



## Pakistan's double dealing

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*Double, double  
Toil and trouble  
Macbeth by William Shakespeare*

Wikileaks' recent release of the 'Afghan War Diary,' a collection of classified battlefield reports from the war in Afghanistan, has set the Internet abuzz with speculation. Though many of these documents are controversial, some of the most inflammatory are the reports detailing Pakistan's double dealing.

Indeed, Islamabad's continued cooperation with the Taliban -- literally, behind the US-led coalition's back -- may very well spell out payback time for the double-dealers.

Though the beleaguered Afghan government has, for years, accused Pakistan of laxity in preventing militants from escaping over the border, most of the world took little notice, dismissing the accusations as the ranting of desperate officials besieged by an increasingly powerful Taliban.

At the same time, Tehran has long accused Islamabad of harboring the leaders of the terrorist group, Jundallah, which have used Pakistan not only as their base, but as a springboard from which to launch terrorist attacks on Iran. Yet, most of the media paid the group scant notice and the world, as a whole, remained in ignorance.

The recently released reports, however, have been impossible to sweep under the proverbial rug and Pakistan's duplicity has finally come to the public's attention.

The documents reveal that the Pakistani military intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), has long aided and abetted the Taliban -- since the beginning of the US-led invasion of Afghanistan -- and while billions of dollars in US aid (American taxpayers' money) were being poured into Islamabad's coffers.

In other words, 'Joe Six-pack' was paying his hard-earned tax dollars (albeit indirectly) to a government, which was helping terrorists kill his son, who had been serving in the US Army in Afghanistan!

How will that news grab American voters when elections roll around? That is what is meant by 'payback time.' Despite Washington's attempts to dismiss the treachery by pointing to Pakistan's strategic value as an ally and protesting that the country is mending its ways and is now trying to cooperate, the American people will most likely demand major revisions in US foreign policy -- at least where Islamabad is concerned.

If the Pakistani government had merely offered the Taliban refuge -- i.e. turned its back when the militants slipped over the border -- it would have been bad enough. But there are strong

indications that Islamabad's deceit goes much further than that. According to the leaked documents, ISI agents actually helped the Taliban organize groups to fight US soldiers and assassinate Afghan leaders.

Though US officials may not have known the full extent of Pakistan's treachery, they obviously were aware of it on some level and had their suspicions regarding it. They had certainly been given ample warning.

As early as 2001, author and political analyst Ted Galen Carpenter, who also serves as vice president for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute (a non-partisan Washington think tank,) named Pakistan as one of the three top countries sponsoring terror.

In his article, which appeared on the Cato Institute's website on November 16, 2001, Carpenter writes, "Without the active support of the government in Islamabad, it is doubtful whether the Taliban could ever have come to power in Afghanistan. Pakistani authorities helped fund the militia and equip it with military hardware during the mid-1990s when the Taliban was merely one of several competing factions in Afghanistan's civil war... Even now it is not certain that key members of Pakistan's intelligence service have repudiated their Taliban clients."

Remember, this article was written only five weeks after the October 7 invasion of Afghanistan.

Author and Middle East expert Daniel Byman, who is a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institute's Saban Center for Middle East Policy, in his 2005 book, titled *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*, agrees. He writes, "Pakistan is probably today's most active sponsor of terrorism." Byman then goes on to illustrate how Pakistan has used terrorism to fight a proxy war against its old rival, India.

Then there is the article by the journalist, author and Muslim convert, Stephen Schwartz, titled "A Threat to the World." The piece, which appeared in the August 19, 2006 issue of the British publication, *The Spectator*, warns that several militant and criminal groups are "backed by senior officers in the Pakistani army, the country's ISI intelligence establishment and other armed bodies of the state."

It might be mentioned that Schwartz, as he relates in his 2002 book, titled *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror*, maintains that so-called 'Islamic' terrorism is, in actuality, a government-manufactured tool, which is used to attain certain political ends. In his book, Schwartz focuses on Saudi Arabia, in particular, as the primary state sponsor of terrorism, and its ability to do so, which he claims hinges -- to some extent -- on the unique relationship between the House of Sa'ud and the Bush family. In the article appearing in *The Spectator*, however, Schwartz includes Pakistan (at least the Pakistani top brass and the ISI) as sponsoring terrorism, as well.

As far as home-grown critics are concerned, there is Pakistani author and journalist Ahmed Rashid. In his 2008 book, titled *Descent into Chaos*, which analyzes past mistakes made by the US-led coalition in the Afghan war, Rashid accuses Pakistan's ISI of providing support as well as a haven for the Taliban.

And finally, there is current Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, who admitted, according to an article appearing in the July 8, 2009 issue of the British publication, *The Daily Telegraph*, that

his country's government had "created and nurtured" terrorist groups to achieve its short-term foreign policy goals.

"These groups were not thrown up because of government weakness, but as a matter of policy," the article states. "He (Zardari) said they were deliberately "created and nurtured" as a policy to achieve some short-term tactical objectives," it adds.

As was mentioned earlier, even before the Wikileaks incident, some US politicians and top military brass were obviously aware of the situation.

An article appearing in the May 11, 2010 issue of *The Daily Telegraph* relates that US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said she believed that certain officials in the Pakistani government were aware of the exact location of al-Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden, (who is hiding in Pakistan's tribal regions.)

The item quotes Clinton as telling Pakistani officials, "... I believe that somewhere in this government are people who know where Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda is, where Mullah Omar and the leadership of the Afghan Taliban is, and we expect more co-operation to help us bring to justice, capture or kill those who attacked us on 9/11."

And then there is the allusion by Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the US and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, who has mentioned the connection between the ISI and "the bad guys."

In fact, numbers of experts, including some US officials and analysts in India, believe that Islamabad is 'playing both ends against the middle' -- in other words, making a show of (token) cooperation with the United States while actually fomenting the insurgency by aiding the Taliban.

But why would Pakistan want to play such a game? What would it gain from a prolonged Afghan war and continued insurgency?

Part of the answer lies in the reason why it is offering sanctuary to another terrorist group, Jundallah, which has used Pakistan as a base and springboard to launch numerous attacks in Iran.

Look at it this way. The game is tricky and treacherous, but if Pakistan is able to 'pull it off,' the rewards will be enormous. Indeed, the rewards are already great.

One proxy war, waged by pro-Taliban, home-grown terrorists in the South and another, fought by Jundallah in the North, can at least serve to occupy -- if not weaken or neutralize Pakistan's two more powerful neighbors, India and Iran. The Taliban, itself, poses little threat and an ascendant Taliban in Afghanistan would mean, again by proxy, greater Pakistani influence in that country.

And then there's the financial aspect. The Afghan war has proved a windfall for Pakistan and a lengthy conflict is definitely to its benefit. As recently as July 18 of this year, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced an additional \$7.5 billion in aid to Pakistan in an attempt to win the Pakistanis over fully to the US cause. This is on top of the billions in military aid that have already poured into the country.

In fact, speaking of military aid, the United States is sending Islamabad 18 upgraded F-16

fighters, which will make Pakistan the only country besides Israel to receive the latest version of the planes. According to a spokesman for the Pakistani Air Force, the capabilities of these high-tech aircraft would provide the PAF with "the means to counter the offensive designs of any air force" and they would be used to "deal with all internal and external threats." Despite US assurances to the contrary, India is worried and apparently with good reason. The point is, just who does Pakistan consider a threat? Obviously not the Taliban, Jundallah, al-Qaeda or any Pakistani pro-Taliban group.

Islamabad's double dealing has paid richly up to now; but the future may prove to be something else, entirely. Pakistan's duplicity is now public knowledge and US congressional elections are fast approaching. Most ordinary people prefer straightforward allies to double-dealers and choose honor over expediency.