautiful country but just as a country of terrors and wars and that isn't right.

respectful_squirrel**Ditton Primary School, United Kingdom**

Afghan people enjoy the same things we do, do the same things we do and deserve the same chance of a life that we have. I don't think we hear about the 'good' sides of Afghanistan because the media chooses stories that shock and gain people's attention. They only give one perspective of the country as it sells more stories.



fabulous_radio
 RAJSHAHI CADET
 COLLEGE, BANGLADESH
**on the coup
 in Sudan**

I think it's difficult to share power because one person is always greedy and wants more – they might start to believe that they're superior or deserve more than other people. This person might also make wrong decisions for his country and people because they are right for himself. For example, in Sudan, I think the military wanted to take over because they wanted power for themselves.



inspiring_outcome
 GRAVENEY SCHOOL,
 UNITED KINGDOM
**on the Kyle
 Rittenhouse trial**

I think that justice has not been achieved in this case because three people were shot but Mr Rittenhouse is free. Even though the protest may have become violent, there were other ways that Mr Rittenhouse could have dealt with the situation without a gun. I do not agree with the second amendment – no one should be able to carry a gun for self-defence.

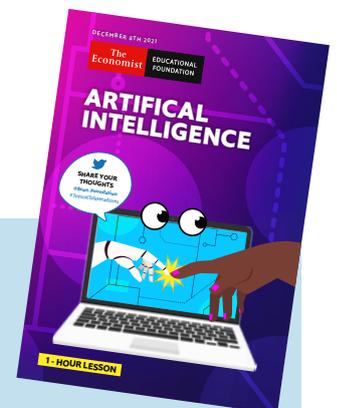
In other news...

The Student Hub also provides a place for students to discuss the latest Headlines. Here are some of the highlights.



majestic_moon
 BEIT HANOUN PREP GIRLS
 A SCHOOL, OCCUPIED
 PALESTINIAN TERRITORY
**on the Belarus
 border crisis**

An asylum seeker is a person who has left his country in order to seek protection from persecution and serious violations of his human rights in another country, but has not yet been officially recognized as a refugee, and is waiting for a decision on his asylum claim. Asking for asylum is a human right. Migrants are people who reside outside their countries of origin, who are not asylum seekers or refugees. Some immigrants leave their countries in search of work or study, or to join their families, for example. My opinion is that settlement rules should not differ for immigrants and asylum seekers because they are all looking for comfort and a better life.



alert_ostrich
 ASMAA PREP SCHOOL,
 OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN
 TERRITORY
**on artificial
 intelligence**

If the richest countries develop artificial-intelligence technology and poorest countries do not, I think that it will widen the gaps between these countries. The richest countries will control the market and they will be able to do things that poorer countries can't. For example, I think richer countries associated with artificial intelligence will develop faster than poorer countries because they will have the technology they need to solve problems.