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Pakistan no obedient ally

WikiLeaks data shows how volatile nation is forced to act against own self interests

By ERIC MARGOLIS, QMI AGENCY
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Release of 92,000 U.S. military field reports from Afghanistan by WikiLeaks has revealed the war's ugly underbelly and embarrassed the hell out of Washington and its NATO allies, including Canada.

They have fired back, claiming release of these old reports from 2004-2009, endangers "our boys."

Nonsense. The only thing the truth endangers are the politicians who have hung their hats on the Afghan War and some paid informers.

The facts are shocking: Wide-scale killing of civilians by U.S. and NATO forces; torture of prisoners handed over to the Communist-dominated Afghan secret police; death squads; endemic corruption and theft; double-dealing and demoralization of western occupation forces facing ever fiercer Taliban resistance.

I've been reporting on the lies and propaganda about the Afghan war since 2001.

The most interesting part of Wikigate was Pakistan's supposedly duplicitous behaviour in aiding the U.S.-led war while maintaining secret links with the Taliban and its allies.

The U.S. government and media have been blasting Pakistan while downplaying the atrocities — and, charges WikiLeaks, "war crimes" — committed by western forces.

Here's the bottom line on Pakistan's "duplicity."

After 9/11, the U.S. threatened to "bomb Pakistan back to the Stone Age" unless it turned against the Taliban, a religious, anti-Communist movement, and opened Pakistan to U.S. military forces and intelligence operations.

This was told to me by a former head of ISI, Pakistan's intelligence service whose directors I have known since 1985.

Former Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf says his nation was forced to reluctantly give in to intense U.S. pressure and abandon the Taliban, which served as Pakistan's proxy army in Afghanistan battling the still active Afghan Communist Party — Tajik Northern Alliance, also backed by Russia and Iran. Intensifying efforts by India to extend its influence into Afghanistan deeply worry Pakistan.

Pakistan was forced by the U.S. to act against its own vital strategic interests. Southern Afghanistan has long been Pakistan's sphere of influence.

This column revealed that in 2007, Pakistan and India concluded that the U.S. and its dragooned allies would be defeated and driven from Afghanistan. Both old foes began implementing a proxy war to control strategic Afghanistan.

Pakistan was compelled to follow a dual-track policy: Accepting semi-occupation by the U.S. and \$1 billion annually from Washington and paying lip service to the U.S.-led war, while keeping open links to Taliban and tribal militants.

This was basic common sense. No one should have been surprised — particularly not Washington which has a long record of abandoning faithful allies.

Washington and U.S. media are heaping blame for the growing fiasco in Afghanistan on Gen. Hamid Gul, former director general of the ISI intelligence agency.

Gul led the anti-Soviet struggle in Afghanistan in the 1980s and was one of America's most formidable allies.

I knew Gul well. He is not anti-American. He is pro-Pakistan, a Pakistani patriot at a time when so many Pakistani politicians and generals have been bought like bags of Basmati rice.

Many of the false charges against Gul came from the Communist-led Afghan secret police.

What Washington really wants is a totally obedient, obsequious Pakistan, not a real ally.

But the interests of the two nations must at times diverge

Trying to make Pakistan into a satellite state will result in that vastly important, nuclear-armed nation one day exploding with anti-American hatred, as was the case in Iran in 1979.

The U.S.-led war in Afghanistan is putting the two nations on a collision course.

Here in Washington, the U.S. Congress just ignored the WikiLeaks scandal and voted for yet more billions to fuel the Afghanistan War.

Politicians are petrified to oppose this nine-year war, lest they be accused of being anti-patriotic, the kiss of death in hyper-patriotic America — where flag-wavers root for foreign wars so long as their kids don't have to serve and they don't have to pay taxes to finance them.