

THE KABUL TIMES

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Editorial

Aid suspension, effective punitive action against Pakistan

The Trump administration's decision to suspend military aid to Pakistan is one of the most significant U.S. punitive actions against Pakistan since 2001. The United States has long been frustrated with Pakistan's persistent acquiescence to safe havens for the Taliban and its vicious Haqqani branch.

Worse yet, Pakistan has provided direct military and intelligence aid to both groups, resulting in the deaths of U.S. soldiers, Afghan security personnel, and civilians, plus significant destabilization of Afghanistan.

Previous U.S. efforts since the 9/11 attacks to persuade Pakistan to crack down—through military and economic largess, as well as through punitive measures—have failed. Many in the U.S. policy community, who have long called for greater pressure, are delighted to finally see Washington run tougher experiments in coercion.

But although U.S. grievances are just, the suspension of military aid, and other possible pressure increased U.S. coercion, are most likely to get Pakistan to fundamentally alter its behavior.

Recently, the Pentagon has announced scrapping \$300m in military aid to Pakistan, accusing the South Asian ally of failing to take decisive actions against insurgents.

"Due to a lack of Pakistani decisive actions in support of the South Asia Strategy the remaining \$300 (million) was reprogrammed," a Pentagon spokesman was quoted as saying by Reuters.

Lieutenant Colonel Kone Faulkner said the US military aid would ask Congress for approval to divert the funds for other tasks. In case of a congressional not, the money will be spent on urgent priorities.

At the start of 2018, President Donald Trump suspended the Coalition Support Funds (CSF) and other aid to Pakistan, blaming Islamabad of aiding insurgents in Afghanistan. Faulkner said another \$300 million in CSF was stripped by Congress from Pakistan earlier this year, to bring the total withheld to \$800 million.

Pakistan has long been a difficult and disruptive neighbor to Afghanistan. It has augmented Afghanistan's instability by providing intelligence, weapons, and protection to the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network. But years of U.S. pressure on Islamabad and Rawalpindi (the seats of Pakistan's government and military establishments, respectively)—alternating with economic aid and efforts to forge a strategic partnership—have failed to induce Pakistan to change.

Meanwhile, suspending military aid to Pakistan—and perhaps even permanently discontinuing it in the future, if Pakistan does not change its behavior—was the most directly available coercive tool for the United States.

But quite apart from the political outrage it has generated in Pakistan, the pain it delivers is quite limited. Parts of the Coalition Support Fund—designed to enable Pakistan to go after counterterrorism targets and militant groups—have been suspended for a long time because of Pakistan's continued support for the Haqqanis and other terrorist groups.

IEC suggests delaying of district council elections

Independent Election Commission (IEC) says there are not enough candidates for district council elections in some parts of the country.



of the country. The commission in a letter has suggested that the district council elections should be delayed.

There are not enough number of candidates in some districts of the country for district council elections, so they cannot hold the elections at the same time," deputy spokesperson IEC Abdul Karim Ghani said.

He added that IEC has accordance to 184th article of the election law to propose to relevant committee that district

Increasing civilian casualties concerning

In a report released recently by Civilian Protection and Advocacy Group (CPAG) it has been said that in the last month (Aug), nearly 800 civilians have been martyred in various parts of Afghanistan.

Expanding concern over increasing civilian casualties in Afghanistan, the CPAG said that most civilian casualties were due to suicide attacks, explosions or armed clashes of ANSF and insurgents. The report adds that in Aug 2018, 241 civilians were martyred, 524 injured and 1500 displaced.

Based on official report of the Afghan government, in recent years in Ghazni, about 200 civilians were killed and 1000 injured. CPAG claims that the precise number of civilian casualties in Ghazni has not been revealed.

The CPAG adds that in an attack on educational center in west of Kabul and a separate attack on a mosque in Kabul city, 299 civilians were martyred and 476 wounded.

It also stated that in several cases, civilian casualties have been charged to a serious concern to Afghan people and government.

In several cases, civilian casualties have been charged to a serious concern to Afghan people and government. CPAG report asked the warring factions, not to target civilian institutions and educational centers. Calling civilian



the Constitution can delay the elections up to four months.

Previously, IEC had received preliminary list of candidates for district council elections in 33 provinces of the country excluding Ghazni. No men and women have registered for the election in 42 districts of the country, also, no women have registered for district council election in 129 districts of the country, according to the list.

Deputy spokesperson IEC further said that there was no government for registration in the respective districts, adding that IEC had tried its best for registration of more candidates but giving an effective result.

He mentioned conditions as 12th grade certificate, domicile of constituency, responsibility and duties as well as its activities as challenges that have stopped people to register for the district council elections.

"When there are not enough candidates for district council elections, we cannot hold the elections," Ghani said, adding that there is also short time to simultaneously hold district council elections with parliamentary elections.

Meanwhile, officials for election monitoring organizations have expressed concern over postponement of district council elections.

"If district council elections was delayed and held with postponement, there will be no proper opportunity for the election to be held in future," IEC chief executive Yousef Rahimi said.

Deputy spokesperson in Independent Election Commission (IEC) for district council elections will be probably held in spring of 2019 simultaneously with the country's presidential elections.

It is not yet clear whether suspension of IEC will be approved by the relevant committee or not.

Lahana Noori

the Afghan government has been criticized, but the government addresses civilian protection as its top priority.

Expanding concern over increasing civilian casualties during fighting and requirement of aid and spending up of the peace process as one of the best solutions that could be absolutely useful for civilian protection.

They said that the Afghan government is obliged to ensure civilian security by every possible means and convince the people that protect their lives and properties.

They believe that civilian security depends upon their close cooperation with security forces and in lack of it, no one would be safe.

Sheraz Kamran

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