

Washington to London: An inside account of how Pakistan's deep state grooms ISI mouthpieces

When Pakistan does not have professional lobbyists to do its bidding, it deploys local goons to disrupt events across the world.



C. CHRISTINE FAIR 5 June, 2019 8:59 am IST

<https://theprint.in/opinion/washington-to-london-an-inside-account-of-how-pakistans-deep-state-grooms-isi-mouthpieces/245703/>

How does Pakistan's deep state continue to influence debate around the world? By deploying people to disrupt public events, of course. Let me explain how this happens.

I appeared recently on a television programme filmed at the Newseum in Washington DC that promised to tell the “whole truth” about US-Pakistan relations. Ordinarily, I would have asked about the composition of the panel but, in this case, I did not because I assumed the effort was credible because the show was tied to the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia.

I regretted this lapse as soon as I walked into the green room where I met my two co-panellists. One was a retired, senior American diplomat with long ties to South Asia who, in retirement, briefly became a lobbyist for Pakistan. The other was a wealthy Pakistani-American physician serving as a current lobbyist who uses his wealth to influence American policy towards countries of interest. He also is the *sole* US representation for former, disgraced Pakistani dictator, Pervez Musharraf, which he claims to do *pro bono*.

Both the past and current lobbyist reiterated tired canards that are empirically falsifiable. Doctor *Sahab* asserted Pakistan's inalienable right to Kashmir and said that the Maharaja of Kashmir was *obliged*—as opposed to *encouraged*—to choose either Pakistan or India based upon geography and demography. Not only is this untrue, but Kashmir could have also have gone either way based upon these considerations. He repeated the absurd narrative about the “plebiscite” and rebuffed my efforts to explain what the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions actually say and the host similarly silenced me from clarifying basic facts.

With two soloists belting out songs from the ISI playlist, I was outnumbered. Any ingénue unaware of South Asian politics would assume I was the one dispensing deceptions. Afterwards, I expressed my irritation with the producer for his choice of a registered lobbyist who promulgated rank fictions. He retorted that “everyone has their own facts”.

As I left the studio, I wondered how this programme came to be. After a perusal of the show's previous episodes, I found that Doctor *Sahab* was a frequent guest on an array of topics about which he has no substantive expertise other than being a well-healed Pakistani-American. I suspect that this programme came about in part

because he suggested it. After all, that is what lobbyists do: they create opportunities to lobby.

When Pakistan does not have professional lobbyists to do its bidding, it deploys local goons to disrupt events that provide platforms for discussion that undermine Pakistan's well-groomed fictions. At a recent [event in London at which I was presenting](#), a recurring uncouth bully disrupted the entire programme. After calling me a misogynist epithet, I insisted that he be removed initially to no avail. Since many attendees told me that I was the reason for their attendance, I refused to speak until security removed him from the venue.

I knew his ruses: last year, the same organisation hosted me, and this same buffoon deported himself similarly. Upon being ousted, and just as I was to about to speak, the banished wag pulled the fire alarm. Despite this, we all reassembled and I gave my presentation on Pakistani cross-border terrorism.

It turns out that the same reprobate did this to disrupt the presentation of a popular politician from the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), which has the boys in Pindi in a swivet. To my horror, I learned that this past year "British Pakistani Patriots" attempted to throw acid on Baloch activists decrying the crimes of Pakistan's deep state in the United Kingdom. Notably, it has been my vast personal experience, that Pakistan's embassies regularly deploy miscreants to disrupt public events in global capitals. During an event hosted by Hussain Haqqani at the Hudson Institution in 2017, the Pakistan embassy actually dispatched a *van* of [rabble-rousers](#) to create a ruckus at the event. Many of these fellows—and they are almost always men—were escorted from the premises.

When Pakistan's friends are unable to manufacture Pakistan-friendly forums or disrupt others, they resort to slandering participants in their sponsored media. ISI-hacks of no journalistic credentials whatsoever, *who were not even present*, frequently write bilious accounts of the programmes based on webcasts or recordings, with the intent of crowd-sourcing troll armies to threaten the target and, in some cases, to persuade employers to fire offending individuals who dare speak historical truth to Pakistan's murderous mendacities.

It is not a coincidence that most of the major think tanks in Washington DC are populated with persons who rarely criticise the deep state. The Stimson Center's Michael Krepon happily pens articles promoting the false equivalence between India and Pakistan, even after India has been victimised by Pakistan-backed terrorist attacks. Toby Dalton and George Perkovich of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace wrote a similarly "both sides are the problem" article after Pakistani terrorists attacked Indian security forces in 2016, and precipitated Modi's much-popularised and aggrandised "cross-border strike". Michael Kugelman of the Wilson Center never misses the opportunity to defend or minimise the most outrageous crimes of the Pakistani state. And Marvin Weinbaum of the Middle East Institute not only happily bans Hussain Haqqani, Aparna Pande and me from his events, but also makes any number of claims that advance the interests of the deep state at these events and the events of others, which he attends. Notably, all of these scholars' organisations enjoy public subsidies as they are all tax-exempt (501(c)(3) institutions.

Of course, the most heinous offender of defending Pakistani equities at the expense of America's own ironically is the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), which is directly paid for by US taxpayers. USIP's Moeed Yusuf endlessly does Pakistan's bidding on our dime. He is joined by a long-time Pakistan-apologist from the George W. Bush

administration, Steve Hadley. The USIP even had the temerity to decline a Freedom of Information Request from a DC-based Indian journalist who requested all communications from both of these persons with the Pakistan embassy arguing that such communications are part of the “inter-agency and intra-agency” processes.

Just how does Pakistan ensure the lockstep goose-stepping of such persons? Surprisingly, the deep state cultivates this stable of obedient interlocutors in Washington and elsewhere without putting anyone on its payroll. How does it do this? By bartering visas and access to the deep state in exchange for “good behaviour” and “good press.”

Also read: [Pakistani generals want to restore their golden era & that's why Musharraf's team is back](#)

Not only do these visa-hungry so-called scholars host deep-state friendly events, many have willingly followed the diktat from the Pakistan embassy to explicitly exclude critics of the Pakistan army. Officials at the American National Defense University have [conceded](#) to me and to other journalists that I—along with Husain Haqqani—am *banned* at the insistence of the Pakistan Embassy. When someone at the National War College did not heed this guidance, an enormous *hungama* ensued. The Pakistan embassy demarched the War College when it learned that I would be discussing Pakistan’s pernicious role in undermining US interests in Afghanistan. This is the *American War College*. American military and civilian personnel have been slaughtered by the proxies of Pakistan and yet it allows the Pakistan Embassy to dictate who it invites to speak at their functions.

This was not always the case with me. Despite my various criticism of the deep state, I was welcomed in Pakistan and regularly enjoyed access to officials in the government as well as officers in the military. While I was never a cheerleader for Pakistan, Pakistan valued me as an independent thinker who carries water for *no one* and is willing to say unpleasant things to *everyone*. This changed in 2011. One of the ISI spymasters—who ironically facilitated many of my previous meetings—explained that the ISI would now only patronise those who would do its bidding. In other words, only those who would dance to the deep state’s *kazoo* would be welcome, which I refused to do.

I want to ask my colleagues at these “think-tanks” who happily trade their integrity for access to Pakistan, how many lives is your visa worth? How many lives are as valuable as your much-desired meeting with the army chief, ISI chief or a few corps commanders? We all know what you get in these meetings are notebooks full of lies. (I have an entire shelf of such lie-festooned notebooks.) What you get is the social cache of such meetings as they have little other utility. So, why do you happily sell your soul to these con artists? What is the crime your patron will commit that will persuade you to develop gonadal fortitude and resist that VIP lounge in Pindi? While you may not care that your handlers are also slaughtering Indians, Afghans and even Pakistanis, perhaps you should look long and hard at the thousands of Americans who have been felled by the murderers in Pindi. If you can’t do that, know that the red carpet they roll out for you is stained red with the blood of hundreds of thousands of persons shed by the very institutions you so willingly propitiate and defend, not for money but for a visa and a full schedule of sham meetings with which you regale friends, colleagues and US officials back home.

C. Christine Fair is the author of Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army’s Way of War and In Their Own Words: Understanding the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba.

