

Scenario 110

ISAF CONTAINERS SCAM

A Wikileaks cable sent on **17th November 2008**, told the world that US military containers that pass through Pakistan on their way to Afghanistan never contain weapons or ammunition..... that the Pakistani media often reported that ammunition and arms off hijacked US convoys and being sold in Pakistan.

The US government's official note commented on those media reports that:

"....to be clear, no weapons, ammunition or sensitive electronics are shipped to Afghanistan by land routes through Pakistan."

.....that after the hijacking of two US military contracted trucks in 2008, the Pakistani rumour mill has generated reports about weapon caches supposedly stolen from US military and Nato convoys complete with elaborate descriptions of non-existent contents of containers".

The US Ambassador in Islamabad had assured Washington that:

".....any reports of agents buying weapons from stolen US military or Nato containers are false".

Once the Federal Interior Minister Rehman Malik and IG sindh had told the media that Israeli weapons were being used in Karachi by '**elements from Africa**' [pointing towards MQM's South Africa Terror Cell] then obviously all those weapons were not simply dropping there from sky. Those were being smuggled or imported into Karachi by someone. MQM's ex MPA Nisar Panwar had once picked up for smuggling of weapons and was later released on pressure from Governor House only.

When the noise of missing containers spread in the Pakistan Customs Directorates then the news started pouring in that more than 2,000 containers carrying goods imported for the International Security Assistance Force [ISAF], based in Afghanistan had gone missing; customs officials and some business tycoons had successfully hushed up the probe into the matter.

The Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly headed by the Leader of the Opposition, Ch Nisar Ali Khan had taken up the matter; and the involvement of a former Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue [FBR] named Abdullah Yusuf was widely discussed being responsible for patronizing the racket – but then, getting him transferred from the slot in July 2008, the matter was pushed into the cold room.

The Customs Intelligence Directorate had traced the missing containers and record of the 1,390 vehicles was collected from the Port Qasim Karachi and Karachi Port. The evidence on record told that all the containers were issued with fake TR Permits (TPs) for inland transportation to various dry ports. By custom rules; goods destined for dry ports had to be carried only by the carrier companies registered with the FBR, but in this case the unregistered carriers transported the containers. [A copy of that Permit is sent to the dry port and the same is

verified through the Pakistan Revenue Automation Ltd (PRAL)], but the authorities made no verification for those Permits issued and received back for ISAF containers.

Ultimately, **on 23rd April 2010**; the **ISAF, Nato and US Army authorities in Kabul confirmed to the Pakistan Customs Intelligence that its suspicions** regarding an international syndicate operating to transport billions of dollars worth contraband goods into Pakistan under the protection of the ISAF food shipments **were correct**.

It might be a coincidence that on the same day, a search at the Karachi Port confirmed the suspicion when a consignment of 28-ton alcoholic beverage was seized, its items were listed and investigations were launched against the involved elements. There were 30 more shipments on the list, and the Customs Intelligence (CI) was carrying out exhaustive investigations - some arrests had already been made. The former DG Customs Intelligence, Lutfullah Virk, confirmed the media later that he had provided the *'related documents'* that was why he was denied promotion to Grade 21 since August 2010 and thus no meaningful posting.

The intelligence sources had revealed that one suspected company, a listed sub-contractor in Afghanistan, was operating under the cover of ISAF - transporters of food items to Kabul from the Pakistani ports. They had obtained proof that 31 such shipments were made by this company and others. It was later confirmed that a container parking yard on the Ring Road Peshawar was used as a workshop till last week for not only disposing the shipments but also for breaking up the containers in which the contrabands were transported from Karachi to remove all criminal evidence.

The FIR at Peshawar was lodged after the confirmation that the Customs Intelligence had found the suspected container's seal after a search from Karachi to Torkham. Then the Torkham Customs Station had confirmed it to the intelligence that a number of other consignments never reached the border for onward transportation to Kabul.

Initially, the Diplomatic Bonded Warehouses in Islamabad were being used for cover, and then the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA). Then those companies ganged up to exploit the ISAF, Nato and US Army shipments. These were thoroughly connected gangs and they had penetrated the Pakistan Customs, without the connivance of which they were not able to operate so boldly. Focussing on three aspects: firstly - the shipments that were made (could be in hundreds; 31 were confirmed); Secondly - the companies involved; and thirdly - the rogue Customs officials.

On 19th January 2011, referring to **'the news'**; an official report prepared on the directives of Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) revealed that about 7,922 transit containers of ISAF and others worth billions of rupees were pilfered within Pakistan during the previous four years and this could be just a tip of the iceberg.

[On the same day's report by **Umar Cheema**, in the same **'the News'** dated **19th January 2011**; told that **'more than 50,000 transit containers were pilfered within Pakistan, many with the collusion of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and National Logistics Cell (NLC).'**]

Which figures were correct – **'the News'** never made it clear; media's bluffs?

This Lost Containers case first came to attention after Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed of the Pakistan Muslim League [Q] appealed to the chief justice through a newspaper item **on 29th June 2010**, to take *suo motu* notice of the ISAF containers' disappearance. The containers, meant for supplies to ISAF and Nato forces in Afghanistan, entered Pakistan in the last four years under the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement [ATTA]. The disappeared containers had caused a whopping loss of between Rs:19 billion to Rs:37 billion to the national exchequer; as per Senator Syed's belief.

The Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO), Dr Shoaib Suddle, had prepared a detailed report in the wake of *suo moto* action taken by the SC regarding "**ISAF Containers Scam**" and the report was duly submitted to the apex court. For fixing the responsibility over the individuals involved, criminal investigation was required under Section 17 of the FTO Ordinance. The SC had taken up the hearing after declaring it a *suo moto* case.

The senior management of customs had failed to take necessary steps to put in place appropriate counter measures against repeatedly occurring scams. The investigation of four mega scams of containers in past few years had indicated a clear pattern. The phenomena of pilferage was not new - manipulation of record and data, diverting focus by 'fact finding committees' and other hindrances were identified earlier, too. Deliberate attempts to diffuse focus of investigation against corrupt and influential officials through '**fact finding committees**' were clearly determined earlier but no action.

In one [lunar] case the collector had failed to prevent wrong clearance of 52 containers laden with liquor as was mentioned by the 'fact finding committee'. The leadership of customs seemed to be a part of that scam. The modus operandi in those mega scams remained the same; fake / forged documents, primitive and manual clearance and processing systems, wide discretion in the hands of unscrupulous customs officials, lack of transparency and effective accountability, involvement of seniors otherwise responsible for oversight.

The picture that emerged was of gross inefficiency, mal-administration and corruption in an organisation that was geared to further principally individual and communal self-interest of a few at the cost of Pakistan, its reputation abroad and its people. That report was an exploratory start-up tool. Although it provided some answers but it raised many questions, too.

In the said *suo moto* case No:16 / 2010 regarding "**ISAF Containers Scam**" was referred by the SC **on 7th October 2010** for investigation to the FTO. Incorporated in the SC order was a set of 14 specific questions ranging from the nature and extent of misuse of transit trade facilities, procedural vulnerabilities causing the misuse and fixing responsibility thereof to suggesting effective countermeasures to control such scams in future. In its recommendations, the FTO had stated that customs clearance, cross border certification and reconciliation procedures needed massive improvement, consolidation and rationalisation.

Cross checks needed to be upgraded, diversified and externalised. Transport system used for Afghan Transit Trade (ATT) needed to be organised on competitive basis and transporters given a level - playing field. Only bonded carriers should be allowed to transport ATT cargo. The vehicle fleet used for the purpose must be upgraded in terms of technology input for safe transportation of transit cargo. There was need to enhance security of cargo through RFID seals and live monitoring through Global Positioning System (GPS).

It was recommended that the ATT cargo should bear bar code embeddings for ease of detection and to minimise the chances of its smuggling back into Pakistan. ISAF / UN / Nato should adopt the same technology and transport precautions as were being used by US forces (e.g. RFID seals and effective tracking / monitoring through GPS). Any collusion by and corruption of customs officials should be effectively discouraged and deterred in a sustainable manner. A specialised and dedicated Collectorate needed to be created to deal exclusively with the entire cargo in transit to Afghanistan.

According to investigators this organised crime had been done in connivance with the FBR officials who instead of taking preventive measures set up fact - finding committees "*to buy time to confuse the real issues.*" Their findings noted a record rise of 60% in pilferage in 2010 as compared to 2009 when it was 36%.

As per the FBR figures, 306,267 containers had landed at Karachi port from January 2007 to 15th October 2010. The figure of 7,922 was of minimum lost containers. Likewise, the NLC data **"was also total disappointment."** The report told further that:

'.....going by the FBR data meant that out of total 306,267 containers landed at Karachi port, as many as 71,202 transit containers never left the Port, 27871 were received at border station "without departure from Karachi", 55140 left Karachi but never reached the border, 152054 left Karachi, arrived at border but did not cross the border.'

Regarding the data provided by NLC, the report said it was data for transport of containers from Karachi to border stations with **"no container number, date, time, truck number etc either for departure from Karachi, arrival at border customs - station or cross border. It was a meaningless exercise for our purposes. NLC data was also a total disappointment."**

The investigators estimated that a round trip of Karachi – Peshawar - Karachi took 11 days and could be 9-10 days for Karachi – Chaman - Karachi round trip. According to the report, 70% containers had taken the Karachi - Peshawar route and only 30% travel through Chaman.

When this formula was applied to the data gathered from terminals, it was discovered 11 containers incredibly returned to the terminal within one day, after discharging their transit cargo at the border stations, let alone entering into Afghanistan. Another 29 containers were back at the terminal within two days, 54 in three days, 128 in four days, 494 in five days, 1784 in six days, 4565 in seven days, 7922 containers completed the round trip in eight days, 11629 in nine days, 15314 in 10 days, 18846 in 11 days and 21935 containers in 12 days.

One could guess that the containers going to Peshawar or Chaman and coming back within nine days or less were all unloaded within Pakistan.

On 28th March 2011; the explanation of FBR Chairman Salman Siddique appeared telling how his office failed to make recoveries of taxes and duties to the tune of Rs:16 billion as per the promise he made a month ago. In the missing ISAF containers case, the FBR was to explain why over 600 officials put on the suspect list in the Customs Department in that scam were not removed from their posts where they continued to handle the Afghan Transit Trade and ISAF containers as usual.

The FTO office believed that the Customs at Karachi connived with the importers as the former, over the past 4-5 years, used to de-seal the import consignments for Afghanistan, sent up the seals to Customs at Torkhum and Chaman to fake the crossing over of these consignments.

On 13th April 2011; Chairman Salman Siddique of the FBR told the Supreme Court that the national exchequer had faced a whopping loss of Rs:7 billion in the last two and a half years on account of evasion of customs duty on the ISAF containers that went missing at Chaman border only. Chairman explained that a total of 2,981 containers were missing, out of which records of only 408 containers could be traced. These containers never crossed the Pak-Afghan border at Chaman.

One of the most important aspects of the ISAF Containers' Scam was the non-availability of data on the movement of ISAF containers. In that regard, Mr Siddique submitted that the Pakistani Ministry of Finance [MoF] had asked the Afghan Ministry of Finance to provide the relevant data. The Afghan government was reluctant to grant Pakistan access to this information, rendering premature the attempts to ascertain the exact percentage of losses. How-

ever, Siddique assured the court that the FBR would collect further materials and inform the court within four weeks.

The FBR Chairman also revealed that the US was assisting the Afghan government in checking transportation. The fact remained that the Afghan government had in place an electronic system to monitor the pilferage of containers while Pakistan didn't have such facilities. Astonishing it was.

Interestingly; at times the SC was continuously misled by different officers of the FBR. One former Chairman FBR, Sohail Ahmed had submitted that only 463 containers were missing from the list (by 21st September 2010) and that was the total number which had not crossed the Pak-Afghan border. In reality, this submission was not based on any reconciliation.

One Former Chief Collector Customs Muneer Qureshi misled the court telling that there was no widespread use of forged Cross - Border Certificates and that only 52 containers had acquired such fake documents and had never crossed into Afghanistan. This issue was referred to Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) as the court was not satisfied with Chief Collector's report.

Meanwhile in the FBR itself, Member Taxpayer Audit was appointed as investigator by former Chairmen, Salman Siddique. Investigation concluded that 28,000 ISAF containers went missing and the report was also presented to the Supreme Court and formed a part of the SC order as well.

Later, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the then incumbent FBR top notch changed the report's version from 28,000 missing containers to just 2000 containers, and told the apex court that 26,000 containers had subsequently been reconciled. The latest submission however ignored the SC order to explain as to how the 'Cross Border Certificates' (CBSs) were manipulated.

On 21st September 2011; the CJP directed the Member Customs FBR to file a comprehensive report on permission of contraband items under the garb of food supplies to the ISAF in Afghanistan through the ATTA and also about the latest position of the missing containers. A 3-member bench of the apex court, comprising CJP Chaudhry, Justice Tariq Parvez and Justice Ghulam Rabbani, was hearing the bail application of driver of one container loaded with foreign liquor bottles.

[In July, DG Customs Peshawar, had seized a container with a declaration of assorted beverages. On investigation, it was found that the container did not belong to ISAF - was also confirmed by the ISAF HQ in Kabul. Detailed inspection by intelligence of Customs revealed that the container carried liquor and contraband items.]

The court observed that the company whose container was carrying liquor was a licence holder of the NLC. The court grilled Chief Collector Mr Qureshi for expressing helplessness to make any observation on NLC. **"If you cannot dare to ask NLC then do not stay in this job,"** the chief justice maintained. ***"This is not a trivial thing that smuggling is being done in the name of NLC."***

On 22nd October 2011; a constitutional petition was filed in the Supreme Court Lahore Registry, seeking inquiry into alleged disappearance of 19,000 NATO containers, carrying weapons which, according to the petitioner, caused serious terror threats to the country. Petitioner Zafarullah submitted that the ATTA of 1965 was being misused with connivance of the NATO and ISAF to damage Pakistan's solidarity and economy. The situation resulted in smuggling of all kinds of military wares into Pakistan under the garb of ATTA.

The petitioner said a declaration was made to save the custom authorities and FBR personnel. The customs department, in connivance with the FBR, had come up with a method to

eluding the main issue by introducing the concept of recovery of loss of Rs:55 billion. The FBR had issued notices to the importers and FIRs had been registered against some lower grade officials who were initially suspended and then restored to their duties without further advancement in criminal cases against them.

The petitioner said that NATO/ISAF smuggled weapons through such arrangements in Pakistan and were misusing Pakistani roads to maintain the supply line to Afghanistan free of cost without paying any toll tax. NATO had never protested or felt need of such desire to intimate the customs department for loss of such missing containers.

On 29th March 2012; the NAB in its report took a stand in the missing Nato - ISAF commercial containers case that 26,000 out of 28,000 containers had reached Afghanistan and its record was available with Peshawar and Quetta Collectorates. It was further stated in the report that investigation into the remaining 2,000 missing containers was being conducted. The NAB had, however, demanded report of FBR's investigation committee that it should hand over the evidence of 28,000 missing containers, but the committee did not provide those documents to NAB.

PAK-US SIGNED NEW MOU:

On 27th July 2012; a 16-clause memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between Pakistan and the US on the restoration of Nato supply. The transportation of commercial cargo to Afghanistan was allowed through the land route – road and railway – but the movement of arms was disallowed. The written accord was drafted in accordance with the UN charter saying that the transportation of non-lethal cargo, including food, medicines, equipment and material, would be allowed through 20 or 40-foot container trucks according to Pakistani laws - no small or heavy weapons or dangerous / harmful materials, including arms and ammunition, was allowed.

The accord also said that the Ministry of Defence would work as the Central Coordination Authority to examine the operations and implementation of the MoU on daily basis. The cargo routes were also defined in the MOU. It was also settled that warehousing or storage of the US goods in Pakistan would not be allowed. Pakistan had to provide facilities for the safe and rapid transit of cargo while the US government was bound to inform about effective monitoring and transit points and the containers going to Afghanistan would be bound to return through Pakistan.

Under the accord, no tax or custom duty was to be charged, but commercial carriers had to pay fee. In case of any misunderstanding, the issues were to be resolved through mutual understanding instead of involving a third party. It was clarified in the MOU that the commercial carriers would be responsible for any damage to the US cargo. It was made effective till 31st December 2015 and was renewable for one year after mutual consultation. Both the countries were bound to inform each other in writing about the MOU's discontinuation while the parties were made bound by the MOU as well as the laws, rules and regulations in vogue.

On 30th August 2012; the SC observed that the NAB was not serious in the missing Nato containers case as it appeared all, from head to bottom, were involved in it. The remarks were given by the two-member bench of the apex court, comprising Justice Jawad S Khawaja and Justice Khilji Arif Hussain. The SC directed the NAB to produce all the details pertaining to issuance of Cross Border Certificates (CBCs). The Customs had no record of those containers which did not reach Afghanistan during the last two years.

The NAB authorities, while seeking more time from the apex court, pleaded that in order to check the status of a total of 112,000 CBCs, which were issued manually, four more months

were required. At this, Justice Khiliji Arif Hussain said that the NAB could be given more time but there would be a condition that during the granted time it would recover all the embezzled money with interest. He further observed that had Rs:50 billion been spent on the education sector, it would make every child of the country literate.

The FBR told the court that the national exchequer had incurred a loss of Rs:53 billion according to the FBR report, while according to the NAB's report, the loss was estimated as Rs:69 billion. Meanwhile, the court was adjourned.

On 2nd October 2012; the Supreme Court admonished [once more] the NAB for making no progress over the recovery of billions of rupees, devoured in tax evasion in the ISAF missing containers case. Once again the 3-member bench of the apex court comprising CJP Chaudhry, Justice Jawwad S Khawaja and Justice Khiliji Arif Hussain resumed hearing on the ISAF containers; expressed dissatisfaction over NAB and FBR reports whereas the NAB asked for two more months. Justice Jawwad observed that Rs:69 billion were digested in tax evasion and the Election Commission of Pakistan [ECP] was provided Rs:13 billions only to bear the expenditures of the general elections of the whole country.

The FBR told the court that 150 cases had been registered while owners of some 31,000 containers had been issued notices. CJP Chaudhry had rightly observed that investigation in the instant case was in progress for the last two years however, no progress had been made so far.

On 6th March 2013: Supreme Court announced the interim order in ISAF containers implementation case - FBR Chairman was ordered for recovery of the losses from the accused within two weeks and personally report compliance during the next hearing of the case. Earlier, the Court was informed that an amount of Rs:54.73 billion had been embezzled in the ISAF containers' case and ***the people involved in looting money had got stay orders from High Court.*** Till then it was settled that about 28,000 containers were missing.

On 12th March 2013, the Karachi Customs Agents Association (KCAA) appealed the SC that the clearing agents having no role in ISAF containers scam should not be harassed or arrested by investigation agencies. The NAB had issued them notices for fresh inquiry regarding missing containers scandal – and also to the importers and officials of the FBR. The notices were issued after the directives of the Supreme Court in the latest order.

The clearing agents said that there were two type of Afghan transit trade; including commercial (offloaded within Pakistan territory at Amangarh / Chaman) declared customs exit stations and non-commercial (going beyond border inside Afghanistan). Thus there were possibilities of completing a trip by a container in less than eight days in the case of non-commercial transit cargo. A trip from Karachi to Amangarh and back to Karachi can be completed in four to five days and Karachi – Chaman - Karachi trip could be completed in two to four days.

During June 2013; in a surprising move, the Intelligence Directorate of FBR opposed its own FBR HQ, and supported the Supreme Court and FTO's report in the missing containers case. The FBR had been suffering from confusion and shifting positions on the said issue. The official position finally taken by FBR for over two years was of denial, that ***'insignificant numbers of containers were missing and that all Customs employees were free of blame'***.

Under instructions from the then Chairman FBR, Ali Arshad Hakeem, to determine undiluted facts in the issue, the Customs Intelligence took another approach to the whole issue. Instead of focusing on the movement of containers by their serial numbers, they focused on the movement of trucks / tractors that were carrying the containers. They found that certain

trucks, supposedly carrying the containers to Afghanistan, never left Karachi. Customs Intelligence team maintained that:

"The trucks were simply taking the containers out of the ports and dropping these at various godowns in Karachi or other parts of country, and that the Collectorates at Peshawar and Quetta were simply generating fictitious record to provide legal cover to the crime.

.....the same truck which picked up an Afghan Transit container has subsequently picked another container during the same time as it is supposed to be in the Afghan transit trip – thus lead to detect 3000 such trips for 2010 alone."

Whereas FBR's team headed by Hafiz Anees held that:

"28,802 containers of commercial cargo or Afghan Transit Trade (ATT) never left Pakistan and were consumed within the country without paying duties and taxes. As many as 3,742 containers of ISAF / NATO stationed in Afghanistan and more than 6,000 containers of American troops never crossed the border."

The finding of the report also said:

'.....If the de-sealing registers of the Collectorates are correct, the question arise about the whereabouts of the container for 19 days after leaving Karachi, which in any case erodes the department's existing stance that the Afghan transit trip takes less than 6 days; or the customs registers are fabricated in which case we would have to determine the intent, interest, motive and involvement of the customs officials at Quetta and Peshawar. In either case pilferage of the consignment within Pakistan is confirmed."

After identifying the trucks the next step was to identify the drivers and record their statements, which led to discovery of the godowns where the containers were offloaded. The record of the godowns was taken into custody and the statement of the godown owners led to uncovering the identity of the basic beneficiaries of the crime.

The investigation team revealed that custom officials from grade-12 to grade-22 all were thickly involved in fracturing the economy of the country. The interim report of the Directorate of Customs Intelligence had been presented to the apex court, which contained irrefutable evidence.

On 6th September 2013; the US Embassy made a startling statement saying none of the 19,000 containers claimed to be missing belonged to Nato / ISAF in Afghanistan. The statement said:

"We have engaged the appropriate Pakistani authorities on this topic. We have underscored that the United States is able to account for all shipments that have arrived in and transited Karachi ports.

The United States and ISAF use carriers who are licensed and bonded by Pakistani customs authorities. The United States tracks and accounts for all military cargo shipments worldwide, including those shipments entering and transiting Pakistan."

The key question being asked after this statement in Islamabad was why did it take so long for the US to clarify that 19,000 US / ISAF containers had not been stolen from Karachi ports?

Earlier, **on 30th August 2013**, DG Sindh Rangers Maj Gen Rizwan Akhtar had confirmed the Supreme Court that around 19,000 shipping containers having weapons and vehicles had gone missing. The court was told that those containers went missing when an MQM senior party official [Mr Babar Gauri] was federal minister for ports and shipping in the PPP government.

If indeed the 19,000 containers did not belong to the US or ISAF, and Gen Rizwan Akhtar insisted that these containers were missing, then who else was importing weapons on such a massive scale – a question never answered nor the stalwart media anchors ever bothered to talk on it.

Referring to **'the News'** dated **11th September 2013**: MQM Senator Babar Khan Ghauri filed an application before the Supreme Court seeking expungement of DG Rangers's remarks in the SC's dated 30th August order regarding connivance of former minister of ports and shipping in disappearance of arms and ammunition containers. The MQM's Senator, who had twice held portfolio of the ministry of ports and shipping during Gen Musharraf and PPP's governments, submitted that allegation against him was totally false as minister had nothing to do with clearance of any cargo as its role was only limited to the policy - making, approval of port authorities budgets and planning schemes etc.

Mr Ghauri held that clearance of such containers had got nothing to do with the ministry of ports and shipping but the FBR, Customs equally responsible for their clearance. At the same time when the goods arrive for clearance multiple intelligence agencies were present at the ports. The fact remained that in the inquiry report of the FTO on the alleged Nato / Afghan transit scam, minister of ports and shipping was not held responsible. The court was prayed to expunge the said remarks which had been pointed out by the DG Rangers.

On 2nd October 2013; the NAB confirmed that they were continuing conducting inquiries against the officers of the National Logistic Cell [NLC] for their alleged involvement in the multi - billion ISAF containers scam and decided to file a supplementary reference in due course if sufficient evidence was found against them. Till then; ***44 references relating to 7918 containers on the basis of report of the FTO had already been filed before the accountability courts while no investigation was pending regarding missing containers.***

The 44 references were related with evasion of customs duty of Rs:19 billion filed before the Accountability Court in Karachi against 349 accused persons including 223 clearing agents, 121 border agents and 5 custom officials. Whereas, the FBR Probe Committee had referred 25 complaints relating to commercial Afghan Transit Cargo in three different batches against 271 clearing agents having mention of 28,802 missing containers. In addition, one more complaint regarding 3542 non-commercial containers was also received from FBR against 54 clearing agents and others.

The matter suddenly lost importance then because CJP Chaudhry had proceeded on retirement in December 2013. After him the SC, if heard the case, simply could not exhibit zeal and interest in moving further. NAB did not tell about even those 2000 missing containers which figures it dragged down from 28000. So many FIRs were registered but not a single arrest made – not a single case submitted in the respective court with final report. No Custom officer or sub-official was removed – the findings of committee reports never made public. Only FTO's 44 reference were echoed. MoF never bothered for the loss; Parliament and its committee went sleeping over the issue.

It could be presumed that the respective 'Action Takers' used the SC's high trumpeting calls, FTO's Report, FBR's Committee Report and FIRs for extortion more currency from the transport companies, goods owners, importers and custom officials involved.