



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