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# Next Up: Pakistan

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July 11, 2011 "Antiwar"

**I see someone besides myself has noticed all the “leaking” going on in the upper echelons of Washington over our rocky relationship with Pakistan.** Suddenly Islamabad is on the verge of being classified as part of the Axis of Evil, with the head of the joint chiefs, Admiral Mullen, openly accusing the Pakistanis of “sanctioning” the killing of a journalist, and allying with a faction of the Taliban. Since when does a military man – the titular uniformed head of the US armed force, no less – speak out on such sensitive political matters? Why, when he has the full backing of the White House – which obviously has plans for the Pakistanis.

The new accusations add fuel to the fire started by the discovery of Osama bin Laden’s Abbottabad lair, where he had been hiding for years. The Pakistan-haters in the administration – of which there seem to be plenty – were quick to draw the conclusion that he’d been hiding with the knowledge and cooperation of the Pakistani military – because of the hideout’s proximity to an elite military academy. Which is odd, since it is well known that al-Qaeda operatives were living in the US for years, undetected, as they planned the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Heck, FBI agents in the field warned Washington after one of the terrorists took flight training lessons and was reported for suspicious activities – to no avail. What if someone in Pakistan had reported similarly suspicious activity in Abbottabad to the local authorities, and no action had been taken – in the view of the anti-Pakistan crowd, wouldn’t that constitute *prima facie* proof of Islamabad’s guilt?

The ultimate prize for US imperialism in the Middle East – the jewel in the crown of the emerging American empire – is Iran, long the chief target of the War Party’s attention. Yet they don’t have either the resources or the political support for such an attack, and so the strategy, for the time being, is encirclement. First, Iraq and Afghanistan, buttressing the substantial US military presence in the Gulf – and now, Pakistan. (Azerbaijan, to the north, has replaced Kyrgyzstan as the main way station funneling supplies to American troops in the region.)

Shorn of its obstreperous military leaders, who entertain delusions of autonomy, Pakistan will be fully integrated into the American orbit – and Iran will be surrounded on all sides.

While keeping the heat on for a direct attack on Iran, the powerful pro-Israel lobby – the driving force behind the anti-Iran crowd – is biding its time, confident they’ll win in the end. In the meantime, they are carefully building up momentum for the final push toward war, and a key part of that is agitating for a complete break in US-Pakistan relations.

The Lobby’s fingerprints are all over the latest anti-Pakistani agitprop. It was one Simon Henderson, described as the resident “expert” on Pakistan’s nuclear capabilities at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), who recently released an alleged letter from a top official of the North Korean regime “proving” Pakistan supplied Pyongyang with nuclear technology. WINEP was founded by Martin Indyk, former research director of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), as an “academic” adjunct to AIPAC, the primary conduit of pro-Israel propaganda in the US.

That this letter is a forgery seems almost beyond doubt: after all, why would a North Korean write a letter to a Pakistani in English? And, come to think of it, why would such a letter be written at all, given its highly incriminating content? Yet – as recent history shows – when it comes to disseminating US government propaganda, such outlets as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* don’t have very high standards. Nobody really cares if any of this is

credible, let alone true: the idea is to hurl such a barrage of accusations that a general impression of Pakistan's perfidy will be created. Where there's smoke...

Signs of Iran's warming relations with Pakistan culminated in the agreement to build a gas pipeline that will transport Iranian gas to Pakistani ports, throwing the hard-pressed regime in Tehran an economic lifeline. The pipeline is expected to be operational in six months. This does much to explain the recent flurry of anti-Pakistan rhetoric coming out of Washington.

As I have said repeatedly, US foreign policy is all about domestic politics. AIPAC is one of the strongest and most feared of the Washington lobbies. It exerts a dominant influence on US foreign policy in the "Near East" (one might ask WINEP: "Near to what?") and has been relentlessly beating the drums for war with Iran. In this election year, President Obama – already beleaguered – can hardly afford to ignore their complaints that he isn't moving decisively on the Iran front.

A war weary public can hardly be expected to begin clamoring for the invasion and occupation of a country several times larger and more populous than Iraq, yet that is hardly enough to deter the Obama administration from laying the groundwork for an attack. That's what the sudden backstabbing of Pakistan is all about.

From what I can discern, the Obama-ites have continued a program initiated by the Bush regime in Iranian Baluchistan, supporting the Jundallah armed grouping which carries out attacks on Iranian civilians and government officials. Could it be the Pakistanis are finally giving in to Iranian demands and no longer allowing this US-backed terrorist band to operate from bases in their territory? Islamabad has long held this prospect over the heads of its erstwhile allies in Washington.

A suitable pretext will have to be established, naturally, before Washington can make any overt moves: perhaps the Pakistani military will be deemed a "threat" to "Pakistani democracy" – such as it is. In any case, the prospect of yet another military coup in Islamabad is hardly shocking – in which case, one scenario might involve the US military coming to the "aid" of President Asif Ali Zardari (popularly known by his nickname of "Mr. Ten Percent"). Another set up for US intervention could conceivably involve an alleged "terrorist threat" to Pakistan's nuclear arsenal: it's well known the Americans have contingency plans in place already. Or – the easy route – would be to simply declare al-Qaeda had migrated en masse to Pakistan, and increase our military presence gradually but exponentially, which is the course we are presently on.

At this point, war with – or in – Pakistan seems almost inevitable: the question is not if, but when.

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article28541.htm>