

Is America Considering the Turkish Model for Pakistan?!

News:

America's former ambassador to the UN, Zalmay Khalilzad tweeted, "Perhaps disaster can be averted, but only if 2 things happen. Army Chief Munir needs to resign, and elections must be posted for a specific date. Without the first, the second is unlikely. Without these steps Pakistan's economic, political and security crisis will only worsen." ([The Tweet](#))

Comment:

The tweet has raised the specter that somehow America is involved in the fracture of the Pakistani army. Some have even speculated that America prefers a Turkish model of ruling, i.e., where the army is under the control of a civilian who, in return, actively works to safeguard American interests.

Presumably, under this model, Khan will manage the Pakistan army through a new Chief of Army Staff (CoAS), and his powers will be curtailed to prevent the army's involvement in Pakistani politics.

Another reason cited to support such assertions is that America must weaken Pakistan to get India fully onboard to counter China. Part of this programme includes stripping Pakistan of its nuclear weapons, reducing the size of Pakistan's armed forces to 200,000, surrendering Kashmir to India by rendering the Line of Control (LoC) permanent, and the eventual integration of Pakistan into a confederation with India.

A close examination of America's rule in Pakistan belie such speculations. This is because America, for decades, has exercised its will through the army junta to manage Pakistan's domestic affairs, the institutional development of the Pakistani army, as well as the country's wide foreign policy foot print.

The army brass has faithfully executed American wishes as and when required. For instance, the Afghan Jihad was an American enterprise concocted to destroy the Soviet Union. To give longevity to this effort meant that the Pakistani army brass had to Islamize Pakistani society to actively support this endeavor. This required changes to the educational curriculum in support of Islam, proliferation of madrassas, establishment of training camps for Jihadists, and encouragement to draw Arab scholars and fighters to live and train in these camps.

Post 911, America decided to reverse its Islamisation policy of Pakistan. Musharraf duly obliged and not only dismantled the Jihadist infrastructure but instigated military operations to apprehend and incarcerate tens of thousands of Pakistani citizens. Under Musharraf tenure, the de-Islamisation of Pakistan was supplemented by acceleration of Pakistan's Westernization.

Musharraf even went further than what was required and placed safeguards on some nuclear weapons that enabled the US to monitor their whereabouts and also made plans to surrender Kashmir to bolster India. Musharraf's successors like Kayani, Sharif, and Bajwa have acted with similar doggedness and have discharged their responsibilities faithfully to America.

During America's hegemony in Pakistan, its chief priority has always been to ensure the integrity of the army brass. To fracture the army leadership whilst America seeks to enlist India in a potential war against China is foolhardy. A fractured army leadership may prompt a civil war or an Islamist takeover. Worse, it could precipitate Pakistan's implosion, which will become a security nightmare for India and impede American attempts to use India against China.

Besides, placing the army under civilian rule is likely to galvanize the army to resist any attempts to weaken it. In the past, America has succeeded in weakening the Pakistani army by driving change through the CoAS and ensuring the integrity of the military junta to implement Washington's will. This modus operandi is not likely to change anytime soon.

In sum, the West has successfully used a weak civilian setup or the facade of democracy operating in the shadow of a strong army to control many parts of the Muslim world and prevent its natural unification. Hence, this model of ruling will only change when the army leadership switches its allegiance away from protecting Western interest to ruling by Islam.

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