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US interest in an unstable Pakistan

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Is Pakistan acceptable to US as an economic, and military power? Does the US global strategy clash with a stronger Pakistan. Why is the US opposed to a nuclear Islamabad. Is Pakistan ignoring the threats posed by the Indo-US strategic partnership. Neither it began with 9/11, nor has it ended thereafter. At the most, as it, quite certainly, seems to be, the US global interest goes no further than granting Pakistan, a very limited space, for it's bare minimum survival on the map. History has a reminder that instead of opening it's markets, the luring assistance i.e. limited aid, and low interest loans, have long been Washington's ploy to consume Pakistan, sometimes, as part of cold war years bulwark against communism, and, sometimes, as the frontline warrior, which it is today in the endless war on terror. With the US-led markets purposely denied, the economic reverses, that Pakistan experienced under the failed civil and military leaderships, ceaselessly continue under the banner of economic mismanagement, lost markets, mounting debts, trimmed sovereignty, and threatened national security. The talk of access to US-led markets makes headlines only to be ditched by the dream aid-packages, offered, every other decade, to the successive Pak regimes. The strategy to ensure a debilitated Pakistan is yielding multiple political, financial, military, and strategic dividends for the US-led endeavour as follows: **POLITICAL DIVIDENDS:** There seems no lapse in US-assessment, that, although Pakistan is the sixth largest part of the world population, a nuclear power, and the biggest Muslim nation between South Asia, and the Atlantic, it will stay under leaderships that would allow US coercion to, unrestrictedly, dictate, and manage every thing from it's security and, foreign policy, to it's regime-change and political settlements, all of which have, over the years, grown to encompass a lot more, including, in particular, it's ideological, educational, and social reconstruction. To solidify these gains, the US-established diplomatic pressure-bridge between Washington and Islamabad, keeps bringing in, besides the permanent

Holbrooke factor, hordes after hordes of towering US Senators, Congressmen, higher officials representing the CIA, FBI, National Intelligence, CENTCOM, and above all, the Pentagon's top brass, including Chairman of US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mike Mullen, the regular US top gun to Islamabad, in addition, of course, to the Uncle Sam's resident overseer, the US ambassador in the capital. What is, indeed, to the nation, a humiliating US intrusiveness, and a diplomatic terrorisation, is, somehow, to the "victimized" US, just another manoeuvre to fortify the exhausted Islamabad's focus on its war, leaving it, thereby, without the crucial assets of time, energy, and, resources, for its normal state-management.

FINANCIAL-MILITARY DIVIDENDS: Had the US-administration deployed as many as 150,000 troops in Afghanistan, as it did in Iraq, the people, and the exchequer in Washington would have found themselves immeasurably bleeding in, and around the Hindukush from the early moments of war. But the rewarding Bush-threats, then, to Pakistan, the unwavering Musharraf co-operation over the years, and the US-guided regime in today's Islamabad have, all, not only contributed before, but, are still, through the new faces, contributing, to what may be called a stunningly cost-effective US-Afghan war. With just over 700 US troops (roughly 80 per annum) lost in 8 years, the cost of the US-Afghan war (about an average of 10 to 12 billion dollars per annum with salaries etc included about \$ 21 billion until right before the recent new deployments), as opposed to the cost of the US-Iraq war(an estimated average of 120 billion per annum, plus nearly 5000 dead), makes it highly affordable with the result that there is hardly, any serious public demand, or debate within the United States, for its troops-withdrawal, or for an end to the Afghan war. The key to the low-cost US-war: over hundred thousand Pak-troops deployment along the Afghan border, (the equivalent of which could cost the US about a staggering 70 to 80 billion per annum) again, in return for as little as billion dollar a year, which, even with the promised conditional assistance of \$1.5 billion, turns the US war, in fact, into a free Western crusade. Thus, with the help of Pak-regimes, both past and present, the prolonged US war in Afghanistan, that is choking Pak-economy, is hardly, any more than a minor military discomfort easily bearable for decades to come if the future US administrations so opt to continue.

STRATEGIC DIVIDENDS: The occupation of Afghanistan offers a wide array of strategic opportunities to the US, which include, but, are not limited to, the following: 1. With its growing military might, and operations along the Pak-Afghan border, the US remains ideally located to exercise maximum containment-pressure over any further weaponization, or needed expansion within Pakistan's limited nuclear programme. Also, based on the alleged possibility that somehow Pakistan's nuclear weapons, or, materials, could one day fall in to the hands of al-Qaeda, or, the extremists, any US contingency plans, to, preemptively, seize or destroy, small Pak-nuclear arsenal, despite the difficulties involved, may never be ruled out. Again, amid growing silence, the question is, whether Pakistan has, failed, under US pressure, to respond, this time, to the mega threat posed by the Indian navy's nuclear build-up - the launch of its Pak-specific first atomic submarine, SSBN Arihant -- in the Indian ocean? Don't let, finances, or misjudgment deprive Pakistan of long range, sea-borne strategic retaliatory strike capability, which, along with landbased nuclear assets, would, certainly, operate to deter any future western adventurism against our otherwise routinely threatened republic. 2. The US is making its presence felt with an intense demand that Pakistan shift its conventional concentration from India to the US anti-terror war. Some of the Pak-troops

deployments, away from the Indo-Pak border to the Afghan border, testify to the leadership's capitulation. US defence secretary, Robert Gates, has, pointed, as late as Sept 10, to the need for such a change. Also, in the wake of Bush anti-terror-doctrine, the termination of Pak-support for the Kashmiris freedom, became even a greater fiasco in that New Delhi, the US strategic partner, quickly surged, and remains, to date, as the "unchallenged" occupier of Kashmir due to the US-forced exclusion of Pakistan from this sensitive issue, ironically, in an imposed war which it continues to fight, but, only to see, in so doing, the J&K -- it's supreme national interest - lost, for now, to India. The US-backed huge expansion of India's economic, political, and military influence in Afghanistan - a direct source of active interference, both, in the NWFP, and Balochistan -- has already given New Delhi a strong foothold, coupled with a strategic advantage effectively eliminating Pakistan from it's historically secure backyard, which bears close similarity to the US-steered exclusion of Pakistan from the issue of Kashmir. The unchecked Indianization of Afghanistan, that goes on under the umbrella of US war on terror, could eventually witness, not only permanent Indian military presence near Pakistan's Western borders, but, also divide and cripple, needles to say, it's already fragile defences in the east against India. Thus, the picture is clear that the US has vested interest in an economically unstable, and militarily vulnerable Pakistan - an Islamic republic -- whose economic and military strength must always remain so abridged as to prevent it - from ever acquiring a major power status, and, from ever playing a major power role, in the Indian Ocean region, and beyond.