



Is Trump planning to strike and sanction CPEC?

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Trump's recently enunciated "Afghan strategy" was really a thinly disguised declaration of the US' Hybrid War on CPEC, making official what had already been ongoing for a couple of years now.

Washington isn't just going to wage proxy war on the project via an intensification of the War on Afghanistan, however, as that's in and of itself insufficient for accomplishing the US' grand strategic goals against CPEC.

It's indeed to the US' interests that it wipes out the Taliban presence along the Afghan-Pakistani border and replaces it with India's RAW-backed terrorist groups such as ISIS-K, but the trouble that this would cause for Islamabad wouldn't be enough to influence, disrupt, and ultimately capture control of CPEC.

What's needed, then, is a comprehensive strategy which applies all elements of American power, including the diplomatic, economic, and media ones.

The US has shown its hand and indicated that it is once again reviving the old and discredited trope that Pakistan is a "state sponsor of terrorism" and "provides safe havens for the Taliban".

Buoyed by what will predictably be a forthcoming bevy of coordinated fake news reports and potential false flags, the US is planning "surgical anti-terrorist strikes" against Pakistan, which in turn will be used to promote the narrative that the country "isn't doing enough to fight terrorism".

Moreover, some of these attacks might take place along CPEC's transit routes in northern Pakistan in order to send a clear message to China, though indirectly of course since the "official" reason for the bombings will be that "Taliban terrorists" were there.

From this orchestrated media-military campaign, the US will then have manufactured the "plausible" grounds for deploying its subsequent diplomatic-economic approach to the Hybrid War on CPEC by sanctioning Pakistan because of its "active and/or passive support of terrorism".

The real reason, however, is that the US wants to continue diminishing the international attractiveness of CPEC, and if foreign (including Chinese) partners aren't scared off by US drone strikes and Indian-supported terrorist attacks, then the threat of violating US sanctions might be enough to coerce them to give up their CPEC business plans.

It needs to be remembered at all times that the most efficient way for the US to influence, disrupt, and ultimately control CPEC is for its Hybrid War machinations to craft the perception -- key word -- that conducting business along the route is both unsafe and costly.

To that end, it makes sense why the intensification of the War on Afghanistan and consequent spill over of RAW-supported ISIS-K terrorists can be expected in the near future, as well as this factor setting off the tripwire for "justifying" US drone strikes against northern Pakistan and subsequently sanctioning Islamabad.

What's needed to counter these plans is a strong reinforcement of the Afghan-Pakistani border and the political will of Rawalpindi to take down any aircraft -- whether manned or unmanned -- that violate its sovereign airspace.

Russia has developed state-of-the-art anti-drone technology that could be very useful to the Pakistani Army, and China could assist with radar support and other related means in detecting these units.

The behind-the-scenes aid and advice that Pakistan's Russian and Chinese Great Power partners could provide it with will go a long way in protecting CPEC, and could predictably be on the agenda of Pakistani Foreign Minister's upcoming visit to these two states.

However, it unfolds, Pakistan needs to highlight its credible defence capacities in warding off the forthcoming American-Indian threat to CPEC, and it would greatly strengthen its position after crafting a multilateral strategy in conjunction with its multipolar partners.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Korybko is a political analyst, journalist and a regular contributor to several online journals, as well as a member of the expert council for the Institute of Strategic Studies and Predictions at the People's Friendship University of Russia. He specializes in Russian affairs and geopolitics, specifically the US strategy in Eurasia. His other areas of focus include tactics of regime change, color revolutions and unconventional warfare used across the world. His book, "Hybrid Wars: The Indirect Adaptive Approach to Regime Change", extensively analyzes the situations in Syria and Ukraine and claims to prove that they represent a new model of strategic warfare being waged by the US.

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