The Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan’s visit to the US took place on July 21-23, 2019 and the general public probably mainly remembered it due to the two passages the US President D. Trump said during his meeting with the distinguished foreign guest. One of them concerned Afghanistan, and the other one had to do with Kashmir. The latter has been an apple of discord between Pakistan and India since their independence.

Both statements were highly outrageous in nature (even for the current US President who is known for his rather unrestrained form of expression in public) and provoked strong feelings in the highest political circles of Afghanistan, India and even the US.

It is possible that the US Congress bringing up the Mueller Report, which happened right after the US-Pakistani summit, was caused by the shock made on the US Establishment by the aforementioned statements. They required urgent “explanatory interpretation” from the Department of State and gave another strong reason to Donald Trump’s foes for doubting his compliance with the requirements for the President.
The author of this article believes though that the US President intended to do the good thing by making both these statements. However, the extremely awkward form of expression of his good intentions led to things turning out as they usually do. And even worse.

Meanwhile Imran Khan’s aforementioned visit is rather remarkable in terms of evaluating the processes going on in the large region including such (essentially overlapping) political and geographical clusters as Southern and Central Asia and the Greater Middle East.

The author continues to believe that the most critical challenges to world stability originate in the area stretching from the north to the south adjoining the sea coast of the People's Republic of China where Japan, both Koreas, Taiwan and the South China Sea are located. Here, the Thucydides effect may lead to a direct (and rather traditional) military collision of two leading global superpowers. The results would be catastrophic for the whole planet.

However, the aforementioned region shows greatest turbulence; it is from there that the world political space has received most kinds of various, irritating "noise" over the recent years. Suffice it to mention the numerous conflicts in the Arab world, the twenty year war in Afghanistan, the recent (umpteenth) Pakistani-Indian armed conflict, various large-scale terrorist attacks in the countries of the region, the exacerbation of the situation around Iran in general and in the Strait of Hormuz, in particular.

All of these regional issues were discussed during the negotiations of Imran Khan and his delegation with their US counterparts. Besides, the bilateral relations and the difficult internal (mostly financial) problems of Pakistan were examined as well. The latter were touched upon at the meeting with several members of the IMF management.

Khan made a speech at the joint meeting of both Houses of the US Congress (such an opportunity is not available to each high-ranking foreign guest) and also before the members of the very influential United States Institute of Peace.

Then, it is necessary to highlight several points. First, the personality of the Pakistani Prime Minister who took office last summer as a result of the triumphal victory of the party he led in the general parliamentary elections.

Having spent most of his life in the United Kingdom, studying at prestigious British universities and known as an outstanding aristocratic cricket player, Imran Khan is more of a London dandy, than of a native of the former colony.

Khan adopted the image of a Pakistani respecting Muslim values and traditions relatively recently when he decided (or followed the suggestion of certain circles?) to make apolitical career in his homeland and reached the top. To explain this phenomenon, it is necessary to mention the second point, which has to do with the specifics of the political situation in the country where the real power has always belonged to the military (in a broad sense of the term). It would be no exaggeration to say that General Qamar Javed Bajwa (the current Chief of Army Staff (COAS) of the Pakistan Army) and Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed (Director-General of the Interdepartmental Intelligence) accompanying Imran Khan were looking after their boss among other duties during the visit to the US.

Let us add: they did the right thing, since only the military leadership of today's Pakistan (perhaps, as well as that of some other Asian countries, such as Myanmar) is capable to adequately assess the situation within the country and in its neighbouring states. The line of action of the top-ranking Pakistani generals (unlike various political parties) tends to the national interests, rather than corporate ones.

Meanwhile, these national interests require putting an end to the several decades long military conflict with India and focusing on resolving the internal problems of various kind (which is point three), of which the prospect of a financial crisis is especially drastic. The military leadership expressed initiatives for ending the confrontation and cooperating in large-scale projects (first of all, in the Chinese-Pakistani corridor) to India 18 months prior to Imran Khan's becoming Prime Minister.

He was probably considered the most suitable candidate for implementing the aforementioned initiatives. Therefore ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who arrived in Pakistan in the summer of 2018 from London to participate in the above mentioned parliamentary elections (probably believing in the forthcoming “act of democracy”), was sent to jail right away. On corruption charges, as is usual in such cases.

The fate of the former principality of Jammu and Kashmir divided approximately in even halves at the time India and Pakistan gained independence remains the key problem in the relations between both states. And if Pakistan favours applying democratic procedures or involving a third party, for example, the UN, for the solution of this problem, then India (for obvious reasons) believes only a bilateral format would be acceptable.
These subtleties of the Indian stance have to be considered if one wishes to establish mutually beneficial relations with New Delhi. And Washington has desired to do so for 20 years. And this intention only increases as the People's Republic of China becomes a global opponent of the US. Over this time, the US has achieved a lot, but the many-handed US foreign policy of the last 12 months (carried out all at sixes and sevens) has already fairly messed up the relations with India among others.

In this respect, Donald Trump's words pronounced publicly during his meeting with Imran Khan about the possibility of the US acting as a mediator in resolving the Kashmir issue sounded like the cherry on the cake. According to commentators, the Indian Parliament was outraged by these words. Let us repeat, Donald Trump probably meant well, but where were his professional advisers?

The same type of good intentions also led to another debacle during the public discussion of the situation in Afghanistan, which was probably the key item on the whole agenda of the recent US-Pakistani negotiations. Donald Trump probably wanted to convey a message of his Administration choosing a humanitarian and diplomatic approach by means of negotiating.

He could have only said as much, but, for some reason, he also pointed out the possibility of the US resolving the aforementioned problem by killing 10 million Afghans. Which was immediately followed by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's request for explanations.

Khan promised to provide assistance in resolving one of today's main US foreign policy issues which has to do with the need to finally end the absolutely senseless and extremely expensive undertaking of 20 years. Preferably, without losing the prestige. For this purpose, the Pakistani Prime Minister is going to establish the necessary contact with the Taliban, with which, let us remark, the US has been already negotiating quite openly and officially.

At the same time, a number of issues remain unclear. For example: what real forces does the word Taliban stand for? How influential are they among the whole range of the Afghan militarized groups? What will be the cost of future signatures of certain Taliban officials under the envisioned agreed documents?

However, today they seem to be minor details in the general process of improving the US-Pakistani relations which was undoubtedly promoted by the Pakistani Prime Minister's visit to Washington DC. If we recall the recent twitter altercation of Donald Trump and Imran Khan (which was on the verge of foul play), then the visit itself will seem a positive thing.

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