

Pakistan probably most dangerous country for World: Ex-CIA Official

10/10/2015 18:05 by admin

Washington: Pakistan is probably the most dangerous country for the world as it is ripe with the threats of terrorism, a failing economy and the fastest growing nuclear arsenal, a retired CIA official has said.

"While Pakistan is not the most dangerous country in the world, it is probably the most dangerous country for the world, and as such, a serious case for close and continued US engagement with Pakistan can be made," Kevin Hulbert, a former top intelligence officer who retired in June 2014, wrote in an op-ed in The Cipher Brief.

"As a country ripe with the triple threat of terrorism, a failing economy, and the fastest growing nuclear arsenal, Pakistan has the potential to create more nightmare scenarios for US policymakers than any other country," said Mr Hulbert, who previously served multiple overseas tours as CIA Chief of Station and Deputy Chief of Station.

Like it or not, Pakistan is similar to a bank or company considered too big to let fail because of the ripple effect it might cause across the entire economy.

The spectre of the sixth largest country in the world being a failed state is a hypothetical catastrophe that would unleash a world of unintended consequences, he said.

"Rather than risk it, and as much as we might like to move on, we really should increase the level of engagement with Pakistan, not decrease it," he recommended.

Mr Hulbert said many of the trend lines in Pakistan now seem to be moving in the wrong direction.

For years, Pakistan felt justified in its use of jihadist militias to attack India in a war of attrition. It pursued a perverse double-dealing game where they supported 'good' radical Muslim extremists that helped them in their proxy war against India, while at the same time trying to hold the line against the 'bad' radical Muslim extremist elements who were focused on bringing down the Pakistani state, he observed.

A large percentage of the Pakistani population does not view jihadi groups, including the Taliban and other militant religious groups, as dangerous elements, but rather as good soldiers of Islam comprised of men performing their religious duty, he said.

"The fight against al-Qaeda in Pakistan was largely seen as a US fight, not a Pakistan fight, and Pakistan's unwillingness to make the hard choices required to confront the growing menace of radical extremism, created a monster," the former CIA official said.

Today, Pakistan finds itself in a very complicated security situation where there is little differentiation among radical groups, he noted.

Terrorist groups, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, are suddenly allied with al-Qaeda, while Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, the Pakistan Taliban, the Afghan Taliban, and other assorted criminals and non-state actors are intent on bringing down the elected government of Pakistan.

While the Pakistan government dithered, the militancy in the country took firm hold, he said.

- PTI