

The U.S. Invades and Occupies Pakistan

A Pakistani viewpoint

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We are watching it happen in the streets. The recurring nightmare has become a grim, new reality for the people of Pakistan. After watching the horrors of the U.S. invasions and occupations of Iraq and neighboring Afghanistan for 8 years, the “war on terror” has finally arrived in The Land of the Pure. Obama is fulfilling his campaign promise to Pakistan. The sudden arrival of U.S. marines, U.S. military Hummers, the hired killers of Blackwater, houses barricaded for U.S. personnel in Islamabad and the construction of the world’s largest U.S. “Embassy” are terrorizing this nation of 180 million people. The U.S. slaughter and destruction in Iraq and neighboring Afghanistan for the last 8 years warn them of what may lie in store for them, their families, their land.

The U.S. Marines

On 9/21/08 a bomb ripped through the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad killing scores of people and injuring hundreds. Prior to the bombing, U.S. marines off-loaded steel boxes from a truck, by-passed security and took them to the 4th floor of the building. US officials refused to cooperate with the government’s attempts to investigate their activities. One year later, U.S. Marines are leading the occupation of Pakistan.

Until this landing of U.S. forces, the nation’s spokesman for Foreign Affairs had been denying that 1000 U.S. marines were on their way to Islamabad. The thousand marines are now in the capital city of Islamabad. Some of them may be quietly slipping into Balochistan where the presence of JSOC (Joint Special Operations Command) have been reported by foreign journalists. But most are here to defend what will be the largest U.S. embassy/fortress in the world, now under construction and to spearhead the invasion and occupation.

Costs to the U.S. Taxpayer

The total cost for housing and and general support for the marines alone will be US\$112.5 million. US Ambassador Anne W. Patterson said the money is allocated as follows: “\$5 million was for Marine quarters, \$53.5 for housing infrastructure, \$18 million for improvement of general services office area, and \$36 million for temporary duty quarters and community support facilities.”

In Patterson’s explanation of the massive expansion of the U.S. Embassy she talked about 4 Billion (that’s with a “B”) dollars: “The embassy expansion, she said, was a reflection of the long-term commitment that the US intended to have with Pakistan. Moreover, she said, quadrupling of the social, economic and military assistance that would touch \$4 billion a year over the next 18 months, necessitated staff increase.”

Ambassador Patterson did not clarify whether the \$4 Billion covers the construction which will make this embassy the largest in the world. When this construction is seen in context and coordination with the new level of U.S. occupation of Pakistan, it looks more like a permanent military base than an embassy for running military and covert operations not only in Pakistan but also in the region.

Weapons and Hummers

Eye witnesses and informed journalists have been reporting sightings of U.S. personnel in Islamabad for the past week or so, but now they are seen moving freely throughout the capital. The law (Section 144) provides that Pakistanis who own guns are not permitted to carry them in Islamabad. But U.S. personnel are showing Pakistanis that they are above the law as they openly brandish their weapons. It has also been confirmed that 3,000 U.S. military Hummers, locked and loaded are awaiting dispatch in Karachi's Port Qasim. For millions of Pakistanis news of these Hummers conjures up images of U.S. troops charging through the streets of Iraqi cities, armed to the teeth, terrifying and often killing unarmed civilians.

On Feb. 23, 2009 the Pentagon revealed that over 70 U.S. military advisers had been secretly working in Pakistan.

Blackwater and the CIA

Pakistanis have known about the 300 U.S. military "advisers" lodged in Tarbela. But news of the arrival of the notorious Blackwater mercenaries in addition to the thousand U.S. marines are riveting their attention. In Pakistan, Blackwater is trading its tainted name for a telling name "Xe Worldwide", - the name behind which these paid killers are now hiding.

Also, last week, Creative Associates International Inc (CAII), a CIA front, has been operating in Peshawar. They have now sealed off a road and set up shop near the houses of senior Pakistani officials in Islamabad, directly across from a school.

Dr. Shireen Mazari

Dr. Shireen M. Mazari is a scholar and commentator on Strategic Studies and Political Science from Pakistan. She has a Ph.D. from Colombia University and was Director General of Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad, Pakistan and former Chairperson of Department of Defense and Strategic Studies at the Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. She is critical of the relationship the Pakistan government has with the United States and India. Speaking for an opposition political party (Tehreek-e-Insaaf) , Dr. Shireen Mazari speaks about the new arrival of U.S. forces in Pakistan:

"Will some of these go to the Pentagon's assassination squads, who may take up residence in some of the barricaded Islamabad houses and with whom the present US commander in Afghanistan was directly associated? Ordinary officials at Pakistani airports have also been muttering their concerns over chartered flights flying in Americans whose entry is not recorded - even the flight crews are not checked for visas and so there is now no record-keeping of exactly how many Americans are coming into or going out of Pakistan. Incidentally the CAII's (CIA/Blackwater) Craig Davis who was deported has now returned to Peshawar! And let us not be fooled by the cry that numbers reflect friendship since we know what numbers meant to Soviet satellites."

The Pearl Continental, a luxury hotel in Peshawar was bombed on June 9, 2009. The U.S. routinely blames these attacks on Muslim terrorists. The U.S. has also routinely sabotaged peace agreements between the Pakistan government and various resistance groups in Pakistan. Attacks like this are used to justify the current invasion and occupation by the United States.

Given little attention in the corporate media, Peshawar's Pearl Continental Hotel was bombed on June 9, 2009. At the time of the bombing, Pakistani media reported officially that it was housing U.S. personnel at the time but did not mention Blackwater. However, Blackwater's name began to surface in rumours and unofficial reports after the Peshawar bombing.

Ahmed Quraishi

On August 5, 2009, Ahmed Quraishi, political analyst, columnist and independent owner of a news website reported on the insertion of U.S. Marines, Blackwater, the CIA and military hardware into Pakistan: "Pakistanis ask, 'Who rules our streets, the Pakistani government or the Americans? And who let them in?'"

"Three weeks ago a group of concerned Pakistani citizens in Peshawar wrote to the federal interior ministry to complain about the suspicious activities of a group of shadowy Americans in a rented house in their neighborhood, the upscale University Town area of Peshawar. A NGO calling itself Creative Associates International, Inc. leased the house". According to its Website, CAII describes itself as 'a privately-owned non-governmental organization that addresses urgent challenges facing societies today ... Creative views change as an opportunity to improve, transform and renew ...' The description makes no sense. It is more or less a perfect cover for the American NGO's real work: espionage...

"In Peshawar, CAII, opened an office to work on projects in the nearby tribal agencies of Pakistan. All of these projects, interestingly, are linked to the US government. CAII's other projects outside Pakistan are also linked to the US government. In short, this NGO is not an NGO. It is closely linked to the US government. Meanwhile, when asked about the expansion of the embassy, U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson was "visibly shaken" and replied, "I'm speechless. To spy on Pakistan we don't need a big US embassy." Quickly recovering, she added, "And we don't need to spy either." Patterson went on to say that Pakistan could turn into a "family station" - whatever that means to a U.S. colonial bureaucrat.

Ahmed further explains the CIA's cover for the Blackwater mercenaries:

"In Peshawar, CAII told Pakistani authorities it needed to hire security guards for protection. The security guards, it turns out, were none other than Blackwater's military-trained hired guns. They were used the CAII cover to conduct a range of covert activities in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province. The infamous Blackwater private security firm operates as an extension of the US military and CIA, taking care of dirty jobs that the US government cannot associate itself with in faraway strategic places. Blackwater is anything but a security firm. It is a mercenary army of several thousand hired soldiers.

"Pakistani security officials apparently became alarmed by reports that Blackwater was operating from the office of CAII on Chinara Road, University Town in Peshawar. The man in charge of the office, allegedly an American by the name of Craig Davis according to a report in Jang, Pakistan's largest Urdu language daily, was arrested and accused of establishing contacts with 'the

enemies of Pakistan' in areas adjoining Afghanistan. His visa has been cancelled, the office sealed, and Mr. Davis reportedly expelled back to the United States.

"It is not clear when Mr. Davis was deported and whether there are other members of the staff expelled along with him. When I contacted the US Embassy over the weekend, spokesman Richard Snelsire's first reaction was, 'No embassy official has been deported'."

Keep in mind that Dr. Shireen Mazari who is in a position to know, stated flatly, "CAII's Craig Davis who was deported has now returned to Peshawar!"

But Ahmed Quraishi explains the denial by the U.S. embassy: "This defensive answer is similar to the guilt-induced reactions of US embassy staffers in Baghdad and Kabul at the presence of mercenaries working for US military and CIA. I said to Mr. Snelsire that I did not ask about an embassy official being expelled. He said he heard these reports and 'checked around' with the embassy officials but no one knew about this. 'It's baseless' [he said]. So I asked him, "Is Blackwater operating in Pakistan, in Peshawar?" 'Not to my knowledge'. [he answered].

"Fair enough. The US embassies in Baghdad and Kabul never acknowledged Blackwater's operations in Iraq and Afghanistan either. This is part of low-level frictions between the diplomats at the US Department of State and those in Pentagon and CIA. The people at State have reportedly made it clear they will not acknowledge or accept responsibility for the activities of special operations agents operating in friendly countries without the knowledge of those countries and in violation of their sovereignty. Reports have suggested that sometimes even the US ambassador is unaware of what his government's mercenaries do in a target country."

Finally, Ahmed discusses a U.S. diplomat met secretly with an Indian diplomat inside Pakistan, knowing full well that India is considered to be an enemy state of Pakistan:

"In May, a US woman diplomat was caught arranging a quiet [read 'secret'] meeting between a low-level Indian diplomat and several senior Pakistani government officials. An address in Islamabad - 152 Margalla Road - was identified as a venue where the secret meeting took place. The American diplomat in question knew there was no chance the Indian would get to meet the Pakistanis in normal circumstances. Nor was it possible to do this during a high visibility event. After the incident, Pakistan Foreign Office issued a terse statement warning all government officials to refrain from such direct contact with foreign diplomats in unofficial settings without prior intimation to their departments" .

NGOs that are not NGOs

In addition, many U.S. sponsored NGO's are working to create news reports in mainstream media which are pro-U.S. For this purpose, many Pakistani analysts, retired generals, businessmen, journalists, and academics are being recruited. As Ahmed Quraishi said, "this NGO is not an NGO", i.e. some Non Governmental Organizations operate under the control and direction of governments who use them for covert operations in foreign countries and fund them surreptitiously.

Conclusion

It's clear that the current government has given full privileges to the US. They neither know how, nor want to draw a line against U.S. interference in Pakistani affairs. To put it bluntly, they are surrendering the sovereignty of Pakistan to a foreign power. Dr. Shireen Mazari says, "Whatever the US embassy gives out ... the terrified Pakistani leadership echoes." The objectives of the U.S. are clear: Deeper U.S. penetration will result in the destabilisation of Pakistan, leading to destabilization of the entire region. These U.S. military installations also strengthening their encirclement of Iran. The Pakistani political opposition parties are lip stuck at all these developments. The main reason for their silence is that they are as corrupt as the ruling PPP. No political party in Pakistan is in the mood to resist US hegemony. The Pakistan Army no longer shows any interest in directly interfering with political decisions. After the disastrous eight years under the military dictatorship of Musharraf, the people are also not ready for the Pakistan military to intervene in the political life of the country. The TTP terrorists have just been brought under control – barely. Now millions of Pakistanis are terrified by their new, unwelcome guests from the west – the U.S. terrorists. We will now have to learn to tolerate and survive under this growing and increasingly dangerous U.S. colonization of Pakistan.

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