[Resurrection of terror](https://nation.com.pk/10-Jun-2019/resurrection-of-terror" \t "_new)

Imran Malik June 10, 2019

The Pakistan Armed Forces, through their highly successful Operations Zarb e Azb and Rad ul Fassaad, have largely pacified the western and north-western stretches of Pakistan. This has created the desired environment for CPEC’s next developmental phase to start. Pakistan, arguably, is set for the road to economic recovery. However, irritants and hickups like the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and others keep propping up to create unwanted diversions for it.

The PTM’s emergence as a “saviour” of Pashtun rights, in the presence of total and comprehensive Pashtun representations in the KP Assembly, the National Assembly, the Senate and all other possible political fora and tiers at the tribal, local, provincial and national levels defy all sense and logic. Its grievances could have been addressed adequately at any one or more of these levels. Then why this proclivity towards rabble-rousing and militancy? Its militant agenda, jingoistic ethnic and anti-Army proclamations, aggressive political rhetoric and its astonishing domestic and international reach and support reflect its ulterior motives, ultimate objectives and perhaps its origins and raison d’eter, too!

What then is its actual intent?

Is it the resurrection of terror in FATA and Balochistan to destabilise Pakistan and consequently disrupt and destroy the CPEC-BRI? Is Pakistan, the CPEC-BRI, China or are all three the ultimate targets? Is the PTM a willing accomplice of hostile-to-Pakistan countries and their intelligence agencies or an unknowing, innocent conduit to either or all objectives? Or is it the proverbial Trojan Horse that will revive terror, subvert Pakistan and disrupt its economic recovery from within? This situation portends very serious and ominous strategic connotations for Pakistan. It must deal with it ardently and expeditiously.

At the strategic level, the development of the CPEC-BRI is seen with unrestrained concern and anxiety by the US-India Combine, whose individual interests converge unreservedly in a destabilized and economically weak Pakistan and a derailed CPEC-BRI. A successful CPEC, the flagship project of the BRI, will be seen as a forerunner of an economically viable BRI by the world, encouraging other Asian, African and European countries to sign up with it. This will expand China’s sphere of influence emphatically and decisively with massive economic, geostrategic and geopolitical dividends. The US considers this a direct threat, an affront to its singular position as the sole global political, economic and military Super Power. The issue will get further compounded with China’s presence on the Mekran Coast and, as expected, its militarization at some later stage. That would have very far-reaching geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economic consequences directly impacting world oil trade through the Hormuz Straits/Persian Gulf and global East-West trade through the Indian Ocean, amongst others. China’s strategic reach will thus enlarge manifold and its emergence as a two-ocean state would create gargantuan challenges for the US in the Greater Middle East and Indo-Pacific Regions!

On the other hand, India has singularly failed to establish its hegemony over Pakistan even at the Indo-Pak sub-continent level much less at the South Asian or wider extra regional levels. These Indian failures and incapacities have been exemplified to India itself, especially to its Armed Forces and the world at large, at Balakot and thereafter. It knows that it cannot dominate nuclear Pakistan politically, diplomatically or militarily. So, the only option left to it is to disrupt Pakistan’s economic revival. To that end, India has always endeavoured to destabilize Pakistan through multi-dimensional means. At the international level, it has launched a diplomatic and media offensive, albeit unsuccessfully thus far, to isolate and demonize it as a state sponsor of terrorism. At the regional level, it has used Afghanistan and Iran (and their intelligence agencies) to export terror into Pakistan. At the bilateral level, it has created a perpetual warlike situation across the LOC and Working Boundary. Within Pakistan, it is recognized as the main sponsor and instigator of militant/terrorist attacks. The Indian policy is to so mire Pakistan in multiple diversions that it’s economic revival and recovery are conclusively stunted. This brings it to the CPEC which if successful would take Pakistan beyond its “prospective sphere of influence, domination, hegemony, dictation and obedience,” forever. Therefore, it is in India’s vital interests too, to scuttle the CPEC and by implication the BRI!

The interests of the US-India Combine thus stand unified; currently, the PTM provides them the desired platform to secure them!

The PTM phenomenon, despite its ostensibly modest origins from a backward area of Pakistan, has demonstrated a surprising reach at the local, national and international levels. Its sublime use of the electronic, print and social media and the vociferous support it gets from some western media houses is very intriguing. Its attacks on Army installations and personnel are meaningful. Its ability to organize protest meets all over Pakistan and in western capitals/cities like Geneva, London, New York, Brussels, Amsterdam etc is indeed unfathomable. All this has a striking albeit not-so-surprising similarity with what the BLA did a few months ago!

Where do these similarities, the funding, the international reach, the international media support, the organizational capacity, the communication networking, the administrative excellence and the wherewithal for all this effort originate from?

PTM’s demands are quite frivolous, indeed. Naquibullah Mehsud’s murder is sub-judice and should be pursued in the court of law. A truth and reconciliation commission is within the purview of the Federal/Provincial Government which may be approached. “Missing persons” have been turning up dead in terrorist attacks on Pakistan, its Armed Forces and its LEAs! The Army is already removing landmines. With no Check Posts, the unrestricted movement of terrorists and their deadly paraphernalia would ease the revival of terror there. Furthermore, withdrawing the Pakistan Army from the region echoes the demands of the TTP and its sponsors - the NDS-RAW Combine and other hostile intelligence agencies. Is the freedom of action to resurrect terror in Pakistan the real desired end state of this sponsored PTM phenomenon?

Pakistan must engage the PTM politically and concurrently proceed against all of its supporters who attacked Pakistan Army’s installations and killed/wounded its soldiers.