



Can the Sons of the Ummah Exploit America's Weakness and Return it to its Rightful Position

A few years ago, it was extremely rare to find articles on America's decline. Today, the fading of American power seems to be a popular topic. Headlines like "Is the United States in Decline?", "America is in Warp-Speed Decline...", "The Future: China's Rise, America's Decline", and "America's imperial decline may be best hope to save democracy" are becoming more frequent and less controversial. The ascendancy of Trump to the Whitehouse and his "America first" mantra has not only failed to stymie the notion about America's decline, but rather it has exacerbated it.

In January 2018, Gallup conducted a survey of opinion in 134 countries and found that approval ratings for the America's role in the world, dropped from 48% under Obama to 30% just after one year of Trump's reign. This is the lowest score Gallup has ever recorded on global leadership.

Only a few decades ago, America was basking in the glory of defeating the red empire—the Soviet Union— without firing a single bullet, and grandiose statements such as "America's unipolar moment" and "hyper power" grabbed the headlines. Those days seem to be very different from the America of today.

The world's most powerful army has been unable to defeat the ill-equipped and poorly trained student fighters of Afghanistan known as the Taliban. America's longest war has sapped the morale of its people and broken the backs of its soldiers. After fighting for just over sixteen years and spending billions of dollars, the political settlement in Afghanistan remains elusive as ever. America is more likely to lose Ashraf Ghani's government than defeat the Taliban.

A recent BBC report belittles the performance of the pro-American government in Kabul and unequivocally states that Taliban's influence can be found in 70% of Afghanistan. Unsurprisingly then, the US Department of Defence has prevented Special Investigator General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) from publishing data on the amount of territory Taliban controls.

Another sign of America's weakness is her poor record in curbing the nuclear ambitions of North Korea. Since 1994, Washington has worked scrupulously to prevent Pyongyang in its bid to attain nuclear power status, and was dealt an enormous blow in 2006 when North Korea detonated a nuclear device and joined the nuclear club. The present standoff between North Korea and the US appears to be heading the same way. Apart from the declaration of more sanctions and risking an all-out nuclear war with China, America has little room to maneuver. Pyongyang has taken advantage of America's narrowing options and undercut Washington's efforts to find a diplomatic solution by inviting the South Korean President for bilateral talks in Pyongyang.

As it so often happens, political objectives are achieved either through war or through the demonstration of military might to compel the adversary into a settlement. Yet in the

case of Afghanistan and North Korea America's failure on both accounts is palpable. Possession of military supremacy counts for naught if the world's sole super-power cannot find political settlements to protracted issues. These two lingering issues reveal the true extent of America's decline. If Washington cannot find a stable political settlement in Afghanistan or deter North Korea from assembling a nuclear warhead that can reach America, then what chance does it have in dissuading other great powers like China and Russia or lesser powers such as Pakistan and Turkey from threatening her interests.

Pakistan represents an interesting challenge to American primacy. It is well known that the Afghan resistance - consisting of Afghan Taliban, Haqqani network and other militant outfits - orbits around the Pakistani military, and whenever America is eager to negotiate a peace deal with the leadership of the resistance, Washington requires Islamabad's support to make it happen. For Pakistan to exert such leverage over the Afghan resistance, despite having lost its strategic depth, speaks volumes about Pakistan's capability to hurt America - only if Islamabad chose to do so. Then there is the matter of Pakistani nukes - some estimates suggest the country's nuclear arsenal could soon reach 240. If North Korea with handful of nukes is proving to be a handful for the US, then imagine what problems Pakistan could cause Washington. Under the right leadership, it is entirely plausible for Pakistan to annex Afghanistan, expel America from the region and snuff out any conventional threats from India with the ominous tactical nukes from its repertoire of nuclear weapons.

Similarly, Turkey - a non-nuclear powerhouse - poses a grave challenge to American hegemony in Europe. Turkey by far is the most powerful NATO country on continental Europe, and its army can severely damage American influence. According to George Freidman of Stratfor, Turkey's armed forces have the ability to reach Germany in an hour and France in half day unimpeded. The only NATO power other than the US that could halt Turkey's advance westwards is the UK.

Unfortunately, the hypocritical leadership of both countries is the only thing that inhibits Pakistan and Turkey from challenging America. A sincere leadership working under the shade of the Islamic flag of the Caliphate would upend America's order in the sub-continent and Europe, and usher in a new Islamic order for the world. But is there anyone in the armed forces who could deliver this order by establishing the Caliphate?

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾

“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered.” [8:24]

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