**A Prudent Timely Response**

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The unprovoked and imprudent Iranian air and missile strikes in Pakistan’s province Balochistan at Sabz Koh Panjgur area on night 16/17 January 2023 killing innocent children created a lot of public hubbub in Pakistan. It caused Pakistan to recall her ambassador from Iran and asked the Iranian ambassador to revert to his country and waited in vain for a diplomatic apology from Iran. However, the Iranian foreign minister reiterated in his arrogant statement that Iran exercised her right of self defence and reserves the right to strike in Pakistan. That compelled Pakistan to deliver a timely intelligence based counterpunch after 24 hours in part of Sistan Province of Iran against terrorists belonging to Pakistani Baloch terrorist outfits named BLA/BRA who have been sponsored, indoctrinated, trained, equipped and funded jointly by Iran, India and Afghanistan for decades. Pakistan restraint and diplomatic/ intelligence engagement has never received any positive response from Iran; and Pakistan’s friendly engagements have throughout been regarded as a weakness. Since Pakistan’s misperceived weakness has been inviting aggression from three neighbouring countries since long, causing unabated acts of sabotage, subversion and terrorism in Pakistan, with no bilateral or international response; therefore, the effective and long overdue retaliatory military response is considered perfectly in order as for the right to self defence/ retaliation and moral as per the military norms; which should have sent the right message to the perpetrators, besides raising the otherwise sapped national morale.

[Qinwen to meet Sabalenka in 2024 Australian Open women's singles final](https://www.nation.com.pk/26-Jan-2024/qinwen-to-meet-sabalenka-in-2024-australian-open-women-s-singles-final)

Pakistan has always shown a lot of magnanimity and patience in dealing with Iran and Afghanistan despite clear provocations and solid proofs of terrorists’ activities inside Pakistan resulting in massive human and economic losses. Not only the internationally declared terrorist outfits like ISIS, AQIS, BRA, BLA, JEM, TTA/TTP, ETIM and IMU; but Indian RAW agents have also been freely using the soil of Iran and Afghanistan for launching terrorist attacks inside Pakistan since long, particularly since 1979. In addition to playing second fiddle to India and other hostile countries for the spread of terrorism, both Iran and Afghanistan have been running smuggling-based parallel economies in Pakistan, hurting Pakistan’s economy beyond measure. Pakistan has been sharing intelligence and dossiers of proofs with UNO and all international players in the region but always in vain. As for Iran, only the case of a RAW officer named Kulbahasan Yadev caught in dozens of terror activities in Pakistan had been operating from Iran as was the case of an arrested one big terrorist named Uzair Baloch. Besides, a number of sectarian killings and attacks on Pakistan security forces in Balochistan had direct links with Iranian support. In an attempt to take control of Quetta by hundreds of Iranian armed militants who killed more than dozen policemen in Quetta in 1985/86, comes as a reminder; however, Pakistan showed great restraint by arresting, disarming all the culprits and returning them to Iran. The spread of Iranian politico-economic agenda cloaked in foggy sectarian clergy cover is not a secret but has been overlooked for a host of reasons; none tenable or logical on the touchstone of national sovereignty, politics, international norms or even mutual trust. On the internal front, hurting Pakistan on multiple fronts helps India and other foes to gain political mileage, especially when the election season is in swing. A reminder to Pakistan for timely free and fair elections for return of a stable political government in Pakistan for long overdue politico-economic and lasting security stability.

[Evidence points to India’s role in assassination of two Pakistani citizens](https://www.nation.com.pk/26-Jan-2024/evidence-points-to-india-s-role-in-assassination-of-two-pakistani-citizens)

Playing on the above mentioned Iranian misadventures and intensified spread of sectarianism in Pakistan since 1979 for regional and international politico- economic aspirations, the Global Deep State has always been trying to pitch Iran against Pakistan like Iran- Iraq war of the yester years and like Ukraine against Russia; all malicious maneuvers leading to creation of situation like Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, Yemen or Syria for Pakistan. It has been well understood by the Pakistani state, and the long exercised restraint and current well measured response has been in order to avoid falling in the well laid trap. It goes without saying that Pakistan has paid a very heavy human, economic, social, psychological and diplomatic cost in order to reject international offers, malicious traps and above all in showing unbearable restrictions despite having the strongest conventional and nuclear military punch. Iran has throughout been misusing the misguided sectarian sympathisers in all the Iranian targeted Muslim countries, resulting in millions of Muslims bleeding to death and demise of military, political and economic potential of the said states. Ironically, that has always provided the US led NATO to strike the beleaguered Muslim countries as a new Crusade e.g. Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Yemen. The present clear division of KSA and Iran led Muslim countries blocks in the Middle East is rooted in over 1400 hundred years old fissure; which unfortunately remains the biggest fault line continuously exploited by all the non-Muslim powers since then till to date. Sadly, the simple wisdom of “united we stand, divided we fall’ has never been understood.

[Bilawal asks PML-N, PTI workers to vote for PPP](https://www.nation.com.pk/26-Jan-2024/bilawal-asks-pml-n-pti-workers-to-vote-for-ppp)

Hoping against the hope, one can pray and wish that the clergy dominated Iranian state shows understanding of Pakistan’s sacrifices and restraint and let the bilateral diplomacy play out in the lead. The mutual respectable survivability of Pakistan, Iran and Türkiye lies in reinvigoration of RCD/ ECO (Founded as the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) in 1964 by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Türkiye, the Forum was rechristened as the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in 1985). The China led SCO and Russia led CSTO provide ideal umbrellas for regional peace, security, politico- economic progress and survivability, that Iran and Pakistan need to utilize with prudence. After all, you can change your friends, but not neighbours!

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