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CONTENTS

Editorial	2
Pakistan: An Uncertain Present and Future	7
<i>Eric Draitser</i>	
Roll Call of Subversives	12
<i>Usman Khalid</i>	
Russia's Quiet Rapprochement with Pakistan	18
<i>Stephen Blank</i>	
Balochistan: Crossroads of Another US Proxy War?	21
<i>Eric Draitser</i>	
Why the existence of Pakistan is not in India's interest	26
<i>Dr Amarjit Singh</i>	
America is Deluded by its Drone-Warfare Propaganda	31
<i>Patrick Cockburn</i>	
Killing 22 'Maoists': First Triumphant Bluster --Then Lies -- Then Denial	
<i>Trevor Selvam</i>	35
Safe in our Hands: MI5, Death, Destruction and Spymaster Saviours	
<i>Colin Todhunter</i>	38
Carnage And The Motives: Anti Muslim Violence And Anti Sikh Massacre	
<i>Ram Puniyani</i>	41
Tensions and Operational Challenges in Pakistan	45
<i>Scott Stewart</i>	
The Politics of the 'Greatest' Indian	49
<i>Vidya Bhushan Rawat</i>	
India: State and Human Rights Minorities	52
<i>Ram Puniyani</i>	
Pakistan and Emerging Geo-political Scenario	56
<i>Sajjad Shaukat</i>	
The Tragic Killing Of Adivasis In Chhattisgarh	60
<i>Paramjeet Singh & Preeti Chauhan</i>	
India must handle Kashmir dispute carefully	62
The US is at War with Pakistan	64
<i>Asif Haroon Raja</i>	
A Russia House on the Indian Ocean	72
<i>M K Bhadrakumar</i>	
India's blood-stained Democracy	77
<i>Mirza Waheed</i>	

EDITORIAL

A Genuine Apology?

Under intense pressure from Washington, the Pakistani government has lifted a seven-month ban and reopened NATO supply routes through Pakistan to Afghanistan. For its part, the Pakistani government could not afford to back down without some form of apology from Washington, no matter how limited. The decision follows a limited apology on 3rd July by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton over the killing of 24 Pakistani military soldiers in US air strikes last November.

The US made some minor concessions in order to reopen land routes through Pakistan that are vital to supply the US and NATO occupation of Afghanistan, and for the planned withdrawal of troops and military hardware by the end of 2014. For the past seven months, the Pentagon had to rely on northern supply routes through Russia and Central Asia that were costing an extra \$100 million a month.

As part of its wider geostrategic aims, the US was also seeking to ensure that China did not use the standoff over supply routes to strengthen its longstanding economic and military ties with Pakistan. Since coming to office, the Obama administration has escalated efforts throughout Asia to undermine Chinese influence, and reinforce US diplomatic and military ties

Does this mean that US and Pakistan are now set to have a long-term relationship based on mutual trust and respect? We do not see it that way since US views this moment not as a new chapter in ties, but as a continuation of the old story, now that one inconvenient road block has been removed. The United States wanted to have this route desperately but the US will not easily forget Pakistan's stand and defiance on this issue.

In fact the US did not lose any time and within three days it showed to Pakistan what it can do and struck with Drone attack on Friday 6th July in Waziristan. America is thus quickly back on the driving seat and demonstrated that it will not let Pakistani concerns get in the way of its imperialistic goals. But the sheer insensitivity — and imprudence — of the timing demonstrates that, after a rocky year and a half with Pakistan, the

US still hasn't realised how carefully certain aspects of the relationship need to be handled.

By reopening the NATO supply routes, Zardari and Ashraf are clearly hoping for Washington's support to keep the PPP in office and to stave off any threat of a military coup. Anti-US sentiment in Pakistan is deepening. *A survey by the Pew Research Centre, released last month, found that 74 percent of Pakistanis regarded the US as an enemy, up from 69 percent last year and 64 percent three years ago*

However, far from easing the crisis, the resumption of US supplies through Pakistan, along with continuing murderous drone attacks, will only heighten tensions and compound political instability in Islamabad.

Myanmar Engulfed in the Geopolitics of Empire

Myanmar has been gripped by abhorrent ethnic violence in recent weeks – violence which has begun to cast doubt on the democratic future of the country. The sectarian and religious bloodletting between the Buddhist Rakhine people and the Muslim minority known as the Rohingya, has led to an international outcry and a swift military response from the government. This sort of violence, something which is not entirely new in the region, threatens to tarnish the reforms made by the nation in the last twelve months.

However, with the eyes of the world focused on the Southeast Asian country, a much more significant and covert war is taking shape: a proxy war in which the United States and its allies use a variety of violent and non-violent means in their quest to block Chinese economic investment and development in Myanmar. It is against this backdrop that the recent changes, ranging from the ascension of Aung San Suu Kyi to the current ethnic strife in Sittwe, must be understood.

The armed conflicts in Myanmar correspond directly to large-scale Chinese development projects throughout the country. Essentially, long-standing ethnic and sectarian conflicts are being fomented by international forces which seek to destabilize the country, thereby loosening the grip of Chinese economic investment on the country. This is not to say that the conflicts are entirely fabricated but, as in Syria, Libya, and countless other examples around the world, the issue is spun by corporate-controlled media to

obscure the reality that the issue is being manipulated from behind the scenes by the forces of Western imperialism.

Memogate a Reality

After proceedings stretching over six months, the three-member commission set up by the Supreme Court of Pakistan on the Memogate scandal reached an unambiguous conclusion. “It has been incontrovertibly established,” the commission said in its report to the Supreme Court, “that the memorandum was authentic and former Ambassador of Pakistan Husain Haqqani was the originator and architect.” However, the commission left unanswered the question as to under whose instructions Haqqani sent the memo pleading for US intervention to install a new pro-American military leadership in Pakistan and to place the country’s nuclear programme under control.

The memo was thus clearly not a rogue operation as suggested by the main stream media and the PPP but was real and sent under orders of the political leadership of Pakistan. This commission report has restored the credibility of Pakistan army and the ISI for taking a fair and authentic stand on this issue. Now it is up to the Supreme Court to take action against Hussain Haqqani and others. However, in this regard Asif Ezdi a former ambassador makes a very relevant remark when he says *“Pakistan’s tragedy is that those who are powerful or have their backing get away with impunity far too often, whether it is on charges of treason, corruption or other serious offences.”*

One of the best ways to break a nation through 4th generation warfare is to install a corrupt incompetent Government in the nation. US has precisely done that in Pakistan. Present Pakistani Government is the most useful ally of the US. It has damaged and humiliated Pakistan in a way that India could not do militarily. It has devastated the economic, industrial, social and political structure of Pakistan. It is at war with its own people, its military and higher judiciary.

India Battles for Influence

Encouraged by the US and its NATO allies as they prepare to retreat in 2014, India and Afghanistan are deepening their ties, to the frustration of

their neighbour (Pakistan) sandwiched in-between. The two states signed a strategic partnership last year, which among other things promises more Indian help in building up Afghan security forces. More than 100 Afghan officers are attending Indian military colleges, with the number set to rise.

In effect, the next round of the age-old battle for influence in Afghanistan has begun. It has pledged or spent some \$2bn (£1.3bn) worth of aid over the last decade to build roads, power stations and even the Afghan parliament. Though Indian Commerce minister admits Afghanistan is still “one of the riskiest places in the world to do business.” India's state gas company is one of the leaders of a consortium trying to persuade global investors to stump up \$7.6bn (£5bn) for the so-called TAPI pipeline later this year. The project has been derided by some in India as, well, a pipe dream which leaves Delhi beholden to its old enemy Pakistan.

Unless relations with Pakistan improve the Indian investments in Afghanistan are *truly risky* since two nations have no physical connections except through Pakistan. Pakistan is thus not overly concerned with Indian interests in Afghanistan except for India capacity build up to promote terrorism in Pakistan specially Balochistan and Pakhtunkhwa.

Bangladesh under Pressure

Human Rights Watch (HRW), an international human rights body, has urged the government of India to stop human rights violations by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along the Bangladesh border and prosecute those responsible. Human Rights Watch has also asked Bangladesh government to take a stronger stand against the Indian government to stop the killing and torture of Bangladeshis. India is constructing a 2,500-mile wall of concrete and barbed wire on the Bangladesh border costing \$1.2 billion.

At the political front BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia on Monday said that the Awami League government wants to destroy Bangladesh Army in a bid to make the country a vassal state of India. “We achieved independence not to become a state of India. Rather, we want to be a neighbour of India with similar status,” added the leader of the opposition. “They (India) have built

barrages on all common rivers. But, our government failed to address the problem," she said while addressing a mammoth rally at Polo Ground in Chittagong city.

How to Build a Nation?

Mohammad Ali Jinnah the Father of Pakistani Nation

“That freedom can never be attained by a nation without suffering and sacrifice has been amply borne out by the recent tragic happenings in this subcontinent. We are in the midst of unparalleled difficulties and untold sufferings; we have been through dark days of apprehension and anguish; but I can say with confidence that with courage and self-reliance and by the Grace of God we shall emerge triumphant.”

How to destroy a Nation?

One of the best ways to break a nation through 4th generation warfare is to install a corrupt incompetent Government in the nation. US has precisely done that in Pakistan. Present Pakistani Government is the most useful ally of the US. It has damaged and humiliated Pakistan in a way that India could not do militarily. It has devastated the economic, industrial, social and political structure of Pakistan. It is at war with its own people, its military and higher judiciary. Pakistan is in utter chaos.

Kevin Tressler

Pakistan: An Uncertain Present and Future

Eric Draitser

Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani's ouster this week was more than merely a significant development for national politics, it was an unequivocal message to the people of Pakistan that ineptness, subservience, and corruption will not go unpunished. Though it is fashionable to conclude that Gilani was dismissed because of his failure to investigate charges against President Zardari – undoubtedly a major part of this story – the reality is that his ineffectiveness in dealing with a range of issues from energy policy to bilateral relations with the United States is what cost him the premiership.

Political power in Pakistan – always a complex issue – is now up for grabs. The ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has lost its legitimacy in the eyes of the people while other parties struggle to establish a significant base of support. In the background, the military leadership, which has, since the early days of Pakistan's independence, played a dominant role in the political establishment, grows ever stronger. With such doubt surrounding the nation's political future, and Pakistan at the centre of some of the most pressing global issues of our time, the one thing that is certain is that the eyes of the world are watching Islamabad closely.

Corruption and Contempt

The event which directly precipitated Gilani's ouster was the contempt of court charge in relation to his refusal to investigate his close ally, President Zardari, and the outstanding corruption charges against him. Despite being ordered by the court to lead a probe into allegations of money laundering through Swiss bank accounts, Gilani refused and continued in his role as Prime Minister, thumbing his nose at the order issued by the Supreme Court. This week, this brazen disregard for the judiciary finally caught up with the Prime Minister. Although Gilani defied the court order, this was not his only judicial transgression. As Pakistani journalist Atif K. Butt

noted in an interview for StopImperialism.com, “Gilani and other members of the PPP continuously ridiculed the court publicly, in gatherings and on television.” This sort of blatant disrespect undoubtedly angered the Supreme Court Justices and fuelled their desire to remove the Prime Minister.

Despite the personal animosity that exists between the PPP and the judiciary, this was merely the legal explanation for the Prime Minister’s removal. *The series of mistakes and sheer ineptitude of the PPP in dealing with the energy crisis, maintaining productive relations with the United States while protecting Pakistani sovereignty, and addressing the growing unrest in Balochistan and elsewhere, caused the people of Pakistan to be fed up with Gilani and, possibly, made the political decision a “no brainer” for the court.*

PPP Loses the People

The recent rioting throughout the Punjab province is in direct response to the continued policies of “load-shedding” which are the result of Gilani and Zardari’s failure to address the energy crisis effectively. Pakistan, which suffers from a severe energy deficit, has been clamouring for practical solutions to the crisis while the PPP could only offer load-shedding – the policy of shutting off power for hours at a time – as a temporary solution. The people began to take to the streets and, as one might imagine, protests turned to riots in many cities. This sort of unrest on the streets contributed to the climate of anger and frustration directed toward the PPP for which, it seems, Gilani became the scapegoat and sacrificial lamb. The real culprit still sits in the President house enjoying legal immunity.

Although the energy crisis formed the immediate backdrop, perhaps the most critical issue for which the PPP was blamed is the continued degeneration of relations with the United States. In the wake of the repeated violations by the US of Pakistan’s sovereignty, the people held the ruling party responsible for having ineffectively dealt with the Americans. The raid on Osama bin Laden’s compound, the NATO air strike that killed 24 Pakistani military officers and subsequent NATO supply route closures, created tremendous animosity within the population. However, the indignation was not merely directed toward Washington. Instead, the

people looked at the lack of leadership in Islamabad – the government’s inability to take a hard-line position with the Obama administration – as a sign of both weakness and ineptitude. Journalist Atif K. Butt notes that, “The people of Pakistan want to have positive relations with the United States however they feel that, without taking a tough stance on the provocations, the PPP’s weakness only emboldened Washington and contributed to the breakdown of diplomatic relations.”

The mismanagement of the relationship with the US, in light of the fact that Pakistan has sacrificed more than any other country to actively contribute to the so-called War on Terror, was too much for the people to bear. This feeling of distrust, coupled with the anger caused by the continued energy crisis, likely played a significant role in motivating the judiciary to act and to remove Gilani now, rather than later. As in the United States and elsewhere, everything in Pakistan is political and, like any other politicians, the Supreme Court acted in their own political interests and ousted Gilani.

Who Will Lead?

The question of Pakistan’s political future is a complex one. There are some who see this moment as the opportunity for yet another military takeover of the government as has happened numerous times in the country’s history. There are other analysts who believe that there will be new elections held and that another party may emerge to lead the formation of a coalition government. Regardless of who rises to take the reins of leadership, they will face a very difficult challenge.

The demise of the PPP has opened the door for other parties to establish themselves as significant players on the political scene. Among these parties are the conservative Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) and the fast-growing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led by national sports hero turned politician Imran Khan. The PTI, which is still in the infant stages of development into a major political force, represents a possible change on the political horizon. As a party representing a progressive agenda, Khan and his allies might be poised to win a significant proportion of seats in the parliament and establish themselves as legitimate political force. Despite the range of options in terms of the civilian government, there is always the looming possibility of a military takeover. Army General Kayani leads a

a military faction that wields considerable power both in terms of the people of Pakistan and foreign policy and diplomacy. They are very close with the Chinese, generally distrustful of the United States, and much more rigidly represent what could be called a hard-line approach to diplomacy. For these reasons, their reputation among the people is generally positive and, though some Pakistanis do not want a return of military rule, there is a significant portion of the population that would not see it as an entirely negative development.

The Challenges of the Future

However the next government is constituted, it will undoubtedly face very complex challenges the moment it takes over. The energy crisis looms large in the public mind, as does the issue of Pakistani-US and Pakistani-Chinese relations. In addition, the myriad development projects and other forms of economic investment both nationally and internationally will have to be evaluated along with addressing the unrest in Balochistan and militancy along the border with Afghanistan.

Pakistan finds itself facing a severe energy deficit that must be dealt with by the incoming government. A number of international investments, some in progress with others still in the planning stages, are designed to address this. The most significant, both economically and geopolitically, is the controversial Iran-Pakistan pipeline. This project, designed to provide Pakistan with immense amounts of energy from neighbouring Iran, has undergone intense scrutiny in light of the economic warfare in the form of sanctions and other extreme measures initiated against Iran by the United States. This pipeline, dubbed the “Peace Pipeline”, is an essential part of any long-term solution to Pakistan’s energy woes. In addition to this project, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline is also a critical artery for the energy future of the country. Likewise, the CASA-1000 will bring significant amounts of electricity to Pakistan from the former Soviet republics of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. All of these projects represent a viable economic and energy future for the nation, the kind of future that seems to have become impossible with PPP at the helm.

Aside from energy-related issues, the new government faces difficult challenges with regard to relations with both the United States and China.

While the US relationship seems to become more adversarial by the day, Pakistan's ties with China, though strong as ever, also face significant obstacles. China looks to Islamabad to develop the infrastructure connecting the Chinese-funded Port of Gwadar to the rest of the country, thereby allowing the Chinese to utilize the port to its full potential, providing a critical land-based entry point for Chinese imports coming from Africa and the Middle East. There is, of course, the potential too that some of the pipeline projects could, in the future, be extended into China, completely altering the face of the Asian economic region. In addition, China and Pakistan must cooperate on eradicating the terrorist group known as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), also referred to as the "Chinese Taliban" which uses the Waziri region as a base of operations. *For these reasons, along with desire of Islamabad to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the new government must be quick to establish a positive working relationship with China while, on the other hand, working to mend fences with the Americans.*

Domestic security concerns will also dominate the agenda. The new government must address the *militant separatist movement in Balochistan which seeks to destabilize Pakistan through terrorism, kidnapping, and other means. This conflict is understood as being fomented by outside intelligence agencies and will require a very delicate touch.* Separately, the new government must work to carve out its place in a post-occupation Afghanistan – a nation that will be vital to Pakistan and the region's future.

The ouster of PM Gilani and the fall of the PPP create more questions than answers. Pakistan's future depends on recognition of the failures of elected officials and the inadequacies of Pakistani development. *However, at the same time, Pakistan is a nation of potential prosperity. If the new government can reconcile a broken political system with the tremendous economic, political and diplomatic potential, Pakistan is poised to become a regional power able to exercise leadership and promote peace on the world stage.*

Roll Call of Subversives

Usman Khalid

India is relying on President Zardari to deliver ‘economic failure’ to make Pakistan a vassal state like Bangladesh. The focus of this article, however, is the role and influence of Journalists with an agenda. With the increase in the number of TV channels and the viewing habits of Pakistanis, TV journalists influence public opinion more than the politicians. This is welcome because it brings about ‘awareness’ independent of the state education and information system. But our ‘friends’ in the USA and India found in this an opportunity to influence Pakistani public opinion their way.

The Obama Administration has decided to put most of its money to use for ‘subversion’ by infiltrating the media of Pakistan. USA has made no secret of it; aid money has been openly earmarked for ‘journalists’ and media owners. India has been smarter. It used the private sector to woo the Pakistani media. The Times of India and Jang Group of Pakistan got together in a project ‘Aman ki Aasha’ (Quest for Peace). The thrust of this quest is to promote cultural links in which Hindu influences – in music and art – are dominant. The objective is to sideline the struggle for freedom of the Muslims of India which continues – albeit for different objectives – in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (where Muslims are a majority) for joining Pakistan, as well in the rest of India, where the Muslim minority has been repressed and impoverished by design.

That the journalists in Pakistan are eager to establish contacts came out in outbursts by an American diplomat (abridged version below), which was reported widely in the press under the title, “My dog is fussier”.

“We talked to an American diplomat whose job requires frequent interaction with the Pakistani media. This report will not assign a pseudonym, or declare the gender of the American diplomat because that was the condition of cooperation. We will not tell whether the diplomat is still in Pakistan or has moved out.

“Pakistani TV journalists are some of the easiest to buy or manipulate,” said the American diplomat

“Their price is ridiculously small. A drink, a lunch with a second or first secretary in a place where they can be seen by their admirers, invitations to official receptions, or at most, a trip to the states, is all you need to buy their loyalty,” said the diplomat.

“My dog is usually fussier,” the diplomat added in disgust.

The fact of foreign efforts for subversion is well-known as are those who pedal the Indian or American propaganda. The objective of all subversive efforts is as following;-

- 1) Discredit the two most important institutions of Pakistan that underpin its viability, stability and its power – the Judiciary and the Armed Forces
- 2) Discredit the state of Pakistan by underlining that its polity – principle of national solidarity – Islam – is flawed, and that Pakistan has become a ‘security state’ like erstwhile Soviet Union which denies resources for health, education and welfare etc.
- 3) Discredit the structure of the federation to promote centrifugal forces.
- 4) Erode the resolve of Pakistan to help Kashmiri struggle for self determination and other nations in India who seek Pakistan’s support.
- 5) Create suspicion about the usefulness of the nuclear deterrent and undermine resolve to maintain strategic parity with India.

The primary focus and the ‘line’ of each subversive are different but all of them together strive to achieve the five objectives listed above. Former Ambassador (to USA) **Hussain Haqqani and another Journalist – Ahmed Rashid** – direct their fire on the alleged ‘alliance’ of the Mullah and the Military. This is utterly absurd. The state objectives are determined by geo-political realities and the state polity. The armed forces, which are the prime instrument for the achievement of those objectives, have to be loyal to those objectives.

Ayesha Siddiq got a lot of publicity in the USA for writing the book “Military Inc’ on the ‘commercial and industrial ventures’ of welfare funds of the three services. The book pedalled many lies. It said, the Fauji enterprises are owned and run by the GHQ, Air HQ and Naval HQ and pays no taxes. That is untrue. The Fauji enterprises are public owned companies listed on the stock exchange, which have consistently earned a profit and paid taxes to the state and dividend to the shareholders. The role of Defence Housing Authorities as developers also came under attack by her. For decades provincial and federal government spent billions to develop housing colonies and have succeeded in creating new unplanned slums. Defence Housing colonies have not used a single penny of state funds and have built the best run housing colonies in the country where civilians can and do buy property and live in relative peace. What is wrong with that?

Pervaiz Hoodbhoy - favourite on Indian/American lecture circuit for demonizing the military in vicious language

Typical of another category of subversives is US educated academic Dr Pervaiz Hoodbhoy – a physicist who is popular on the lecture circuit in India and the USA because of his abusive language to decry, Islam, Pakistan and everything that is of value to Muslims. Such language coming from a Muslim is music to western ears because it is more effective than the voice of Daniel Pipes and his likes. In a recent article “Let us become proudly beghairat,” he concludes: “A curse upon Honour! It brings to a nation naught but militarization, conquest, conflict, and the pain of war.” It amazes me that we allow such subversives to teach our children. Does he really believe that Europe should have submitted to Nazi occupation? Should the peoples of India have submitted to British occupation? If the answer is, no, why should the Kashmiri put up with Indian occupation? Clearly, his mission is to help India consolidate its occupation of J&K. He is more than subversive; he is a traitor!

Najam Sethi of GEO TV

The most effective subversion is carried out on our TV screens. In what call “GEO Technique” of subversion, the principle followed is: “Half truths are like half bricks; you can throw them farther”. In its programme “Aapis ki baat”, Najam Sethi practices the technique perfectly. The descriptions of

facts are by and large correct; it is conclusion which always is: “Pakistan should do what the USA (or India) want otherwise the consequences would be dire. Every night Najam Sethi issues warning of dire results on behalf of America or India for one hour. His wife – Jugnu Mohsin – does the same in a morning show, “*GEO Shan Se*” for two hours. I cannot be sure if the people believe Najam or Jugnu. But the technique is good. In both programmes the anchors are very likeable persons. Neither anchor expresses any opinion; the viewers are likely to believe what is said because the very likeable Shan (anchor of *GEO Shan Se*) and Munib (anchor of *Aapis ki Baat*) do not disagree.

The most vicious attacks on Islam and Pakistan are made on GEO TV by **Hasan Nisar** on programme ‘*meray mutabiq*’, which in English means, “According to Me”. It is not just the title which is presumptuous, what is said is even more so. In the promo of the programme, Hasan Nisar pontificates, “Nations that distort history are ruined by history” – whatever that means. After saying that he begins to distort history of Islam and Pakistan. He finds no merit in Islam or Pakistan; he reviles both in a vicious language that Daniel Pipe would dearly like to replicate but does not dare. He presents the India view of history in which Muslim rule was the Dark Age. Surely he must know that Moghul rule India was a rich country and an orderly society that it was called the ‘golden sparrow’ and 25% of the world GDP was produced in India. In any other country, Hasan Nisar would have been off air during his first programme for his vile language.

But why does the state of Pakistan put up with so many subversives and so much subversion. It is because the ruling coalition comprises political parties that are anti state i.e., hostile to the polity of Pakistan. This government has failed miserably in doing anything good – in economy, administration or maintenance of peace, law and order. But it is well equipped to provide themes for subversion and its targets are the military and the judiciary. President Zardari does not care if his ministers loot or plunder, but he does care about who to use to undermine the military and the judiciary. The master minds of the this elaborate system of subversion are **Asif Zardari himself and Asma Jehangir**, who defended Hussain Haqqani before the Supreme Court in the Memo case and ‘boycotted’ its proceeding to precipitate the mistake of allowing him to go to abroad on a promise to return on four days notice.

The best known organized group that promotes the Indian line in the name of is **SAFMA** headed by **Imtiaz Alam**. This group is so well funded and so openly pro-India that it has little credibility outside the charmed circle of fellow liberal secularists. But their influence should not be ignored because there are several politicians including federal and provincial ministers and senior civil servants who get into the inner circle of rulers because of their ‘secular-progressive’ views. A journalist friend of mine says there are two types in politics and the media – *sharabi* (drunks) and *namazi* (those who offer prayers regularly). Since birds of feather flock together, the two categories do not mix socially or politically. On a closer look it becomes clear that the hard core of the PPP, MQM and ANP are all *sharabi*. Their alliance is indeed natural and is likely to remain solid.

It has been considered wise to ignore the subversives in the past. Their influence is waning and their line discredited when it is not fiercely opposed. But there are two reasons why it is unwise to ignore them; it is important to remove them from the academia and the press:

- 1) Their presence in the corridors of high academia and power is used as rationale for attacks by suicide bombers and criminal groups.
- 2) The enemies of Pakistan – within and without – use the existence of suicide bombers and militant groups as evidence of Pakistan being a failed state or a terrorist state or even both.

Clearly a coalition of secular liberal parties that rule Pakistan today is a part of the problem. The patriotic majority looks the other way because the civil war is between the two extremes and they are usually not the targets; they are victims only in co-lateral damage. This explains how civil strife has continued in Pakistan without any serious effort to calm the situation. Since the ruling coalition – of liberal secularists – is a party in the civil strife, it has no need or desire to stop the strife. They are arming their side to win in the streets and want the police and the military to take sides – their side – as they are bound by law to obey the elected government. The military has a dilemma: does its duty to the state require it to stop the fighting take priority over its duty to obey the elected executive. According to law and the constitution, their duty is to stop the fighting and take action – if required – against even the ruling coalition. But the position is not so clear

cut. In walk the lobbies allied to Indo-American line and interests through their ‘friendly’ anchors and other journalists. They can and do marshal the argument for India and America even though the counter-argument of ‘patriots’ is stronger and has a much bigger following.

Until now the focus of all writing – in Pakistan and the West – has been to decry the armed forces for their “anti-democracy” role and the “corruption by avaricious Generals”. Since there is evidence of both, the TV channels and the newspapers focused on that and the probability of another coup d’état. However, evidence of corruption by senior military officers was largely hearsay and has since dissipated. But the evidence of corruption by politicians including several Minister fills the TV screens for the ‘eager to know more’ public. *No one in Pakistan would like the military to take over the reins of government. But the military – particularly the intelligence agencies – have statutory role to deal with subversion.* They get a bad name for ‘abducting’ political activists of the right as well as the left, for no dividend in terms of national security. If Makhdoom Javed Hashmi could be sent to jail for slandering the armed forces in private, there is more reason for stiff sentence to those who slander the armed forces and superior judiciary in public. The pendulum has swung too far in favour of subversives. If timely corrective measures are not taken, a military takeover would become necessary. ++

LISA Annual Seminar

This is to inform all readers that The London Institute of South Asia is holding its Annual Seminar on 23 August 2012 in London on “Roots and Realities of Terrorism in the Subcontinent”. For further details please see our website <http://www.lisauk.com/lisauk.com>

Russia's Quiet Rapprochement with Pakistan

Stephen Blank

Four-party talks with Pakistan, Tajikistan, Russia and Afghanistan. (Source: kremlin.ru)

Quietly and unobtrusively, a Russo-Pakistani rapprochement has been developing behind the scenes of world politics for the last two years. On Pakistan's side, the almost spectacular deterioration of relations with the United States and NATO has led it to seek new friends, especially as the North Atlantic Alliance accelerates its withdrawal from Afghanistan. Russia also fully understands that Pakistan is a crucial player in Afghanistan and that, as NATO withdraws; it becomes all the more urgent for Moscow to seek some sort of modus Vivendi with Islamabad. Thus Russia initiated four-party talks with Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan to discuss the latter's future. Furthermore, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari met six times with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev 2008 to 2012, and President Vladimir Putin is set to visit the South Asian country in September.

This modest, albeit real rapprochement is, however, built upon a long-standing foundation of mistrust. Russian officials have long been concerned over the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons arsenal (Geo Television Network, March 25, 2009). Due to those concerns and Pakistan's record, foreign policy analysts like Alexei Arbatov observed that for Russia, Pakistan is a principal potential threat to non-proliferation. Other observers, like the former director of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service and Ambassador to India, Vyacheslav Trubnikov, view Pakistan, Iran and North Korea, as destabilizing nuclear powers (<http://pakistankakhudahafiz.wordpress.com/2009/04/11/pakistan-principle-nuclear-threat-russia/>; Strategic Culture Foundation, May 4, as reported in *indrus.in*, May 5). Therefore, Russia wants Pakistan to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) (*The Voice of Russia*, February 9).

But while this residual Russian suspicion remains, other factors have impelled Moscow to seek a rapprochement with Islamabad. The

deteriorating Afghan situation, the realization that it must deal with Pakistan on its own merits – apart from the Indo-Pakistani connection – to help secure Afghanistan and Central Asia, and the opportunities provided by the erosion of the US-Pakistan alliance are too important for Moscow to avoid. Thus, Russia has now determined to deal with Pakistan independently and acknowledged that relations will be on a bilateral presidential level – as they are with India (The Hindu, September 9, 2010).

Moscow has been alert to these possibilities for some time. Already, in 2009, Russian state television accused the US of trying to destabilize Pakistan to damage China, Pakistan's "all-weather" ally and friend (Rossiya TV, May 13, 2009). Since then, Moscow has also announced its support for Pakistan's efforts to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (Russia Today, May 13, 2011). While this latter move may be regarded as a concession to Beijing who has long-supported Pakistan's entrance into the SCO, there is no sign that China is ready to welcome India, whom Moscow has supported, into the SCO. But there is no doubt that Pakistan's membership in the SCO would strengthen the SCO's claim and perhaps its capacity to involve itself in a post-ISAF Afghanistan.

There are tempting energy and economic objectives as well that could lead to advantageous geopolitical outcomes between the two countries. Gazprom has regularly hinted at its interest in investing in or helping to build the proposed but troubled Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline (RIA Novosti, October 22, 2010; Reuters, March 8). Since that pipeline has been a potential showcase for US policy, Russian participation would not only enhance Moscow's ties and influence with all the players, it would also undermine US credibility and policy in Central Asia. Beyond the TAPI pipeline, Moscow clearly also has interests in expanding its energy profile throughout South Asia, for example in assisting Sri Lanka's oil exploration projects (Lankadeepa [Colombo] June 20, 2011).

As expected, the new rapprochement is also founded on trade. Russian exports to Pakistan rose from \$93 million in 2002 to \$620 million in 2008, and both sides feel there is room for further growth (Interfax, November 7, 2011). Then-Prime Minister Putin said in 2011 that Russia views Pakistan as a reliable and very important partner. Putin's remarks were indicative of how far Russian-Pakistani relations progressed, despite Moscow's long-

held suspicions of Islamabad's aims (Interfax, November 7, 2011). Yet, perhaps the most striking aspect of this rapprochement is that it now may also encompass security cooperation. Discussions are already underway about expanding defence ties by holding joint military exercises, exchanging trainees and trainers, and selling Russian weapons to Pakistan. It remains to be seen if such cooperation will truly materialize and expand. But if it does, the reactions of India and China to these events will merit close scrutiny.

To be sure, Moscow-Islamabad relations are not exclusively positive. Pakistan's support for terrorist groups, its fast-growing nuclear program, as well as its past history of international nuclear proliferation are surely not forgotten. But, as the Central and South Asian configuration of states now undergoes a new transformation, Russia needs to reach out to Pakistan and has the opportunity to exploit Washington's difficult relations with Islamabad. Therefore Putin's upcoming visit to Pakistan in September will be, for many reasons, a visit worth watching.

U.N. Rights Chief calls for Drone probe

Jefferson Morley

The U.N.'s human rights commissioner called for an investigation of civilian casualties in U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan yesterday; as Defence Secretary Leon Panetta said the aerial attacks would continue.

"Drone attacks do raise serious questions about compliance with international law," the U.N.'s Navi Pillay told a news conference in Islamabad, according to AFP. It was the U.N.'s strongest condemnation yet of President Obama's remote control war that has killed four top al-Qaida commanders in recent months and scores of bystanders.

"I see the indiscriminate killings and injuries of civilians, in any circumstances, as human rights violations," she said. "So therefore I stress the importance of investigating such cases and ensuring compensation and redress to the victims," she said

Balochistan: Crossroads of another US Proxy War?

Eric Draitser

The current unrest in Balochistan centres around forced disappearances, kidnappings, targeted killings, assassinations and terrorism. However, these are merely the tactics of a much broader, more geopolitically complex war in which the United States and its Western allies are engaged. Though seemingly insignificant against the backdrop of all the regional and international crises affecting our world, Balochistan is, in fact, a nexus: the point at which diametrically opposing strategic interests converge.

The United States views Balochistan, an area that encompasses western Pakistan, eastern Iran, and a piece of southern Afghanistan, as critical to the maintenance of US hegemony in the Middle East and Central and South Asia. Conversely, China regards the region as necessary for its own economic and political evolution into a world superpower. Seen in this way, Balochistan becomes central to the development of geopolitical power in the 21st Century.

Balochistan's Strategic Location

Balochistan is located in one of the most geographically and politically significant places anywhere in the world. Not only does the region sit astride three countries which have become central to Western political and military power projection, it is also central to the development and export of energy from Central Asia, access to the Indian Ocean, and a host of other geopolitical imperatives for both the West and the SCO/BRICS countries. Because of this, the region has grown exponentially in importance to all the major powers of the world.

Though the land seems, on the surface, to be inhospitable, it also holds great wealth just beneath the soil. Aside from what is believed to be a large quantity of natural gas and/or oil, the earth under the feet of the Baloch people holds vast quantities of minerals necessary for economic

development. Because of this, the conflict raging in the region takes on the added dimension of being a resource war, on top of a geographical and political one.

Balochistan's location has another crucial element that makes it geopolitically necessary: it sits at the crossroads of the most important trade routes between West and East. Although, in the public mind, trade crossroads seem to be a thing of the past (one might imagine the Silk Road being travelled by camel), in fact, they are essential to development. Land-based trade, something the Chinese understand to be a linchpin of their economic and political evolution into a superpower, is impossible without a stable and dependable Balochistan, and this is precisely what the United States and the West seeks to prevent.

This focus on land-based access to trade should always be seen in the context of energy. China's insatiable thirst for oil and gas makes the development of pipelines from Central Asia, Iran, and elsewhere invaluable to them. The Iran-Pakistan pipeline, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, and other projects all serve to increase the importance of Balochistan in the eyes of the Chinese. Additionally, the Chinese-funded, Pakistani Gwadar Port is the access point for Chinese commercial shipping to the Indian Ocean and on to Africa. With all of this as a backdrop, one can begin to see just why Balochistan is so significant to the Chinese and, conversely, why the United States and its Western puppets seek to destabilize it.

Western Subversion and Destabilization

The Western imperialist powers have an obvious interest in preventing a stable Balochistan from emerging. Not only is the region essential to the Chinese, it is also a major part of the covert war being waged against both Iran and Pakistan. Terrorist groups with direct and indirect links to Western intelligence agencies operate with impunity in Balochistan, a vast area that is nearly impossible to police. The Pakistani government is not oblivious to the fact that foreign intelligence agencies are behind much of the violence in Balochistan, a fact that was even stated publicly by former President Musharraf. In fact, Islamabad, though they cannot state it publicly, is aware that its survival rests on the ability to quell the unrest in Balochistan, which

in turn means they must effectively combat the foreign-controlled separatism.

In an article published by the Qatari English-language newspaper *The Peninsula*, the author cited credible sources as saying that “the CIA is indulging in heavy recruitment of local people as agents (each being paid \$500 a month)”. Additionally we know that the CIA, under the leadership of Gen. Petraeus, has been using Afghan refugees to destabilize Balochistan. The significance of these revelations should not be understated. The fact that the CIA is recruiting agents and informants throughout Balochistan indicates that the US strategy of subversion is multi-faceted. On the one hand, a network of agents allows for intelligence and information manipulation while, on the other hand, the United States engages in terrorism through a variety of terrorist groups it controls or manipulates either directly or indirectly. As was reported in *Foreign Policy* magazine, the CIA and Mossad compete to control Jundallah, an important fact because it shows the way in which the Western imperialists use Balochistan, the base of Jundallah, to wage covert war on Iran, including the assassination of scientists, terrorist bombings aimed at critical infrastructure, and targeted killings of ethnic minorities.

Aside from Jundallah, the CIA and its counterparts (MI6, Mossad, and India’s RAW) are actively engaged in the handling and manipulation of a variety of other terror groups operating in Balochistan. The Baloch Liberation Army, headed by Brahamdagh Bugti and others, has long-standing ties with British MI6 going all the way back to the early days of Pakistan’s independence. This group is responsible for countless terrorist actions in the region, all of which have been aimed at innocent civilians. This, and other groups like it, illustrates the way in which the United States and its allies use the weapon of terrorism to create chaos for the purpose of destabilizing Balochistan, thereby preventing economic development both for the Balochi people and, by extension, China.

Political Sabotage

The tactics of subversion are not limited to terrorism and espionage in Balochistan. One of the most critical dimensions of this issue is the use of political destabilization through the US Congress. Lawmakers such as Representative Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), who himself has led the anti-

Pakistan charge, have argued vigorously for the “right of self-determination of the people of Balochistan”. Of course, what he means by this is that he, and others who have a vested interest in the issue, support separatism and the destruction of modern Pakistan. In so doing, Rohrbacher and other members of the Congress act, as they always do, as apologists and facilitators of the US imperial strategy of dividing nations in order to control them. Rohrbacher, who himself has long-standing ties to Al-Qaeda (former mujahedeen) fighters, is a vociferous proponent of a fiercely anti-Pakistan agenda, one which treats that nation as a threat to the United States. Naturally, the only threat Pakistan truly poses is that, in the course of the development of China, Pakistan has chosen to be on the side of economic development, rather than allow itself to be perpetually subjugated to the will of the United States.

The resolution introduced by Rohrbacher, who is the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, called for the US to support Baloch separatism and end relations with the democratically elected government in Islamabad. He has repeatedly issued threats and other provocations which have been correctly interpreted by the Pakistani government as meddling in their internal affairs. The goal of these resolutions and provocations has been to make the case, both politically and in the court of public opinion, that Pakistan is a terrorist state which, because of the twisted logic of the American people, means that the US should be able to do whatever it wants to them.

The goals of the Western imperialists vis-à-vis Balochistan have been, and remain, very simple: destabilize the region in order to block the Chinese from using it to assert their regional dominance and continue on the path to economic development. Using the same, tired tactics of terrorism and political subversion, they hope to achieve these aims. However, unlike the case of the British imperialist ruling class of a century ago, the United States must contend with a Pakistan that maintains a strong current of nationalism, one that rejects the hegemony of the United States in the region, and one that has friends internationally. Unfortunately for the Baloch people, the US ruling class has learned nothing from history and continues to use them as pawns against their perceived enemy in Beijing. Without a strong, nationalist government in Islamabad, one that is willing to do more than just protest US actions, there will be no peace in Balochistan. Instead, the situation will only deteriorate as the US elites

continue their drive for dominance in the 21st Century, whatever the human and financial cost may be.

Eric Draitser is a geopolitical analyst of remarkable ability. He runs "Stop Imperialism" an organization that is devoted to the principle that all nations of the world have the inherent and inviolable rights of self-determination and territorial sovereignty, as well as the right to peaceful economic and political development. Nation-states must not be subjected to oppression, exploitation, coercion, or subversion at the hands of more powerful nations or empires.

What's at Stake

Total US debt is not just \$14.8 trillion, but \$61 trillion (including social security obligation that is off the balance sheet and only disclosed in the footnotes of US government's financial statements as of the fiscal year ended September 30, 2011.) Every US citizens and taxpaying US residents should take 10 minutes to watch this Video made by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), and find more time to read the resources cited in the video, and get involved to change the direction the US is heading.

Video: <http://www.aicpa.org/Advocacy/Pages/CPAsInsight.aspx> (of course much of this debt is due to lavish funding for Israel and countless wars done at the behest of the Israel lobby including the \$3 trillion Iraq war; watch for Iran now! The wonderful hard working Americans I met when I lived there do not deserve this)

Why the Existence of Pakistan is Not in India's Interest

Dr Amarjit Singh

Unfortunately this article represents a typical stereotype view of most Indian elite who have left no stones unturned to destabilize Pakistan. This article by Amarjit Singh bears testimony that alleged paranoia of Pakistan of being Indo centric is perhaps not paranoia but a true assessment of a belligerent neighbour that has not come to grips with its very existence. This article was published in the Indian Defence Review.

Pakistan has been a thorn in India's left side for 65 years, and amazingly, India has tolerated its pain and irritation, against most odds of human nature. After four wars and multiple proxy wars waged by Pakistan, it still doesn't count as much for India – a big elephant that is difficult to move. India's Pakistan policy practices restraint and constraint against an enemy that hates it, that was born in conflict against India in brutal bloodshed, and even now hopes one day to overcome a weak India.

Despite all the difficulties that Pakistan has faced and faces – internal political turmoil and terrorist threats, external issues in Afghanistan, an economy that is on the verge of collapse, and being condemned around the world for its export of terrorism – Pakistan still has the energy and gumption to promote proxy wars in India via Nepal, Bangladesh, and, of course, Kashmir. Which concept of rationality in the modern world can accept Pakistan's belligerent and incongruent worldview, at a time when the civilized world wishes peace and economic prosperity against a threatening climate, growing population, an oncoming oil crisis, and worldwide economic woes?

By all facts and accounts, Pakistan has been sapping India's productive and psychic energy every day for 65 years. It is somewhat true that Pakistan has been bleeding India by a thousand cuts. Look at the billions of hours of productive time and newspaper print and headlines wasted on a Pakistan that is an affliction for India and

perhaps the world. None of the energy spent on Pakistan counts towards India's GDP or improved industrial productivity, nor does it improve the economic position of India. *The industrial production of India, creativeness of its engineers and thinkers, and ability to gain a foothold in the world has been compromised because a Pakistan exists that threatens war on the subcontinent*, distracts national pursuits for excellence, and thereby diminishes foreign investment and confidence in India. *For India to grow and have peace and confidence, it must get rid of the Pakistan* that obstructs it in many ways, even standing against it in its quest for a rightful position on the permanent Security Council, and one that tried vehemently to oppose the Indo-US nuclear deal.

Pakistan is more dangerous as an independent state positioned to be taken over by terrorist elements supported by a manipulative ISI than under Indian control. In fact, the USA must find merit in the argument that it can better contain the terrorists and Taliban with India controlling them than they themselves. While the USA realizes that Pakistan is duplicitous with its terrorists, the USA is unable to see through the haze that can only be seen by those who have lived with Pakistan and in Pakistan's neighbourhood forever, such as India. Neither does Afghanistan's Hamid Karzai trust Pakistan, nor do the Iranian Shia's have much love for Pakistan's Sunnis, even though the Iranians acquired nuclear technology from A Q Khan. A Pakistan that doesn't exist is safer for the world than a Pakistan that does.

Once every few years, Pakistan feigns interest for diplomacy and negotiations (cricket diplomacy, bus diplomacy, this or that) and often brings up ethnic and language similarity with India to suit its temporary interests – only to back off at the last minute and plot new proxy wars or battles against India. *This is of no use to India; in fact, it is a hindrance in India's quest to be a self-confident power in and of it.* Pakistan *presumably* hates India and starts an anxiety disorder each time it realizes that Kashmir may slip from it is grip. Now, in another deceptive move, Pakistan recommends that India withdraw from Siachen – a mistake India can ill afford to make after the mistakes of Haji Pir and the return of 93,000 POW's. Withdraw from Siachen for what? Only for Pakistan and China to occupy

it in a sudden move before the onset of a future China-Pakistan joint invasion of Ladakh? None of the satellite monitoring or UN observation systems will be effective at that time, and China and Pakistan will be staring down at Leh and the valley of Ladakh in free sport. The sooner that India can realize it cannot ever trust Pakistan on anything; the healthier it is for India. In that vein, the dialogue and negotiation with Pakistan that is thrust on India by the USA, only helps to prolong the inevitable and the burning pain. The only way to put Pakistan in its place is to possibly have no truck with it, perhaps even not trade with it. One reason that India often enters into negotiations with Pakistan is because its diplomats need to generate work for themselves to justify their existence; also, the USA quite often exerts pressure on India in its usual patronizing attitude to negotiate with Pakistan. This is not healthy.

Among the most feared aspects of a war with Pakistan is the nuclear element. Now that India has allowed Pakistan to move ahead in this department in the 1970s and 1980s, and failed to implement Operation Brasstacks into a fully fledged invasion of Pakistan, India has to bite the bullet on this score. *Though Pakistan threatens India with nuclear retaliation in an all-out war, this must not hold India back against trashing Pakistan. Whatever others may believe, my opinion is simply that it is better for India to brave a costly nuclear attack by Pakistan, and get it over with even at the cost of tens of millions of deaths, than suffer ignominy and pain day in and day out through a thousand cuts and wasted energy in unrealized potential.* This is not to say that the objective can't be achieved without a nuclear war. In this respect, India's no-first strike policy stands it in very good stead. In fact the process objective must be to achieve the strategic objective through conventional war. Without the elimination of Pakistan, India may never become a secure nation where the mind is held high without fear, and cannot ever hope to attract the type of foreign investment it needs for its economic growth. In addition, the psychological boost that India will get by eliminating Pakistan is unequal in and of itself—one which can propel India into the status of a future, stable, democratic, competitive, responsible, and secular nation.

Analysts tend to ask what will happen to a Pakistan if India defeats it in battle. *The answer is not complicated at all: Baluchistan will become independent, but under Indian security arrangements; Kashmir will revert to India; Sindh and West Punjab will be de-weaponized and become special states under Indian protection; and the entire NWFP handed over to the Pathans for a Pakhtoonistan that includes Southern Afghanistan and Kandahar.* This will have ramifications on Afghanistan, as well, which may then naturally divide into two for its own peace and stability; Afghanistan's northern areas consisting of the Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Hazaras, need to form their own country because they have little in emotional and filial bond with the Pathans. This whole reorganization will change the boundaries of the region, but one that has to be undertaken which will be a welcome change to the current bloodshed, turmoil, and export of terrorism. Very often, major change is needed to change the status quo when minor changes don't succeed.

Much of this is against formal Indian foreign and security policy. The United Nations might also tend to balk at the destruction of a nation member, though it is likely that the West may not shed tears at this. But, this article is not being written to agree with Indian policies, or to present a framework within those policies, or to appease those who worship the Indian mentality. Quite to the contrary, a reformation in Indian policies is presented, and perhaps indicated, one that can give confidence and bring esteem to its people. It is in this light that a new paradigm is advanced. For instance, for long, the Indian policy has been to not engage in cross-border attacks, especially since Prime Minister Inder Gujral passed an ordinance to that effect in the late 1990s. It is to be pointed out that Indian security policies are nothing to be proud of simply for the sake of pride in government. Policies that trample on sustainable Indian pride must be dismantled

The writer feels that the implementation of this new paradigm is ripe for action at this current time where Pakistan is reeling under internal imbalances. If a boxer will not knock out his opponent when the opponent is dizzy and imbalanced, then other opportunities are only guesswork.

Subsequently, India must realize that it has deep religious and philosophical opposition in countries beyond Pakistan to the West. Saudi Arabia finances and supports Pakistan in every way possible and depends on Pakistan for its nuclear shield; the Arab nations have deep links to Pakistan. Discussion on what India needs to do in countries west of Pakistan is best left to another article. Thus, India needs to confront the uncertain future boldly, be a force in the region, spread the message of humanitarian rights and equal opportunity, project itself in the interests of peace and equanimity in the region, and avail of opportunities long before it is itself divided and dismembered.

Thus, the ideal planning option for India is to invest heavily on liberating Pakistan, invest massively in engineering enterprise and education that can advance indigenous armament production, and double or triple its ship building programs and shipyards in which it has exceptional expertise and capability; and it must plan this in ten years, for the plan to be effective to carry a punch. These actions will ipso facto stimulate Indian industry, GDP growth, and bring employment and happiness to its people. Very few educated people understand that money printed but used for stimulating indigenous manufacturing industries actually stimulates the economy, while inflation is checked by means such as control of interest rates and free trade with South East Asian nations. For India to throw its money into foreign nations for expensive defence procurement does not sound like wisdom in action, though one cannot deny that importing defence equipment may be necessary on occasion. India actually begs for enlightened leadership that has moral fibre and a spine to go with it. It is time for the politicians to stop squabbling, for the generals to relearn service in the name of the nation rather than being involved in corruption scandals, and for the nation to get its priorities right and initiate industrial, agricultural, and trade reform. Eventually, for India to succeed, Pakistan must be out of the picture and cease to exist for peace on earth, and India must actively work towards that objective rather than waiting passively in spectator stand. (*Amarjit Singh is Professor and is also a Cooperating Graduate Faculty of Public Administration at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu.*) |*Indian Defence Review*| Issue: Net Edition | Date: 19 Jun, 2012.

America is Deluded by its Drone-Warfare Propaganda

Patrick Cockburn

World View: The use of unmanned aircraft to assassinate its enemies is guaranteed to backfire on Washington

As the US and its allies ponder what to do about Syria, one suggestion advanced by the protagonists of armed intervention is to use unmanned drones to attack Syrian government targets. The proposal is a measure of the extraordinary success of the White House, CIA and Defence Department in selling the drone as a wonder weapon despite all the evidence to the contrary.

The attraction of the drone for President Obama and his administration five months before the presidential election is self-evident. The revelation that he personally selected targets from the top ranks of al-Qaida for assassination by remote control shows the President as tough and unrelenting in destroying America's enemies.

The programme is popular at home because the cost appears not to be large and, most importantly, there are no American casualties. The media uncritically buys into claims of the weapon's effectiveness, conveniently diverting voters' attention from the US army's failure to defeat puny opponents in two vastly expensive campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Republicans cried foul, alleging that the administration is selectively leaking highly classified secrets to portray Obama as a man of decision untroubled by liberal qualms in his defence of his country. The White House expressed itself deeply shocked by such a claim of political opportunism, and last week the US Attorney General, Eric Holder, appointed two lawyers to track down the leakers, though without giving them special powers to do so.

Almost unquestioned in all this is the utility of the drone strikes and whether they really are the wonder weapon they are claimed to be. After all,

air forces have been over-selling precision bombing as a way of winning wars on the cheap since Lord Trenchard ran the RAF in the 1920s. Politicians of all nations have been attracted by new war-winning armaments or commando-type organisations. Examples include Churchill in the Second World War and President Kennedy, who favoured the Green Beret special units and helicopter-borne forces in Vietnam. The media has traditionally gobbled up and publicised tales of magically effective arms or the derring-do of elite detachments, often ignoring their lack of long-term military success.

The most striking but understated feature of the drone strikes in the North-west Frontier districts of Pakistan is that they could not take place without the co-operation of the Pakistani army and its all-powerful military intelligence branch, the ISI.

Some government co-operation is essential in Yemen, too, though less so than in Pakistan because of the weakness of the Yemeni state.

The problem is that high-precision weapons still need ground-based intelligence to identify targets. The difficulty for those guiding the drones from command posts far away has not changed much since "precision bombing" in the Second World War or the far more accurate missile strikes in Iraq in 1991 and 2003. Large, immovable facilities or power stations are easy to identify; individuals are not. In 2003, President Bush brought forward the start of the bombing and missile strikes because US intelligence believed it knew the exact location of Saddam Hussein in south Baghdad. This was destroyed by missiles, but research after the war showed that Saddam had never been near the place.

Up-to-the minute intelligence about who is in what house, and when they are there, requires a network of local agents who can communicate their information immediately. It is very unlikely that the ISI would now allow the CIA to have this sort of network in Pakistan. The crucial information that enabled the US to find and identify Osama bin Laden in Abbotabad reportedly came from the ISI itself.

Of course, an assassination target might be stupid enough to give away his or her position by using a mobile, satellite phone or some other form of

electronic communication. But few insurgent groups today are likely to give away their position so easily.

The result of reliance on the ISI is that it is Pakistani military intelligence officers, and not President Obama or his security and military staff, who really determine what sort of person is killed by the unmanned drones. This is in keeping with Pakistan's cynical but successful approach to dealing with the US since 9/11. This is to be, at one and the same time, its best ally and worst enemy.

It means allowing the US to kill or capture members of al-Qaida in Pakistan, successes that have important electoral benefits for any administration in Washington. At times, Pakistan may look to the US to eliminate a troublesome member of the Pakistan Taliban such as its leader, Baitullah Mehsud, who over-reached himself in the eyes of the Pakistan authorities and was killed by a drone strike in 2009. Over the years, the White House or the CIA has been able to claim successes, such as the elimination of the second in command of al-Qaida or the killing of most top al-Qa'ida commanders, as if Bin Laden's old organisation were the same size as the Pentagon.

What we have not seen is the effective use of US drones against the Afghan Taliban and its allies, who rely on their safe havens in Pakistan.

It is here that the Afghan Taliban's leadership is based, and its ability to retreat into Pakistan has ensured the US military failure in Afghanistan, just as it ensured the Soviet Union's inability to wipe out the insurgents fighting its forces in the 1980s. The lack of good US intelligence on the Afghan Taliban leadership is striking. How else would a shopkeeper from Quetta be able to extract a large sum of money and pose as a Taliban leader in peace negotiations in Kabul?

Unmanned droned strikes are all about American domestic politics rather than about the countries where they are used. They cater to illusions of power, giving Americans a sense that their technical prowess is unparalleled, despite the Pentagon's inability to counter improvised explosive devices, which are no more than old-fashioned mines laid in or beside roads.

The drones have even been presented as being more humanitarian than other forms of warfare, simply by claiming that any dead males of military age killed in a strike must have been enemy combatants.

The downside to these exaggerated successes is that the White House and the US security agencies believe more of their own propaganda than is good for them. Ramshackle insurgent movements in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen are not like regular armies, in which the elimination of officers or senior cadres might be a crippling blow to the organisation.

Just as important, in the long term, assassination campaigns do not win wars, and they create as many enemies as they destroy

SCO Seeks a Role in Afghanistan

- Bloc of Asian countries led by China and Russia is seeking a bigger role. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) should be involved in its "peaceful reconstruction", China's President Hu Jintao said in Beijing.
- The group opposed military intervention in Syria, adding that use of force against Iran - which is an observer at the talks - would be "unacceptable".
- China also offered \$10 billion (£6.5bn) in loans to the bloc's member states. Mr Hu announced the loans in a speech broadcast on state television, but did not elaborate on how the money would be disbursed and used.
- The SCO group - including the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan - was formed in 2001 to curb extremism in the region and enhance border security. It was widely viewed as a countermeasure to curb the influence of Western alliances such as NATO. Pakistan, Iran and India have observer status in SCO.

Killing 22 ‘Maoists’: First Triumphant Bluster --Then Lies -- Then Denial

Trevor Selvam

The standard modus operandi of the mainstream Indian media and the spokespersons of the para-military Police Forces have now become quite predictable. They have developed a programmatic approach when describing their operations in Maoist stronghold areas. The Indian Police chiefs and Administrators (no matter how many Masters degrees their IPS and IAS officers have recently been touted to have gathered in “governance and development”) come out lying in Technicolor, banners waving, whistles blowing when the first reports start coming out about anti-Maoist operations.

The mainstream press led by The Indian Express, Business Standard, Hindustan Standard, sometimes the Times of India and their syndicated news sources including the web-based outfits like DNA and Zee news start out by mimicking the same news headlines over and over again in the first 48 hours and creating a nice frothing environment for Naxalite bloodletting. Next they go on to editorializing and literally go berserk extolling the “morale boosting”, “spirit uplifting”, “hunt down and elimination of the Maoists.” These were the actual expressions used when describing this week’s incidents in Chhattisgarh. Within hours of the CRPF and Cobra Commandos attacking a village meeting in a Maoist stronghold area, the news reports were flashed—“22 Maoists Killed, Major Success! Maoist “base” wiped out etc.”

Within the next 12 hours, the complexion changed somewhat, with the press reporting that 16 Maoists and 6 police officers are killed. As the day wore on the news changed again, stating that two officers are dead and six are injured and there maybe some villagers who are also dead. One whole day later, reports started filtering in, that 11 year old children and 16 year old girls were among those shot dead. *Then the Local Congress Party decides that there is something totally fishy about the reports and decide to carry on an investigation themselves.* The Hindu reports there are doubts about the exact nature of the campaign carried out by the brave Cobra

commandos. There are reports now emerging that majority of those killed were villagers attending a meeting. One local Police honcho wants the world to believe in his lies by insisting that they have recovered the body of a “hardcore” Maoist, whose name they also release. And further on states that he was main organizer of the ambush carried out by the Maoists in the same area on April 6, 2010. Ah! Their intelligence is working! The case is desperately attempted to be closed with such convincing bits of news. Then the semi-literate mob that infests the net, start writing in notes asking for more Naxalite blood. Hip!Hip! Hooray! India is booming... to the sound of Galils, Tavors and Uzis from Israel and the jungles of Abujmarh hear the crashing sounds of India’s first citizens falling to the ground. Their blood is barely dry on the forest floor and the lies, the deception, the stories, the yarns and the Cinderella-esque stories of the new and brave IPS/IAS boys and girls are flashed around simultaneously.

Without disappointing the semi-literate blood cult on the net that thrives on the Bharat-Mata ethos to invoke the wiping out of the Naxalite and simultaneously commending the brave Indian Police forces, let us examine a typical scenario involving the Maoists. The news is not black and white. In fact it is so grey that it starts to turn dark and ominous in no time.

The Maoists do not refer to any of their strongholds as “base areas.” The folks who get fat pay checks in the some of the strategic institutes in Delhi to read Mao, Giap or Che will tell you that these are not Bases. They are essentially guerrilla zones which change hands frequently. What is important to understand is that the people who live in these areas, India’s aboriginal population--- the first citizen’s of this country--- have developed some faith in the Maoists to carry out decent, democratic governance, including schools, irrigation, health clinics and land distribution, a department where Manmohan Singh’s government in Delhi has miserably failed in. But the Maoists know they cannot defend these areas militarily. So their main military force simply carries out tactical offensives from time to time to spread the guerrilla zone. They have their local militia and village defence forces to defend their local governments. These local defence forces are essentially villagers armed with rudimentary weaponry, even bows and arrows. They are there to defend against infiltration by police and political agents and the touts of the mining companies. Their role is primarily local and they have not received training either in guerrilla warfare or in platoon strength operations. This is left to the Maoist regular

PLGA. Once again, those who are thirsty for the blood of the Maoists, may want to do some homework again with those same fat salaried “defence and counter-Intelligence, strategic institute” types in Delhi. I am sure they will agree with me on that score. There is hardly any base, nor is there a fortress. So those Maoist “hardcore” elements are invariably moving in guerrilla detachments, from one political “base” to another. Folks, who have travelled with them, like Arundhuti Roy and others, will tell you that they are constantly on the move. They do not rest.

So, when the Maoists’ regular forces are called to a local meeting by the local peoples’ governing bodies, they do attend. These meetings have to do with settling local issues, tendu leaf collection, forestry issues and anti-mining activities. Now, during such meetings, the brave Cobra forces acquire “intelligence” that “hardcore” Maoists are having a “hardcore” meeting. So they carry out a major assault in the thick of the jungles. The villagers who could be several hundred unfortunately do not have a Maoist headband on their foreheads to identify themselves to the brave Cobras. Nor do their DNA or genes attest to their Maoist leanings, when they have been sprayed with machine gun fire. Their only attestation is that they are better off dead than trying to gain concessions out of the Union of India.

So when the assault is carried out, a segment of the Maoists regular army stay back and defend the village when it is attacked, along with the local defence forces. They know they will be martyred. But that is their political credo, their statement of their beliefs. They will give their lives for the people they serve. So, yes, some hardcore Maoists will get killed. And so will some hardcore Cobra commandos too. Because the Maoists have nothing to lose. They do not get a pay check as do the Koya, the Selwa and the Cobra commandos... But the bulk of the dead will be India’s first citizens. Women and children and elderly, who were attending the meeting and could not flee to the mountains. And the parrot, free-press of India, owned by some ten families, will whoop and holler about the brave Cobra commandos and their continuing successes against the China-armed, Pakistan-infiltrated aboriginals, **Trevor Selvam** *comments occasionally on India's Operation Green Hunt*

Safe in our Hands: MI5 Death, Destruction and Spymaster Saviours

Colin Todhunter

Cast your mind back to the beginnings of the ‘Arab Spring’ and the overriding media narrative at the time. The premise was that spontaneous, grass-root uprisings were spreading within individual countries and then from one country to another largely as a result of the use of social media technology. In many ways, it was reminiscent of the earlier revolutions in Eastern Europe that occurred in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. These revolutions were also portrayed as autonomous people-powered uprisings.

The covert US funding and management of the revolutions in Eastern Europe has been well documented. A series of governments were overthrown by mobilising disaffected, pro-western people financed by the US government via various foundations, such as National Endowment for Democracy, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, Freedom House, the Centre for Non Violent Action and Strategies and the United States Agency for International Development.

Similarly, the US had its fingers all over much of the Arab Spring since before day one. Little if anything was said by the mainstream media about the US government’s role, through its various foundations and institutes. French-Canadian Ahmed Bensaada’s book ‘Arabesque Americaine’ documents the links, funding and main figures behind pro-democracy organisations in over a dozen Arab countries, including Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Syria, which were financed by the US. Indeed, he identifies the specific pro-democracy groups by name and the exact amount of US funding each received.

Notwithstanding the genuine desires, frustrations and grievances that propelled many ordinary folk to join in and take to the streets, as in Eastern Europe, the hand of the US wasn’t lurking too far in the background.

US ally Mubarak wanted to adopt a more conciliatory line concerning Iran and Syria. He was got rid of with relatively little violence. It was different in Libya. Gadhafi's demand for more money from western oil companies (probably in response to Libya having to cough up compensation for victims of the Lockerbie flight, which Libya appears to have had no part in) seems to have been the straw that finally broke the back of a camel that the US had wanted gone for a long time. How convenient to then proceed with more violence to remove another bogeyman regime in the region - the Syrian one.

All of this had been fairly predictable. George W Bush once stated that West Asia through to Pakistan represented an 'arc of instability' and that it was the US government's mission to export freedom there and to bring stability to the region. Look no further than Pakistan to see US freedom and stability in action.

The invasion and occupation of Afghanistan was not just about securing oil and pipelines, but was also about the US having a geographical foothold to wage a proxy war in Pakistan to counter Chinese influence. An active US high-risk campaign has been mounted to divide, weaken and control a nuclear armed country by fuelling ethnic and regional tensions and exploiting factionalism between and within the military, intelligence services and civilian government. The ongoing destabilisation of Pakistan and even eventual balkanisation would serve US aims to assume control of the wider region, from northern Africa to the borders of a compliant India.

The type of 'divide and rule' destabilisation tactics we see in Pakistan have been used by many an empire throughout the ages.

Millions of ordinary decent folk are now living in chaos as a result of US and western interference in their countries. And the same could be in store for millions more. As part of exporting 'freedom, democracy and stability', the US is running covert operations, building bases (or massive embassy compounds) and is involved in training, arming, and funding local forces in 75 countries across the globe.

From Libya and Sudan through to Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and into Pakistan, the US has stoked up ethnic and political tensions and has attacked or debased the sovereignty of nation states in its attempt to secure

control of the entire region. Iran is a work in progress. Whether it is part of the bogus ‘war on terror’, or whether it occurs under the lie of ‘humanitarianism’, US led imperialism has effectively brought an arc of tragedy to the region. And it’s a tragedy of epic proportions.

Little wonder then that, with one eye on the forthcoming London Olympics, the Director General of Britain’s MI5 secret services agency Jonathan Evans in a recent speech declared that there is no shortage of individuals wanting to mount terrorist attacks in the UK. As part of an Anglo-US establishment that is responsible for much of the mayhem in the world, Britain’s MI5 chief could do well to ponder on Noam Chomsky’s comments when asked about the best way to stop terrorism: “Stop committing it.”

In the absence of any will whatsoever by the west to stop committing it, Jonathan Evans went out of his way to reassure the public that MI5 is involved in a courageous, nation-saving battle against terrorism. The Olympics are safe was the message, but we cannot for a second ever let our guard down. It was a message designed for a public that is constantly distracted and misled over what is really happening. It was a message designed for a population to line up and admire with awe the likes of Evans, Cameron and Obama, officials and leaders who are saving the ‘international community’ (the west and its allies – formerly known as the ‘free world’) from destruction by the barbarians.

The national anthem ‘God save the Queen’ will ring out in respect to the monarch when Britain wins its first gold medal at the Olympics. More apt for those who swallow the lies might be to kneel in deference and face spymaster headquarters on the banks of the Thames and sing ‘God save MI5’. Either way, neither will save the world from the destruction and deceit.

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Carnage And The Motives: Anti Muslim Violence And Anti Sikh Massacre

Ram Puniyani

Last few months (June 2012) Narendra Modi has been much in news for his spectacular rise in BJP hierarchy and his projection as the BJP nominee for the future Prime Minister. That there is blood on the hands of Modi, carnage of 2002 Gujarat, cannot be washed off with any amount of pouring the water of 'myth of vibrant Gujarat'. Modi-BJP is also labelled as Fascist by many social scientists-activists. On many a political debates on TV or other forum, when such charges are labelled against Modi-BJP pat comes the reply, if Modi is fascist for Gujarat carnage, what about the Congress-the anti Sikh pogrom of 1984. Its true murder is a murder, inexcusable, irrespective of who does it. In that sense Congress is also guilty of letting Anti Sikh pogrom take place right under its nose, many of its cadres-leaders instigating the riot, while the police machinery at best looking the other way round.

But that's just a part of the story. It's at the level of political process that these carnages, Gujarat and Delhi, cannot be equated and has totally different politics at the back of it. There are carnages which are a part of deeper political processes, and there are other carnages which are accidental, revengeful and 'one go' affair, where political motives if at all are of temporary nature. The Delhi massacre falls in the second category.

On 30h January 1984, Indira Gandhi was walking in her compound to give an interview, and right there her Sikh bodyguards gunned her down. Indira Gandhi was advised to remove the Sikh body guards in the wake of operation Blue Star. In This operation by Indian army Golden Temple was attacked, to evacuate Khalistani militants hiding there. Mrs. Gandhi refused remove Sikhs from her team of body guards rhetorically asking, are we not secular? After her murder the atmosphere in Delhi got charged, the newly sworn Prime Minister was glum, being covered by the TV camera, while the massacre-anti Sikh pogrom started outside. Rajiv Gandhi at this point uttered that infamous sentence, 'When a big tree falls, the Earth shakes'. This was a signal enough for the rioters, the elements from Congress, those shaken by Indira's murder and lumpen-elements to go on with their job.

Rajiv Gandhi visited the riot areas on third day, military was called and peace came in. The process of justice and reconciliation began, some semblance of rehabilitation came through, some semblance of justice began but still a number of those involved in the crime have not been punished. Sonia Gandhi and Manmohan Singh both expressed regret, remorse in their own way. This was a 'one go' political madness in which Sikhs were targeted in the wake of the murder of Indira Gandhi. There was no deeper-long term political agenda. It was a sort of political insanity, momentary and tragic, painful and horrifying which tormented the Sikh community, a political accident so to say.

Gujarat is a different cup of tea. From the decade of 1990, with BJP government coming to power, all the wings of RSS combine, VHP, Bajrang Dal and their patriarch RSS came to full scale, unrestrained activity. RSS Chief Rajendra Singh declared that Gujarat is the 'Laboratory of Hindu Rashtra'. Different villages of Gujarat started putting the hoarding outside their villages. 'Welcome to so and so village of Hindu Rashtra'. Adivasis areas started seeing the intimidation of Christians; Muslim youth were attacked for inter-religious marriages. Meanwhile BJP was losing the grip on the electoral arena and in the forthcoming 2002 assembly elections; the fear was that BJP may lose. Here came the Godhra, Sabarmati train burning, 58 Kar Sevaks, innocents got burnt alive. The local administration said it is not pre planned act. Modi had his own calculations; he instantly declared that it is premeditated act by local Muslim in collaboration with the Pakistan's ISI and International terrorism.

The burnt bodies of Kar Sevaks were taken in a procession on the instructions of Modi. VHP called for a Bandh and as per Citizens Tribunal report and the affidavit of Sanjiv Bhatt, Modi instructed the state administration to sit back and to let the Hindus vent their anger. Modi did not visit the riot affected areas for weeks, till another swayamsevak, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, gathered courage to visit the victims in Shah Alam camp and Modi accompanied him. The mayhem went on and on for months. Refugee camps run by the state were wound up, no rehabilitation, relief and remorse from the state machinery.

The polarization process in the state, the ghettotization of Muslims is more

or less complete by now and Muslims have been relegated to second class citizenship in the state. While few affluent Muslim businessmen are turning to Modi for their survival, the average Muslims are living the life of all round neglect. Most of those who were alleged to be part of leading the mobs, got rewarded, re-elected, though some of them are cooling their heels in the jails under different charges. Gujarat carnage was one more, and most horrifying in the chain of anti Muslim violence which began from the Jabalpur one in 1961 and passing through the other horrific riots of Meerut Malyana, Bhagalpur, Bhivandi, Mumbai in all of which the anti Muslim one's. The percentage of Muslim victims so has been 90%. In many of these the inquiry commissions have showed the role of organizations affiliated to RSS or its ideology of Hindu Rashtra.

The carnage of Gujarat is a part of the series of anti Muslim violence being spearheaded by the divisive ideology of religion based nationalism. In the same 'ideological violence' has come in anti Christian violence peaking in Kandhmal in August 2008.

The issue of Anti Sikh pogrom, equally condemnable has to be seen in a different light. While the anti Muslim and anti Christian violence is guided by the ideological agenda, the anti Sikh violence was a political accident taken advantage of by Congress. It passed off leaving bitter social realities. The anti Muslim-anti Christian violence is the part of slowly developing agenda of Hindu Rashtra, the goal of RSS in this country. This agenda of RSS has streaks of authoritarian ideologies. Social scientists look for analogies for analyzing social-political phenomenon. In case of Modi, who is part of the RSS agenda at political level, their inner differences notwithstanding, the carnage of Gujarat is an expression of Fascism, as politics of religion based nationalism. Like fascism it targets minorities (Jews were targeted in Germany). It asserts its supremacy as a race or religion and harps on the glorious past where the caste and gender hierarchies were the norms. Translated in contemporary times it means abolition of democracy, abolition of liberal space, looking down upon the plural ethos of the nation and turning to the social stratification of earlier times.

While Fascism word is used very often, what is it exactly? Is it a just a dictatorship or is it just massacre of minorities or is there something more to it? These two are the key ingredients of fascism. The other major pillar

of fascism is an intimidation of weaker sections through street violence, abolition of democracy and the creation of hysteria around the infallible leader. Hitler was one such, who wanted nation based on German (Aryan Race), he persecuted the Jews and then Communists, He was glorified as the infallible leader, he usurped all the powers in his hands and did have an aggressive stance towards not only the ‘others’ in the country but also the ‘other nations. Hitler was also the favourite of big capitalists. Is any political leader on Indian political chess board close to these analogies?

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A New Front: Myanmar’s Role in the Geopolitics of Empire

Myanmar has been gripped by abhorrent ethnic violence in recent weeks – violence which has begun to cast doubt on the democratic future of the country. The sectarian and religious bloodletting between the Buddhist Rakhine people and the Muslim minority known as the Rohingya, has led to an international outcry and a swift military response from the government. This sort of violence, something which is not entirely new in the region, threatens to tarnish the reforms made by the nation in the last twelve month

However, with the eyes of the world focused on the Southeast Asian country, a much more significant and covert war is taking shape: a proxy war in which the United States and its allies use a variety of violent and non-violent means in their quest to block Chinese economic investment and development in Myanmar. It is against this backdrop that the recent changes, ranging from the ascension of Aung San Suu Kyi to the current ethnic strife in Sittwe, must be understood.

This is not to say that the conflicts are entirely fabricated but, as in Syria, Libya, and countless other examples around the world, the issue is spun by corporate-controlled media to obscure the reality that the issue is being manipulated from behind the scenes by the forces of Western imperialism.

Tensions and Operational Challenges in Pakistan

Scott Stewart

On June 4, four U.S. diplomats assigned to the Consulate General of the United States in Peshawar, Pakistan, were stopped at a military checkpoint and temporarily detained after refusing to allow their two vehicles to be searched. The diplomats -- including a vice consul -- were travelling in a two-vehicle motorcade and were accompanied by three Pakistani Foreign Service National (FSN) security officers.

According to media reports, the Pakistani military has charged that the diplomats had travelled to Malakand without first obtaining permission from the Pakistani government. Malakand is a city located about 120 kilometres (75 miles) northeast of Peshawar in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, formerly known as the Northwest Frontier Province. Because of the problems Pakistan has had with foreign jihadists in its border badlands, all foreigners are required to obtain something called a No Objection Certificate from Pakistan's Interior Ministry before visiting areas in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and the adjacent Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Furthermore, the Pakistani press noted that the Pakistani military also objected to the Americans and their Pakistani FSNs' being armed and operating vehicles with fake license plates to disguise the diplomatic vehicles.

At its core, though, this incident is not about these small infractions. Indeed, Peshawar is the capital of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province and diplomats stationed there already have received host country permission to be in the province. Additionally, U.S. diplomats assigned to Peshawar rarely venture outside of their secure compounds without a protective detail because of the extreme security threat in the city. Rather, this incident is a product of the strain in U.S.-Pakistani relations.

Motorcade Operations

The threat against U.S. diplomats in Peshawar is quite acute. In August 2008, American Consul General in Peshawar Lynne Tracy survived a small-arms

attack against her motorcade. In November 2008, the director of the U.S. Agency for International Development in Peshawar, Stephen Vance, was assassinated in an attack on his vehicle. In June 2009, Peshawar's Pearl Continental Hotel, which housed many foreign diplomats and U.N. personnel, was attacked with a massive vehicle borne improvised explosive device (VBIED), and in April 2010 the American Consulate building was the target of an elaborate VBIED plot. In May 2011, a U.S. diplomatic motorcade was attacked in Peshawar using a remotely detonated VBIED that was activated as the motorcade drove past. Jihadists also have attacked numerous Pakistani targets inside the city, including military, police and other government officials.

Given the threat in Peshawar, it makes sense that the vice consul would travel in an armed motorcade to attend a meeting -- especially in Malakand, which is even more remote than Peshawar and even more dangerous for a U.S. government employee. The use of fake vehicle tags is also logical. There are places where it is beneficial to announce one's diplomatic status, but in Peshawar, diplomatic vehicles and premises are targeted specifically for attacks. It is also an environment in which the militants possess the weaponry to engage a fully armoured vehicle, so it is much better to attempt to be low key than to maintain a high-profile protective detail. American and other diplomats frequently do this in Pakistan, so it was somewhat disingenuous of the Pakistani military to raise it as a point of contention in this case.

From the configuration of the motorcade as shown on Pakistani television, it appears that it was intended to safeguard the vice consul, who was presumably riding in the rear seat of the first vehicle with a U.S. driver and the agent in charge of his protective detail riding in the vehicle's front passenger seat. The security follow-car appears to have been staffed by a U.S. shift leader riding in the front passenger seat and a Pakistani FSN driver and two FSN security officers in the rear of the vehicle.

It is not clear if the three U.S. security officers are full-time government employees or contractors. They reportedly were carrying U.S. diplomatic passports at the time of the incident, but not everyone who holds a diplomatic passport is afforded full diplomatic immunity. Still, it is likely they were at the very least members of the administrative and technical staff

and that they would be afforded functional diplomatic immunity for activities related to their official duties.

This case is quite unlike the January 2011 Raymond Davis case, in which a contract security officer assigned to the U.S. Consulate General in Lahore shot and killed two men who he claims attempted to rob him. In the June 4 incident, the security officers were with the diplomat they were protecting and clearly were performing their assigned duties. This means they would be immune from prosecution for any violations the Pakistanis can cite in this incident. However, the FSN security officers could find themselves in a much worse position if the Pakistani government decides to pursue charges against them.

U.S.-Pakistani Tensions

While the June 4 incident is unlike the Davis case, it certainly is related to the growing tension between the United States and Pakistan exacerbated by the Davis shootings. The countries' relationship deteriorated further after the U.S. raid on Osama bin Laden's hideout in Pakistan. Relations between the two countries reached an all-time low in November 2011 after U.S. airstrikes against a Pakistani military post along the country's north-western border with Afghanistan resulted in the deaths of 24 Pakistani soldiers. In response, the Pakistani government shut down NATO's supply route into Afghanistan, asked U.S. forces to vacate an air base used to fly unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and suspended military and intelligence cooperation.

After the November 2011 airstrike, the United States noticeably scaled back its UAV strikes in Pakistan. From Jan. 1 to May 21, the United States conducted just 13 UAV strikes while it sought to persuade the Pakistanis to reopen the NATO supply lines. However, since the conclusion of the NATO summit May 21, there have been eight U.S. airstrikes, including three strikes on June 2, 3 and 4.

Considering this dynamic, it was no coincidence that the U.S. diplomatic motorcade was stopped the evening of June 4. The incident was meant to send a message to the Americans -- and perhaps even more important, a message to the Pakistani public, which has been full of anti-American sentiment since well before the Davis case. In fact, the Pakistani

government has used anti-American sentiment as a tool for many years now, spanning several military administrations and now a civilian administration. The presence of a television crew at the scene also raises the possibility that the Pakistani military staged the entire incident.

The video shot by the television crew revealed another interesting point aside from the continuing tensions between the Americans and Pakistanis. Based on the footage, it is apparent that even though it has been two-and-a-half years since the suicide bombing against the CIA base in Khost, Afghanistan, and a year and a half since the Davis case, Washington continues to send Caucasian-looking men to work in this very hostile region rather than recruiting officers who could blend in on the street. The presence of Caucasians in a city like Malakand would draw even more attention than diplomatic vehicle plates.

Following 9/11, there was a rapid increase in the number of case officers assigned to collect information pertaining to al Qaeda and bin Laden, and the CIA was assigned to be the lead agency in the hunt. According to government sources, one big problem with this was that most of the case officers hired were young, inexperienced and ill suited to the mission. The CIA was simply unable to recruit case officers who understood the region's culture, issues and actors and who could move imperceptibly within the local milieu. Instead, the case officers are obviously foreigners. Along with the threat level in places like Pakistan and Afghanistan, this ensures that these officers, like other U.S. government employees in the region, receive protection when they leave secure compounds.

Not only does the United States lack officers who can blend in within the region, but also the Americans' operational security is typically worse than al Qaeda's. The areas where the remaining al Qaeda leadership is hiding are remote and insular. Visitors to the area are quickly recognized and identified -- especially if they happen to be Caucasian. Local residents who spend too much time talking to such outsiders often are labelled as spies and killed. These conditions have helped the jihadists maintain a superior human intelligence (and counterintelligence) network in the area.

The June 4 incident highlights the persistence of these organizational problems as they continue hampering U.S. efforts to collect intelligence in Pakistan.

The Politics of the 'Greatest' Indian

Vidya Bhushan Rawat

Indian's have always been fascinated in comparing people and using the best available adjectives for their favourite leaders and sports stars. It is unknown to us to respect the diversity of these people and understand that each one of the leaders had their own qualities which influenced us. It is also important to understand that different political leaders and sports persons were born in different era and had different sets of challenges before them hence a comparison cannot be made. Of course, it is important that when we do such surveys, we keep in mind growing realities of the time and their relationships with the people. The fact is that, you would find it difficult to vote for a writer or a philosopher as the 'greatest Indian in this age when Saas Bahu serial are so powerful that an Smriti Irani could find way for the 'greatest' Indian slot than a writer who might have influenced our thoughts . It might also be possible that a Cricket Star or a Film star may get more votes than many of the personalities who dedicated their lives for the nation building.

The greatest problems with Indians are their understanding of history which is very limited. We, as a nation, have no sense of history in any stream. That is why these polls are farcical and cannot decide about the greatness. You cannot decide who is great and who is not based on these surveys. The problem with such a poll is that they are unscientific and are meant to promote certain individuals and provide legitimacy to them for fixing the agendas of the nation.

Now, we are hearing about the 'greatest' Indian and that include people from different streams. So, you have so many people in the list including businessmen, cricketers, film stars, and off course, political leaders of different variety except for Mahatma Gandhi who we have already anointed as 'greatest' Indian. Why and how come Gandhi has been declared as India's 'greatest'. Which survey or referendum is making Gandhi the 'greatest'. When you are putting Gandhi's contemporaries on the poll, why Gandhi was left aside? Was it a fear that Gandhi might be defeated in the online survey and that would expose all the hollowness of Gandhian greatness? It is a very smart move by the channel to save them from the

wrath of the government who might feel offended with any reference to Gandhi.

The interesting part of the online poll is the hollowness of the idea itself. Now among Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Rajendra Prasad and Mahatma Gandhi the poll is easier and undoubtedly Gandhi will be the greatest Indian and you can always claim who is the next one after Gandhi if we have to discuss among ourselves. But when there are diverse issues and history is being revaluated with Gandhi and Congress party's role being scrutinized in a more scientific way than it was done earlier, a poll who is greatest Indian after Gandhi is a betrayal of the sentiments of the country as we would like to ask when was the survey for 'greatest' Indian ever done and who got what? The greatest Indian need contemporariness and cannot be found which look like a match fixing event. Definitely, it could be the person who influenced India or maximum number of Indians. Now, if we say, Gandhi influenced our psyche the most, then we must analyze what is that point of Gandhi that influenced us and where do we stand. Just by voting who is the 'greatest' by random online voting will not change the realities of our life.

Our question is not that channel should not do it. They should do it and sit and analyze it. But why who is greatest Indian after Gandhi when we are talking about the contemporaries of Gandhi himself. During his life time, Gandhi was projected to be the greatest among the upper caste Hindus. Definitely, any poll would have left Jinnah on the support of the Muslim votes only and Ambedkar did not have a possibility of winning the poll that time as the Dalits had not come to the age as middle classes. If you opt for a referendum today in India about the greatest Indian, Gandhi may not get that walk over as our people think and Ambedkar may easily push him down. The editors can depute their reporters on four important days and find how people celebrate them. Yes, depute your reporter on October 2 nd or January 30 th which are Gandhi's birthday and the day he was shot by Nathu Ram Godse. Find, how many people attended the programme and whether these programmes were government sponsored or self sponsored. Let us also depute our reporters on April 14 th and December 6 th, the day of Ambedkar birth and when he passed away respectively. And you will realize who influenced India the most and who is the greatest.

Let us not forget that this is growing Ambedkar era with rising Dalits sentiments which were never ever accepted and respected during Congress lead freedom movement when Gandhi was at the helm of affairs. That time, the Dalits were just marginalized and their voices were drowned in the upper caste hatred, contempt and anger. Today, things have changed. Despite efforts by the power elite to deny Dalits their history and glory, they have traced their history and did not depend on what the upper caste intellectuals have been projecting them about the greatness of others. Ambedkar remained the tallest and unquestionable the greatest icon for the Dalits who changed their lives. There is no other thought and no second person who can come near him. That is why the Dalits feel hurt when the poll suggests the 'greatest' Indian after Gandhi. None of them would ever accept Gandhi as 'greatest' Indian.

It is a very questionable motive to start the online poll as who is the 'greatest' Indian after Gandhi. Perhaps, they had feared it in advance that Ambedkar can easily over take Gandhi in these voting as with growing number of Dalit middle classes online users whose life was vastly influenced by Dr Ambedkar will never settle for anything less than the greatest. India is a subcontinent and it would be difficult to decide about such things as the 'greatest'. The greatest of the upper castes may not be the greatest for the Dalits and other marginalized communities. If 'greatest' has to be done through the referendum then the government must come out with a referendum as who are the greatest. Let these TV channels not play politics with people's sentiments. India cannot have 'greatest' Indian after Gandhi when we have engaged contemporaries of Gandhi who differed with him sharply and never ever called him a Mahatma leave alone the 'greatest'. It is time when we evaluate our people impartially and agree that there were weaknesses in them and they too made mistakes. The business of 'greatest' Indian must stop as it exploit the sentiments of the people and do not allow them to think rationally that all these 'greatest' people were human being and acted according to situation that time and made mistakes too.

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India: State and Human Rights Minorities

Ram Puniyani

In Kalyan a Muslim youth Bilal Shaikh was slapped with a non-boilable cognizable offense (May 2012) under section 333, after he jumped the traffic signal. He was assaulted brutally by the police for having arguments with them, suffered a fracture in right arm and was in jail for eight days. The policemen who beat him up got released with the non-cognizable warrant.

Another Muslim youth Mohammad Amir Khan, age 18, preparing for his school exam, was abducted by police, charged with being the mastermind of serial blasts in Delhi, was charged under all the possible sections, tortured in jail for 14 years and finally released in 2012 when no evidence was proved in the courts.

In the series of blasts, for which now Aseemanand-Pragyasingh Thakur and company is now cooling the heels in jails, many a Muslim youth were arrested after every blast in Malegaon, Mecca Masjid (Hyderabad), Ajmer and Samjhauta express. In all the cases the Muslim youth had to be released as police had no credible evidence of any sort. In the meanwhile many of them had to drop out from their studies and their careers were ruined.

In the recently released (June 2012) report by Tata Institute of social sciences, the observation is that 36% of the jail inmates in Maharashtra are Muslims while the population of Muslims in state is close to 10.6%. The report was sponsored by the Maharashtra States' Minorities Panel. The findings of the report are in conformity with the Sachar Committee report and general observation of Human rights activists.

Most of the arrests of Muslim youth are prompted by the prevalent stereotype of 'Muslims are criminals, terrorists'. These stereotypes are highly prevalent not only in society but also amongst the bureaucracy, particularly the police and amongst intelligence agencies.

Many in the police force are totally in the grip of communal thinking and with their infinite power they unleash themselves against the Muslim youth at every conceivable opportunity. The rise of communalization of society and more particularly after the coming up of the terrorism of Al Qaeda variety, the stereotypes about Muslims have worsened

One recalls that this type of terrorism was subtly brought up by United States for pursuing its goal of controlling the oil wealth. The attitude of authorities has become more anti minority and this in turn has undermined their professionalism and they are guided more by their biases than by the rules of law

.There are multiple reasons for the Muslim youth being targeted by the state authorities. True, that some Muslim youth have fallen prey to the illegal activities due to the abject poverty which they have to suffer. Still the major reason for their being indiscriminately arrested by the police relates to the misconception regarding acts of terrorism and communal violence.

In communal violence, the major culprit instigating the violence is majoritarian communal forces. The study of different inquiry committee reports by Teesta Setalvad (Communalism Combat, March 1998) shows that in most of the cases of violence it is the RSS related organization, already prevalent or floated specially for the occasion, which is in the lead.

Even in Mumbai violence, Shrikrishna Commission held Shiv Sena as the major factor leading the violence. As such Muslims are 13.4% of the Indian population according to 2001 census, but amongst the violence victims 90% are Muslims. Police and many a times political leadership takes the attitude which increases the insecurity of the community.

The worst part of this phenomenon is that in popular perception it is alleged that it is Muslims, who start the riots. Dr. V.N. Rai, who has done a major study on the communal violence points out that generally a situation, is created where the minority community is forced to throw the first stone on many occasions. To worsen the matter, after the violence the majority of those who are arrested for communal violence are Muslims again

The recent acts of terror and attitude of police are very reflective of the whole process. In most of these acts of terror, Malegaon, Ajmer, Jaipur and

Samjhauta express blast, many a Muslim youth were arrested as the ones' who have done the act. Police machinery produced evidence of their involvement with some Pakistan based terror group; SIMI was always blamed for many of these acts

.Even at that time there were enough pointers that police investigations and action defies common sense. Police had the standard formula for arresting Muslim youth after every blast. They made it a practice to implicate the Muslim youth and put on their head the charge of blast and their link with Lashkar-E-Tayyaba, Indian Mujahedeen, SIMI or some such group

.Social activists kept pointing to the authorities about the leads showing in another direction from where the acts of terror were emerging. Police totally biased with prejudiced mind set kept on repeating the same pattern over and over again.

Once Hemant Karkar's immaculate investigation showed the link of Malegaon blast to Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur's motor cycle and her links with many Hindutva groups the matters came to a halt.

Sadhvi's links with Swami Dayanand Pandey, Lt Col Prasad Shrikant Purohit, retired Major Upadhaya, Swami Aseemanand and many others of Hindutva ideology revealed that police till then was totally acting in a wrong manner. In this light Human Rights organization ANHAD (Act Now for Harmony And Democracy), organized a tribunal in Hyderabad, 'Scapegoats and Holy Cows'

.The report of this tribunal was very damning of the actions of the investigation authorities and the state. Logically with the arrest of Saffron terror gangs the acts of terror seem to have come to a halt.

Despite this, the attitude of police remains as biased as before and in the day to day life they display this partisan behaviour. This biased attitude of state machinery, police and intelligence authorities in the main, has been ruining the life and careers of many a Muslim youth

The feeling of insecurity amongst the community as a whole is on the rise. This feeling of insecurity is crippling the possible growth of the community. Those implicated in such acts are also boycotted by the

community and have faced immense personal, social and economic losses.

It is time that the Human rights groups intensify their campaign to protect the innocent Muslim youth, the legal measures need to be strengthened whereby the police cannot exercise its biased attitude in arresting any Muslim youth. Measures are needed to ensure that police-intelligence agencies takes up more professional attitude overall and more particularly in the matters related to minority youth.

Apart from preventive legal steps we also need to work against the prevalent social biases against Muslims in particular. The myths against the community, which are historical and contemporary issues, which are related to the causes of acts of terrorism need to be countered by spread of truth about these myths.

India Must Stop Killing and Torturing

Bangladeshis

Human Rights Watch (HRW), an international human rights body, has urged the government of India to stop human rights violations by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along the Bangladesh border and prosecute those responsible. Human Rights Watch has also asked Bangladesh government to take a stronger stand against the Indian government to stop the killing and torture of Bangladeshis.

HRW recalled that in December 2010 it released the report “Trigger Happy”, which documented the excessive use of force by the Indian Troops at the Bangladesh border as well as nearly 1,000 killings by the BSF over the last decade.

Human rights activists charge that the BSF is committing grave abuses on these desperate people, including torture and murder, in defiance of the laws of both countries and a violation of promises made earlier to exercise restraint.

India is constructing a 2,500-mile wall of concrete and barbed wire on the Bangladesh border costing \$1.2 billion.

Pakistan and Emerging Geo-political Scenario

Sajjad Shaukat

We are living in a world where shift occurs in international politics from time to time, depending on the relationship of big countries. Now, new geo-political scenario is emerging rapidly in the world, focusing on Afghanistan, while Pakistan has become special arena of the major countries' rivalries

Although leaders of all the concerned countries expressed cooperation among themselves, emphasising stability in Afghanistan in various summits and conferences held in the recent years, yet all are preparing for the new cold war which US intends to initiate against China and Russia.

In this respect, during his Asia visit, on June 2, this year, US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta disclosed in Singapore, "The United States will shift a majority of its warships to the Asia-Pacific region by 2020" as part of a new US military strategy in Asia. Panetta's Asia visit came at a time of renewed tension over claims in the South China Sea between China and Philippines, a major US ally. Besides, US also backs other countries like Taiwan, Brunei, Vietnam and Malaysia against China's legitimate claim

During his trip to Australia, on November 17, 2011, President Barack Obama, while sending an unmistakable message to Beijing said, "The United States is a Pacific power, and we are here to stay," and he would send military aircraft and Marines to Australia for a training hub to help allies and protect US interests in Asia. Obama stressed that any reductions in America's defence spending will not come at the expense of that goal.

Besides some other countries, America has also troops and security relationships with New Zealand and some Gulf countries. Disagreements also exist between Washington and Beijing over Taiwan issue. American strategic thinkers take China's military modernisation as a great threat to its military bases in the continent. While Russia opposes US intentions to deploy national missile defence system (NMD) in Europe, and expansion of

NATO towards Eastern Europe. In this backdrop, the Russian President Putin had openly stated that his country was returning to its Soviet era practice

.Russia, on January 18, 2012 rejected the tough US-led western strategy of sanctions over Iran and Syria. In this regard, on February this year, Russia and China vetoed the UN Security Council resolution, calling the Syrian president to step down. Both Moscow and Beijing had also opposed the US-led NATO attack on Libya, while they have asked the US to resolve the question of Iran's nuclear programme peacefully. But America and Israel are still acting upon a war-like diplomacy against Tehran

.Notably, old NATO ally Turkey also changed its policy. Now, by supporting the cause of Palestinians, Ankara is increasing trade with Iran—not to comply with sanctions against Tehran. Keeping new emerging geopolitical scenario in the world, Pakistan is also strengthening its ties with Turkey.

While, since May 2, 2011, tension already existed in Pak-US ties when US commandos killed Osama Bin Laden, and the same received a greater blow on the November 26 incident which killed 24 soldiers on Pak Army outposts. In response, Pakistan blocked the NATO supply to Afghanistan and closed the Shamsi Airbase. Finally, Islamabad decided to reassess its engagement with the US. It also rejected American duress in relation to IP gas pipeline project with Iran, and is no more interested in the US-supported gas pipeline project, Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP)

.Taking note of US anti-Pakistan plans, besides China; Pakistan has also cultivated its relationship with the Russian Federation. Moscow and Islamabad agreed to enhance bilateral relations in diverse fields. In 2010, the then Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin publicly endorsed Pakistan bid to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) which includes Central Asian Republics as permanent members. Putin also remarked that Pakistan was very important partner in South Asia and the Muslim world for Russia

Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari participated in the 12th summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization recently held in Beijing. While addressing the summit, hinting towards US secret designs, Chinese

president Hu Jintao said, “The international situation has been complex, thus bringing many uncertainties to the regional situation. He explained, only when SCO member states remain united can they effectively cope with emerging challenges.” President Putin said, “SCO should enhance security cooperation”

.After the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan in 2014, US has decided to establish six military bases in that country having eyes on the energy resources of Central Asia, with multiple strategic aims against Pakistan, China, Iran and Russia.

Meanwhile, during his recent visit to New Delhi and Kabul, by reviving old blame game, US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta allegedly remarked that drone attacks would continue on terrorists’ safe havens which Pakistan “offers to insurgents in Afghanistan”.

”Leon Panetta also encouraged India to take a more active role in Afghanistan in training the Afghan forces. India which has already invested billions of dollars in Afghanistan, signed a wide-ranging strategic agreement with that country on October 5, 2011.

In fact, it is due to the Pakistan’s province of Balochistan where China has invested billions of dollars to develop Gwadar seaport which could link Central Asian trade with rest of the world irritates US and India. America which signed a nuclear deal with India has been providing New Delhi with sophisticated defence-related arms to make it a great Asian power to counterbalance China, control Balochistan and subdue Iran. For these purposes, American CIA Indian RAW and Israeli Mossad have been supporting subversive acts in various places of Pakistan and separatism in Balochistan besides backing similar acts in the Iranian Sistan-Baluchistan including Tibetan regions of China.

At this delicate hour, when Pakistan’s diplomats were negotiating a complex issue of resumption of NATO supply routes to Afghanistan with America, drone attacks killed more than 50 people in FATA. This action is part of anti-Pakistan campaign.

Pakistan’s Foreign Minister reiterated seeking apology from the US on Salala incident for reopening the NATO supplies. US officials refused to

tender apology. Pakistan's civil and military leaders apparently remain firm on their stand that the issue of NATO supply lines guidelines.

However, rapidly developing geo-political differences among global powers in Asia show that the next cold war is likely to be waged between the Russia-China alliance and the US-led block in Asia, while Pakistan has already become its arena. Hence, US-backed infiltration of militants from Afghanistan and unrest continues unabated in our country.

Pakistan is the only declared Islamic nuclear power. It has a strategic geo-political location at the corridor of world major maritime oil supply lines, and has close proximity to oil rich central Asian countries. Pakistan's location could influence Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East. So, Pakistan is focus of attention in wake of emerging geo-political scenario.

Sajjad Shaukat writes on international affairs and is author of the book: US vs. Islamic Militants, Invisible Balance of Power: Dangerous Shift in International Relations.

US- Pakistan Relations

While US apology, and subsequent re-opening of supply line and funds transfer that US owed Pakistan, were important developments, "it would be a mistake to believe that US-Pak relations are now 'back on track,'. Disputes over drone strikes, intelligence sharing/cooperation, and the role of the Haqqani Network remain serious and unresolved.

Above all deep distrust is at the very heart of the problem, despite at least one shared goal of a relatively stable and peaceful Afghanistan. Both countries have their own version of how Afghanistan should look and these versions are quite different. Pakistan believes that US will leave all debris from its misadventure in Afghanistan and apprehends that US wants to dismantle its nuclear assets thus destabilizing Pakistan leading to a collapse.

Editor

The Tragic Killing Of Adivasis In Chhattisgarh

Paramjeet Singh & Preeti Chauhan

People's Union For Democratic Rights (PUDR) condemns the cold-blooded and cowardly murder by security forces of 19 villagers of Sarkelguda in Chhattisgarh including five children in age group of 12-15 killed with bullets, axes and knife wounds, as well as sexual assault of four teenage girls. The incident once again exposes how dispensable and inconsequential is the life of the Adivasis people of Chhattisgarh for the Indian state. The sheer brutality and complete impunity with which the forces have acted, is matched by the doublespeak of the political class. We have the Union Home Minister naming three "hardcore" Naxalite only to find that there is no person named Mahesh among the dead; Nagesh is a 17 year old student of class 10 and another Nagesh is a 'dholak' player.; Somulu the supposed 'hardcore naxalite' was a marginal farmer. The Union Home Secretary claimed that no children were killed, not even bothering to explain the five children among the dead. Clearly in the eyes of the political class the men, women and children who were killed did not deserve to be the recipient of the development and progress that the political leadership keeps tom-tomming.

What is also shocking is the concerted attempt by the bureaucracy and the executive to cover up the massacre. The arrogance of power drove the CM of Chhattisgarh to defend the killing by claiming that villagers got killed when they were used as 'human shields' a fact unequivocally denied by villagers. The state home minister claims that if people are present at any meeting with Naxals then it is alright for soldiers to kill them. Read together with the Union Home Secretary's remarks to the Standing Committee of Parliament that his orders are to troops to "arrest or kill" then it becomes clear that the war against people who are resisting corporate takeover of their land, forest and water is being stepped up to scale new heights of barbarity. It is no less alarming that senior officers of this force say that forces are justified to open fire no sooner they 'come under attack.'

In this case, even that is dubitable and has been clearly denied by the villagers. This signals an open acceptance that what is being done is not any "police action" where restraint is the operative word but a war in which soldiers go on a killing spree. The very fact that some of the villagers were killed after these soldiers had taken physical control of the villages corroborates this.

All these facts suggest that there's a war on in Chhattisgarh. Not a war in which the people of Chhattisgarh are collateral damage, but a war in which the Adivasis of Chhattisgarh are indeed the enemy.

Noticeably not only are all these rationalisations post the hulla, horrifyingly enough they are also seen as self-explanatory. No need to establish identity, investigate or prove a crime; and after the killing, no requirement to follow due procedure and uphold fundamental rights, no need to conduct post-mortems, to make the reports of these public, or to explain the axe marks. Nor any requirement to establish their own veracity- Pellet injuries as the government doctor says, or AK 47/ SLRs as jawans and officials claim? Who cares - not the government certainly?

The slow decimation that the tribals of Chhattisgarh were experiencing in the 60 years following partition- no medical facilities, malnutrition, displacement- has been speeded up in the last few years first through Salwa Judum and now through Green hunt. It has today reached a point where the state doesn't even feel the need to at least maintain a veil of accountability. Its pursuit of loot of the mineral wealth of the state in the interests of corporates at the cost of the life and liberty (dignity it never bothered with) of the people of Chhattisgarh is now brazen reality. To turn a blind eye is to now become complicit with the state in the ongoing war against the people of Chhattisgarh.

We appeal to all democratic people to come out in protest. The only way in which we can stop this savage war against our people is by bringing the criminals of CRPF, Cobra and Chhattisgarh Armed Force (and their masters in the bureaucracy and the executive) to justice and demand accountability of the government at the state and the centre..

India must handle Kashmir dispute carefully

Beijing, MTT News Desk: China has said that if the Kashmir dispute is not handled carefully by India, it may have negative impact on Beijing's bilateral relations with India. However, it said that China had no intentions to meddle in the dispute.

The statement was given by the Spokesman and the DG of the Information Department of Ministry of Defence, Senior Col Geng Yansheng, while talking to a group of visiting journalists from India.

Maintaining that Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory between India and Pakistan, China has also expressed the hope that the two countries will be able to resolve the issue bilaterally and peacefully.

"Our stand is clear. Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed area between India and Pakistan. It is a sensitive issue. China is handling this sensitive issue carefully to avoid any misunderstanding."

It was in this context that Beijing refused permission to General Officer in Command of the Udhampur based Northern Command of Lt Gen B S Jaswal to visit China in August 2010, which triggered a major diplomatic row between India and China.

Sr Col Yansheng said, India and China are two major emerging powers in the world and it is in their benefit to work together for the promotion of peace and tranquillity in the world.

Kashmir is one of the oldest unresolved disputes in the list of UN. The dispute arose when India entered its troops into Kashmir in late 40s and claimed that the whole state of Jammu & Kashmir is part of India.

Pakistan, on the other side, refused to accept Indian claims on Kashmir. After India invaded into Kashmir, Pakistan also ordered its armed forces to respond to the enemy forces. With the help of tribals, Pakistan freed Gilgit, Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir from Indian occupation.

However, after the ceasefire agreed by both countries, the remaining part of Jammu & Kashmir remained under Indian occupation since then.

China always favoured Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir. Recently, China stopped giving visas to the residents of Occupied State of Jammu & Kashmir (OSJK) on Indian passports. But, on the other hands, residents of Gilgit, Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) are given visas on Pakistani passports.

China's recent statement that Jammu & Kashmir is a disputed territory between Pakistan and India, shows that China consider Kashmir a legitimate part of Pakistan.

India Battles for Influence

Encouraged by the US and its NATO allies as they prepare to retreat in 2014, India and Afghanistan are deepening their ties, to the frustration of their neighbour (Pakistan) sandwiched in-between. The two states signed a strategic partnership last year, which among other things promises more Indian help in building up Afghan security forces. More than 100 Afghan officers are attending Indian military colleges, with the number set to rise.

In effect, the next round of the age-old battle for influence in Afghanistan has begun. It has pledged or spent some \$2bn (£1.3bn) worth of aid over the last decade to build roads, power stations and even the Afghan parliament. Though Indian Commerce minister admits Afghanistan is still “one of the riskiest places in the world to do business.” India's state gas company is one of the leaders of a consortium trying to persuade global investors to stump up \$7.6bn (£5bn) for the so-called TAPI pipeline later this year. The project has been derided by some in India as, well, a pipe dream which leaves Delhi beholden to its old enemy Pakistan.

Unless relations with Pakistan improve the Indian investments in Afghanistan are truly risky since two nations have no physical connections except through Pakistan. Pakistan is thus not overly concerned with Indian interests in Afghanistan except for India promoting terrorism in Pakistan specially Balochistan and Pakhtunkhwa.

The US is at War with Pakistan

Asif Haroon Raja

The US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta has emerged as the chief basher of Pakistan. He has been spewing venom against Pakistan from the time he took over as Director CIA. He was the one who advocated making drone as a choice weapon in war on terror and in accelerating drone war in Pakistan since 2009.

This is notwithstanding that the final approver is President Obama and he signs the death warrants. Despite Pakistan's loud protests to put an end to extra judicial killings through drones which kills 97% of innocent people, Panetta arrogantly says that drone strikes would continue. His attitude towards Pakistan, particularly Pak Army and ISI has always been abrasive and hostile. All the statements he made on Pakistan as head of CIA and now as Defence Secretary were stinging and threatening.

Stiff necked and arrogant by nature, Panetta sees everything in Pakistan with a jaundiced mind. We recall how he behaved after the shocking 2 May stealth raid in Abbottabad, asserting that either Pak Army/ISI were complicit or inefficient. He is principally responsible for dissuading Obama to extend a formal apology over Salala incident.

He has been trying to intimidate Pakistan to reopen NATO supply lines and made an issue over cost of transit fee for containers. He provocatively stated that the US will not pay excessive transit fee of \$5000 per container knowing well that the US is currently paying five times more to the Central Asian States to transport supplies via northern route.

He is the one having created hype over conviction of traitor Dr Shakil Afridi who worked as CIA agent and was linked with a terrorist group Lashkar-e-Islam (LI) in Bara. Afridi-Mangal Bagh connection is another clue that CIA is connected with LI.

Finding that his bullying tactics are not working because of the solid front put by Gen Kayani and new DG ISI Lt Gen Zaheer, his blood pressure has risen so high that he has become a madcap. On his recent trip to New Delhi,

in an attempt to irk Pakistan, he sang the tune of Hillary Clinton provoking India to play a more active role in Afghanistan

At Kabul, he growled that the US is at war in Pakistan's FATA. He said that the US had reached its limits of patience and it couldn't tolerate Haqqani terrorists residing in North Waziristan (NW), come across the border, attack and kill ISAF troops and return back to their safe havens. He warned that Pakistan must eliminate insurgents' safe havens in North Waziristan.

Let us examine the grouses of Panetta whether they have some meat, or are capricious and motivated. If the militants belonging to one-third force of Haqqanis under Sirajuddin are crossing over from 2-3 crossing points into adjacent Paktia and Khost provinces where bulk of Haqqanis under Jalaluddin are operating in eastern Afghanistan, why can't ISAF and ANA equipped with sophisticated surveillance equipment intercept the infiltrators crossing the border by manning border posts and mining crossing places? NATO had launched an operation in Khost last year; why couldn't it subdue the main body of HN or was it just a ruse to lure Pak Army? Why have most of the border posts opposite North Waziristan and South Waziristan (SW) been withdrawn? Why can't the infiltrators be caught and killed when they marry up with their comrades across the border and then travel upwards towards their intended targets well in depth

Why does the 480,000 strong combined force of ISAF-ANA-Afghan Police-US security contractors expect Pak security forces to singly take on the dual job of fighting the militants in all the seven tribal agencies and adjacent settled areas as well as man over 1000 border posts all along the porous western border and also check infiltration while the other side conveniently adopts a rearward posture to avoid battle casualties and bad mouth Pakistan? It complains like a fidgety and nagging mother-in-law.

It wants Pakistan to continue deploying 147000 troops along its western front without expecting payments for services rendered. Rather, it wants additional forces at the cost of thinning its presence on eastern front to launch another military operation in North Waziristan but without asking for reimbursement of dues. Stoppage of \$800 million CSF is not aid money but the arrear repayments of 2010/11, Washington owes to Pak Army.

The US is at war with Pakistan since 2002 but kept it hidden till Obama took over in January 2009. By accelerating drone war in FATA and stepping up covert war and propaganda campaign after declaring Af-Pak region as a single combat zone, the US had subtly converted its covert war to overt war.

Since March 2009, SW and North Waziristan have been mercilessly hit by CIA operated drones killing hundreds of innocent civilians, mostly aged men, women and children, sleeping in their houses. Although big claims have been made that high profile al-Qaeda leaders were targeted by drones, the fact is that 97% of victims are civilians and veracity of 3% killed militants has never been substantiated.

If the safe havens are in North Waziristan as alleged by Panetta, it boggles one's mind as to why the Predator and Reaper drones, supposed to be precision guided systems didn't destroy any of them? The only restraining reason could be that the US considers all the towns and villages in North Waziristan as sanctuaries and want Pak Army to destroy all of them.

If the ISAF with the help of ANA had been successful in overpowering the strongholds of Taliban in Eastern and Southern Afghanistan, which constitute 60% of total territory of the war torn country, it could then justifiably lament over the adverse impact of safe havens across the border and blame Pakistan? Reality on ground is that the ISAF and ANA have utterly failed to contain the rising power of Taliban what to talk of subduing them.

It was because of stiff resistance put up by the Taliban that the US was compelled to order complete withdrawal of combat troops from Afghanistan by December 2014. Hardly a day passes when no clash or bomb blast takes place resulting in fatality of occupation troops and such incidents occur in all parts including Northern, Western and Central Afghanistan including Kabul.

So how come, the whole onus of ISAF's performance is attributed to few crossings in North Waziristan by elements of HN? How come, a tiny portion of HN in North Waziristan has become such a dreadful monster that it has crippled the military power of US-NATO-ANA? If it is such a horrifying fiend, why it is expected that it can be tamed by Pak military?

Safe havens and HN are not the problem; the real problem is that groups under the command of Maulvi Nazir in SW, Hafiz Gul Bahadur and Haqqani group in North Waziristan refuse to tow American line and are not confronting Pak Army. The US is forcing Pakistan Army to mount an operation in North Waziristan so that all militant forces including pro-Pakistan groups gang up against it.

Let us now examine the conduct of Pakistan's so-called allies bunched up in Kabul. Isn't it true that the CIA invited RAW to Afghanistan to undermine Pakistan? Isn't it a fact that the US and Karzai regime helped India in establishing dozens of Pakistan specific consulates filled with RAW officials and in establishing over 100 training camps closer to Afghan-Pakistan border to train saboteurs and in allowing India to transport thousands of tons of arms, ammunition, explosives and military trainers to Afghanistan under the garb of road construction projects? Who would believe that RAW, and RAAM created by former, carryout covert war against Pakistan at a massive scale without the knowledge and connivance of Washington, US military, NATO and CIA? It is now an established fact that a group of six colluding intelligence agencies under CIA stationed at Sehra Naward near Kabul are assiduously working on an agenda to secularize, denuclearize and balkanize Pakistan.

Who can deny that Pakistani Taliban were the creation of CIA and Mossad to defame Islam and Afghan Taliban, and to incapacitate Pak Army? Who doesn't know that Nek Muhammad was the first one cultivated by CIA to confront the Army, and when he learnt that he had been wrongly briefed and he signed a peace deal with Lt Gen Safdar at Shakai Fort in June 2004, he was killed by CIA operated drone.

It is a well known fact that Abdullah Mehsud after his arrest in Afghanistan in November 2001 was shifted to Gitmo Prison where he was thoroughly brainwashed and then infiltrated into FATA via Afghanistan in 2005 to galvanize Taliban movement. Likewise, his cousin Baitullah Mehsud was also brought in line and the two worked independently but in unison to establish TTP. Both had been led up the garden path that the US will help in creating Islamic caliphate in FATA.

Pakistan has ample proofs of foreign support to Mullah Fazlullah in Swat. He and his followers after being dislodged from their base have been

provided safe havens in Nuristan and Kunar from where they are carrying out acts of terror in Mehmmand, Bajaur, Dir and Chitral duly aided by Kabul regime and agencies. Unlike state sponsored cross border terrorism from across western border, Pakistan or its Army and ISI are not involved in abetting cross border terrorism into Afghanistan or even in Kashmir where genuine freedom movements are waging. While the other side has no proof against Pakistan, the latter has abundant proofs against Afghanistan based intelligence agencies

.It is an open secret that the training centre run by Mossad in Badakshan for which Muslim religious teachers were provided by India imparted ideological training to young recruits and trained them as suicide bombers. Targets given to them were military convoys, mosques, shrines, funerals, wedding parties, schools and religious scholars. Can the US deny that Blackwater secretly inducted in Pakistan in early 2008 is the extension of CIA? Documents seized from the car of Raymond Davis and diary containing addresses and phone numbers revealed that he and his colleagues were linked with all terrorist groups in Pakistan and a huge CIA network was operating in Pakistan.

Isn't it true that despite the policy of appeasement, top officials of Pakistan have been off and on mentioning in categorical terms that RAW is involved in Balochistan? PM Gilani had handed over proofs to Indian PM Manmohan at Sharm-el-Sheikh in 2009 which shook him. India's RAW-run websites like www.saag.org openly claim India hand behind Balochistan. Karazi has been shown proofs by ISI on several occasions that Afghan soil is used by RAW and others to destabilize Balochistan and FATA. Dissident Baloch Sardars like late Balakh Marri, Brahamdagh Bugti and several others that led the insurgency were provided safe havens in Afghanistan and were patronized by CIA, RAW, MI-6 and Mossad

All these agencies have established their tentacles in Balochistan and in league with BLA, BRA and BLF are involved in attacking security forces, target killing non-locals and Hazaras, abductions, and mutilation of dead bodies. 30 Farari (training) camps are operating in Afghanistan and 121 in interior Balochistan to train Baloch terrorist groups as was disclosed by IGFC Balochistan in his press conference on 2 June. He said our agencies are confronting 20 foreign intelligence networks in Balochistan. Several runaway Baloch rebels are living in luxury in European countries and USA

and are encouraged and helped by foreign powers to pursue their separatist agenda. US Congress, Senators and media are audaciously running a campaign for independent Balochistan

.Having forced the Army to take up a backseat, the rebels and their mentors now want the paramilitary forces to also pack up and clear the way for foreign intervention unopposed. For this reason, issue of missing persons is being blown out of all proportions. Retired Justice Javed Iqbal heading the Commission on missing persons stated that there was concrete evidence to show that foreign intelligence agencies were responsible for making Balochistan restive as well as the disappearance of Baloch nationalists. He decried the baseless propaganda by foreign and local media about missing persons that FC and agencies were involved in this racket.

What I have failed to comprehend is the infuriation of chief justice Iftikhar over the press conference of IGFC Balochistan Maj Gen Obaidullah concerning foreign intervention and worsening law and order situation of Balochistan. He has further tensed the situation by stating that he might summon Gen Kayani before the court if enforced disappearances didn't get controlled.

Now that IGFC's his services have been placed directly under Chief Minister Raisani, the latter should order elimination of rebels training camps which are training target killers and saboteurs and terrorizing people of Balochistan. I am sure, the US and India so fond of eliminating sanctuaries and training camps in other countries would have no objection to this act against terrorism. Or else, the US could be requested to divert few of the drone strikes from FATA to Balochistan to destroy Farari camps.

Pakistan's alliance with the US has proved very costly. It suffered a loss of 40,000 human lives, \$70 billion economic loss and extreme social trauma. Pak security forces have suffered 5000 fatalities while combating militants, mostly aided by foreign powers. No other country involved in fighting terrorism can match Pakistan's sacrifices.

Had it not been for the excellent fight put up by the Army, Frontier Corps, Frontier Constabulary, Levies, Khasadars, Police and tribal Lashkars and routing the strongholds of the militant forces in Swat, Shangla, Malakand Division, tribal agencies of SW, North Waziristan, Bajaur, Mehsud,

Kurram, Orakzai, Khyber and Dara Adam Khel, as well as provincially administered tribal areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, terrorism would have flooded Pakistan and then spilled over to India, Iran, Afghanistan Central Asian States, China and Russia.

ISAF could not have stayed on for that long in Afghanistan. In other words, Pakistan is absorbing the major brunt of terrorism as a frontline state at a very heavy cost and easing the pains of all these countries. Its sacrifices are unparalleled and resolve unshakeable.

Instead of appreciating its difficulties and rewarding it for what no other country could do, Pakistan is being unjustly distrusted and punished by the US and neglected by the world. Pakistan's interests are disregarded and sovereignty repeatedly violated.

Pakistan has been rendering full support to USA even after finding out that it was being treated as a foe. NATO containers were allowed to transit through Pakistan from October 2001 till 26 November 2011 free of cost. Pakistan continued to follow the policy of appeasement despite Washington's spiteful attitude and didn't run out of patience. It blocked the supply routes only when the US arrogantly refused to own up its mistake of brutally killing 24 soldiers of Pak Army at Salala and to tender an apology and to stop mutilating Pakistan's sovereignty by ceasing drone attacks.

The US wants the supply routes to be reopened or else it will block the aid supply and may even impose sanctions, or attempt another unilateral military action. The US behaved in a similar haughty fashion when Raymond Davis was arrested and when the US Navy SEALs carried out a unilateral strike in Abbottabad.

Believing in the dictum of 'might is right', power drunk American leadership wants Pakistan to accept its insults, humiliations, discriminations and lies without uttering a word of protest and behave like a slave country. America is the most impatient and trigger-happy country which acts on its whims, but Panetta incongruously says the US is losing patience.

His Asst Defence Secretary Peter Lavoy also came with a swollen head thinking that the threatening posture of his boss might have softened up Gen Kayani, but he got the shock of his life when Kayani fittingly refused

to meet him. Times have changed and earlier the US understands it, better will it be for it.

It is time for the US to admit its follies in Afghanistan and stop playing a double game of fighting and talking with the Taliban in the same breath. Time for fighting is over and now the entire focus should be on negotiations to ensure a safe and speedy withdrawal of 130,000 troops and heavy equipment stranded in Afghanistan. At the same time, the US should also pick up moral courage to admit that it has made mistakes in dealing with Pakistan and should take immediate steps to alleviate the hurts it has caused to Pakistan and to remove its security concerns.

Both are possible only if Obama wriggles out of the heavy-handed influence of Pentagon and CIA and relies more on Pakistan to help in ending the endgame on a positive note favorable to all the stakeholders. At the same time our leaders should also become more assertive in highlighting the perverse role of foreign powers in internal affairs of Balochistan and present solid proofs to the world bodies and international community at the earliest.

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DON'T LOSE PAKISTAN

Alexander Evans

Washington should use the window between now and the moment when the United States is no longer dependent on the Pakistan-Afghanistan supply line to restructure their bilateral relations. An open discussion of what the relationship could look like in the future could focus minds in Islamabad. Public threats and Drone attacks, however, run the risk of pushing Pakistan further away and making core U.S. interests even harder to defend.

A Russia House on the Indian Ocean

M K Bhadrakumar

The building blocks of the historic visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin to Pakistan in September have begun arriving in Islamabad. It is a poignant moment in the region's history and politics. This will be the first time a Russian president visits Pakistan since its birth in 1947.

The Russians are fabricating some hardy bricks for the mansion they hope to build in the region which forms a beachhead on the Indian Ocean - a mansion large enough for their friends in Pakistan and in the neighbouring countries of India, Iran and Afghanistan to consort with them.

But then, the very sight of the Russian bricks infuriates the United States. The point is, this Russia House will stand bang on the way of the New Silk Road that the US has been planning, which also needs to run through Pakistan. If the access is blocked, it becomes problematic for the US to keep together the body and soul of the tens of thousands of its troops who were hoping to settle down in the Hindu Kush and Central Asia as pioneers in the "Wild West" of China's Xinjiang and on the "soft underbelly" of Russia.

In sum, the battle is joined for influencing Pakistan's future. The stakeholders are many and a keen struggle lies ahead, since at the core of it lies a host of other issues of profound consequence to world politics - energy security of the two big power-houses of Asia (China and India), the future of the New Middle East, and of course, the US strategy to contain Russia and China.

Moscow deputed a talented and vastly experienced diplomat to visit Pakistan in May to make an estimation of the lay of the land. He was a surveyor of great experience whose reputation is the stuff of legends in the Hindu Kush Mountains - Ambassador Zamir Kabulov, Russia's point person for Afghanistan. By the choice of Kabulov, Moscow also gently stated its broad intentions as regards its architectural design, namely, that it is a mansion with Afghan characteristics.

Following up on Kabulov's visit, Russian experts began arriving in Pakistan. The proposals they brought are of momentous significance to the long-term security and stability of the region. Moscow has zeroed in on energy cooperation as the fulcrum of its nascent cooperation with Islamabad.

A six-year old idea reappears...

This is a shrewd decision by Moscow since energy security is a key issue in Pakistan's political economy today, no less important than terrorism. Much of Pakistan gets only a few hours' electricity in a day and the people's rancour is visible. Moscow has assessed that energy security is integral to Pakistan's capacity to maintain "strategic autonomy" as a South Asian power of standing and, therefore, by assisting that country in this sphere, Russian geopolitical interests in a vast swathe of the Greater Middle East stretching from the Persian Gulf to China's Autonomous Region of Xinjiang would also be served.

Besides, in immediate terms, mutual understanding with Pakistan is becoming an imperative need for Russia in the post-2014 scenario in Afghanistan, where the Western powers would have withdrawn the bulk of their troops but are nonetheless establishing an open-ended, sizeable military presence of tens of thousands of combat troops.

Russia and Pakistan are joined in their opposition to the long-term occupation of Afghanistan by the West; Russia hopes to influence Pakistani policies with regard to Afghanistan's future and, in turn, cooperation with Pakistan enhances the overall Russian resilience to play an effective role in the stabilization of Afghanistan and in providing security to Central Asia; and, equally, a strong relationship with Pakistan - in the field of energy security, in particular - can provide yet another underpinning for Russia's strategic ties with other key regional powers, especially China, India, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Last but not the least; Pakistan is a valuable interlocutor for Russia with regard to the activities and movements of the militants operating in North Caucasus.

Having said that, Russia weighs its options carefully and is averse to

embarking on Soviet-era adventures that might be a drain on its resources. The priority of the Russian leadership lies in regenerating and innovating the economy and building the national strength, and in the case of Pakistan, Moscow estimates there could be an interesting partnership of much economic value to Russia and of mutual benefit.

All in all, Moscow's strategy is to develop new sinews of cooperation with Pakistan that are sustainable, durable, and which dovetail with Russia's vibrant strategic partnerships with China, India and Iran

Put differently, the Russian approach becomes a necessary regional-policy "adjustment" or even a pre-requisite to the impending admission of Pakistan and India into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as full members. Putin is an action-oriented statesman and the unhappy part is that six long years have passed since he first proposed at the SCO summit in Shanghai in June 2006 the setting up of an energy club within the regional grouping comprising the energy producing countries of Russia, Iran and the Central Asian countries and the three big energy consuming countries of China, India and Pakistan.

It was at the very same Shanghai summit of the SCO that Putin came out openly for the first time to say that Russia's energy leviathan Gazprom was willing to take part in the construction of the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline. Putin said in his address, "Gazprom is ready to take part and provide technological and, if necessary, financial assistance, and we are willing to provide an unlimited amount of it, especially for a project that is certain to take off".

Putin's idea is that the oil and gas exporters within the SCO have been competing for promising markets (such as China or India), and to coordinate the moves SCO needs an energy club, which will act as a coordination center uniting both energy producers and the three key consumers.

One major Central Asian player who has stayed out of the SCO so far has been Turkmenistan, and it is a bit awkward to speak of an energy club in the region that doesn't include such a large-scale gas producer. Russia also has some gas disputes with Turkmenistan - with which, however China has a warm relationship built around energy cooperation.

A little-noticed development of great significance was that Chinese President Hu Jintao invited the Turkmen president to visit Beijing at the time of the SCO summit last month - and the latter accepted. Suffice to say, China is keen to harmonize its regional policies with Russia and would even lend a hand to Moscow's efforts to coordinate the impulses of energy security amongst and within the SCO member countries and observer countries.

A stunning thing is that the proposals brought by the Russian experts in the past week to Islamabad essentially pick up the threads of Putin's 2006 proposal. According to the details available so far, Moscow has made the following proposals to Islamabad:

- Russia can offer financial and technical assistance for Pakistan's multi-billion dollar gas and power import projects that are in the pipeline.
- Specifically, Russia is interested in participating in the two big gas pipeline projects on the anvil, namely, the TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) and the IP [Iran-Pakistan].
- Russia prefers that the cooperation is negotiated at the governmental level through direct negotiations rather than through bidding.
- Russia is also keen on participation in the Central Asia and South Asia (CASA) project, which was originally floated in 2006, to bring to Pakistan via transmission lines across eastern Afghanistan 1,000-1,300 megawatts of surplus energy during the summer months from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. (The project has the backing of the World Bank and the Islamic Development Bank.)
- Russia will be willing to cooperate in the exploration of oil, gas and minerals in Pakistan.

Unsurprisingly, Islamabad has eagerly responded to the Russian proposals. The following understanding seems to have been reached at the talks, which concluded in Islamabad on Wednesday:

- Pakistan welcomes the Russian proposals;

- Specifically, Pakistan is agreeable to negotiate the contracts with the state-owned Russian energy companies on a government-to-government basis and will be willing to amend its public procurement rules accordingly;
- Steps will be taken to conclude a memorandum of understanding to move ahead with the identified projects during Putin's visit;
- As regards the IP, Pakistan has already floated the tenders for awarding contracts for the pipeline procurement and construction work for the US\$1.5 billion project. Russia's Gazprom may also participate. Pakistan proposes to give weight to bids that have a financial package attached. (China and Iran have also shown interest in the project.)
- Meanwhile, Pakistan will hand over to Russia by mid-July a draft agreement for financial and technical assistance from the latter for the IP project.
- Russia has agreed to finance the rehabilitation of the Guddu and Muzaffargarh power plants.

... this infuriates the overlord

These developments constitute a daunting challenge to the US' regional strategies in Asia and the Middle East. The ramifications are quite far-reaching. First and foremost, Pakistan's "defection" from the Western camp all but amounts to a crippling blow to the US' New Silk Road Initiative aimed at rolling back the Russian and Chinese influence in Central Asia. Along with that, the US' dreams of getting access to the vast mineral resources of Central Asia and Afghanistan would also suffer setback.

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India's blood-stained Democracy

Mirza Waheed

Last September, a lawmaker in Indian-Held Kashmir stood up in the state's legislative assembly and spoke of a valley filled with human carcasses near his home constituency in the mountains: "In our area, there are big gorges, where there are the bones of several hundred people who were eaten by crows."

I read about this in faraway London and was filled with a chill - I had written of a similar valley, a fictional one, in my novel about the lost boys of Held Kashmir. The assembly was debating a report on the uncovering of more than 2,000 unmarked and mass graves not far from the Line of Control.

The report, by India's government-appointed State Human Rights Commission, marked the first official acknowledgment of the presence of mass graves. More significantly, the report found that civilians, potentially the victims of extrajudicial killings, may be buried at some of the sites.

Corpses were brought in by the truckload and buried on an industrial scale. The report catalogued 2,156 bullet-riddled bodies found in mountain graves and called for an inquiry to identify them. Many were men described as "unidentified militants" killed in fighting with soldiers during the 'armed rebellion' against Indian rule during the 1990s, but according to the report, more than 500 were local residents. "There is every probability," the report concluded, that the graves might "contain the dead bodies of enforced disappearances," a euphemism for people who have been detained, abducted, taken away by Indian armed forces or the police, often without charge or conviction, and never seen again.

Had the graves been found under Col Muammar Gaddafi's compound in Libya or in the rubble of Homs in Syria, there surely would have been an uproar. But when over 2,000 skeletons appear in the conflict-ridden backyard of the 'world's largest democracy', no one bats an eye. While the West proselytises democracy and respect for human rights, sometimes going so far as to cheerlead cavalier military interventions to remove

repressive regimes, how can it reconcile its humanitarianism with such brazen disregard for the right to life in Held Kashmir? Have we come to accept that there are different benchmarks for justice in democracies and autocracies? Are mass graves unearthed in 'democratic' India somehow less offensive?

The Indian government has long been intransigent on the issue of Kashmir - preferring to blame Pakistan for fomenting violence rather than address Kashmiris' legitimate aspirations for freedom or honour its own promises to resolve the issue according to the wishes of Kashmiri people and investigate the crimes of its army. And almost a year after the human rights commission issued its report on mass graves, the Indian state continues to remain indifferent to evidence of possible crimes against humanity. As a believer in a moral universe, I expected better. But it is an all too familiar pattern.

In March 2000, a day before President Bill Clinton visited India, about 35 Kashmiri Sikhs were massacred by unidentified gunmen in the village of Chattisinghpora, 50 miles from the Indian-Held Kashmiri capital, Srinagar. Soon after, LK Advani, then India's home minister, declared that the 'terrorists' responsible for the killings had been shot dead in an 'encounter' with the Indian Army. But the truth turned out to be more sinister. Under pressure from human rights groups and relatives, the bodies of the so-called terrorists were exhumed and after a couple of botched investigations in which DNA samples were fudged, it was revealed that the dead men were innocent Kashmiris.

It took nearly 12 years - primarily because of the Indian government's refusal to prosecute those involved in the murders - to reach the Supreme Court of India. On May 1, in a widely criticised decision, the court left it to the army to decide how to proceed and the army has opted for a court-martial rather than a transparent civilian trial. In the eyes of Pervez Imroz, a Kashmiri lawyer and civil rights activist, the court's decision "further emboldens the security forces" and strengthens "a process that has appeared to never favour the victims."

But the victims have not forgotten Kashmir's estimated 8,000 "disappeared." Perhaps the most telling reminder is the women who stage a symbolic protest every month in a Srinagar park like the Mothers of the

Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, who protested weekly after their children became “desaparecidos” under the Argentine dictatorship of 1976-83. Each woman wears a headband bearing a blank photo - steadfastly refusing to forget in the face of the Indian government’s callous and immoral indifference.

In the long and bloody narrative of India’s injustices in Held Kashmir, there come seasons that are etched in the public consciousness as collective epitaphs of mourning and loss. In the summer of 2010, there was a mass uprising against Indian rule in Held Kashmir - an Arab Spring before the Arab Spring.

It came after police killed a teenager; thousands of people came out into the streets across Kashmir. The Indian paramilitary forces and police yet again reacted with brute force, keeping the region under virtual siege for over two months and killing 120 people, many of them teenagers. The youngest, Sameer Rah, not even 10, was beaten to death by irate paramilitaries. The provincial government promised “speedy justice.” But once again, no one has been charged with these killings, let alone convicted of them.

The Indian government must do what may seem inconceivable to the hawks in the military establishment but is long overdue. Before it can even begin to contemplate negotiating a lasting political solution in consultation with Kashmiris it must act to deliver justice - for the parents of the disappeared; for the young lives brutally extinguished in 2010; for the innocent dead stealthily buried in unmarked graves in the mountains; for the Kashmiris languishing in Indian prisons without any legal recourse; for the exiled Kashmiri Hindu Pandits who fled in 1990 after some were targeted and killed by ‘militants’; and for the mother of Sameer Rah, who still doesn’t know why her young son was bludgeoned to death and his body left by a curb.

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