

Comments on Afghanistan's uphill economic battle in Arab News, Aug 23 2021

Dr. Nasser Saidi's comments appeared in an Arab News article titled "[Deprived of foreign aid, Afghanistan's new Taliban rulers face an uphill economic battle](#)" on 23rd August 2021.

The comments are posted below.

"Macro-economic stability cannot be maintained in the short term. But in the medium to long term, if there is a political settlement and relations are re-established with the US, Europe and the Gulf states, they can begin to stabilize it," Nasser Saidi, the Middle East economic expert, told Arab News.

Saidi, who has served as economics minister of Lebanon and vice governor of the Lebanese central bank for several terms, highlighted the likelihood that China and other non-Western countries would see economic and strategic advantages in Afghanistan under Taliban rule – if stability can be achieved.

On economic administration experience:

"They have controlled the trade routes to other countries for some time, which allowed them to finance the Taliban movement. But that will not be enough on its own to finance the entire government," Saidi said.

"I anticipate agreements with China to exploit Afghanistan's natural resources. In that case, China will benefit from the debacle of the US withdrawal," Saidi said.

"It will not come in the form of aid, but in investment in infrastructure and exploitation of natural resources. If Afghanistan is linked to the Belt and Road Initiative, the economic situation could improve dramatically," he added.

Arabian Gulf countries might also be persuaded to take part in the rebuilding of the country. "The Gulf countries don't want to see a destabilized Afghanistan, and might be interested in the natural resources, too," said Saidi, pointing to the prominent role already being played by Qatar in Afghanistan's affairs.