POWER & POLITICS

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It's All Out in the Open Now, so Why the Softness on Pakistan?

Practising politicians are rarely prophetic as they live only in the present. They refuse to read the writing on the wall if it is politically inconvenient. They don't mind killing their conscience to serve their fake drawing room constituencies. This is exactly what our ruling establishment is doing when dealing with Pakistan. All of them concede that Pakistan is almost a dead nation, yet they want to engage those who aren't safe even in their own country. They live at the mercy of those who pose a threat to India. While bloodthirsty fundamentalists continue to demolish all the civilised and democratic institutions of Pakistan, large-hearted leaders from the US and their Indian fellow travelers continue to lobby for a dialogue. They have no logic. They don't even have an idea about whom to talk to. For them, a healthy and stable Pakistan represents a golden future. These regular yatris from Lutyens' Delhi to Lahore are more concerned about their evening parties where champagne is spilled than about the blood spattered all over the streets of Pakistan and in Mumbai during 26/11.

If any more evidence of Pakistan being the most favoured and safest haven for terrorists was required, it was there in the form of the audacious attack on the Karachi naval base last week. Earlier, the US army killed the Badshah of Terror Osama bin Laden in an area that was barely a few kilometres away from the seat of Pak military establishment. In the US, David Headley left no one in doubt during his ongoing trial that he was trained and funded by the Pakistan's dreaded and unconstitutional ISI.

Headley even gave details about the names of Pakistani officials, terror funds and terror attacks planned against India. Yet Indian peaceniks have turned their backs to the facts and plugged their ears. While American opinion makers are furious over Headley's revelations and confessions, Indian authorities have chosen to hide behind diplomatic camouflage. While the US is waging its war on ISI-sponsored terror, Indians are debating through media and TV channels on how to make Pakistan a stable and viable state. Predictably, the US is speaking with a forked tongue. One argues for the safety of their country and its strategic interests. Another advises India to wait and watch, which means let the ISI divert its terror outfits to hit at will on Indian soil.

It is amazing that our leaders and cheerleaders for Pakistan behave like ostriches. In private, however, they admit that Pakistan is the global godfather of terror. Even a hardcore diplomat-turned-politician like Natwar Singh admitted during a TV interview, which he gave as India's foreign Minister in 2004, that Pakistan was a failed state. But fearing diplomatic disaster, he withdrew his remark before it was telecast. He, and all those who both preceded and followed him to South Block, held almost similar views but never spoke their mind in the presence of colleagues or fellow diplomats. Hardly a day passes without women losing their husbands, children their parents and mothers their children in Pakistan, but its rulers instead of flushing out the killers boast about targeting India and that too on the floor of their parliament. General Pasha, the man whose ruling passion is harbouring and training terrorists isn't bothered about the implications of his warmongering.

AFP PHOTO/A. MAJEED

As more and more evidence of Pakistan's patronage of terrorism emerges, Indian movers and shakers retreat further into their shells.

Why should he? He was, after all, addressing a captive house that enjoys only a token mandate from the people of Pakistan. None of them dared question the ISI chief about his dangerous plans to attack Indian defence and civil installations. Meanwhile, as Pasha was spewing venom, our leaders were still talking about talks. From Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to most Congress leaders, all pleaded for an incensed India to ignore the hawkish boast of a frustrated military establishment across the border. Moreover, American leaders visiting the subcontinent were exhorting their Indian counterparts to restrain themselves from speaking the same language as Pakistanis. Even the American collaborators in India are more active now than they have ever been before. Using foreign-funded think tanks, they have mounted pressure on Indian political, corporate and social circles to prevent the Government from taking any sort of action against Pakistan. None of them has spoken out for the repatriation of 45 fugitives, including Dawood Ibrahim who lives like a monarch in Pakistan. Not even a single NGO has demanded the dismantling of terror camps operating across the LOC. Instead, they go about collecting crowds and inviting Pak chatteratti and glitteratti to participate in Indian cultural festivals in return for generous remuneration. Even India's hawkish Home Minister P Chidambaram admitted in a candid interview that while India has a limited capacity to undertake an Osama-type operation in Pakistan, it has constraints. It is clear that even his hands are tied.

For the past few months, as more and more evidence against Pakistan's patronage of terrorism surfaces, Indian movers and shakers retreat further into their shells. While candlelight peace processions and seminars have almost vanished, so have those who were aggressively advocating an offensive against Pakistan; instead they are seen participating in seminars and conventions abroad. Escaping the summer heat seems to be more important than turning up the heat on Pakistan. Suddenly our over-enthusiastic defence chiefs also have lost their bravado and have stopped giving vent to their inner feelings. Defence Minister (Saint) A K Antony always preaches tolerance, even in the wake of serious provocation. Chidambaram must have reflected the mood of the nation if he sought a level-playing field for Indian forces when he met US Secretary for Homeland Security Janet Napolitano. Chidambaram should have demanded the destruction of the evil empire of terror, whose access to Pakistan's nukes will always be an ominous possibility. It can be done with US cooperation. Or if need be, in spite of them.

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