

WILL IT WORK?

The new US Afghanistan-Pakistan plan

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OBAMA'S plan, announced on 27th March, for defeating Al Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan is based on hard realism. He has come to the basics when he said that "we are not in Afghanistan to control that country or dictate its future but to disrupt, dismantle and defeat Al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan."

Obama's plan has four aspects:

(a) He wants to bring other regional players in the discussion, including Iran and Russia;

(b) He plans to send hundreds of civilians to develop new jobs in Afghanistan and an economy not tied to poppy production;

(c) He wants to provide \$1.5 billion every year to Pakistan to build schools, hospitals and roads;

(d) He wants the so-called moderate Taliban to abandon their hard-line leaders.

Obama's plan is essentially to win the hearts and minds of Afghans and Pakistanis. America cannot defeat the extremists if Afghans and Pakistanis don't see their lives improve. Unemployment, deprivation, desperation and lack of social justice lead youths to join the extremist organisations.

The Bush administration removed the Taliban from power in 2001 from the major cities but did not diminish their influence in the countryside. Seven years later the Taliban and Al Qaeda are stronger than ever in both countries. Taliban are getting stronger in north, east, and west, creeping steadily toward the capital city, Kabul. Sources close to Taliban say that they pay US \$8 dollars a day to fighters while Afghan National Army fighters are paid US \$4 a day.

Talibans have almost occupied the Federal Administered Area in Pakistan and the government had to conclude an agreement with them. Despite that, the recent attacks on Sri Lankan Cricket team, suicide bomb attack on a Pakistani mosque during Friday's prayer and on the Police Training Academy in Lahore are visible manifestation of its resurgence in brutal form.

Talibans have the money, the weapons and have the determination and if they die, they know they will go to heaven. What else can motivate person than these factors, although their goal is totally misplaced and contrary to the true teachings of Islam.

It is reported that Taliban has become more radical, more sophisticated and more brutal than the Taliban ousted by US-led forces in 2001. Tactics have been imported from Iraq such as suicide bombers and remote controlled roadside bombs. Today they reportedly use guerrilla-style strikes, not confronting face to face. One Taliban told that "in this country, there are many religious people and they want a reason to fight for God, for martyrdom. They welcome this opportunity to go to paradise." The production and export of opium has increased enormously and IMF estimates it about US\$ 6 billion and Taliban encouraged it for funds.

Bush committed two political mistakes. First he abandoned the necessary war in Afghanistan for the ill-conceived war of choice in Iraq. Second, he was vague when he talked about representative democracy in Afghanistan. It was understood that the two campaigns - military and political/economic - had to go forward together; the success of each depended on the other. But the vision of a reconstructed, peaceful, stable, democratically governed Afghanistan

faded fast. Most Afghans now believe that it was nothing but a cover story for the Bush administration's real goal - to set up permanent bases in Afghanistan and occupy the country forever.

Whatever the truth of the matter, in the long run, it is not soldiers but services that count - electricity, water, food, health care, justice, and jobs. Had the US delivered the promised services on time, while employing Afghans to rebuild their own country according to their own priorities and under the supervision of their own government, they would now be in charge of their own defence. The forces on the other side, which we loosely call the Taliban, would also have lost much of their grounds for complaint.

An Afghan businessman, who has worked on American projects, insisted that when Bush pledged \$10.4 billion in aid, President Karzai should have offered him a deal: "Give me \$2 billion in cash, I'll kick back the rest to you, and you can take your army and go home."

"If Karzai had put the cash in an Afghan bank," the businessman added, "and spent it himself on what people really need, both Afghanistan and Karzai would be in much better shape today." Though he was half-joking, he wasn't wrong. Endemic corruption among the Karzai administration has depleted the US money.

India's increasing influence in Afghanistan perturbs Pakistan. It is heavily investing in Afghanistan and the "great game" has been taking place between India and Pakistan in creating its sphere of influence in Afghanistan comparable to that between Russian Empire and British Empire for supremacy in the other. Strategically, Pakistan can not let it occur because politically it is a suicide for it.

India has come in a big way to



assist Afghanistan. It is constructing the new Afghan Parliament in Kabul with an estimated cost of \$1 billion, building roads and opened two consulates in cities near Pakistan's border since 2001. It dispatched hundreds of professionals including teachers, trainers and doctors in Afghanistan. Pakistan's perennial fear is of being squeezed between India on one flank and an Indian-dominated Afghanistan on the other. Strategically, Pakistan can not let it occur because politically it is a suicide for it.

To counter this uncomfortable

squeeze, Pakistan's intelligence agencies are likely to provide assistance to extremists in Afghanistan so that India does not succeed to hold sway over Afghanistan. Furthermore, until the Kashmir issue is resolved, 'jihadis' will continue to target soft spots in India. To an average Pakistani, India poses a great threat to its security than a Taliban-dominated Afghanistan.

Some say America encouraged influence of India over Afghanistan and President Karzai is more at ease with India than

with Pakistan. Critics say that Obama's plan fails to address the strategic concern of Pakistan. The US should advise India to back off in Afghanistan. Unless geostrategic interests and disputes of the region are taken into account, experts say Obama's new plan may face stumbling blocks in the coming months in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Obama's plan to pour in more resources including additional soldiers to Afghanistan, according to many strategists, is comparable to Kennedy's gradual

involvement into what would become the mother of all quagmires, Vietnam. Obama's commitment to Afghanistan is not really shared by European countries, except Britain. The world has changed since 1945, when Big-2 (US and UK) used to decide the fate of the free world. By the end of 20th century, Big '2' became G-7 and by the 21st century it has been replaced by G-20 countries.

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The BDR carnage and intelligence failure

MAJOR GENERAL M.A. HALIM psc (Retd)

THE tragic incidents that took place in Pilkhana on 25th of Feb 2009, where fifty-eight army officers were brutally killed, was one of the most heinous crimes beyond anybody's comprehension. Such brutal and merciless killings are very seldom.

We know of the carnage of cruel and barbaric rulers and kings in the past, we also know the atrocity of Pakistani soldiers during our Liberation War, but the scale is not even near to what these mutineers have done to our beloved officers who lived through thick and thin with

ing mutineers upholding the genuineness of the mutiny, for they have enormous grievance against Army officers deputed to BDR. Our media failed to give the real situation of Pilkhana whereas people got news of what was actually happening through international media. What were their grievances? Were these grievances genuine? Did they really want to solve the problems? If they really wanted to, they would have kept the officers as hostages and gone for negotiation. But here in this case no officer was held hostage, they killed all available officers in Pilkhana and asked for negotiation. This was a fake negotiation only to

plan with the aims primarily to demolish the force's strength and unity and ultimately hit the very foundation of our national security and sovereignty by weakening the country's defence.

The BDR crisis was not handled very prudently. It is not known if the stock of the situation regarding the safety of the officers and their family were taken before declaration of general amnesty, although by then the international media was telecasting updated BDR incident. Even after the declaration of general amnesty on 25th Feb afternoon, the mutineers did not lay down their arms, nor did they surrender. The public were unaware of any deadline given to the mutineers to surrender. The mutineers kept on carrying out the massacre till the morning of 27th February. They, however, put an additional demand on the evening of 25th February that amnesty to be passed in National Assembly and a gazette to be published to this effect.

In handling such crisis, the handler must be intelligent, knowledgeable and capable of handling such crisis. But here, in case of Pilkhana, an inexperienced person and unfamiliar to such crisis was sent. Questions are being also raised regarding intelligence. It can't be said surely whether it is an intelligence failure or command failure. We have to wait till the investigation is completed. But failure to gather intelligence is not a new phenomenon, especially if it is ill equipped and ill organized. The Twin Tower blast, Mumbai terrorist attack, 17 August grenade attack and bomb blast in sixty-three districts of Bangladesh, all are cases of intelligence failure. However, intelligence organizations will not have any excuse if they fail to find out the cause and the perpetrators after the occurrence of the incident. Immediately after the occurrence, they should take control of the situation and try to identify the cause and who are behind it. They should also carry out thorough study of their failure and identify the weaknesses and take a remedial measure.

Three committees so far have been formed to unearth the fact as to how it happened and who were behind the planning and execution. Foreign intelligence experts are also in the country to lend their expert hand in the investigation process. These experts will not go beyond providing technical assistance for obvious reason. Therefore, we have to rely on our investigating team and keep our fingers crossed. It is very important to find out who are the real perpetrators behind this heinous act. The investigating team should be upright and they should not have any weaknesses or emotions regarding the investigation. The whole nation is eagerly waiting to know the outcome of the investigation.

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their troops. They not only killed the officers they went further to mutilate the dead bodies and disposed the bodies most unceremoniously in drains and gutters.

The initial media reporting was in support of mutineers. They were telecast-

avoid punitive action for unpardonable offences they already committed.

The nature and the characteristics of mutiny is that the mutineers always have a genuine and noble cause; they hardly involve in such immoral act of killing and looting. This was a very well coordinated

Is the Third World a third-class world?

ABU YOUSUFF ZOBAYERULLAH

IT is not the intention to bash the Third World with negativity and criticism but merely to vent the frustration and sense of hopelessness. It is also an attempt to focus on the strengths that we still possess and maybe, just maybe, we can force a glimmer of hope that will lead us to a new beginning of change from this morally and intellectually decaying society.

The world where people can live as they desire is the First World and the world where the situation is reverse is the Third World. The nature of water is to run down and the nature of human being is to constantly strive to rise above for a better life. For better living capable people migrate to First World leaving their dear motherland in the hands of looters. The 'number one' characteristic of the Third World is there has to be rampant corruption in the ranks and files from top to bottom. It seems, the leaders mostly take influenced decisions due to the presence of Agents in Place (A in P) or Agents of Influence (A of I). Consequently, in spite of genuine desire to remain popular, they fail miserably and get dethroned with humiliation and shame either by the people or by a military coup.

50-year long cold war has provided some countries so much of intelligence expertise that keeping small nations under full domination has become a cat-walk task for them. No one wants to leave power, particularly with humiliation. But, this has turned into a routine affair in Third World countries, as if, "this is politics". The first class political system (democracy) is for the First World and the third class political system (demon's cracy) is for the Third World.

Under the cover of democracy the Third World nations can easily be dominated so long they are infested with corruption. It is the tool to de-popular a Third World leader and the same tool is used to replace them over and over again. This is the main intangible expedient, which is the root cause of misery for the people of the Third World. Every time, with the change of power, people become hopeful for an honest environment but again get deceived and the corruption continues as before, sometimes under a newly woven fabric of falsehood. Without this a Third World country can quickly follow Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand or even Singapore!

Let's unearth some indisputable characteristics that separates these two worlds:

In case of First World, any national problem is solvable, whereas in Third World, problems are persistent and unsolvable.

In the First World, power is within the system but in Third World power is with the chair.

In the First World no one is above the law. In Third World, the ruling class

is definitely different than the way people of Bangladesh look at it. For the mass, power is a curse once it is in the hands of corrupt leaders, is blessings, once it is with honest leaders.

Where there is corruption, there is no justice, when there is injustice there is no human right. To get out of this third class environment, we need only one objective - get the country on honest footing and give discard all other perspectives and advices.

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It is interesting to know how they hook the leaders and thereby hook the people of the Third World. Being extremely professional, global Rambo follows the copy book method of espionage skill. Their intelligence organization is of extreme capability in terms of human intelligence (HUMINT) and technological intelligence (TECHINT).

If the mission of a professional intelligence organization is "to keep the Third World countries under corruption in order to ensure constant political unrest, economic stalemate and facilitate brain drain and also to soak up subsurface, surface and aerospace resources," does it need a PhD to comprehend how efficiently the global Rambo is doing the job? The presence of such "Their Men" is in every faculty of public influence.

Since decision-making authority remains with the First World or with their chosen leaders, the Third World has to continue as a third class world, till it finds a leader like Mahathir Mohammad of Malaysia or Lee Kuan of Singapore. It is an extremely difficult proposition to negate global or regional Rambo's intelligence onslaught. What is possible is, to ensure a professional intelligence organization led by a professional and all "Their men" are identified and eliminated like Ecuador's leftist President Rafael Correa.

Dishonest and incapable leaders are very much required to lead the Third world; the First World only needs to help them go into power while the rest are managed by the hypocrites, notion greasers and hyper (personally) loyal subordinates. The philosophy is, either there should be a continuous flow of new corrupt leaders or rotate the power among the corrupt leaders like pillow passing game. When a leader loves his country and his people the country develops like Malaysia and when a leader loves power and the money then it remains permanently a Third World.

Like war time, piece time domination is conducted by strong and professionally capable intelligence organizations. Ecuador's leftist President Rafael Correa claimed that number of his intelligence organizations and defense departments were penetrated by foreign intelligence organization (FIO). He had to remove some of his top brasses and replace them with patriots. Is it only Ecuador out of all the Third World countries that has been penetrated?

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