[Politicisation of FATF](https://nation.com.pk/01-Nov-2019/politicisation-of-fatf" \t "_new)

Malik Muhammad Ashraf November 01, 2019

[**Malik Muhammad Ashraf**](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/malik-muhammad-ashraf)

Reportedly Deputy Director General for Policy Planning of Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Yao Wen talking to the visiting Pakistani journalists categorically stated that China did not want the FATF forum to be politicized as some countries were pursuing their political agenda in a bid to blacklist Pakistan. He further said that China had clearly told the US and India that it could not do it as the FATF was not meant to put any country in the blacklist, rather to support it to take action against terror financing.

The foregoing remarks make it clear beyond any doubt that in spite of the fact that Pakistan had made considerable progress in tackling money laundering and terror financing and rendered unparalleled sacrifices in fighting the scourge of terrorism, the US and India were making relentless efforts in keeping Pakistan under pressure to achieve their political ends which is quite understandable in the backdrop of their strategic cooperation.

Pakistan was put on the grey list on the basis of a resolution moved by US and its allies in the FATF in June 2018. China is right on money to point out the real role of FATF. It must assist Pakistan in overcoming the problem rather than trying to punish it to fulfill the political designs of the big powers. It was encouraging to note that while making the foregoing observations Mr. Yao Wen also reiterated that Pakistan was effectively pursuing its National Action Plan and China encouraged it to act against terrorists and strengthen its system. He also vowed that China would help Pakistan technically and politically to improve its system, build its capacity to handle issues related to terror financing while also urging the FATF member countries to adopt the same policy.

China has always stood by Pakistan and extended unqualified support to her on all international forums on issues of concern to the latter. It was due to the efforts and support of China, Turkey and Malaysia that Pakistan avoided being pushed to the blacklist in the last meeting of FATF in spite of the persistent efforts by India and US. According to the Charter of FATF, the support of at least three countries is required to keep any state from being blacklisted and 14-15 votes to get out of the grey list.

The FATF in its meeting from 14-18 October reviewing the progress made by Pakistan in implementing the 27 point action plan given to her noted that the country had complied with thirty six out of parameters, while the joint group found Pakistan largely compliant on 10 points, partially compliant on another 10 points and non-compliant on 7 points. The FATF however expressed its dissatisfaction on the implementation plan by Pakistan and gave further four months time till February 2020 to her for complete implementation of the rest of the plan points. Its President Xiangmin Liu in a statement noted that Pakistan had demonstrated strong political will to implement the action plan and FATF would provide all the necessary training and assistance and it called upon our members and global network to help in that regard. He however remarked “Pakistan needs to do more, if by February 2020 it does not make significant progress it will be put on the black list.

It is pertinent to point out that the government of Pakistan has decided to implement the rest of points of the action plan by December 2 and initiated efforts to meet the target given by the FATF. Since the implementation of the plan given by FATF pertains to legal, administrative and political measures it has its own specific difficulties which need to be understood by the FATF. Pakistan has already made good progress on the given plan. It should assist Pakistan to implement the remaining points without giving timelines which are not justifiable in view of the enormity of the task. As stated by the President of the FATF it should assist and help Pakistan to implement all points of the plan and not allow some countries to use the institution for their political agendas. Fighting terrorism and blocking avenues of terror financing and money laundering is an issue of global concern which requires a collaborative effort on the part of the global community and particularly entities like FATF to make sure that the countries like Pakistan which have shown the desired political will to fight terrorism and in the implementation of its action plan are encouraged and assisted in completing the remaining task rather than trying to punish them or keep them under pressure unnecessarily.

The reality is that Pakistan has been a sincere partner in the war on terror and has not only dismantled the infrastructure of all the terrorist outfits based on its territory including North Waziristan but is also faithfully engaged in eliminating the remnants of their supporters within the country. It has also taken all possible administrative and legal measures to check and block the sources of funding to the terrorist organizations. Pakistan has already promulgated a Presidential Ordinance to amend the anti-terror legislation in order to include all UN-listed individuals and groups in the national listings of proscribed outfits and persons. Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) also took measures in keeping with the FATF regulations and issued Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism Regulations 2018. The government had also chalked out a comprehensive plan to eradicate terrorist financing which was shared with the international watch-dog. The FATF decision to keep Pakistan in the grey list and the threat to push it into the black list is reflective of the US rhetoric to do more. It is also indicative of how much influence US could exercise on world bodies like FATF.

As the things stand at the moment, Pakistan can rest assured of the support of China, Turkey and Malaysia to save it from being black listed. However even remaining in the grey list is not good for Pakistan because it has its own implications. Therefore Pakistan besides taking further measures on the implementation of the remaining points of the FATF action plan would also need intensive lobbying with members of the FATF particularly the US to muster required support for getting out of the grey list. The US which expects Pakistan to play its role in resolving the Afghan conflict and taking the fight against terrorism to its logical end also has to show sincerity of purpose by recognizing the ground realities and assisting Pakistan in getting out of the grey list if it really wants the problems to be tackled for good.

The writer is a freelance columnist.

ashpak10@gmail.com