

Pakistan: Is Washington Now Imran Khan's Buddy?

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We all know that 95 percent of elite Pakistani politics is mentally challenged fairytales and gossip replete with murmurings that can be cooked up for a good story to sell to the public. The intrigues and power plays of Pakistan's rulers seem to just drag the country further and further to the abyss.

After virtually a year now of the troika of the country's entire traditional crooked and corrupt political class, dominant sections of the upper echelons of the military, and of course Washington (no wretched troika worth its salt could be without the third!) trying to eliminate former Prime Minister Imran Khan and the massive popular support behind him, things seem to have backfired so badly that the 'Deeper' state in Washington is actually feeling nervous.

This is the backdrop to all of the bluster coming from Khan's enemies, i.e. he is now becoming 'friendly to the Americans.' The phrase itself is indicative of the buffoonery of Pakistan's politicians and elite liberal intelligentsia.

Indeed, Khan would have no problem being a friend to the Americans, Indians, and Israelis if they immediately ceased their warmongering, occupations, and brutality.

Khan has, on average, done about fifteen interviews *just with CNN* every year since 9/11. And for those twenty years of the 'War on Terror,' there was a very simple proposition that Khan made: America's military solution will not only take a huge human toll (as all wars do) but will also be counterproductive since it will fuel more militancy.

One of the reasons the American national security state, humiliated in Afghanistan by the Taliban, was hellbent on the regime change against Khan was because they never forgave him for being...absolutely right. Yet, this was always called some genetic 'anti-Americanism' and earned the leader the poetic title of 'Taliban Khan.'

But this is nothing new. As Noam Chomsky noted once, "anti-Americanism" is a term of propaganda intended to stifle and shut down debate on any meaningful issues related to US foreign policy. If your views are seen unacceptable in what they're advocating, you

immediately become 'anti-American' and your views are removed from the 'free market of ideas.' No one knows this better than Chomsky.

In Khan's case, the American national security state knew that it had trillions to lose (largely for its defense contractors like Raytheon and Northrop Grumman) if no war(s) and 'shock and awe' campaigns were unleashed incessantly after 9/11 against multiple Muslim-majority countries. Hence, Khan's view was unthinkable and therefore axiomatically made him and the view itself 'anti-American.' This is what is meant when Pakistan's class of political punditry, not known for its sophistication or nuance, constantly regurgitates the trope that Khan is 'using the Anti-American card.'

For much of Pakistan, there's no 'card' to be used. Opposing American drone strikes and US support for Pakistan's ruthless military and civilian leaders is simply sensible and necessary critique, and that's what Khan's been offering since 2001.

Nevertheless, the tightly state-controlled media is peddling the narrative that because of some tweets by the old American pragmatic neocon, Zalmay Khalilzad, Khan is secretly now being supported by Washington. How inane these claims become have no bounds.

For the past few weeks, it has become clear that there is some real confusion now within Washington planners about the situation in Pakistan. They certainly did not see the massive outpouring of support for Khan coming after the regime change last April, but they thought it could be fixed quick with the only plan that could kill this phenomenon: assassinate Khan.

Unfortunately for the troika of tyranny, it was a botched assassination attempt and Khan survived. His popularity doubled after that.

Next have come a series of deeply repressive and pathetic attempts by Washington's clowns in Islamabad to try to arrest Khan on bogus charges - none succeeded since tens of thousands of ordinary people are always guarding and protecting Khan from any such state malfeasance targeted towards Khan. The political mafias - and the military establishment sometimes - that keep sending these security forces to arrest Khan have now...tripled his support.

Thus, one does not need to be a master geo-strategist to figure out why Washington may be incredibly anxious about the political scene in Pakistan right now. Washington planners may be many things, but they perhaps are not so boorish to observe that even if miraculously Khan is eliminated somehow now, that the 'Pakistani street' is going to sit back quietly and let the much-despised traditional political dynasties and sections of the top brass of the military simply roll out the red carpet for Washington to do as it pleases in Pakistan (re-establishing a military base, surveillance on China, etc.) And in the minds of all ordinary Pakistanis will be that it was Washington in the first place that set the process in motion that led to the ouster and potential elimination of Khan.

In such a situation, even a warmongering and insatiable empire like the United States has to think twice before believing in its own ability to accomplish its stated aims. And it is precisely in that context that the old neocon pragmatist Khalilzad articulated one gradually emerging position in Washington right now. That is, the jokers that we put in power when ousting Khan have fumbled up things so royally that we might have to take a step back or two in order to regain some influence in Pakistan and the larger region itself. This is what crucially explains why Washington is dragging its feet before releasing yet another IMF

bailout for the brainless quislings ruling Pakistan right now.

On the other hand, the Pakistani liberati and punditry are too quick to parrot the asinine accusations for which their paymasters pay them. Even a cursory geopolitical assessment indicates that Washington grossly miscalculated on two fronts this time, how deeply popular Khan was throughout the country, and how detested was the rest of the entire traditional political feudal dynasties and their cohorts were. Perhaps the one factor Washington cannot be blamed for was predicting the one unprecedented and perhaps the most important facet of this political equation: for the first time in the nation's history, there are serious divisions within the military, with the majority of middle and junior rank officers, not to mention nearly one hundred percent of the soldiers, on the side of Khan, not their boss, the always all-powerful Chief of Army Staff (COAS).

Thus, even though the US national security state regularly seems to display signs of insanity these days, it still has retained a little sense that some special cases like Pakistan may need some recalibration of policy after the abominable tyrants Washington has subject Pakistan to over the past year, an abomination Pakistanis will not forgive or forget lightly.

As for Khan, his message remains the same that it was more than twenty years ago now: we (the US and Pakistan) can be friends in peace and on the basis of an equitable relationship - but only on the conditions of those terms.

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