

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

# Pakistan

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## FORTNIGHTLY REPORT ON PAKISTAN

September 16-30, 2016

This report is based on the reading of Pakistani media during the last two weeks.

### **India-Pakistan**

The relationship between India and Pakistan had already been witnessing a new low when terrorists, belonging to Pakistan, targeted the brigade headquarter of the Indian Army in Uri resulting in the death of over a dozen army men. Despite clear evidences, Pakistan not only denied its involvement in the deadly terrorist attack, it accused India of diverting the international attentions from the human rights violations in Kashmir. Sartaj Aziz categorically rejected a Pakistani hand in the attack and argued that India was trying to hide its reign of terror in Kashmir by hurling “vitriolic and unsubstantiated” statements. Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan went to the extent of saying that India could hurt Pakistan through terror.

In between, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in an attempt to reduce the tension, challenged Pakistan to wage a war against poverty. His suggestion of fighting a war against poverty was mocked by some sections of the Pakistani media and seen as a sign of weakness of the Indian government. The government also gave a push to isolate Pakistan internationally. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's refusal to attend the SAARC summit was an important step in this context. However, Indian Army's surgical strike, in the end of the month, against the terror launchpads along the LoC changed the direction of the debate. The Pakistani side not only became defensive, it out rightly rejected the surgical strike done by the Indian military. In reality, the Pakistani security establishment was taken aback with Indian military's move to locate and destroy terror launchpads situated at the LoC. Pakistan army downplayed the surgical strikes

as it required them to respond adequately which would have escalated the tensions at a dangerous level.

### **Panama-Deadlock**

The deadlock between government and the opposition over the enquiry of Panama Papers leak is continuing. PTI Chairman Imran Khan has announced that he would lead his party's protest march to Raiwind on September 30 to pressurize the government over the issue. PPP expressed its reservation over the venue of the protest. The opposition leader in the National Assembly Syed Khurshid Shah stated that his party would not support the idea of staging a demonstration outside the residence of any opponent. This time both the Punjab provincial government and the federal government decided not to take strict measures to deal with the protest march. Instead, the ruling PML-N indicated of using carrot approach this time. The ruling party instructed its party workers to stay away from giving harsh reactions to PTI marchers. It also decided not to put any hurdle in the proposed march by PTI.

The united opposition also introduced a bill in the Senate demanding the constitution of a judicial commission to investigate the scandal. The bill was allowed by Senate Chairman Raza Rabbani after the opposition won a vote count with 32 votes against 19 votes. The efforts of united opposition to corner Nawaz Sharif is leading nowhere. The government is no yielding over the issue. Given the complexity of the situation, there seem to be no end in sight.

### **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**

On economic front, Pakistan accords top priority to materialize the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and various projects associated with it. At least on

this issue both civilian and military elites seem to be on the same page. Both want the project to be successfully executed within the stipulated time frame. Some reports do suggest a civil-military differences with regard to the plans for operationalising the Special Security Division (SSD). However, as of now there appears to be no major disagreements between the civilian and military leadership. The federal government has raised 9,000 strong SSD and six wings of civil armed force consisting of 4502 personnel. Meanwhile the provincial government in Sindh too has taken steps to recruit ex-army men to beef up the security of the CPEC project in the province. The total worth of the CPEC has also increased after China and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) agreed to provide \$8 bn to upgrade the main railway line from Karachi to Peshawar.

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