

GLEANINGS II – 894
Thursday August 19, 2021

Quote of the week – “Women are going to be very active in the society, but within the framework of Islam. Women are a big part of society and we are guaranteeing all their rights within the limits of Islam.” - Zabiullah Mujahid -. *Once a lowly peon in the pre-2001 Taliban Ministry of Culture and Information, he has, since 2007, been one of its main spokesmen. But prior to his first ever press conference on August 17, he had always communicated with the foreign media only by phone, text, email, Twitter & on various jihadist web sites - The key words in the above are “within the framework/limits of Islam”.*

No Gleanings last week – On Friday August 13 I screwed up. About to send out Gleanings 893, I did something that made my computer send it into the nethersphere from where even my techie couldn't retrieve it. Then, thr next daydt in three days, that I wasted the morning in Emergency to have them look at my swollen left leg. That turned out to be a waste of time; I have no problem waiting but don't like getting the run-around' for over four hours; so I walked out after having wasted five hours there (*I have since been to see my doctor who prescribed a series of tests, some of which I have undergone, with no results back as yet, except that they could not find a clot; meanwhile I have been self-doctoring by massaging my leg, immersing it twice a day knee-deep for 15 or more minutes in hot, Epsom salt-laden water, and sleeping with my foot elevated with the result that the swelling is pretty wel gone by morning, although my calf remains tender & s pretty well swollen by midday.*

A foretaste of things to come? - On Wednesday August 18, a crowd of *mostly young* people demonstrated on Pashtunisian Square in the city of Jalalabad (pop. 200,000), waving Afghan national-, rather than Taliban-, flags. This was promptly dealt with by gun fire that killed three & wounded more than a dozen (and in recent days Taliban fighters have dealt with the masses around the airport with whips & rifle butts). On the other hand, other protests in Khost (pop. 96,100) & Asadabad (pop. 48,000), and a women's protest the next day in Kabul, went of without a hitch, and on Thursday the annual Ashura commemoration by the local Shiites ¹ of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein was also, unlike some other years was uneventful, although the crowd was much smaller than usual. And now there is anecdotal evidence of the Taliban 'government' sending out letters informing people that they have been sentenced to death without any right of appeal - *While the Taliban leaders, are externally for macro-economic/political reasons on a PR campaign, their less erudite rank-and-file followers have guns, take their leaders' domestic “Forward to the Past” talk at face value & feel threatened by all 'women's lib' talk.*

General Petraeus on the Afghanistan situation – He told NBS on August 18 that those (*incl. President Biden*) who say the Afghan soldiers did not fight for their own country are dead wrong [*for according to Providence RI-based Brown University 69,000 Afghani solders have died for their country in the past two decades, as well as 110,000 (half & half) Afghani militants & civilians and 3,500 coalition soldiers (about two-thirds of them American)*]. ² They only threw in

¹ Who are estimated to account for a minor (<10%) share of Afghanistan's population.

² An August 18 AP article by Ellen Knickmeyer entitled Cost of the Afghanistan War in Lives and Dollars had more precise numbers :US service members – 2,448, US civilian contractors – 3,846, other Allied service members – 1,144, Afghan military & police – 66,000, Taliban fighters – 51,191, Afghan civilians - 47,245, aid workers – 444, & journalists – 72 (although it also reported that infant mortality had been cut in half and that 37% of Afghan teenage girls now can read

the towel after it had become blatantly obvious the Americans were about to 'bug out' (*in a not atypical American fashion?*)³. Today's Taliban has the same dream as the pre-2001 variety of a medieval Islamic Emirate ruled by Sharia law but is just more PR-savvy. But he may be proven wrong in predicting that the US would not recognize the legitimacy of any Taliban regime nor keep an embassy in Kabul, and sooner or later would impose sanctions on Afghanistan – *Petraeus (age 68) is a West Pointer four star general who capped a 37 year career in the US Army as commander of the Multi-Nation Force in Iraq (2007-08) & the US Forces - Afghanistan (2010-11), and briefly as Director of the CIA (in 2011-12) until his affair with his biographer, & US Army Reserve Lt.-Col., Paula Broadwell, blew up in his face.*

Nova Scotia's provincial election – In the 2017 election the Liberals got 39.5% voter support & 27 seats (in a 51 seat Legislature), the Conservatives 35.7% & 17 seats & the NDP 21.5% & 7 seats. And in the last poll before the Tuesday August 17 election each had 38%, 36% & 21% voter support respectively. But when all votes had been counted on August 17, the Tories had 39.2% voter support & 31 seats, the Liberals 36.6% & 17 seats & the NDP 21.0% & 6 seats in the now 55 seat House.⁴

Bad news for Prime Minister Trudeau who, just two days earlier, less than halfway through his second term in office, had called an election for September 20 because he "needed a new mandate to ensure voters approved of his Liberal government's plan to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic" (*but in reality because, with the Poll Tracker favouring his Liberals 34.9-29.4 over Erin O'Toole's Conservatives, he expected it to give him the extra 15 or so seats for the majority he needed to remain Prime Minister without being pestered by the 'deplorables'.*

But a few days earlier a Mainstreet poll reported that 65% of Canadians don't believe this is "a good time for an election", with the high 75% in BC slightly exceeding the 67% in 'vote-rich' Ontario. In the Thursday August 12 National Post's John Iveson reminded readers that in 1965 Prime Minister Pearson, after two years at the head of a minority government, had also called an *early* election, urging voters to give him a majority for "five more years of prosperity"⁵. But, according to Tom Kent (Pearson's then Senior Adviser) in a 2009 article in the magazine Policy Options "voters were apparently pleased enough with what we were doing to give no credence to the plea that we needed a majority in order to continue". Canada faces a possible pandemic 'Fourth Wave' that may not be a Liberal-friendly fact when voters put their X on their ballot on September 20. The latest Nanos poll, published on August 12, found "a significant recoil effect against the Liberals ... *that had* shifted voters from the Liberal column to the Conservative column, probably because they're upset about there being an election [and more specifically noted that in the previous four weeks Liberal voter support had **declined** from 39.3% to 33.4% & that for the Conservatives **risen** from 23.6% to 28.4%, while in Quebec support for the BQ had grown 24% (from 4.8% to 6.3% of the national electorate)]. And voter 'Liberal ennui' may

3 Those interested in the other side of this story can learn about it in a guest essay in the NYT entitled "I commanded Afghan troops this year. We were betrayed" by Sami Sadat, a young Afghanistan National Army commander who headed the 215 Maywand Corps in Southwest Afghanistan.

4 These numbers don't add since, for the first time in over three decades, there will be an Independent MLA in the Nova Scotia Legislature. Elizabeth Smith, a small business owner & RN first won the Cumberland North seat with 51.7% voter support in 2017 as Conservative but was kicked out the caucus earlier this year for allegedly having instigated a blockade at the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick border (*as an anti-COVID 19 spread move*) and this time beat 54.0-31.7 76 year-old Bill Casey, who had been the local Conservative MP for a decade ending in 2007 but had joined the Liberal Party in 2014.

5 And 11 days later Geoffrey Stephens reminded readers in another paper that he may find, as his father did in 1972, that the universe won't necessarily always develop as it should.

prompt a low turnout at the expense of the governing party – *One can only hope that on September 20 voters will sent the mental featherweight Trudeau ⁶ packing (and this comes from someone who, since he became a Canadian citizen on April 2, 1968, (two days **after** the election!) has voted in **every** federal election, & more often than not for Liberal candidates, but won't this time, since the Conservative candidate is such a quality that the Liberal candidate in my riding cannot 'hold a candle' to him).*

Tether – This is a now a US\$64BN market cap cryptocurrency that is deemed a “stablecoin” one since its coins ‘are backed on a 1:1 basis’ by US dollars. But the Economist, in one of its ‘leaders’, on page 11 of its August 7, 2021 entitled “Unstablecoins”, suggests that in Tether’s case this is bunk; for it owns just US\$30BN-worth of commercial paper ... *and thus ...* “With an estimated leverage of 383-to-1 ... would be unable to honour all its tokens after losses of just 0.26%, a safety cushion that regulators would never allow at a bank.” - *This implies Tether is a “scam”, and, in fact, earlier this year it was investigated by the New York Attorney-General (& got away with just being fined US\$18.5MM & a prohibition from doing business in the state), SEC Chairman Gary Gensler has agitated for a need for more authority to regulate the cryptocurrencies, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has gone on record as saying “we have a role as a nation to protect those investors against fraud” & common sense suggests even a tiny ‘run’ on Tether could blow the entire cryptocurrency thing out of the water (and induce the biggest financial crisis ever for the usual reasons : a mixture of greed & overconfidence by immoral financial promoters & naive & history-challenged ‘investors’, and lax regulators?)*

The day of reckoning might be nigh. For like all ‘pyramid schemes’ going back to the bottle of liquor ones of my university days, their sustainability depends on a constant inflow of new suckers. And the momentum seems to have gone out of the cryptocurrency phenomenon. For the number of cryptocurrencies in existence, that supposedly had skyrocketed from 66 in 2013 to 4,501 last February & 6,044 last month this month supposedly declined to 5,840, at the same tome that the July-August monthly MoM rate of growth in the number of ‘Blockchain wallet’ users, that had soared from 32,000 in 2013 to 52MM last year, went from from 11.1% in 2013 via 6.3% in 2015, 8.3% in 2017, 1.7% in 2019 & 2.2% last year to this year’s 0.02%.

The irony behind the Taliban phenomenon – While on the one hand, Washington has been fighting the Taliban on the ground in Afghanistan, on the other hand it has for years been forking out billions of dollars of foreign aid, much of it in the form of grants (i.e. “free money”) to Pakistan, the primary sponsor, mentor & helpmate of the Taliban - *Go figure!*

The week before last Pelosi rained on Biden’s parade – As he was basking in the glory of the Senate passing his US\$1.2TR infrastructure bill 69-31 (with 19 Republicans supporting it), she announced she was not going to let the House even debate it, unless & until the Senate had also passed the US\$3+BN ‘do-good’ “human infrastructure” bill so close to the heart of “progressive Democrats” like Sen. Bernie Sanders & Rep. AOC. And that bill likely has as much chance of surviving in its current format in the Senate as a ‘snowball in hell’. For Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) is dug in against it, and the party has little, if any, leverage on him. He is 73 years of age & is safe in his seat until 2024. And in the past decade West Virginia voters have

⁶ He upset some people recently when, upon being asked about the Bank of Canada, he responded with “you’ll forgive me if I don’t think about monetary policy. You’ll understand that I think about families ...”, seemingly implying he is more interested in spending money than growing the economy (*Thus in the fiscal year ended March 31, two-thirds of his government’s spending was paid for with borrowed money, or with money created out of thin air!*)

turned against the Democrats in droves. Thus he was first elected to the Senate in 2012 (when the number of “red” counties in the state was only three, which has since quadrupled), with 60.7-36.5 voter support but in 2018 just ‘scraped by’ 49.6-46.3, while Shelly Capito, the state’s junior Senator was elected in 2014 with 62.1-34.5 voter support & re-elected last year with 70.3-27.0, & in 2020 the strength of GOP support in West Virginia was second to only to Wyoming, with Trump beating Hilary in 2016 68.5-26.4 & Biden in 2020 68.6-29.7.

Western Canada’s grain crop is a ‘dud!’ – The National Post on August 20 reported on the experience of Hannah Konschuh, the holder of an MSc in Soil Science & the Vice Chair of the Alberta Wheat Commission, on her fifth day of harvesting in 33 degree heat on her family’s farm near the town of Bow River, 25 miles South of Calgary. 2020 had been a bountiful year for her family, with it’s spring wheat yielding 65-, & it’s barley 100-, bushels an acre, whereas this year their yields are only 12-, & 10 to 15-, bushels respectively! ⁷

This year farmers across Western North America likely are experiencing similar yield reductions for whatever crops they grow, which cannot help but result in serious food product price pressures, and a much lower small town Canada & US ‘propensity to consume’.

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IT IS STILL EARLY DAYS, AND THE PICTURE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING IN AFGHANISTAN ... CONTINUES TO DEVELOP (Substack, Heather Cox Richardson)

- The Taliban has regained control of one of the poorest countries in the world. Half its people need humanitarian aid & 90% live on less than US\$2 a day. And under the US-supported government the outside world was funding 80% of its government’s budget and accounted for 43% of its GDP.
- This will be a problem for the Taliban. For the US has frozen billions of US dollars of Afghan government money in the US, the EU & Germany have suspended their financial support for the Afghan government & the IMF has blocked its access to US\$460MM in Afghan government currency reserves. This prompted Adam Smith, a one-time Obama National Security Council staffer to tell the WP’s Jeff Stein “the *resulting* financial squeeze is potentially calamitous for Afghanistan”, threatening a humanitarian crisis that will create a refugee crisis in Central Asia [*while there are already half million IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) in Afghanistan*].
- And, while Russia would be inclined to side with the Taliban in any scrap with the US, its domestic security could be endangered if Taliban extremism were to spill over into other countries (*in Central Asia?*). So, while it says it’s supporting the Taliban, it is stepping up its efforts to help neighbouring countries tighten their borders. And the growing numbers of migrants has given rise to worldwide anti-immigrant sentiments that have given a leg-up to right-wing governments.
- While Canada & the UK are each taking 20,000 Afghan women leaders, journalists, LBGTQ types & human rights workers (*with the former seemingly not intent on making a serious effort to rescue many of the interpreters & others who had worked for, or with, the CAF while it was in Afghanistan*), the world as a whole is building walls to keep migrants out to the point where French President Emmanuel Macron has formally asked Pakistan, Iran & Turkey to prevent migrants to their country from going any

⁷ One bushel of wheat weighs 60-, & one of barley 48.5 lbs (i.e. 27.24-, & 22.02-, kgs. Respectively.

further (which seems like a *'fool's errand'* since they don't want them either, and would be only too inclined to pass on this *'hot potato'*). And in the US the Afghan refugee question is splitting the GOP since 30% of its members (*those in the Trump 'base'?*) have swallowed his anti-immigrant stance hook, line & sinker, while in areas with military installations people say they would welcome them.

- And the Taliban is caught on of a cleft stick. For many of those anxious to leave are the very people it would need to run the government, while preventing them from leaving would antagonize the global community to the point of *negatively* affecting the flow of desperately-needed foreign aid. So while in the streets Taliban fighters harass those trying to leave, Taliban leaders spout 'loose talk' that they will permit them to do so, talk about a blanket amnesty, & pretend they will 'defend women's rights'.
- Much is still unclear and the situation changes rapidly, but my guess is that keeping an eye on the money will be crucial in keeping track of how things will play out.

Taliban rank & file fighters are a pretty bigoted lot, and guns & bigots are a lethal combo! (something US decision makers should keep in mind?) - the writer (age 59) teaches history at Boston College (and previously at MIT & the University of Massachusetts Amherst), while Substack is a San Francisco-based online platform.

IMAGES OF A BABY THROWN OVER RAZOR WIRE GIVE BIDEN'S DESERTION A HUMAN FACE (Daily Mail, Niall Ferguson)

- In this Ferguson reached back to the 2010 diary of Richard Holbrooke to paint a picture of Biden unlike the kind grandfatherly image he seeks to project :
 - "when I mentioned the womens' issue , Biden erupted. Almost arising from his chair, he said 'I am not sending any boy back there to risk his life on behalf of women's rights'...". And when he remonstrated, Biden became heated and said that "I didn't understand politics ... we have to be on our way out ... we have to do what we did in Vietnam";.
 - This shocked me and I commented immediately that I thought we had a certain obligation to the people who had trusted us, to which he responded : "F*** that, we don't have to worry about that. We did it in Vietnam , Nixon and Kissinger got away with that". And maybe that's all you need to know."
- To Biden it's Vietnam *all over again*. The scenes in Kabul are like those in Vietnam in 1975. And he conceded to Holbrooke that his calculation was heartless but thinks that the benefit of being able to say "I brought the boys back from Afghanistan" before next year's mid-term elections will exceed the costs of abandoning the Afghans ... who supported the US presence as soldiers or interpreters, to the 7th century barbarity of the Taliban.

Americans' first reaction may not have borne out the latter belief, for on August 16, the day after the Taliban 'captured' Kabul, his approval rating, that had started out at 53.0% on January 23 & peaked at 54.5% on April 25, dipped below 50%, five days later hit 48.9% & on August 26 was 47.2 - Scottish-born Niall Ferguson (age 55) has a D.Phil in history from Oxford and, after teaching at both Oxford & Cambridge, and LSE, came to the US in 2011 where he has done so at NYU's Stern School of Business & Harvard, and now is the Millbank Family Senior Fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution. And Holbrooke, who died in December 2010 at age 59, was for decades an independent-minded foreign policy 'Man about Town' who at various times was in the US Foreign Service (1962-70), the Peace Corps Director for Morocco & Managing Director

of Foreign Policy (1970-76), worked in the Carter Administration, among others as Assistant Secretary for European and Asian Affairs (1977-81) and on Wall Street (1981-93), during which time he also was Al Gore's Chief Foreign Policy Adviser in his run for the Presidency, US Ambassador to Germany (1993-94), again Assistant Secretary of State for European-, and Asian-, Affairs (1994-96), Special Envoy for the Balkans (1996-99), during which time the Dayton Accord came into being, US Ambassador to the United Nations 1999-2001), active in the global battle against AIDS (2001-08), Hilary's Chief Foreign Policy Adviser in her unsuccessful 2008 run for the Presidency and at the time of his death at age 59 in 2010 Obama's Special Representative for Afghanistan & Pakistan on a pro bono basis.

FOUR REASONS A TALIBAN TAKEOVER IN AFGHANISTAN MATTERS TO THE WORLD **(NPR, Scott Neuman)**

- It will create a (*global?*) human rights problem since the Taliban of today is not really all that different from that 20 years ago (*except that it is more 'PR-savvy'?*);
- Afghanistan could again become a safe haven for extremists; or as Leon Panetta [former Secretary of Defense (2011), Director of the CIA (2009-2011), White House Chief of Staff (1994-97) & Director of the OMB (1993-1994)] puts it, "The Taliban are terrorists, and they are going to support terrorists" (*and there has in recent years been some significant ISIS K/Al-Qaeda activity in Afghanistan*);
- A Taliban-ruled Afghanistan might destabilize Pakistan (*which would serve it right since it has been playing footsie with the Taliban for years*); and
- It would enable China to expand its foothold in in the region. While twenty years ago, only three governments (Pakistan, Saudi Arabia & the UAE) recognized the then Taliban regime in Afghanistan, in recent weeks top Taliban leaders have been visiting Iran, China & Russia, and China has already offered it help with energy & infrastructure projects, and with developing its vast rare earth deposits.⁸ And according to the WSJ the Taliban sees China as a 'foot-in-the-door' way towards international legitimacy & control over Pakistan, a China ally – *And while China has a 13,171 mile-long border with Russia, that with Afghanistan is 57 miles short, enough for easy overland access but not long enough to pose a national security threat.*

WESTERN STATES FACE WATER CUTS AS A SHORTAGE IN THE COLORADO RIVER IS DECLARED (NPR/AP)

- On Monday August 16 the US, for the first time ever, declared a water shortage in the river basin that serves 40MM Americans in the West (& *millions in Mexico*), that will trigger cuts next year to Arizona *irrigation* farmers (that are big producers of livestock & dairy products, alfalfa, wheat & barley, and are already suffering from this year's crippling drought.
- The region's-, & the nation's-, two largest water reservoirs, Lake Mead (behind the Hoover Dam) & Lake Powell (behind the Glen Canyon one) provide much of the household-, & irrigation-, water consumed-, & account for a significant portion of the hydropower generated-, in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah & Wyoming (and Northern Mexico?) and the water level in them has been dropping for

⁸ "Vast" is a gross exaggeration & China may well be more interested in Afghanistan's other mineral resources , like base metals. For at last report Afghanistan was said to be home to 1% of global rare earth reserves & China for 36%.

years to what now are record lows due to their *rapidly growing populations*, less 'snow melt run-off & the warmer temperatures *that increase the evaporation rate*.

- While in 2019 Arizona, California, Nevada & Mexico already gave up part of their water drawing entitlements from these lakes, this was not enough to avoid the shortage declaration. For cuts became mandatory when the water level in Lake Mead dropped below the 1,075 feet above sea level (at which point its water storage capacity drops below 40%) and it is now expected that, come next January, it will be down to 1,066 feet (& further cuts are mandated when if it hits the 1,050 & 1,025 foot levels).
- Arizona will be hardest hit since next year it will lose 512,000 AF (acre-feet)⁹, about 8% of its total annual water consumption, vs. Nevada's 21,000 AF (7%) & Mexico's 80,000 AF(5%), although Nevada also will feel it less than Arizona because of its earlier introduced water consumption reduction efforts.

*This is a crisis long in the making. For so much water has been taken regularly out of the river by riparian communities, that hardly any Colorado River has flown in to the Sea of Cortez for the past half century. In the case of Lake Mead, it started filling in 1935 & in just 7 years filled to its 26.12 MAF-, 1,220 feet above sea level capacity. Then it dipped to 1,081 feet in 1956 & again in 1965, only to refill to a record 1,232 level by 1984 & to 2,015 by the year 2000, and ever since it has been downhill. Ditto for Lake Powell. It started filling in 1963 & by 1975 was filled to its 24.3 MAF capacity at 3,639 feet above sea level. And, while by the year 2001 it had only 3x been below that level, since then it has **never ever** been **above** it and by 2004 had dipped to 3,578 & by 2018 to 3608, due to the fact that in the years 1989-2018 there had been only 9 years of 'above average snowpack'. At last report the level in Lake Powell was 3,551 feet & its YTD annual rate of water release is 7.2 MAF, down from the minimum 7.5 MAF needed & well below the one-time routine 8.2 MAF.*

This cannot help but accelerate the rate of growth in demand for ground water. And this introduces another can of worms. For, as is the case all over the world, in the US too groundwater has been 'overpumped' at rates well in excess of sustainability, causing its level to decline precipitously by as much as 300 feet. Thus volume of water in the Ogallala aquifer, that underlies 174,000 square miles in eight states from South Dakota to Texas now contains only two-third of the water it held less than a century ago, and the withdrawal rate is still accelerating. And in Arizona groundwater is being overpumped at a rate that that caused researchers at the Arizona State University, in a recent 58 page report, to warn that "unsustainable pumping ... threatens the state's water future" (Phoenix alone is pumping groundwater at a 151,000 MAF annual rate (that is causing its level to decline by nearly 2 inches a year). But the worst parts of this are is that a) the lion's share of the groundwater used in irrigating crops¹⁰ with large sprinkler systems is wasted since one-third of the water used evaporates before it can do the plants any good and b) that this irrigation farming floats on government subsidies.

EUROPEANS EXPRESS 'GRAVE CONCERN' OVER IAEA REPORT ON IRAN **(LAS VEGAS SUN/AP)**

- On Thursday August 19 the Foreign Ministers of Germany, France & Britain expressed "grave concern" about a report by the IAEA, the UN's Vienna-based nuclear watchdog,

⁹ 1 AF = 12,335,000 liters.

¹⁰ That accounts for up to 90% of total groundwater withdrawals.

that Iran continues to produce uranium that can be used in the production of nuclear bombs. And it noted that it has significantly increased its production capacity of uranium enriched to 60% (with Iran insisting it is not developing a nuclear bomb-making capacity, but just doing so for the purposes of its civilian nuclear program (*which is utter and easily debunkable nonsense since electricity generation does not require uranium refined to such a high level of purity*). And in their joint statement they say that “Iran’s activities are all the more troubling given the fact talks in Vienna have been interrupted upon Tehran’s request for two months now and that Iran has not yet committed to a date for their resumption”.

The request for an interruption was likely prompted by the imminence of the presidential election that, effective August 3, replaced the 72 year-old ‘moderate’ Hassan Rouhani with the 61 year-old Ebrahim Raisi, a ‘hard-liner’ protege of the Supreme Leader Ali Khameni, who on his second try, after a great deal of election outcome ‘fixing’, got 62.9% voter support after having been ‘taken to the cleaners’ 57-38 by Rouhani in the 2017 election [although Rouhani likely had benefited from the 2015 JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) that his predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, another hardliner, had agreed on with the EU, China, Russia & the US because US sanctions had put the Iranian economy in the dumpster). For after in 2015 Iran’s GDP had declined by 1.3%, it grew by 13.4% in 2016 & 3.8% in 2017, only to decline again by 6.0% in 2018, 7.6% in 2019 & 6.0% in 2020 after Trump in 2018 walked away from the JCPOA on the grounds it had not curtailed Iran’s missile program, nor its growing influence in the region. And while the EU, China & Russia are still seeking to preserve the JCPOA (& extend its current 2025 expiry date?), there is a deadlock between Biden who says he is open to rejoining it but only after Iran stops ignoring the restrictions JCPOA imposes on its missile cum nuclear program, while Iran insists that the precondition for it doing so must be the total removal of all US sanctions.