
Diplomatic victory for Pakistan: China, Russia, Iran confirm terror threat from Afghanistan

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In what is seen as major diplomatic victory for Pakistan, China, Russia and Iran have confirmed that several terrorist groups including outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Majid Brigade, and Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) are operating from Afghanistan and posing a threat to the neighbouring country. A quadrilateral meeting of Pakistan, China, Russia and Iran held in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session on September 27. While China, Russia and Iran were represented by their respective Foreign Ministers, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif attended the huddle on behalf of Pakistan. A joint statement issued on Sunday debunked the claims by Afghan Taliban that it was not harboring any terrorist group including the TTP. Contrary to the interim government's claims, the joint statement expressed serious concerns

over the presence of several terrorist groups in Afghanistan. “The Ministers expressed deep concern over the security situation related to terrorism in Afghanistan, noting that terrorist groups such as ISIL, Al-Qaida, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Jaish ul-Adl, Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and other similar groups in the region including Majeed Brigade, as well as others, based in Afghanistan, continue to pose a serious threat to regional and global security,” read the joint statement. The Ministers condemned the recent terrorist attacks in all shapes and forms in Afghanistan and the region, including the attacks by ISIL-K on Karbala pilgrims on 13 September 2024 and the attacks by TTP in Bannu and Besham in Pakistan on 15 July and 26 March 2024, respectively. The Ministers expressed deep concern over the terrorism-related security situation in Afghanistan and the region and stressed the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security, as well as principles of equal indivisible security, examine regional security issues from a more comprehensive and integrated perspective, and work together to address various security challenges in Afghanistan and the region. The four countries called on strengthening counter-terrorism cooperation at both bilateral and multilateral levels. “Afghanistan should be supported in taking comprehensive measures to address both the symptoms and root causes of terrorism and to eradicate terrorism at an early date,” according to the statement. The joint statement

acknowledged the efforts of Afghanistan's de facto authorities to combat ISIL-Khorasan. They called on de facto authorities to take visible and verifiable actions in fulfilling the international obligations and commitments made by Afghanistan to fight terrorism, dismantle, and eliminate all terrorist groups equally and non-discriminatory and prevent the use of Afghan territory against its neighbors, the region, and beyond. Meanwhile, all the four countries reiterated their support for Afghanistan's national sovereignty, political independence, unity, and territorial integrity. They reaffirmed principles of international law, particularly non-interference in its internal affairs, and the right of the Afghan people to independently decide the future of their country in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. The Ministers stressed that all members of the international community have a shared interest in a stable and peaceful Afghanistan, a country that should serve as a platform for international cooperation rather than geopolitical competition. The Ministers emphasized the importance of building an inclusive and broad-based governance system in Afghanistan that reflects the interests and aspirations of all segments of Afghan society. The Ministers commended the de facto authorities' efforts to reduce the cultivation of traditional opium. They called for comprehensive measures to combat narcotics, particularly in light of the significant rise in the production of synthetic drugs, including methamphetamine jointly fighting against and dismantling

transnational organized criminal groups involved in the trafficking of opiates, and cutting off trade and transit corridors of narcotics within and beyond the region and stressed the importance of the international assistance to promote agricultural development and alternative crops on the way to building a society free of drug abuse. The Ministers urged de facto authorities to create conditions that facilitate the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland, prevent further migration, and take serious measures to ensure returnees' livelihoods and reintegration into political and social processes to achieve a lasting solution. The Ministers expressed appreciation for the regional countries, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, for hosting millions of Afghan refugees. They urged the international community and donors to provide, adequate, predictable, regular, and sustainable financial support and other necessary assistance, in line with the principle of international responsibility and burden sharing, for time-bound and well-resourced repatriation of refugees back to Afghanistan, as well as to countries hosting Afghan refugees, particularly the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of countering attempts to politicize the provision of humanitarian assistance needed by the people of Afghanistan and called on the international community to continue providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and help the country strengthen its capacity for sustainable and self-reliant development. The Ministers supported

effective regional initiatives aimed at uplifting Afghanistan's economy and emphasized the importance of continued economic engagement with de facto authorities to alleviate the dire situation of the Afghan people. The Ministers expressed willingness to expand economic and trade cooperation and regional connectivity with Afghanistan that will contribute to the active integration of Afghanistan into the regional economic cooperation. The Ministers emphasized the importance of the rights and needs of the entire population of the country including all ethnic and religious groups. They also stressed that women and girls' access to education, and economic opportunities, including access to work, participation in public life, freedom of movement, justice and basic services, will contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in the country. The Ministers pointed out that NATO members should bear the primary responsibility for the current plight in Afghanistan. They should create opportunities for Afghanistan's economic recovery and future development and prosperity, immediately lift unilateral sanctions against Afghanistan, and return Afghanistan's overseas assets for the benefit of the Afghan people. The Ministers encouraged de facto authorities to maintain a friendly and cooperative foreign policy, adhere to international law, comply with international obligations within the bilateral and multilateral treaties that Afghanistan is a party to, and coexist peacefully with neighboring countries, and the region. The Ministers emphasized that strengthening peace and stability in Afghanistan and

countering the threats of terrorism, radicalism, and drug crime emanating from its territory are in line with our common interests in the region. They advocated for the establishment of Afghanistan as an independent, united, and peaceful state, free from terrorism, war, and narcotics, living in peace with its neighbors and ensuring respect for basic human rights and freedoms, including for women, children, persons with disabilities, and ethnic and religious minorities. The Ministers supported all diplomatic efforts that are conducive to the political settlement of the Afghan issue and supported the international community, especially the United Nations. They emphasized the significant role of regional frameworks such as the Moscow Format, the Foreign Ministers' Meeting of Afghanistan's Neighboring Countries, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, to play a positive role in achieving a political stability.