

Pakistan under US and UK attacks: A look at history



latest US-UK offensive against Pakistan so ironic. A look at history would make the current attacks on Pakistan by the USA and UK even more so because both have in the past betrayed Pakistan's interests at critical times.

It was the US that had encouraged Pakistan to get involved in the Afghan war after the Soviet invasion in 1979. Again, it was the US that had given Pakistan the moral and material support needed to build the Taliban resistance and then abandoned it as soon as the Soviet Union disintegrated. It is again the USA which is now seeking Pakistan's assistance to negotiate agreement with moderate Taliban to weaken the Taliban resurgence. At the same time, it is the US that is bombing Pakistan's northwest regions with drones in pursuit of taking out Taliban and when such attacks end killing innocent Pakistanis and blaming Pakistan's intelligence for the failure.

History makes David Cameron's accusation more ironic than the US's accusations of Pakistan. It was British policy of divide and rule that sowed the seeds of discord between the Hindus and the Muslims that created Pakistan. It was the British indulgence while leaving India after 200 years of a colonial rule that divided Kashmir that as a Muslim majority princely state should have gone to Pakistan under the principles of partition. It is the Kashmir conflict that has been at the cause of tension between Pakistan and India that has forced these nations to fight two wars and turn into nuclear states. It is the same conflict that has encouraged Pakistan to get involved in the jihad over Kashmir and actively assist groups fighting for freeing Kashmir from India, groups that are using terrorism as a

strategy for their goal. It is again the Kashmir dispute that has led Indian security and police to commit human rights violations to keep control over its part of Kashmir that in turn has given terrorist groups like the Laskar e Taiyaba; Jaish e Mohammed and Harakat ul Mujahadeen the cause to survive and thrive.

The British Prime Minister could perhaps have taken a look at history before making the statement in public against Pakistan. In doing so, he has also shown scant respect to diplomatic norms where it is most unusual to accuse a third country while on a bilateral visit. The fact that David Cameron chose to accuse Pakistan while on an official visit to India is what makes his act a difficult one to understand. Only recently, the Pakistani and the Indian Foreign Ministers had met to open dialogue between their countries that ended abruptly with the Indian Foreign Minister failing to make the point on Pakistan's tryst with terrorism that was so well articulated by David Cameron. Pakistan High Commissioner in London regretted that David Cameron failed to see "Pakistan's immense role in the war on terror and sacrifices made since 9/11". He went on to say that the British Prime Minister should have pursued his goal of attracting Indian investments to his country without "damaging the prospects of regional peace".

Pakistan has reacted furiously at the attempts by Great Britain and the US to link it officially to terrorist groups. Its disapproval to the US administration is being communicated through the many diplomatic and official channels at its disposal. In case of its reaction to David Cameron's accusation, the Pakistanis are

protesting pro-actively and angrily. It has cancelled a very important visit by an intelligence team to London. After actively considering cancelling an official visit to London, President Zardari eventually decided perhaps to take the opportunity to communicate first hand with the British Prime Minister about his country's indignation.

The latest WikiLeaks and the British Prime Minister's comments have come for Pakistan at a very inappropriate time. It is facing India in Afghanistan where the Indians are gaining upper hand with the Karzai administration. In recent times, India has opened four regional consultancies in Afghanistan and has given Afghanistan US \$ 662 million as aid, with a promise of more and even an offer to send troops. It has found favour with the Hazaras, Uzbeks and Tagiks who are behind the Karzai administration although the President himself is a Pastun. The Pakistanis were hoping to balance and perhaps gain the upper hand in Afghanistan by its contacts with the Taliban. It will now be under intense scrutiny to keep its distance from the Taliban, allowing the Indians a better negotiation of Afghan affairs. It should convince Pakistan that in international politics, there are no permanent friends but only permanent interests. US's interest at the moment is to come out of Afghanistan by blaming it on someone else, perhaps Pakistan; whereas Britain's interest is to benefit from India's new-found status as a world economic power for which Pakistan-bashing may not be a bad strategy.

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M. SERAJUL ISLAM

PAKISTAN has suddenly become the scapegoat for what is going wrong in Afghanistan. The latest documents released on WikiLeaks (92,000 documents in total) reveal that in Afghanistan USA is losing the war and the truth is far removed from what the Obama administration has been telling the people. The documents also show Pakistan's intelligence agency (Inter Services Intelligence) ISI's close collusion with the Taliban and other terrorist groups. In

line with the leaks, British Prime Minister David Cameron has caused a major controversy by stating bluntly that his country and allies cannot tolerate in any sense the idea that Pakistan is allowed to look both ways and is able in any way, to promote the export of terror to India, Afghanistan or any other country. Quite understandably, Pakistan protested furiously but David Cameron did not recant his statement rather he came up with free advice about what Pakistan should do, which was like adding insult to injury.

A current view in Washington is that the US administration may have leaked the WikiLeaks documents to shift the responsibility of losing the war in Afghanistan on Pakistan's shoulders. As the latest WikiLeaks documents revealed it is therefore not very surprising that the Prime Minister of Britain, the country that along with the USA had brought Pakistan into the team as a strategic partner of the West in their war against terrorism, had to blame Pakistan as a country that exports terrorism to its neighbouring regions. It is not just this that makes the

The Kabul Conference: A fruitless exercise?

PALLAVI KUMAR

THE plane carrying UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon to the Kabul Conference last Tuesday had to be diverted to Bagram Air Base from Kabul Airport, due to rocket fire. The 70 countries, organizations, and groups attending this conference cannot possibly feel any reassurances about their discussion after this incident. Peace and success seem to still be a distant quixotic notion for the people and government of Afghanistan, and while the Kabul Conference reports boast of unrelenting support for President Hamid Karzai, there are still many elements lacking in this country before it can become a fully functioning, sovereign, governing body.

It has been almost 10 years since the invasion, and the Kabul Conference was intended to be a one-day event marking the progress of the country and a complete analysis of the remaining objectives that need to be achieved. It was held in Afghanistan's capital city, hosted by the governing body of the country and co-chaired by the United Nations. Unlike during the Peace jirga held by the Karzai Administration a few weeks earlier, which was to bring together moderate Taliban members and the government, this time there was no violence, attacks or bombs that interrupted the actual meeting. Security was tight in the Afghan capital ahead of the conference, and if it seemed safe to everyone, it was mainly because there was absolutely no one on the streets of Kabul except security personnel. The Taliban had no one to attack, even if they wanted to.

Afghanistan and its many allies are standing at a crucial turning point, as the partnerships are starting to diminish and questions regarding the end of this

war are starting to rise. While achieving lasting peace, security, and stability are of utmost importance; everyone is also evaluating their exit strategies. Many governments have already withdrawn their troops from the battlefields, The Netherlands and Canada are currently planning their withdrawal, and Germany has stated that it will start transitioning control to Afghanistan next year. Some countries are also hoping that an increase in aid will compensate for their noticeable absence from active security detail. The British are pledging an increase of 40% in aid to Afghanistan, and of course, there is the big issue of what exactly America will do next July.

The highlights from the conference include a goal for Afghan forces to lead and command all security operations by 2014, an endorsement of Mr. Karzai's integration program for insurgents, and an increase to at least 50% of aid to be channeled through the Afghan government. The second goal at the conference includes Karzai's plan to offer jobs and cash to Taliban members in exchange for them laying down their weapons. This last goal also commits Afghanistan to lead a transparent government that will be responsible and accountable for its resource allocation. These are ambitious goals because currently, no Afghan police unit can operate independently, the concept of rehabilitation of Taliban members seems quite grand, and due to the high level of corruption within the administration, funneling aid through the government may not be the best idea. Currently, the money is spent and allocated through NGOs and international organizations, but most people have not seen any of it. Afghanistan has received \$36 billion in foreign aid - about US\$1,200 per person - since 2001, and the country is worse than it

ever was. If the government were to allocate the financial resources for the country, it would be a change in the current policy, but it may not necessarily be the best option.

A deep mistrust still characterizes the relationship between the Afghan government and its international donors, and while they want to end this relationship, the latter are often reluctant to entrust anything to the Afghan government fearing corruption, mismanagement, or lack of qualifications. A 2008 Brookings Institution report on the Index of State Weakness, ranked Afghanistan as the second-weakest institution in the world - behind Somalia. Donors view the Afghan government as weak, but Afghan officials complain that efforts to circumvent their ministries further weaken the state.

The civilian population within the country does not care what the outcome of the meeting is. They only want to know when the outside armies will be leaving. Their lives have not improved, and have actually only deteriorated since the Taliban ruled the country. They were not free back then, but at least they did not also have to content with a war, bombings, and deaths of family members. The population was actually more hopeful after the Peace jirga, hoping that some type of reconciliation would have come from that meeting. This is the ninth meeting in almost nine years since the war began, and many of these promises were made previously, and many of these same goals were set on earlier occasions. Nothing notable came out of the conferences held in London, Paris, or Tokyo, and if nothing comes out of this one, it will definitely make Afghans lose complete hope in the coalition forces.

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Top thinker says China may 'push the US out of Asia'

PAUL KELLY

ONE of the US's leading strategic thinkers has warned Australia that over the next 30 years, China would seek to dominate Asia.

The warning came from John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago, who said China's rise would not be peaceful.

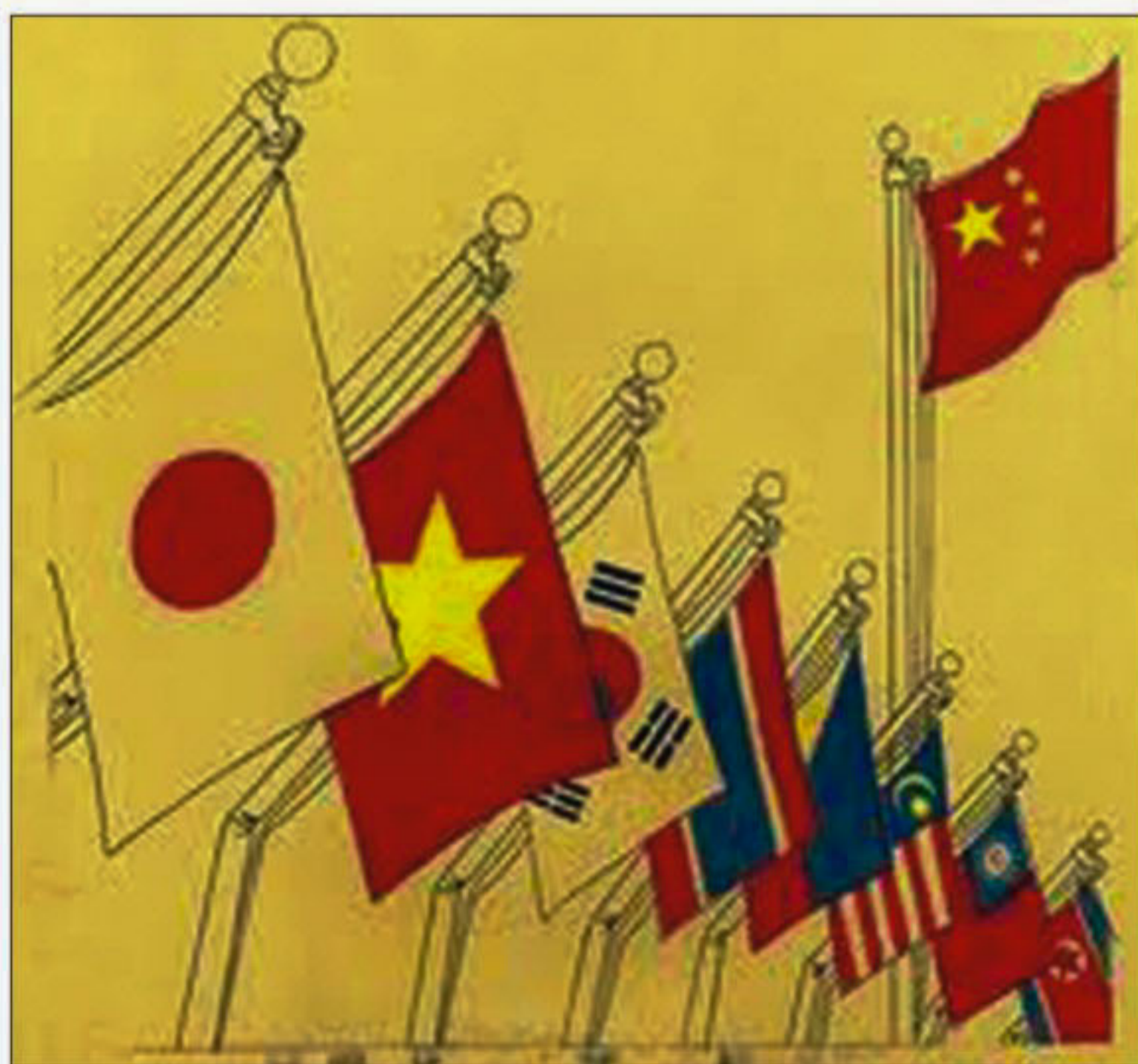
At the same time, Professor Mearsheimer said the US faced defeat on its four main challenges in the wider Middle East -- he predicted it would fail in Afghanistan and Iraq, that Iran would acquire nuclear weapons and there would be no "two-state" solution for Israel and the Palestinians.

"If China grows in the next 30 years as it has over the last 30 years, it will seek to dominate Asia the way America dominates the western hemisphere," the professor said at Sydney University.

"If China turns into a greater Hong Kong, it will try to push the United States out of Asia and develop its own Munroe Doctrine" -- a reference to US hegemonic assertion in the Americas.

"I think that China cannot rise peacefully and that this is largely predetermined."

A foreign policy realist, Professor Mearsheimer opposed the Iraq war, is a fierce critic of the Israeli lobby in the US and a sceptic about American



decline. He will deliver the annual Michael Hintze Lecture at Sydney University tomorrow. His host, Sydney University's Alan Dupont, described Professor Mearsheimer as "America's boldest and perhaps most controversial thinker in the field of international relations".

Professor Mearsheimer believes the

US and its Asian allies, including Australia, will follow a strategy of "containment" and of "balancing" China in Asia. He says there is no difference between these concepts -- thus dismissing the formula that underpins Australia's policy towards China.

Professor Mearsheimer says that containment of China "is desirable

from an American point of view". On Australia's potential conflict as a US ally and China's economic partner, he predicted we would develop closer economic ties with China but support the US to contain China's power.

The presence of nuclear weapons, he argued, meant there would be "no shooting war" between the US and China.

"I think in Afghanistan and Iraq, America will be seen to lose both wars," he said. It was inevitable that American withdrawal "would leave a mess behind" in both countries. In the northern autumn last year, "it was clear Afghanistan was not a winnable war yet President (Barack) Obama upped the ante".

Professor Mearsheimer said there was "no sign" of a two-state solution in the Middle East. The alternative of a Greater Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu's real policy, risked the future of Israel as a state: "Most Americans and most American Jews do not appreciate how much trouble Israel is in."

"I am in favour of a much more prudent US," he said. "I think it important that the US retain its primacy." That meant grasping the limits to military power, avoiding invasions of Arab and Islamic nations and moving to balance the rise of China.

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Russia's defense spending to rise by 60% by 2013

MOSCOW, Russia: Russian defense spending will increase by 60 percent, to more than 2 trillion rubles (\$66.3 billion) by 2013 from 1.264 trillion (\$42 million) in 2010, a leading Russian business daily has said.

The Russian government made the relevant decision during a meeting on Thursday. The largest growth is planned for 2013, when the figure will rise by 0.5 trillion rubles (\$16.6 million), Vedomosti reported.

Konstantin Makiyenko from the Russian Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies (CAST) told the paper that the government is likely to spend more on the Navy, as well as the aviation and space industries.

The construction of advanced submarines, including Yasen and Borei class subs, and Bulava ballistic missiles, as well as the construction of three new Talwar class frigates, three Improved Kilo class subs and other vessels for the Russian Black Sea Fleet are likely to require the largest part of the planned spending, Makiyenko said.

The budgeted allocation should also consider spending on the construction of the first two Mistral class amphibious assault ships under a Russian-French deal, a Russian military plant manager told Vedomosti. This may account to about \$0.5 billion, he estimated.

Russia is currently in talks with France on the purchase of two Mistral class helicopter carriers and the construction of two others under a French license.

Besides this, Russia is planning to spend 80 billion rubles (\$2.65 billion) on 60 Su-family fighter jets starting 2010, and buy 26 MiG-29K Fulcrum-D carrier-based fighter jets, with the expected contract estimated at about 25 billion rubles (more than \$828 million), a military aircraft plant manager told the paper.

The plans also include the purchase of 32 Su-34 Flanker fighter bombers under the 2008 contract (a single plane then cost more than 1.1 billion rubles (\$36.4 million), he said.

Dutch withdraw from Afghanistan

THE last Dutch forces are leaving Afghanistan Sunday, marking the end of the Netherlands' four-year mission in the central province of Uruzgan. The Dutch withdrawal is the most significant pull-out of troops from the Afghan war, now in its ninth year.

American, Australian, Slovak and Singaporean forces will replace the 1,600-member Dutch military contingent. Twenty-four Dutch soldiers were killed during the mission.

In violence Sunday, Afghan officials say a roadside bomb blast hit a bus in southern Kandahar province, killing six civilians and wounding nine others.

There has been no claim of responsibility for the bombing.

Roadside bombs are a favorite weapon of Taliban insurgents against foreign and Afghan government forces, but civilians are often victims of the explosions.

Also Sunday, NATO said one of its service members died following an insurgent attack in southern Afghanistan. The coalition did not provide further details.

U.S. and NATO commanders have warned of an increase in violence as international and Afghan forces work to clear the south of Taliban insurgents.

In the Afghan capital, Kabul, hundreds of demonstrators protested the reported killing of 52 civilians in a NATO rocket strike. NATO disputes the allegation of civilian deaths in the Helmand province attack, which took place July 23.

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