US anti-terrorism narrative

What is the issue?

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- Present US administration has a clear anti-terrorism narrative against Pakistan.
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- India needs to ensure whether it is truly benefited from US's moves.
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What is the stand of earlier US administration on Pakistan?

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- Earlier US government was fully aware of Pakistani complicity in providing bin Laden safe haven, but didn't took any actions on Pak.
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- It also turned a blind eye to Pakistani assistance to the Taliban, which resulted in the killing of over 2000 American soldiers.
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- Obama's administration firmly believed Pakistani cooperation in arranging for an early withdrawal of American forces in Afghanistan.
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- Obama's policies involved the US and Pakistan treating the legitimate government of Afghanistan and the Taliban virtually as sovereign equals, while giving Pakistan a significant say in the future governance of Afghanistan.
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- But Obama administration could not achieved his cherished objective of bringing back American combat forces from Afghanistan while attempting to virtually hand over Afghanistan to Taliban/Pakistan control.
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What is the stand of present US administration over Pakistan?

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- Trump’s administration is determined to make the Afghan military strong enough to resist Taliban depredations by providing it firepower and airpower.
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- The administration also declined to join the Russia-China-Pakistan initiative to promote dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban while ignoring Taliban-sponsored terrorism.
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What are the positive signs for India?

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- American establishment claims to tackle Pakistan-sponsored terrorism not just across Pakistan’s borders with Afghanistan, but also its borders with India.
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- The Modi-Trump Declaration proclaimed the will to meet threats from not just the al Qaeda, ISIS and Taliban, but also the Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba ‘D (Dawood) Company’, and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen.
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- Recent naming of Hizb as global terrorist organisation was a categorical American rejection of Pakistan’s claims that it was helping a “freedom struggle” in Jammu and Kashmir.
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What are the challenges in achieving US interest?

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- The US Congress had developed a bipartisan consensus to deny American assistance to Pakistan unless it ends its support for the Taliban and India-focused groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba.
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- The US Congress had, in fact, also drafted legislation incorporating such conditions on aid to Pakistan.
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- While large sections of US deeply distrust Pakistan, there are sections of the State Department and “liberals’ in the American mainstream “liberal media” which criticise India.

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What are the tasks before India?

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- It is crucial that India need to strengthen the bipartisan consensus in the US Congress to condition aid to Pakistan on its ending terrorism across the entire South Asian region.
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- India should make clear to US that its participation in the US, Japan, Australia, India ‘Quad’ cannot be confined just to the security of sea lanes in the Indian and Pacific oceans and for serving US interests .
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Source: Business Line

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