

US' Threat to Pakistan

Why in news?

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The U.S. President has recently made an announcement, threatening to stop financial assistance to Pakistan.

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What is US's stance?

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- The US has accused Pakistan of providing safe havens to the terrorists that US is striving to root out in Afghanistan.

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- There was significant scaling down of U.S assistance to Pakistan in the later years of the Obama administration.

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- The U.S has also made disbursement of Pentagon's Coalition Support Funds (CSF) more stringent.

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- CSF is the reimbursement to Pakistan for logistical and operational support of U.S-led military operations.

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- A decision by the Trump administration on CSF for 2017 is pending.

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- Notably, US was insisting Pakistan to hand over a Haqqani Network operative who kidnapped an American-Canadian couple and held them hostage.

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- It was also "contemplating withholding" aid if Pakistan's response to the demand was not satisfactory.

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- Besides shutting down terror havens, the US wants Pakistan to use its influence on those terror organisations in negotiations with the Afghan government to hold peaceful elections.

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What are the implications?

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 - **Pakistan** - Pakistan has maintained that it would officially respond to Trump's allegations.
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 - With Pakistan already caught up in a civil-military crisis in recent months, Trump's move has caused new disruptions.
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 - The real catastrophe in Pakistan is the cynical use of Islamist extremism by the security establishment to hold democracy hostage.
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 - Until this changes, there is scant hope Pakistan will take control of terrorism.
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 - **China** - It is possible that Pakistan will reach out to China to alleviate the potential economic hardship due to US's decision.
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 - Notably, China holds that Pakistan had made enormous efforts and sacrificed for the fight against terrorism.
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 - It defended Pakistan, saying the world community should acknowledge Pak's "outstanding contribution" to counter terrorism.
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 - China has reasserted Pakistan as its all-weather partner and expressed its readiness to promote and deepen all-round cooperation.
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 - Notably, China is currently investing heavily in Pakistan as part of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
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 - Roping in Afghanistan, Beijing announced plans to extend the CPEC to Afghanistan as well.
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 - But, Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of sheltering Taliban militants.
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 - However, China is seeking to mediate between the two neighbours through the trilateral mechanism.
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Source: The Hindu, Indian Express

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