

---

## PAKISTAN PUTS US ON NOTICE TO 'FIX' AFGHANISTAN

12.04.2017

---

The National (April 11, 2017)

According to a report in the British media, a Pakistan military source has warned the United States to "sort out its mess in Afghanistan, or Russia will". If this did occur as The Daily Telegraph -reported, then its an amazing development.

This sounds like a threat of Russian intervention in Afghanistan similar in nature to its Syrian military adventure. And no one is used to hearing the Pakistan military put the US military on notice so brusquely. In fact all such criticism has usually been addressed to Pakistan.

Something has really changed.

First and most importantly, Pakistan is fed up with being held responsible for the ineptitude of the Afghan government.

While all manner of terrorists now find succour in Afghanistan to carry out more attacks in Pakistan, ISIL and the Taliban are competing with each other for control of territory.

Second, Americas ability and desire to control events in Afghanistan is fast diminishing. It has too much on its hands in the Middle East and elsewhere. Afghanistan is falling prey to the law of diminishing returns. If so, sooner or later, the US will quit and leave Afghanistan in chaos.

This is, in all probability, now inevitable. But, when that happens, then the most likely scapegoat is Pakistan.

Third, it is now old news that in 2012, US intelligence warned the government that its policies would result in strengthening extremism in Syria. It has done so, not only in Syria, but also in the entire neighbourhood and the US is indifferent to this reality.

Fourth, there is a general realisation that the US is not amenable to reason in its approach in Afghanistan and the greater Middle East.

A mere glance at the map of Afghanistan will show that the spread of ISIL is towards northern Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban from southern Afghanistan can do little or nothing about them.

The only Afghan tribes that could are the Zadran, whose best-known warlord is Jalaluddin Haqqani, and the Ghilzai. But far from seeking their help, the US will neither talk to the Haqqanis nor permit Kabul to do so.

Fifth and finally, Pakistan has learnt from its blunders. Any solution to the Afghan mess will work

only if it is Afghan originated, owned and implemented, without any outside interference. Outside assistance might, just might, work, but not interference.

In fact, the Afghani tribal system is egalitarian. Not only intra-tribe but also inter-tribe. This means all tribes, irrespective of numerical strength and influence, are equal.

If everybody sits together, they might still be able to hammer out an agreement. If I were in charge, I would call an assembly of all tribes, warlords, Taliban, Haqqani and others, with government representatives.

But the US, and India, still think they can guard their interests through force and incentives.

It is in this environment that Russia decided to host a conference in Moscow with China and Pakistan. Neither the US nor India was invited.

This warning came as an aftermath of the conference on Afghanistan in Moscow.

It seems that the tripartite conference must have decided that it was time to serve notice to the US. The idea being that, if its hand is forced, the US might reach towards workable options.

Alternately, if it doesn't, it may be forced to pull out earlier. The earlier it does, the earlier chaos will set in and the earlier it does, the earlier it might end.

So as to reduce the intensity and duration of the chaos, Russia may join China and Pakistan in reducing the extent of the current mess that Afghanistan is in.

The only catch in this is American arrogance. Before taking over as president, Donald Trump publicly criticised his predecessors Syria policy and seemed to agree with Russia. Now, it seems the American establishment has won him over.

Can the US establishment force another such response from Mr Trump in Afghanistan? If it does, we are in for really bad times.

---

Kaynak/Source: