

## Headlines:

- **US Congress begins Power Play against Trump**
- **Syrian Government Struggling to Secure Capital's Water Supplies**
- **Russian Role in Syria Undiminished Despite Latest Withdrawal**
- **Failed Pakistani Military Courts Expire**

## Details:

### US Congress begins Power Play against Trump

We are now seeing a live lesson in the reality of American democracy over the Russian hacking issue.

Both Democratic and Republican Party Congressional leaders, as well as President Obama's outgoing intelligence heads, are intensifying their campaign against the alleged Russian hacking of the US Presidential elections won by Donald Trump. Congress is using this as an opportunity to establish a strong position against the incoming President. It seems that Trump has realised that Congress is merely 'playing politics' on this issue. According to Reuters:

*President-elect Donald Trump called the controversy over Russian hacking during the 2016 presidential campaign a "political witchhunt" on Friday in an interview hours before he was to receive a U.S. intelligence briefing on the topic.*

*"China, relatively recently, hacked 20 million government names," Trump told the New York Times, referring to the Office of Personnel Management breach in 2014 and 2015. "How come nobody even talks about that? This is a political witch hunt."*

*He said hackers have infiltrated the White House and Congress. "We're like the hacking capital of the world," said Trump.*

*(Reporting by Doina Chiacu; editing by Grant McCool)*

The American system particularly emphasises the concept of 'Separation of Powers', which they say is needed to maintain the democratic power of the people. In reality, however, the separation of powers results in a weak and divided government that ensures the continued imposition of elite interests within American politics.

### Syrian government struggling to secure capital's water supplies

The severe bombardment of Aleppo has not ended the Syrian uprising against Assad. The regime is now battling to save critical water supplies to the capital. According to Reuters:

*The Syrian army and its allies pressed ahead on Friday with a two-week-long offensive to seize a strategic valley where a key spring provides supplies to four million people in the capital, Damascus, residents and rebels said.*

*Aerial bombing and shelling from the army as well as Hezbollah fighters stationed in the mountains that overlook the valley on the northwestern edge of the capital had intensified in the last forty-eight hours, they said.*

*Scores of jets pounded the area around the Ain al-Fija springs and the villages of Baseimah, Kafr Zayt and al Husseineh, which form part of a cluster of ten villages controlled by rebels in the valley that lies at the northwestern edge of the capital.*

*The Syrian army, aided by Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed Lebanese Shi'ite group, has so far been unsuccessful in making any significant advance in the valley since they launched the drive to capture the strategic area and accused rebels of polluting the springs with diesel.*

The people of Syria are not ready to accept defeat at the hands of this brutal dictator.

## **Russian Role in Syria Undiminished Despite Latest Withdrawal**

The Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad continues to depend on foreign forces in his war against his own people. According to the Associated Press:

*Russian President Vladimir Putin wants to cast himself as a peacemaker in Syria, after his military proved to be the difference in the battle for Aleppo. The Russian military announced Friday it was withdrawing its flagship vessels from the Syrian coast, and Putin has sent his envoys to organize the first talks between the Syrian government and opposition in nearly a year, set for later this month in Kazakhstan.*

*But the Syrian government's battlefield victories have depended crucially on Russian firepower, and Moscow is likely to remain closely involved in the protracted war. Syrian President Bashar Assad has indicated he still has battles to fight around the capital, Damascus, and in rebel-held Idlib province, in the country's northwest. These are matters that Russia still needs to resolve.*

The dependence on Russian and outside forces clearly demonstrates that Assad is unable to depend fully on his own army and security forces, which are otherwise perhaps the most powerful in the region. The war in Syria can only truly be solved by the participation of the armed forces. But first they have to decide if they stand with their people, or they stand with the criminal regime of Bashar al-Assad.

## **Failed Pakistani Military Courts Expire**

Over the past two years, Pakistan has maintained a parallel judicial system of military courts in order to try so-called 'jet-black terrorists'. After scores of false convictions by these courts, they have become deeply unpopular with almost all segments of Pakistan society. According to the Pakistani paper, The News:

*The federal government is not extending the jurisdiction, expiring on Saturday, of military courts to try civilian terrorists, Attorney General of Pakistan Ashtar Ausaf Ali Khan told The News on Friday.*

*"The cases that were being referred to these forums would now be tried by the existing Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs)," he said in a telephonic conversation. "The number of ATCs may be increased considering the workload."*

In fact, the military courts became a convenient mechanism for the notorious military intelligence agencies to cover up their criminal excesses. The failings of Pakistan's judicial system cannot be solved by such ad hoc measures as military courts, which end up dispensing even worse justice than the existing system. It is the British judicial system itself that needs to be uprooted and replaced with the Shari'i system of law, under the righteous Khilafah State working on the method of Prophethood.