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Subject:

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(i) **Bill Gates "letter":** Pak media reported 8 June on an ostensible letter delivered by Bill Gates's "personal emissary" to Imran Khan (Chairman of Pakistan Justice Party, which placed 2nd in the 11 May elections, he will lead the opposition) requesting intervention with the Pak Taliban to allow polio eradication campaign, and that BG would be telephoning Imran Khan within a few hours. The Party Secretariat has officially confirmed receipt of the letter (although someone else may well have sent a letter purporting to speak for BG?)!

However, the "false" news has already had the undesired effect of tying a high-profile US citizen to Pak's polio eradication, on the heels of the droning of the Pak Taliban No. 2 as well as a more recent droning of seven high-value targets.

(a) **Discreet confidential enquiry** has yielded the following reaction from the Taliban (not yet in the public domain): "BG can try as much as he wishes to use Imran Khan or others to convince the Taliban, but these efforts will not yield the desired results, because Imran Khan is not our leader, we do not follow him, he cannot dictate to us, we are not answerable to him, he follows a "secular" line -- we want an "Islamic" explanation on polio vaccination!" The latter point is in the IPI Mission Report as well as below in the TPs.

(b) **At present, the Pak Taliban are engaged in a far more essential issue for them, their concern that Pak authorities are trying to stir trouble on the border between the Afghan Taliban and the Pak Taliban. Hence a pointed BG denial of an outreach to Imran Khan would at this stage be irrelevant. So let us wait.**

(ii) **On 5-6 June, an international conference of religious scholars was held at the International Islamic University of Islamabad, as a follow-up to a March regional conference in Cairo, to draw up strategies to overcome social and political challenges to polio eradication in Pakistan. In the Declaration issued at the conclusion, the clerics stated that a National Advisory Board for Polio Eradication will be established in Pakistan, its secretariat will be in the International Islamic University. However, the Declaration also referred to wider peace issues, drone attacks etc, i.e. repeated the linkages while the IPI's strategy aims to de-link polio eradication from everything else. Many of the Islam-based points were useful, and originated at the March Cairo conference.**

1. **The IPI project for the Foundation is not a technical assessment nor a comprehensive polio eradication plan, neither of which are needed, the Govt has a well-conceived programme with necessary structures in place;**

2. **However, the information obtained by IPI is distinguished by the fact that it is based on direct talks with representatives from the major tribes and other groups in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas (some close to the Taliban) – through these intensive talks end April 2013, IPI is able to acquire valuable information which is not in the public domain;**

3. **In addition, through contacts, IPI was also able to access and obtain information on a strictly confidential basis from other sources which corroborated the information obtained from the tribesmen;**

4. **The corruption in the polio-eradication programme, as a direct result of the massive inflows of funds and related aid, is unmatched, normally seen only in major sectors such as oil, gas, and armaments!**

Examples: “ghost” anti-polio health worker teams (funds billed for numbers greater than the actual number of teams); “ghost” children (numbers of children supposedly vaccinated are fewer than those actually given anti-polio drops); “ghost” transport (the number of vehicles to transport health teams is less than the numbers billed for); some medical personnel receive 2 salaries, one for their normal work, the second larger stipend for polio eradication work (leading to a more focus on polio to the detriment of the other vaccinations for lethal diseases);

5. The Foundation and BG’s personal engagement have already yielded awesome results – efforts by the Govt of Pakistan to give polio eradication the highest national priority, the stark reduction in polio cases, as well as encouragement to other international donors to come forward;

6. The polio eradication programme is very well-funded and technically and structurally sound; however existing and new problems block Pakistan from becoming completely polio-free – the ultimate goal of BG and the Foundation;

7. Pakistan was close to complete polio eradication, when a combination of **external circumstances (conflict, terrorism, drones, anti-US sentiment, ban on anti-polio drops)** as well as **management issues (relating to corruption, accountability, too exclusive a focus on polio eradication to the detriment of routine immunizations, poor infrastructure etc.)** created again an increase in the number of polio cases;

Note 1: Under-reporting in previous years yielded figures on recorded polio cases which were thus misleadingly low.

Note 2: In recent weeks, outbreaks of measles and resulting child deaths in the hundreds have been reported from different areas of Pakistan, thus unfortunately supporting the affected communities’ belief that death-inducing diseases are worse than one which “only” cripples!

8. **Contrary to popular perception, IPI has reason to believe that that religion-based refusal is only a very small and not insurmountable part of anti-polio measures.**

9. **Pressure tactics: the ban, the refusal to allow anti-polio health teams to enter certain areas etc. are often pressure tactics to achieve other ends (an example: the Pak Army sets up a checkpoint which causes great hardship to the community, so the Taliban retaliate with a ban on girls attending college, which is located beyond the checkpoint, i.e. “you don’t remove the checkpoint, we won’t allow the girls to attend college!” This is subsequently seen in simplistic terms as a Taliban ban on female education.)**

10. **The attacks on polio eradication health teams in different parts of Pakistan cannot with certainty be attributed to the Taliban – when examined, each case turns out to have a different reason for the attack;**

11. **Security, too, is not an insurmountable problem: For example, the Pak Army has carried out road construction worth ca. US\$ 100 million without major problems!**

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