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U.S. INVOLVEMENT: HINDRANCE IN REGIONAL STABILITY

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Terrorism is a transnational threat that cannot be defeated by any single government or organisation. Terrorism is a persistent and evolving global menace, No country is immune to it. It needs a concerted multilateral response at global, regional and national levels. Social media, encrypted communications and the dark web are being used to spread propaganda, radicalise new recruits and plan atrocities. The threat ranges from the crude tactics of sole actors to refined coordinated attacks using chemical, biological or radioactive weapons. Keeping in view the South Asian region, the only way out to counter this menace of terrorism

is the vision of shared regional prosperity and connectivity linked to peace and security in the region, particularly Afghanistan, which has become the epicentre of terrorism with a spill-over effect on the neighbouring countries including Pakistan. Continued conflict, instability, insecurity and involvement of the international powers has effects on the security matrix in Pakistan. If we review the peace ties in the context of renewal of the dialogue between Pakistan and Afghanistan, it can be witnessed as a welcoming development because dialogue and continued engagement are the essential ingredients in regards to resolving conflicts and removing kinks in relations between the two neighbouring states.

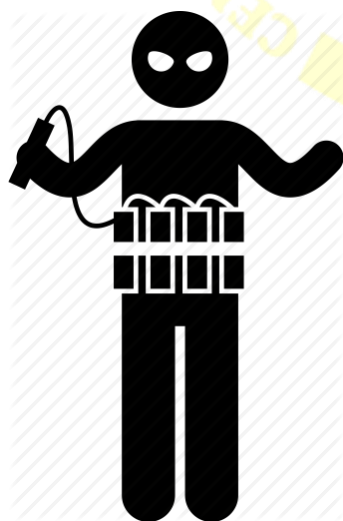
Though Afghanistan and Pakistan have an abiding interest in ending the war in Afghanistan and regard terrorism as the common enemy, unfortunately the conflict in Afghanistan and peace in the region were not possible until and unless the United States not only realised and acknowledged the ground realities but also changed its position accordingly. It is a known fact that the United States always attempts to destabilise the region which is actually an important ingredient of its global politics to obstruct China's emergence as number one economic and military power in the world. It has found an ally in India to further its strategic interests and checking the burgeoning influence of the Chinese in the region and beyond. Therefore peace in the region does not suit the United States. The strategic partnership with India it would go to any extent to sabotage China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which it considers as a major initiative that could help China in becoming the dominant power in the world in the near future.

The Trump Administration initiated trade war with China is yet another indicator for the things to come. Peace in Pakistan is linked to peace in Afghanistan and the former would be the last country to wish the continuation of conflict in the latter. It is an admitted fact that peace in Afghanistan is also crucial to regional connectivity and the success of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in which Pakistan has the highest stakes. Pakistan is situated strategically as far as the Belt Road initiative is concerned, because it is through Pakistan that China seeks to connect with Afghanistan and farther afar. Therefore, for this project to succeed, it is important that peace and stability is established in the region. Any view to the contrary is a negation of the ground realities. The United States suspicion regarding Pakistan reflects her inability to understand the complexities of the situation and its impulsive streak to find a fall guy for its failures in Afghanistan even after sixteen years of war that has cost trillions of dollars and innumerable casualties. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) success is highly threatening for United States, and for the sake of destabilising the security situation of Pakistan, the United States doesn't want peace in Afghanistan. Because a stable Afghanistan leads towards a stable Pakistan.

Although this point cannot be denied that no major break-through occurred between Pakistan and Afghanistan but the very fact that the two-sides recognised the importance of dialogue to resolve the contentious issues, is a very positive move. We have seen similar initiatives in the past as well but unfortunately no credible headway could be made to achieve the desired objectives and the relations between the countries have remained mired in an ambience of mistrust

and mutual blame-game. The reality is that the government in Afghanistan is not in a position to take any major decision without approval from the United States. Much therefore depends on change in the United States policy and the sincerity of purpose in finding an amicable and lasting solution to the Afghan conundrum. Having said that the US is not sincere in finding a solution to the Afghan war and it would not leave the country, notwithstanding her expressed commitment to do so. It would keep the situation in Afghanistan fluid to encourage instability in the region for achieving its strategic interests.

Therefore, for improving the situation of the region it is essential to strengthen counter-terrorism structures and institutions. To address the root causes the promotion of education, tackling youth unemployment and addressing marginalisation. Clearly, the response to terrorism and violent extremism must respect human rights and comply with international law. Acts, methods and practices of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations are activities aimed at the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy, threatening territorial integrity, security of the region and destabilizing legitimately



constituted Governments, and the regional community should take the necessary steps to enhance cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism. That is not just a question of justice, but of effectiveness. When counter-terrorist policies are used to suppress peaceful protests and legitimate opposition movements, shut down debate, target human-rights defenders or stigmatise minorities,

they fail and we all lose. Indeed, such responses may cause further resentment and instability, and contribute to radicalisation.

No cause or grievance can justify terrorism. But we will only diminish the threat by ending the conflicts, human rights abuses, poverty and exclusion that drive so many to violent extremism. The international community has come a long way in its efforts to counter terrorism. There is a clear international framework that makes it easier to prosecute terrorists, disrupt their financial networks and prevent online radicalisation. But there is much still to be done. The main responsibility is to unite to build a world of peace and security, dignity and opportunity for all people, everywhere, so we can deprive the violent extremists of the fuel they need to spread their hateful ideologies. The region needs to establish strong contact and open communication channels with the people and assure them of the guarantee of human dignity and honour, and grants the right of existence with peace, safety, and security

In the building scenario the best way for Pakistan to protect its strategic and economic interests would be to align itself (not joining in any formal pact) with the countries of the region like Russia, China and Iran and strengthening its role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Pakistan's belongs to this region and its security and prosperity are inextricably linked with this region. Long term multidimensional partnerships between the countries of the region will be mutually beneficial for the people and would contribute towards regional peace and stability. Keeping in view the United States South Asian Policy our response needs to be equally agile and multifaceted of how to unite collectively against this

menace of terrorism. Countries already appear to have developed consensus on some of the regional issues including Afghanistan. The governments, security agencies and law-enforcement bodies should improve the exchange of critical information and strategies to detect, disrupt and prosecute terrorist networks. So that this blame game between Afghanistan and Pakistan can be reduced.

