

Pakistan: U.S. And NATO Have Licence To Kill

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Talk about target killing, and you think of Karachi. However, the founding member of this horrible form of inhumanity is the US. If we consider drones and the so-called target hunts for terrorists, we understand the origins of this extrajudicial atrocity. The US has traditionally been a master of this 'art'. It actually does strategic planning sessions on this art. The vision of the US as a superpower is based on exercising its might on smaller countries and making them powerless. Grenada, Panama and Vietnam in the past, and Iraq and Afghanistan more recently, have been experimental laboratories of its war games. The fact that the US has never succeeded in these countries is immaterial, as the country's actual objective of this war is to boost sales of its mega industrial multinationals and to get access to resources to feed its economy. The CIA and its allied departments create profiles of target countries. The profiles have qualification criteria that include political and economic prerequisites for a country to be included in the hit-list. Politically, it needs to be unstable with a government whose credibility is marred by corruption and mismanagement. The leadership of such countries is obsessed with personal gains and is ready to negotiate anything for perpetuating its power, and therefore not endangered by its lack of performance. Economically, these countries are beset with huge deficits, are dependent on US-sponsored aid and are constantly on the verge of bankruptcy. An added attraction might be scarce natural resources that serve as fuel for American industries.

Pakistan fits admirably this profile. For decades, governments, autocratic and democratic, were formed with the consent of the White House and then obediently sustained the target profile criterion as per the US's requirements. From General Ziaul Haq to General Musharraf, and from Benazir Bhutto to Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's fate has been tied to the moods of Capitol Hill. The excuse given by our leaders for this subservience has ranged from benefit to the country in the long run to being forced by threats of not cooperating with the US. Whatever the reason, each successive government gives the impression that life without the US is impossible. The more corrupt the government, the weaker the economy, and greater the US control. Thus, the present PPP rule was tailor-made for a US takeover. Last year has seen an amazing deterioration in governance and the performance of the government. State enterprises have gone downhill, trade and business has been badly hit and law and order are non-existent. The US has been taking increasing liberties to increase its encroachment on Pakistan starting with Raymond Davis being whisked away under the nose of our legal system and Osama killed on our territory, to NATO killing 24 of our soldiers. Its incursions have been greatly encouraged by the government's haplessness.

The Pak-US relationship has become extremely one sided. The US has demanded more and

more from Pakistan. Musharraf gave Shamsi air base to the US and Google map pictures show a base that has a very well developed strip, one that is good enough to accommodate sophisticated bombers, etc. The mystery of the base being let to the UAE, and then sublet by the UAE to the US is an example of dubious deals that are bound to lead to unfair advantages to the exploiter. The government has now given a deadline to the US to vacate the base by December 11. However, as we know, such deadlines are not going to impress the US as it is used to empty threats from the government and treats the threats with scant regard. In contrast, the US makes sure that the threats it renders are taken very seriously. The recent souring of the relationship between the two countries over Pakistan not taking action against the Haqqani network resulted in a US warning of military action. Thus, the NATO attack on our forces is a result of not giving in to their warnings. The incident shows the complete confidence of the US in its ability to get away with murder, given the special licence to kill by the leaders of this country. The US mocked Pakistani outrage and retaliatory measures with further NATO skirmishes along the border. Another discovery was that aside from Shamsi, Shahbaz airstrip was also under US control. How many other bases are available to the US to bomb Afghanistan and Pakistan is a mystery nobody seems to have a clue about. When asked about Shahbaz, our defence minister said that Shahbaz would be dealt with later. Later? After hundreds more of our innocent men are gunned down?

This helplessness of our government is frightening. They have always jumped onto the US bandwagon with the expectation of being paid handsomely for services rendered, but the payment is peanuts compared with the amount being spent on fighting a completely futile war of terror. Pakistanis have seen innocent people become victims of the greed of the men in charge of public money. They are fearful now that this encroachment of the US might turn into random invasions to teach Pakistan a lesson for work underperformed. The philosophy of the government seems to be that if you cannot handle a crisis, create a bigger one. To pale something as horrific as Memogate into insignificance, you needed something on the scale of the NATO attack to divert attention and focus. However, people have an elephant's memory. They may have got a new topic to ponder, but will never forget the anguish of being embarrassed globally by the (alleged) immaturity of our leaders' rushed and reactive approach to crisis. For the US to take us seriously, we need to have a sincere leadership with a single point agenda of reviving the economy and educating the masses to become independent economically, mentally and spiritually. And such freedom of thought and soul will lead to the biggest cancellation of any licence that the US has to create political and economic havoc in Pakistan.

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