



Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

Briefing Paper
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REPORT AUTHORS

"Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" was written and researched by Syed Khalid Muhammad, Director General – CommandEleven.

Khalid has significant field operational experience with terrorism, extremism, and insurgencies, and specific insights on the Afghan Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Islamic State – Khorasan Province (ISKP), and other groups operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

ABOUT COMMANDELEVEN

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Visit <http://commandeleven.com> for more information or contact info@commandeleven.com.

INTRODUCTION

For many in the United States and around the world, the unthinkable happened yesterday in US politics. Donald Trump, the man who no one thought would be President, was elected President. While many have had cringe worthy moments during the past day with their commentary on the election and remembering the many “colorful” statements of the candidate, everyone is wondering which Donald Trump will occupy the White House come January. In the same respect, there are some core cabinet positions that hold significance to Pakistan.

For Pakistan’s government, military and people, there are core interests in US foreign and development policy. We, as a nation, are still fighting the scourge of terrorism carried out in Pakistan domestically and from neighboring countries. We have an extremely unstable government that can fall with the right gust of wind from the West. We have a nation that is broken from economic conditions, poor access to education, health care and basic facilities. Pakistan, as President Obama put it during the state of the union, will have instability for decades to come.

For Pakistan to emerge from the crisis of governance that it perpetually exists within, they will need pragmatic decision making and a stiff stick to keep them on point and moving forward. Or there is the option former US Ambassador to the United Nations, and potential Secretary of State, John Bolton has repeatedly stated – a military government in Islamabad because they are easier to deal with. Whatever the Trump administration decides, it must be done with a clear understanding of the geopolitical, strategic and diplomatic backgrounds of the region and relationships.

We do appreciate President-Elect Donald Trump’s offer to mediate the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan, but his ultra-pro-India stance and the potential of his key cabinet members holding that stance doesn’t bolster the potential of a favorable resolution for the people of Kashmir.

While an intelligent government in Islamabad would be key on who holds the trade and commerce portfolios, instead diplomatically, we are focused on State, Defense, National Security and Homeland Security.

Secretary of State

Being the foreign policy arm of the White House, the Secretary of State is crucial to any productive activity happening between Pakistan and the United States. Traditionally, the Secretary of State has kept their scope confined to foreign policy development, but with the changing environment globally, we would expect this Secretary of State to be more of a force than in past administrations, especially with President-Elect Trump’s views on global relationships.

Currently, three names are being openly discussed for the position: Newt Gingrich, John Bolton and Bob Corker. All three carry impressive foreign policy experience, but hold very similar positions on Pakistan.



Newt Gingrich is the former Speaker of the House of Representatives and frontrunner for the position. Gingrich brings an impressive political record with him, including being the architect of the 1994 Republican insurgency that ended 40 years of Democratic control of the House. He unsuccessfully ran for President in 2011, and has been close to the Trump campaign since the beginning. While Gingrich may carry a significant political record, he also carries significant baggage against Pakistan and Muslims as a whole.

Gingrich has held the position that Pakistan is a rich recruiting base for ISIS, based on a Pew Internet Research report that stated 9% of Pakistanis held a favorable view of ISIS. He has also claimed that Pakistan's nuclear weapons were easily within the reach of extremists and had probably infiltrated Pakistan's armed forces. He has regularly stated there should be a "religious test" for all Muslims entering the US, and if any show belief in Sharia, they will be deported immediately. Mr. Gingrich also believes that Pakistan provides sanctuary to anti-US Taliban fighters and wants to cut aid.

And then there is this statement at BAE Systems in Nashua.

Also concerning to Pakistan is his undying and outspoken support of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, telling reporters that Trump and Modi are a "natural fit." He also serves as honorary Chairman of the Hindu Republican Coalition, a political pressure group modeled from a similar Israeli group.



John Bolton, former US Ambassador to the United Nations, is also being considered. Bolton brings a wealth of foreign policy and development experience to the position, if selected. Sadly, most of that experience is with neo-conservative, anti-Muslim groups and organizations. Bolton was first tapped during the Reagan administration to work with USAID, before joining Attorney General Edwin Messe. It was during that time that Bolton took stances disregarding the legitimacy of the United Nations, as well as declaring international treaties to be “non-binding political obligations.” Mr. Bolton also removed the United States from the International Criminal Court’s jurisdiction. He currently heads the Gatestone Institute, a right-wing pro-Israel activist group accused of fomenting anti-Muslim sentiment, and is a Senior Fellow at the neoconservative American Enterprise Institute. He previously founded the Project for the New American Century, designed to make sure America didn’t make the mistake of electing a president who doesn’t care about America’s national security, and an advisor for the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

When it comes to Bolton on Pakistan, he has claimed Pakistan is like Iran on steroids, as well as believing that the [**US withdrawal from Afghanistan will lead to the collapse of Pakistan to extremists and terrorists**](#). And we have all read his [**leaked memo on Pakistan from Wikileaks**](#). Mr. Bolton does confuse us at CommandEleven with his double stand on using aid to [**prop up Pakistan’s unstable government with aid**](#) or his [**support for a military government in Islamabad to sort out domestic, regional and international problems**](#). Or if he still believes in the [**blueprint that the American Enterprise Institute drafted for President Bush to take Pakistan’s nuclear assets**](#).



The third name in consideration for the Secretary of State position is **Senator Bob Corker**, the current Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Corker was elected to the Senate in 2006, serving on numerous Senate subcommittees related to African, European, East Asian, Narcotics, Human Rights and Foreign Assistance, prior to serving as the Chairman of Foreign Relations Committee. Corker, however, is notoriously anti-Pakistan in his views.

Recently, Senator Corker wrote a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry refusing to allow US taxpayer money to be used to purchase F-16s for Pakistan, even though the framework of the sale had been agreed to and approved. He has regularly called Pakistan's "activities" as immensely problematic and "a duplicitous partner, moving sideways rather than forward in resolving regional challenges." After Mullah Mansour, the Emir of the Afghan Taliban was neutralized in Baluchistan after crossing from Iran, Senator Corker commented, "[if Pakistan would play a more constructive role, we could destabilize the Taliban far more rapidly.](#)"

And then there was this incident that [stopped just short of declaring Pakistan a terrorist state.](#)

When we consider the options that are available for Secretary of State, we are not bolstered by the potential impact on Pakistan's relations with the United States, especially at a time when geopolitics are shifting fast and new alliances are being formed among old enemies.

Secretary of Defense & National Security Advisor

For Pakistan and its armed forces, the Secretary of Defense is the familiar face for the next 4 years. Because of the tenuous relationship between Islamabad and Rawalpindi, and the even more tenuous relationship between Rawalpindi and Washington, D.C., the job of any US Secretary of Defense is difficult to say the least. Add into the mix, India, Afghanistan, Russia and China, and the Secretary of Defense is looking at a highly unstable sub-continent that needs the deft skills of a statesman, the cunning of a field espionage officer, and the resolve of a battle-tested general.

When we look at the names under consideration for Secretary of Defense, the two names being considered here are also being considered for National Security Advisor.



Stephen Hadley, National Security Advisor to President George W. Bush, is a strong choice for Secretary of Defense. In addition to overseeing the full range of national security issues, he was also involved with the US/Russia political dialogue, Israeli disengagement from Gaza and developing a strategic relationship with India. Hadley brings strong credentials to the SecDef position, if selected:

1974 – 1977 – National Security Council staff (President Gerald R. Ford)

1989 – 1993 – Assistant SecDef for International Security (President George H.W. Bush)

1993 – 2001 – Principal at The Scowcroft Group, strategic consulting firm headed by former NSA Brent Scowcroft

2001 – 2005 – Deputy National Security Advisor (President George W. Bush)

2005 – 2009 – National Security Advisor (President George W. Bush)



Lt. General Mike Flynn is the former Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency under President Obama. He was forced out, according to reports, for clashing with his superiors. He has been used by the Trump campaign to gain credibility with veterans since President-Elect Trump has no military service himself. General Flynn has been very critical of the Obama administration's handling of everything from Benghazi to counter-terrorism and the Islamic State. Flynn is also credited with the [transformation of USJSOC into one of the most lethal terrorist hunting networks in the world, along with General Stanley McChrystal.](#)

We do have to believe that President-Elect Donald Trump will be looking for someone who shares his domestic and international view, whether its the one he shared during the campaign or a modified one he develops in the White House.

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