

Anti-Muslim Wave in Europe: Post France Attacks

By: Rana Athar Javed

The Paris Attack has generated a strong anti-Islam wave throughout Europe, which in turn is being exploited by the right-wing groups – resulting in a racial backlash against Muslims in Europe. The Syrian refugees too suffered in the process, thereby a very strong public opposition towards positive “refugee” policy of respective European states. Mosques, Islamic cultural centers and women in veil (*Hijab*) were attacked and a negative press has become order of the day.

The argument begs the question whether the discourse about European Muslims would also address their remarkable contributions since the Second World War. However, the issue of social integration of Muslims in Europe is also becoming more pertinent to the overall social reflection of mainstream European citizens. Across Europe, “deadly actions” of a minority has undermined the way Europeans treated Muslim immigrants since the early nineteenth century. Moreover, popular opinion rejects the conservative immigration policy because the estimates show that the West would require millions of young skillful professionals in the next three decades, hence

making a case for a plausible and wise immigration policy. Despite all the complexities, the West must not dilute its investment in those millions of Muslims who are permanent part of Western societies. In the case of France, Muslims have long been segregated and are living in ghettos.

The intelligence failure and the reports that the attackers were known to French and Belgian police must also be considered in final examination of why the early warning system of state institutions failed to gauge the ISIS infiltration in French society? Importantly, the Muslims are source of socioeconomic stability in the West, and their role must be considered in terms of dialogue and integration.

The diversity in Western societies is not a threat, rather than social strength. Promotion of this idea is responsibility of Western governments, the countries of origin cannot be blamed for something that occurs due to malfunctioning or breach of security in European capitals. The only way forward is to include all the stakeholders, especially religious leadership of all faiths and Muslim youth. Humiliating and racial profiling can only create further challenges for the host nations and hence more complexity and difficult time for European Muslims. The war and conflict in the Middle East may well become the single most

important factor in initiating the third world war scenario. Every nation of the world, especially the permanent members of United Nations Security Council, must discharge their responsibility towards the world peace. Failure is not an option!



Pakistan, China and Russia: A New Emerging Bloc

By: Sadaf Sultana

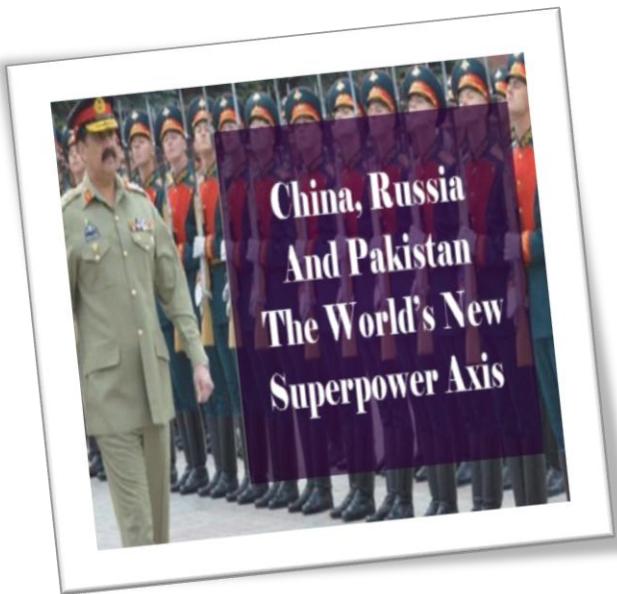
The world geopolitical landscape is changing with a remarkable pace. New Strategic alliances are in the making, and thus foreign policy of major countries passing through transformation. As a result, new “security-oriented blocks” are emerging – convergence of resources and collective national interests has become the basis of any war & peace related policies. The Cold War rivalry between Pakistan and Russia is gradually fading away, and the relations are shaping under the current strategic environment in the world.



Despite Russia's close ties with India, it may be no more a viable policy for Russia to only rely on

historical Indian relations. Pakistan, on the other hand has come very far both in terms of countering the most complex asymmetrical warfare and expanding its relations “out of Western-oriented” foreign policy realm. In the backdrop of India’s US policy and China’s exclusive consideration for Russia’s strategic interests, Pakistan is a natural third and important component of this emerging block. Russia’s paradigm shift towards Pakistan, especially annulment of arms embargo in 2014 has cleared the way for future cooperation between the two nations. Russia also signed a military-to-military cooperation agreement with Pakistan.

The deal will help both states to exchange information on military related affairs including establishment of a partnership in the defense and counter terrorism areas as well as exploring collective objectives to stabilize Afghanistan. The Defence agreement and construction of gas pipeline are two of the vital components that would strengthen the emerging relations between Pakistan, China and Russia. As the CPEC is taking its roots in Pakistan’s economic growth, the Russian inclusion would provide the region a much needed “alternative” to NATO and India’s designs about the region. Therefore, the Pak-China-Russia block will greatly impact the way Afghan and security issues are being decided in South Asia.



Furthermore, Russia and China are facing severe tensions and unrest in their neighborhoods. Russia, for example is grappling with an unprecedented NATO pressure over Ukraine crisis as well as facing sanctions due to its military venture in Crimea. China's advancement in South-China Sea, on the other hand, has intensified tensions with Japan, US and its allies Asia-Pacific. It is under these strategic constraints that a requirement to for Pakistan, China and Russia to establish partnership, so a wider NATO intervention can be impeded. The Pak-China strategic partnership is an example for the region because as a traditional ally, China supported all sustainable economic/energy projects of Pakistan. The current wars in Syria and Iraq and brewing conflict in other parts of the world carry all the hallmarks of Third World War. The economic crunch, currency devaluation and Dollar vs. Euro will further encroach upon peace opportunities. The emergence of Pak-China and Russian partnership will help stabilize the region and would signify the importance of new military and economic alliances.

The Indian assumption and implicit diplomatic threats to oppose CPEC or Pak-Russian alliance is sign of overprotective diplomatic

policies. For Pakistan, Indo-US strategic partnership is no longer a matter of concern as, CPEC and Pakistan's resolve against terrorism has shaped a favorable place in international arena. Delisting of India's special status in Russian quarter too would create more space for Pakistan to maneuver this new relationship with Russia.

To be concluded, the emerging block of Pak-China and Russia holds the key to establish new strategic settings and future peace direction. Although Russia cannot be a substitute of the US, but it has a very important role to play in power balancing act both in the UNSC and also in the Middle East. Russia's needs to counter international opposition to its Middle Eastern and Asian policies has a potential to incorporate this "new block" thereby diluting or diminishing future pressures on future cooperation between Pakistan, China and Russia.



General Raheel Sharif visit to US and Future Security Cooperation

By Saman Choudary

General Raheel Sharif paid a conclusive five day visit to US from 15th to 20th November, 2015. This visit is being considered as a visit of vital importance and holds significance in terms of strategic and defense ties with Washington. The COAS held meetings with all key political, defence and security officials during the visit. This visit signals the importance of the problems that both countries seem to be facing in the region and especially because of the Afghanistan situation in post 2014. The pressing issues such as regional counterterrorism and Afghan peace efforts have been the most important part of the agenda.



This visit was also significant in nature as it came at a time of intensified international and regional push for restoration of a stalled peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan to end the Taliban-led insurgency in Afghan state. Within the high level meetings, COAS had productive discussions about the bilateral defense and security cooperation and highlighted the need for resolving Kashmir issue. Within the perspective of regional security, Afghanistan and India was discussed with reference to Afghanistan-owned reconciliation process and Pakistan's role in stabilizing peace in

the region. A special focus was paid by the COAS on the regional challenges and a way forward was also discussed, along with the future opportunities for achieving an enduring regional peace.



Pakistani military leader re-emphasized the need for effective border controls on the porous Afghan side frontier and the need for blocking external terrorist financing. The things that are being put on the table by the US officials include peace talks with the Taliban in Afghanistan; Pakistan's continued support of Islamic militants in the South Asian region; and its deteriorating ties with India due to Indian involvement in Pakistani territory. The two sides have also effectively reviewed international security and anti-terrorism cooperation.

The relationship between Washington and Islamabad will continue to be strained by mutual distrust, internal threats to Pakistan's stability due to Afghan factor, Pakistan's relations with its neighbors and militants, and the U.S. role in Afghanistan beyond 2014. US has always used Pakistan for its own narrow tactical purposes that underlined US-PAK relations. However, now there is a clear recognition that US-PAK relationship is based on mutual necessity rather than of strategic requirement. This objective recognition can be seen in terms of the recent visits of Pakistani establishment to Washington D.C. and engagement

of officials in bilateral talks. COAS visit outlines the importance of Pakistani state in the South Asian region and the need for bilateral partnership for the re-initiation of fragile Afghan peace process. This visit delineates that how cooperation is mandated to achieve successful peace talk's outcomes in Afghanistan and to achieve regional security.



If US stops the blame game and both states work productively towards resolving the security issues. US should objectively look at Pakistan and both states should work with a clear focus towards resolution of Afghan issue, Indian sponsored terrorism in Pakistan and trust issues. The US leadership should put aside the mantra of do more against Pakistan.

Both sides should truly engage into the bilateral mechanisms of cooperation, as both parties could only gain their objectives through trust buildup and productive engagement. Both countries should focus on those areas where cooperation is truly possible and these include civilian cooperation, trade relations, Afghan peace process, constructively countering Indian influence, and support to Pakistan's private and energy sector. As Pakistan is the only state that has practically fought asymmetrical warfare and gained victory. Therefore, Pakistan should play a lead role and should collaborate with other states in order to further expand its security cooperation arrangements.





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