

## Pakistan army will never take on Afghan Taliban: Manmohan Singh

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has expressed doubts that the Pakistan army will ever take on the Afghan Taliban terrorist elements that attack Afghans, Indians and Westerners as they want a Pakistani puppet regime in Kabul.

'I sometimes fear that Pakistan's objectives are not necessarily in harmony with the US objectives,' in Afghanistan where Washington is trying to stabilise the situation, he said in an interview with CNN's 'Fareed Zakaria GPS' coinciding with his arrival here Sunday.

'Pakistan sometimes feels that the Americans are short-term maximisers, that if the pressure continued, they will not have the courage to stay put, they will walk away, and that Afghanistan will become a natural backyard for Pakistan to influence its policies and programmes'.

Asked if that meant Pakistanis want an Afghanistan that is amendable or a Pakistani puppet, Manmohan Singh said, 'Yes, I think that is-that appears to me.'

'Well, who am I to judge?' he said when asked if the Pakistani government and the Pakistani army are taking active measures to destroy the Afghan Taliban, as distinct from the Pakistani Taliban.

But 'I think what Secretary (of State Hillary) Clinton, when she was in Pakistan recently, I think she did ask, I think, publicly, that Quetta Shura, the leaders of Afghan Taliban-where are they? That can not be unknown to the people in Pakistan.'

'So, that is an indication of things that are happening on the ground.'

Asked if he thought the Pakistani army will ever take on the Afghan Taliban, Manmohan Singh said: 'I'm not certain that the Pakistan army will take on those elements.'

On American presence in Afghanistan, Manmohan Singh said: 'Well, all I can say is, the rise of Taliban in Afghanistan created a major problem for the world, and that the disappearance of the Taliban regime is, indeed, a blessing for the global society, global polity.'

Asked if there should be some kind of political outreach to the Taliban, he said: 'Well, I think President (Hamid) Karzai, having been re-elected, it is his responsibility and his obligation to harmonise and to bring together all elements who can contribute to the construction and development of Afghanistan.'

'And I hope that he will rise to the occasion,' he added hoping 'that all elements of Afghan societies which are opposed to the terrorist elements can get together to give a purposeful government to the people of Afghanistan.'

*Arun Kumar* ( © IANS / India eNews)