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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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26.03.2025

## ***Balochistan Attack: The New Front in Global Power Struggles***

The recent terrorist attack on a Pakistani train in Balochistan is not just an isolated incident, but part of a larger geopolitical struggle involving global powers vying for influence in the region.



Amidst the changing world order, the West has prompted its activities against China and Russia, the two rising global superpowers. Pakistan, due to its critical geostrategic location, has been at the center of the great power rivalry since its inception. The recent terrorist attack on a Pakistani train in Balochistan province is also a part of the great game between the old and new superpowers of the world.

For more than two decades, Pakistan has been suffering from the menace of terrorism. The country has lost more than 80000 lives in its fight against terrorist organizations, including ISKP, TTP, and BLA, mainly operating from Afghanistan. Since the Taliban's takeover of Kabul, terrorist activities in Pakistan have surged to an unprecedented level.

The United States and other regional and global rivals of China have always been critical of the CPEC

On Tuesday, March 11, the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), a separatist terrorist organization operating in the Balochistan province of Pakistan, hijacked a train, traveling from the provincial capital, Quetta, to Peshawar. The organization was designated as a terrorist group by the United Nations and the US in 2009. The group carried out 504 terrorist attacks, killing more than 385 people, in 2024.

The train was carrying more than 440 passengers, including military officials and civilians. The BLA blew up the railway track while the train was passing through the area of Bolan. The driver of the train was killed by the BLA militants. Most of the passengers were taken hostage by the BLA terrorists, while some succeeded in escaping soon after the attack. The BLA terrorists demanded the “unconditional release of Baloch political prisoners, forcibly disappeared persons, and national resistance activists” within 48 hours. It also held that it had killed 10 Pakistan army soldiers traveling on the train. The terrorists warned the Pakistan army of severe consequences if they launched any military operation.

The Pakistan Army possesses unparalleled expertise in countering terrorism, with a proven track record of effectively tackling insurgency and militant threats. It launched a military operation against the militants. According to reports, the terrorists used women and children as shields during the operation. However, the Pakistan army succeeded in putting an end to the hijack, killing 35 terrorists. Although the hijack has ended, it marks a new start to a great game in South Asia, especially Pakistan. The Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and BLA have repeatedly attacked civilian and military personnel in Pakistan. However, their main target has been the CPEC. After the recent attack, a video of a Baloch insurgent resurfaced on social media, threatening China and asking it to halt its infrastructure-building activities in Balochistan. He also threatened to sabotage the CPEC project. Pakistan’s government has repeatedly voiced its concern over the involvement of foreign hands behind BLA and TTP.

This recent video of the BLA militant threatening the Chinese government corroborates the Pakistan government’s narrative. The United States and other regional and global rivals of China have always been critical of the CPEC. In the past, US officials used diverse tactics to hamper Pakistan from becoming a part of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). However, Pakistan seeks to attenuate its dependence on the West. Due to its past experience, the Pakistani establishment acknowledges the fact that the US alliance and support have always been transactional. Therefore, it has altered its foreign policy outlook and now seeks to establish fraternal ties with regional powers like Russia and China.

It is a prevalent belief in Pakistan that the United States and its regional rivals of the country are supporting terrorist organizations to destabilize it. The Crocus City Hall attack in Moscow in March 2024 and the spread of Wahabism, an extremist minority sect of Islam, by the US funding demonstrates that it has always had the policy to use radical extremist and terrorist groups to achieve its foreign policy goals. According to reports, BLA and TTP are using the weapons left behind by the US troops in Afghanistan. The surge in terrorist activities in Pakistan speaks volumes about the real intention of the US behind leaving this military equipment in Afghanistan. By imposing sanctions on Pakistan and prioritizing its relations with India, the United States has lost its diplomatic leverage over Islamabad. However, the terrorist organizations provide it an opportunity to pursue its anti-China ambitions inside Pakistan.

Currently, the US establishment is playing a great game of illusion in the global arena. President Trump is portraying himself as a peacemaker to rebuild the United States' soft image around the world. However, the actual ambition behind this smokescreen is to divide the challenges posed by the rising multipolar world order. The European Union has been tasked with overseeing longstanding geopolitical challenges, particularly containing Russia, while the United States pivots its strategic focus toward the Asia-Pacific region, signaling a calculated division of responsibilities within the transatlantic alliance. Through this approach, the transatlantic alliance seeks to perpetuate the US-led unipolar world order. To achieve this ambition, they would utilize all the means, including escalating the Russia-Ukraine conflict and using terrorist organizations to destabilize the region and sabotage BRI.

Abbas Hashemite, March 23, 2025

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