

Afghanistan: What next?

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The visit to India was part of the APEC arc that President Obama undertook culminating in November 19 at the NATO Summit at Lisbon. Many Pakistanis, who felt that India was accorded preferential treatment, need to acknowledge that it was as much part of the mission to garner support for the AfPak strategy, as it is to seal and contain the Asia Pacific Rim from Russian and Chinese influence or to parry the failures of US policy in Afghanistan.

The USA is fast losing its long-term allies in Afghanistan, while the talk of an imminent “withdrawal with victory” doesn’t help to keep its army focused on fighting.

As the days pass, the US sees no definite event that could truly provide a firm date of withdrawal. The 10-year old policy hinged on destroying Al-Qaeda has failed and now must be revised to routing out hostile sanctuaries in Pakistan.

Hence, the present diplomacy can be seen as seeking greater support from allies in the game of global domination, as also to secure sufficient space to deal with Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In the broader framework of global dominance, India is considered a long-term strategic ally to patrol and identify with US interests in the entire Indian Ocean Rim.

The role of Pakistan is restricted to its perceived destructive potential in Afghanistan and to combat and tame the militant outfits in its border regions and rest of the restive country. This message is loud and clear in the intense diplomatic chatter, leaks and interviews.

In words of Rick Rozoff of Global Research, President Obama took this whirlwind visit to: “Receive the plaudits of 27 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allies and secure their continued fealty on issues ranging from the war in Afghanistan to a continental interceptor missile system, the continued deployment of American tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, participation in the Pentagon’s cyber warfare plans and expanded military missions in the planet’s south and east...In the first half of November, the quadrivirate in charge of US foreign policy – President Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Secretary of Defence Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen – all toured the Asia-Pacific area....The Pentagon has, indeed, marked this as its Asia-Pacific century.”

While Obama toasted and danced in India, Pakistan was conveyed mixed signals meaning that all had not gone well in the latest Strategic Dialogue.

The regional emissary Mr Richard Holbrooke was quick to support the civilian supremacy and belittle a dictator, who was once touted as America’s most trusted and valuable ally.

In his well-planned interview, he credited the USA with the restoration of judges and the rule of civilian law. In the process, he took credit away from Pakistan's civil society and political activists, who forced the dictator into a comedy of errors and the legislators that combined to threaten the dictator with impeachment.

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