

Headlines:

- **‘Europe is Being Overrun’: Hungarian leader Viktor Orban**
- **Saudi Arabia, China, Turkey Blocked US Move Against Pakistan on Terror Financing: Report**
- **In Long-Secular Turkey, Sharia is Gradually Taking Over**

Details:

‘Europe is Being Overrun’: Hungarian leader Viktor Orban

Hungarian leader Viktor Orbán has claimed “Christianity is Europe’s last hope” in his latest escalation of populist rhetoric ahead of April’s elections. The Prime Minister warned “dark clouds are gathering” as he accused politicians in Brussels, Berlin and Paris of facilitating “the decline of Christian culture and the advance of Islam”. Speaking at the 20th annual state of the nation, the 54-year-old also outlined government plans to oppose UN and European efforts to make migration acceptable to the world and continue his fight against what he believes is an “Islamisation” of Europe. He also claimed with mass immigration, especially from Africa, “Our worst nightmares can come true. The West falls as it fails to see Europe being overrun.” His speech was the latest example of an increasingly determined anti-immigrant sentiment peddled by his Fidesz party. Matthew Goodwin, senior Europe fellow at Chatham House, said inciting nationalism had become an effective way for Mr Orbán to gain votes. “Orbán is now in an incredibly strong position, not only has he got a strong lead in the polls, but he has also discovered populist nationalism has gone down very well with Hungarian voters,” he told The Independent. “Hungary represents a form of nationalism that is much stronger and more ethnic than forms of nationalism in western Europe. “But it is also clear that an emerging alliance between Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Austria does pose a significant challenge to leaders in Brussels, Paris and London.” [Source: The Independent]

Today, every European leader is bashing Islam in order to boost his popularity amongst the electorate. This implies that the electorate is becoming more and more apprehensive about Islam and Muslim immigrants. This situation does not bode well for Muslims living in the West, and they must think twice about making Europe their home.

In Long-Secular Turkey, Sharia is Gradually Taking Over

Over the past few weeks, Turkish officials have broken with decades of precedent in what is still, at least nominally, a secular republic: they have begun describing the country’s military deployment in Syria as “jihad.” During the first two days of the operation, which began on Jan. 20, the government’s Directorate of Religious Affairs ordered all of Turkey’s nearly 90,000 mosques to broadcast the “Al-Fath” verse from the Koran — “the prayer of conquest” — through the loudspeakers on their minarets. Mainstreaming jihad, which sanctions violence against those who “offend Islam,” is a crucial step in draping the sheath of sharia over a society. Sadly, Turkey seems to be slowly moving along that path. Turkey, established as a secular republic by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk at the end of World War I, long managed to hold sharia out of the official sphere, making it an outlier among Muslim-majority countries. While the secular constitutional system remains, my own research, polls and recent developments in Turkey together demonstrate a dangerous shift. In recent years, the government led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been limiting individual freedoms, as well as sanctioning individuals who “insult Islam” or neglect Islamic practices. Since November 2017,

the national police — controlled by the central government — has been monitoring online commentary on religion and suppressing freedom of expression when they find such commentary “offensive to Islam.” Off-screen, it has become commonplace for the police to arrest those who speak critically of Islam in public. For example, world-renowned Turkish pianist Fazil Say has been prosecuted twice because of “provocative commentary” on Islam. His crime: making gentle fun of the Muslim call for prayer on Twitter. Education is a prime pillar in Erdogan’s efforts to throw a membrane of sharia over the country. Turkey’s education system, like the police, falls under control of the central government, and the Ministry of Education has been pressuring citizens to conform to conservative Islamic practices in public schools. But those who expect Erdogan to declare Islamic law in Turkey will have to wait for quite some time. The change will not happen overnight. It is taking place gradually as the diaphanous veil of sharia descends. [Source: Washington Post].

Erdogan is not sincere in his pursuit of implementing Islam in Turkey. His primary concern is to woo his supporters by pulling wool over their eyes. If Erdogan was sincere to Islam he would have established the Caliphate (Khilafah Rashidah) and then declared Jihad.

Saudi Arabia, China, Turkey Blocked US Move Against Pakistan on Terror Financing: Report

China, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, three close allies of Pakistan, have joined hands to block a move by the Trump administration to place Islamabad on an international terror-financing watch list, a US media report said on Thursday. While Pakistan has claimed a victory of sorts, the US was working behind the scenes during the ongoing Paris meeting of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to take action against the country which it believes has not acted against terrorist financing and the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions. The Wall Street Journal which first reported about the development said this was one of the “rare disagreements” between Saudi Arabia and the administration of President Donald Trump. Saudi Arabia, it said was acting on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The report said the US is still trying for the FATF to take a decision on this by Thursday. Pakistan claimed on Wednesday that it had foiled US-led efforts to place it on a terror financing watch-list after the country was granted a three-month reprieve by the Paris-based international watchdog FATF. The FATF, a global body that combats terrorist financing and money laundering, met in Paris amid reports that the US with support of some European allies was trying to place Pakistan on a list of countries that financially support terrorism. “The officials said the US effort, which included pressure on the Saudis, raised the possibility of a fresh vote on action against Pakistan as soon as Thursday. The Pakistanis were scrambling to shore up support,” the WSJ report said. Noting that the Trump administration is angry with Pakistan’s inadequate efforts to combat terror groups, the daily said the US has sought to ratchet up pressure on Islamabad. Last month, it froze some USD 2 billion in security assistance to Pakistan. The US says Pakistan is not taking action against terror groups like the Haqqani network and the Taliban. Islamabad has denied those allegations. China, Pakistan’s all-weather ally, has repeatedly blocked efforts by India, the US and the UK to designate JeM chief Masood Azhar a terrorist under the Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee. Pakistan being added to the “list of countries deemed ‘high risk’ for doing too little to curb terror financing,” would have a financial implication for the country. [Source: News18].

Disagreement or not, it appears both the Saudis and the Americans have used the threat of FATF to put pressure on Pakistan to do two things. First, send troops to Saudi, which most likely will be used in Yemen. Second, for Islamabad to declare a fresh offensive against militants in the tribal areas.