

This E-Bulletin focuses on major developments in Pakistan on a weekly basis and brings them to the notice of strategic analysts and policy makers in India.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The meeting between retired Naval Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav, held in Pakistan, with his family dominated the news in both India and Pakistan. The meeting was arranged with a purpose to strengthen Pakistan's argument that he is a serving naval officer as Jadhav was forced to claim his 'serving' status in front of his mother and wife where there was no need for him to make such claims. The circumstances in which the meeting took place was intimidating and the family was not given any private moment as they were being watched and their meeting was being recorded. Apart from this incident, the news that Palestinian envoy Walid Abu Ali shared the stage with Hafiz Saeed in Lahore brought much criticism from India. As a result Palestine authority recalled their Ambassador from Pakistan. The Pakistan government released over Rs 318.49 billion under its Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2017-18 for various ongoing and new schemes against the total allocations of Rs1001 billion.

COMMENTARY

Jadhav's Family-Meet: An Image Building exercise for Pakistan

*Dr Zainab Akhtar**

In August last year, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) stayed the death sentence awarded by the Pakistan Army Court to Kulbhushan Jadhav who was charged with being involved in spying and espionage. India took the case to the ICJ petitioning to the court that Pakistan ignored Vienna convention of consular relations while

refusing consular access to Jadhav. However, though Pakistan continued to deny consular access to Jadhav, in December it decided to facilitate a meeting between Jadhav and his family on humanitarian ground. It was decided his mother and wife will be allowed to meet and one of the officers from the Indian High commission in Islamabad would accompany them – in this case it was J.P.Singh, Deputy High Commissioner of India. The drama surrounding the meet and Pakistan's release of video tape of Jadhav all pointed out that Pakistan wanted to use Jadhav to showcase how it treats a 'self-confessed spy' and especially the tutored meeting he had with his family. The other part of this 'spy' game is to tell the world about India's alleged interference and its links to terrorist incidents in Pakistan. Therefore Pakistan is not the only country that is fomenting terrorism in the region and India is also involved in similar type of activities. The circumstances under which Jadhav was caught however remains shrouded in mystery. This article makes an attempt to understand why Pakistan suddenly decided to showcase its humanitarian consideration? Is there a larger objective than that meets the eye?

Window Dressing

From sentencing him to death to allowing Jadhav to meet his family in Islamabad, if one reads between the lines there is a major loophole in Pakistan's way of handling the so called alleged Indian spy. Given the international pressure on the Jadhav case, post ICJ verdict, Pakistan adopted a two pronged approach: first improve its image by allowing the humanitarian meeting and most importantly, the meeting between Jadhav and his family was an overt signal to the World community that it is working in accordance to the ICJ protocol.

Second, it had put pressure on Jadhav to confess to his mother and wife that he is an India spy and a serving naval officer. Therefore, Jadhav parroted what he was tutored by the Pakistani establishment. The meeting was also held with a glass partition being placed between him and his family ostensibly for ‘security’ reasons and communication between him and his family, ironically, was through an intercom device. His family members were prevented from speaking to him in his mother tongue Marathi. Soon after the meeting, Pakistan television channel played another recorded video of Jadhav in which he thanked Pakistan for making this meeting possible.

Signaling to India

At the same time this so called humanitarian-meeting was a big move for Pakistan in legal terms for recording and collecting evidence to submit to the ICJ if and when needed. India termed Pakistan’s move as a tactical. However, for Pakistan military it was more of image building exercise in the context of international criticism over Pakistan’s sponsorship of terrorism against India and Afghanistan. It is very unlikely that “India will change its Pakistan policy based on this dubious move by the army”. On the foreign policy front, India has taken a strong stand on Pakistan sponsorship of terrorism and has denied to engage bilaterally until Islamabad clamps down the militant infrastructure that train militants to carry out cross border terrorism in India. According to reports, “In 2017 the Indian security forces have killed over 200 terrorists and have seen a surge in infiltration attempts by terrorist groups backed by the Pakistan Army and has lost over 50 soldiers as well.” Therefore the course of India-Pakistan engagement will also take into account the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan’s interference and infiltration in the valley.

The meeting took place in a heavily guarded foreign ministry chamber with foolproof security system in place. Also, Pakistan strongly underlined the fact that the presence of deputy high commissioner of India to Pakistan, J.P Singh does not equate to the consular access to Jadhav. Pakistan had earlier clarified that this is not consular access as the two countries are fighting a case in the ICJ. It also announced that this is not the last humanitarian meeting and Pakistan will facilitate such meetings in the future too. In an effort to display their

gesture of humanity Pakistan released the photos of the meeting through various social media platforms. But the catch was the video (which was recorded before he met his family) of Jadhav in which he was seen thanking the Pakistani administration for arranging the meeting. But experts in India believe that if one reads between the lines, the video seems to be recorded by coercion and he was blackmailed to give these statements. The Ministry of External Affairs on 4th of January issued a statement on Jadhav’s video and said, “This does not come as a surprise. Pakistan is simply continuing its practice of putting out coerced statements on video. It is time for them to realize that such propagandistic exercises simply carry no credibility. The absurdity of a captive under duress certifying his own welfare while mouthing allegations of his captors clearly merits no comment. Pakistan is best advised to fulfil its international obligations, whether it pertains to consular relations or UNSC resolutions 1267 and 1373 on terrorism and to desist from continuing violations of human rights of an Indian national.”

Pakistan has denied consular access of Jadhav to India on twenty occasions earlier; therefore this humanitarian meeting is looked upon with doubts and questions in New Delhi. This year Pakistan has been under the firing lines of the US which announced the cutting of funds to Pakistan stating its failure to deal with terrorist safe heavens. The strong international pressure on the issue of terrorism and the increasing closeness of India and United States on the same will keep Pakistan on its toes in the future. The way Pakistan deals with Jadhav’s case will be an important factor that will shape the future course of engagement between the two nations.

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THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

POLITICS

Palestinians Recall Envoy Seen With Pakistan Cleric

Palestinian envoy Walid Abu Ali shared the stage with Hafiz Saeed, the head of the hard-line Jamaat-ud-Dawa movement, at Friday’s rally, which was held to protest U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. The rally

in Rawalpindi, attended by thousands, was organized by the Defense of Pakistan Council, an alliance of religious parties dominated by Saeed's group. In a statement Saturday addressed to India, the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the envoy's participation "in the presence of individuals accused of supporting terrorism" was "an unintended mistake, but not justified." It said the envoy has been recalled. India had lodged a protest with the Palestinians earlier Saturday, calling the envoy's association with Saeed "unacceptable."

<https://www.voanews.com/a/palestinian-envoy-pakistan-cleric/4186277.html>

Thousands march towards Gilgit against taxes, Pamir Times, 27 December

Thousands of people from the four districts of Baltistan region left for Gilgit on Tuesday to participate in the protest against the imposition of taxes under Gilgit-Baltistan Adaptation Act 2012. The shutter down strikes and protests by traders, political and civil society activists entered seventh day despite below minus 5 temperature in most parts of Gilgit-Baltistan. In Baltistan, the protesters from Shigar, Karmang, Ghanche and Skardu districts gathered at Yadgar-e-Shuhada Skardu before starting the long march towards Gilgit. Addressing a huge gathering, the president of Anjuman-e-Tajran Ghulam Hussain Athar said that the protest will continue till the government quashes all taxes illegally imposed in Gilgit-Baltistan.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2017/12/27/thousands-march-towards-gilgit-against-taxes/>

ECONOMY

GB govt agrees to withdraw taxes as protesters end long march

After a seven-day-long shutter-down and wheel-jam strike across GB against imposition of taxes, the GB government bowed down before the protesters and agreed to withdraw all taxes being imposed in the region. The regional government that was reluctant to withdraw taxes like income tax, withholding tax and banking transaction tax despite a complete strike in all 10 districts

of the region in the last seven days has accepted almost all demands of the protesters. As per terms of the agreement, the representatives of protesters and regional government will shortly visit Islamabad with their recommendations to finalize the withdrawal process of taxes through GB Council.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1379304/gb-govt-agrees-to-withdraw-taxes-as-protesters-end-long-march>

RS. 318.49 released for development projects under PSPP 2017-18

The government has released over Rs318.49 billion under its Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2017-18 for various ongoing and new schemes against the total allocations of Rs1001 billion. The released funds include Rs78.36 billion for federal ministries and Rs26.67 billion for special areas, according to data released by Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform. The government has also released Rs 8.615 billion for AJK (block and other projects) out of its allocations of Rs 25.844. billion, Rs7.5 billion for Gilgit Baltistan (block and other projects) out of its allocations of Rs 18.3 billion whereas Rs 10.5 billion have been released for SAFRON/FATA (Block and other projects) out of its total allocations of Rs 26.90 billion for the FY2018.

<https://nation.com.pk/29-Dec-2017/rs-318-49-bn-released-for-development-projects-under-psdp-2017-18>

Pakistan to set up \$1.51 billion hydropower project in PoK

Pakistan has decided to set up a new hydropower project of over 700 megawatts in PoK through foreign financing at an estimated cost of USD 1.51 billion by 2022, according to a media report. The Azad Pattan Hydropower Project (APHP) is a run of river scheme located on Jhelum River in the Sudhanoti district of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and about 90 kilometres from Islamabad, the Express Tribune reported. The project would be completed by 2022 for which the authorities have sought an import tariff at Rs 8.05 per kilowatts, the daily said.

<http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/india/pakistan-to-set-up-1-51-billion-hydropower-project-in-pok-2472091.html>

SECURITY

Jadhav meets family, 'not for the last time'

Amid unprecedented security cover, Indian spy Kulbushan Jadhav met his wife and mother at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad. They were accompanied by Indian Deputy High Commissioner JP Singh, who was present at the meeting held at a custom-built, bomb-proof container parked at the backside of the Foreign Office. Jadhav spoke to his wife and mother through intercom as the glass partition was installed due to security reasons.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1592805/1-jadhav-meets-family-not-last-time/>

Pervez Musharraf killed my mother: Bilawal Bhutto

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto has said that he considers former President General (R) Pervez Musharraf the murderer of his mother Benazir Bhutto. "I personally hold Pervez Musharraf responsible for the assassination of my mother," he added. The PPP chairman further said that he did not want to hurl allegations at certain individuals or institutions because his party did not have specific information as to who Musharraf called or contacted to get rid of Benazir Bhutto.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1594024/1-pervez-musharraf-killed-mother-bilawal-bhutto/>

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