

The Kashmir problem

Essay No. 01

Synopsis: Since independence India and Pakistan have been at loggerheads on Kashmir. Pakistan has sponsored terrorism and secessionist elements in the valley. She has fought three unsuccessful wars against India in the last 50 years on the issue. Pakistan's belief that Muslims cannot live as equals in Hindu-dominant India is baseless. India is a secular State and there are more Muslims hating in Pakistan itself. Kashmir's accession to India is final and irrevocable. Political compulsions in Islamabad oblige the leaders there to keep the issue unnecessarily alive and burning. The US's own interest makes the matter more complex and disturbing. It is essential that Article 370 is abrogated and Kashmir's full integration is achieved. There are some other imperatives which should be taken care of by the popular government immediately.

All through these fifty years of India's independence, Pakistan is very clearly and methodically trying to lay their claim and rightful authority over the State, whether it is with force, murder, or mischief. This means that, a little mistake in the past has caused and is causing havoc to the State and to the people of the State of Kashmir. Seeing no benefit accruing to it by small and far apart skirmishes of big and small magnitude for the last ten years Pakistan is trying to eliminate the minority of Hindus from the State by reigning terror in the State. They are training, financing and inspiring young men and sending them across the Indian border to spread fear in the State. The trainees are working under the guidance of hard-core Muslim terrorists to kill and plunder in the State. There have been talks and declarations a number of times but there seems to be no end of the continued struggle for the little State of Kashmir. For over 50 years there has been bitter hostility over Kashmir between India and Pakistan. Pakistan-sponsored terrorist and extremist outfits have been active for a long time in the valley causing huge losses in terms of human lives and property. The secessionist elements trained, armed and sneaked into Kashmir have been systematically carrying out sabotage, killing of innocent people, desecration of places of worship, exploding bombs and kidnapping common people and even visitors and foreign tourists. India is a secular State and there are more Muslims in India than Pakistan. They constitute 13 per cent of the total population of the country of 970 million people.

Political compulsion in Pakistan oblige the leaders in Islamabad to keep Kashmir issue alive and burning and it is raised again and gains in international forums and conferences of the Islamic nations inspired by the hard fact that Kashmir will remain where it has been for the past 5 decades- in the thick of all the hype, hoopla and dispute. The US has its own interests and does not want the issue to be put on the back burner. She still does not recognize Kashmir as an integral part of India and insists that the issue be settled bilaterally. Washington believes that the valley is still a disputed territory between the two countries and it helps her in mandating her pressure on both the countries.

The US has declared the Pakistan based terrorist outfit Harkatul-Ansar as a terrorist organization, and the other extremist group Kashmir Liberation Front, again sponsored and supported by Islamabad, is under watch and may be soon declared a terrorist outfit by the US Administration. This action of the US branding the Harkat as a terrorist group is although a belated one, and yet it has gladdened the Indian establishment. Now, Pakistan finds itself in a very embracing position as it has amply proved and highlighted the Indian contention that Pakistan was involved in terrorist activities in India.

There are certain political compulsions behind these firings and military skirmishes. There has been long drawn out communal violence in Pakistan resulting in thousands of deaths and destruction of property on a large scale. The Pakistani economy has been in shambles and corruption has been boundless. Moreover the war next door in Afghanistan threatens to enter into Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistani rulers find it convenient to keep the LOC alive to divert the attention of the Pak public from their own failures and bungling. In the words of some experts the Pakistani leaders have turned the LOC into a lifeline for Pakistan. Unfortunately, Pakistan's one crutch in her relation with India is that of Kashmir.

We should not commit the past mistakes on this sensitive and complex issue. First, we committed a serious mistake by taking the issue to the UN in the fond hope that the world community in general and super powers in particular see reason and do justice to India, the biggest democracy and a secular State. Second mistake was when we agreed to discuss the Kashmir issue under the Shimla Agreement. While discussing Kashmir with Pakistan the violation of aggression by her should also be raised. The Gujral doctrine, in relation to Pakistan, need not be stretched too far and should be to the tune of a right response from the opposite party lest it should be construed as our weakness.

Essay No. 02

The Kashmir Problem

The State of Kashmir has always been a bone of contention, an eye sore ever since India achieved its independence. The position at that time was that, all the States that comprised India, and had been independent, had three clear options, available to them. The three options were that, either they accede to India, or accede to Pakistan. The third option was that they could remain independent of both India and Pakistan.

While all the States did the needful the State of Kashmir took a unique turn, an eventful and an unprecedented turn. The then Prime Minister of India stated that, regarding the accession of the State of Kashmir the wishes of the people of the State would be taken into account, and not only the rules applicable to the other States. This condition gave the State of Kashmir a peculiar status which no other State had, to enjoy. This little declaration by the Prime Minister turned the tide of events for the State of Kashmir which, till today has not seen the light of an amicable solution. Taking full advantage of the declaration of the Prime Minister that, the people of Kashmir will decide their own fate, Pakistan has, all through these past fifty and odd years of independence of India been harping on the taking of an opinion poll in the State. This is so because, Kashmir has a majority population of Muslims and, Pakistan is convinced and rightly so that, if opinion is taken, the Muslim majority will most certainly vote for the option of acceding to Pakistan. In the pursuit of this view only, Pakistan has been spreading terrorism in the State and ousting the Hindu minority so that, the few non Muslim are also out of the scene of voting if the need arises.

After having dealt with the problem for fifty years, it is felt that, even to-day, the problem defies any solution, at least in the near future. The situation is in reality absolutely inflammable as, Pakistan continues to send Jihadis/ terrorists to wreak destruction in the State. The plea taken by the Jihadis is that, they are fighting for their right of freedom. India has all through these years sought to find a solution to the problem, which is amicable and mutually acceptable to all the parties involved. The latest attempt to find peace with Pakistan is the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire by India. Even to this step taken by India the Pakistani reply is not a follow up of a ceasefire by them but with guns and shells.

To this sort of a situation where both parties to the struggle have their own styles of functioning, all solutions seem to obstruct any results. The policy of 'wait and watch' can only be the keyword to the Indian policy on Kashmir, let us see when Pakistan realises the futility of a cold attitude towards its neighbour and its cold blooded revolt against India in the process of which, only innocent people are killed, kidnapped and hacked to death. The net result of all this being a big zero we remain as is where is even after fifty years of attempting for a solution.

With this situation remaining for so long a period, it does not appear to any reason that, relations of the two neighbours will ever improve. The relations are keeping on moving down the ladder of discontent and suspicion of each other, and there is nothing just nothing achieved.

Essay No. 03

The Kashmir Problem

“Kashmir, the most picturesque and fascinating area, known for its beauty, gardens, gentle and docile people has been reduced to a region of ghosts and death because of the devious means adopted by Pakistan to incite the people by giving them arms and inciting them into terrorism.”

The Kashmir problem now is a problem over 53 years old, and in spite of more than half a century's claims and counter-claims, the problem remains unresolved. India has stoutly denied any international mediation. To trace the history of the Kashmir problem we have to go back to the point of partition of India into two countries- India and Pakistan. After the partition has been agreed upon and was being implemented the infiltrators of Pakistan raided Kashmir. Till then it had not got settled to what country was Kashmir acceding and in the face of these insidious designs of the Pakistani infiltrators. Maharaja Hari Singh, the then Maharaja of Kashmir rushed to Delhi, signed the instrument of accession with India, giving the legal relevancy to India to send their forces to push out the insurgents for Kashmir. This was done and that was the stage when the entire Kashmir even that part which today is termed as POK (Pak Occupied Kashmir) was under India's control. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India made the colossal political blunder in referring the Kashmir dispute to the UNO asked the Indian forces to retreat and demarcated a line of control which till today as the LOC line has remained the bone of contention. The region lying beyond the line of control on the Pakistan side has remained a disputed part and has remained to be described as the POK- neither fully a part of Pakistan nor a part of India and is a constant irritant of. India being the safe passage for the militants and insurgents who sneak into the Indian territory through it.

Pakistan has even been uncomfortable with the situation particularly against the repeated and resolute assertions of India time and again that Kashmir is an integral part of India. That is the truth and none dare touch the 'head of the body'. Pakistan has fought four wars- the first one in 1947, then in 1965 and then again in 1971 and last one recently known as the Kargil misadventure on their part in May, 1999. And every time Pakistan has suffered a defeat and humiliation. India on her part has ever been a pardoning country and diplomatically this has caused more irritants to it. A tough and unflinching stand if India had even once taken would

have solved the problem for all times. It has been the view of a section of political thinkers that the Pak-sponsored terrorism can only be countered through equal or greater force—and not parleys. The Pakistani war-mongering could not succeed either in 1947 or in 1965 because the agenda was supported by only a minuscule section of the valley. The Tashkent Agreement and the Shimla Agreement had all good intentions behind them but Pakistan could never stomach the insult that it seemed to be suffering within signing these agreements. There were agreements signed by Pakistan under duress. P.M. Dhar a onetime diplomat bureaucrat who was actively involved in the Shimla agreement in his recently published book-Indira Gandhi, 'The Emergency and Indian Democracy' writes that the Kashmir problem would have been resolved, had a letter and spirit of the Shimla Agreement been implemented. It was during this agreement also that Indira Gandhi relented India's stand (as Bhutto had virtually come to his knees during the process, as was reported) otherwise that was again an opportunity when the POK would have been got vacated and the whole region would have come within India's grip.

Kashmir is a major challenge to India democracy, infact to the concept of democracy how can a democracy confront a non-democratic system that only uses catchy democratic phrases such as Human Rights, self-determination etc. in the furtherance of its 'cause' while denying all such democratic values itself. How can a democracy take on a religious crusade, "Jehad", that does not believe in democratic tenants but exploits them to the hilt for achieving its vested interests?

The Kargil was the third attempt in the history of Independent India that Pakistan tried to occupy the Kashmir by assisting or backing the infiltrators: The first time just after independence in 1947, a second time in 1965, as a part of operation Gibraltar, that leads to Indo-Pak Second War end the third time through Kargil. But Pakistan could not succeed in her efforts.

In short, India and Pakistan have to work together to solve the Kashmir problem amicably. Violence is not a solution. No third party can do anything. It is better to view the things in practical shape and work honestly so that the present arms race between the two brothers comes to an end and every Indian and every Pakistani can lead their life happily, amicably and this is what every national of both the country wish, as reflected during the latest Indo-Pak cricket matches.