

Secret War

In war every truth has to have an escort of lies". That was Churchill during the Second World War. And today the escort of lies is so numerous in every theatre of war that there is little truth left. Privatisation of defence establishment is one thing but deployment of private militia run by security companies with dubious distinction of being called death squads in some conflict regions, is quite another. Though Indians are not unfamiliar with the phenomenon of private army as notorious landlords of Bihar once raised private armies—SENAS—along caste lines to regain their lost privileges and maintain caste supremacy. Right now Salwa Judum, yet a new incarnation of SENA is doing havoc by terrorising poor tribals and indulging in murder, rape and loot in Chattisgarh. Also, all ruling parties, including communist parties, have their own vigilante groups, armed secretly with the help of police force, to silence any voice of dissent, violent or peaceful. But the way America is utilising the services of private army in Pakistan in recent months to win Afghan war has no parallel. The progressives in the West call it the secret US War in Pakistan. The fact is that it is no longer so secret.

That US Special Forces enlist Blackwater's help on covert operations with active cooperation of Pakistan's military is becoming crystal clear with every passing day. Escort of lies cannot hide the ground reality anymore. Blackwater reportedly works for the CIA at "hidden bases in Pakistan and Afghanistan, where the company's contractors assemble and load Hellfire missiles and 500-pound laser-guided bombs on remotely piloted Predator air craft". Blackwater is paid by the Pakistani government through local intermediaries. That Blackwater works with Pakistan's Frontier Corps in Pakistan-Afghan border regions is not denied even by military sources : "There is no real oversight. It's not really on people's radar screen." Despite Pakistani rulers' desperate attempt to downplay the involvement of private American security contractor in their war against the terrorists—Taliban to be precise—the presence of so many mercenaries on Pakistani soil doing dirty job cannot be glossed over by any amount of jugglery. Not that reports on America's secret war in Pakistan don't find place in Pakistani media but it is too feeble to mould public opinion against America's unjust war.

What the *News*, the biggest English language daily in Pakistan says about escalation of America's Afghan war in Pakistan through other means is revealing enough : "Let's forget Blackwater for a second. What this is confirming is that there are US military operations in Pakistan that aren't about logistics or getting food to Bagram, that are actually about the exercise of physical violence, physical force, inside Pakistani territory." America could do anything to retain its control. It's a matter of time that American security personnel, private or otherwise, under one pretext or another, would be on Indian soil ostensibly to coordinate their strategic moves on "war on terror" in the sub-continent.

In 1979 when Soviet troops entered into Afghanistan and precipitated the regional crisis to the point of crossing Pakistan-Afghan border in their pursuit to chase the fleeing mujahideens, a liberal section of Indian ruling elite really got panicked because they apprehended a boundary with Russia, possibly not in the distant future. But that didn't happen. Soviet Russia itself faced disintegration

and Brezhnev's Afghan adventure, rather misadventure, played a crucial role for the collapse of the Soviet Union.

America and its western allies may go to any length to dominate the world and they won't hesitate to do anything in India as South Asia is increasingly becoming a new flashpoint threatening their strategic interest in the region. Today it is Pakistan, tomorrow it might be India. In 1990s non-orthodox Christian US and NATO powers destroyed the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious South Slav Republic of Yugoslavia, one of the founder members of Non-aligned movement, alongwith India. US-led illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003 and brutal occupation has destroyed a united secular Iraq of Shia and Sunni Arabs and Kurds, Turkmen and others. As US is now bogged down in the quagmire called Afghanistan, the spill-over effect of its secret war in Pakistan won't be restricted to Pakistani territory only. With the Afghan resistance growing substantially in depth and breadth braving all odds, mercenaries like Blackwater may be on this side of the fence, anytime if the situation so demands. It's as simple as that. Indian left's superficial anti-Americanism doesn't take into account this aspect of the game. □□□