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innocent



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The elected government should see that peace and law and order prevail and militancy is eliminated and people feel safe and secure.

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. 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 x Kashmir have been systematically carrying out sabotage, killings of innocent people, desecration of places of worship, exploding bombs and kidnapping common people and even visitors and foreign tourists.

The Kashmir Liberation Front (KLF) and such other outfits and their insurgent activities show their potential for mischief but the accession of Kashmir in India is final and irrevocable. No power on earth can undo it. In the last 50 years Pakistan has wages three wars on the issue but on each occasion it had to suffer a humiliating defeat at the hands of Indian forces. Pakistan is mistaken if she believes that she can capture Kashmir by aggression. Again, Pakistan's belief that Muslims cannot live as equal partners in a Hindu-dominated India is totally baseless and erroneous.

India is a secular State and there are more Muslims in India than in India than in Pakistan. They constitute 13 per cent of the total population of the country of 970 million people. During the time of independence of the sub-continent, Kashmir was attacked by Pakistan, Pakistan made an armed

attack on the valley and Maharaja Hari Singh acceded to the Indian Union on 26th October, 1947 By signing the instrument of accession.

But then India under Jawaharlal Nehru committed a fatal error by approaching the UN in January, 1949. The move had no sense because Maharaja Hari Singh had sought help and protection from India against the armed aggression and under the treaty of accession it became obligatory for India to protect the whole of the erstwhile State and not the parts of it. Again the same mistake was repeated by halting the Indian military operation in and Kin 1949 when Indian troops were on the verge of pushing the armed tribal and Pakistani army out of the now Pakistani occupied Kashmir (PoK).

It was done mainly to please Sheikh Abdullah and the controversial Article 370 came into being. In 1962 China defeated Indian forces on the northern borders, Nehru passed away and Pakistan thought it was golden opportunity to capture the valley and so attacked India in December 1965 and subsequently Tashkent Agreement was signed following Pakistan's defeat between Lal Bahadur Shastri and Field Marshal Ayub Khan. His successor Zulfikar Ali Bhutto saw it as very humiliating, and again Pakistan committed armed aggression against India in December 1971. This time again history repeated itself. Bangladesh came into existence and the Shimla Agreement was signed between Indira Gandhi and Bhutto. The humiliated Pakistan moved more close to the US and China and finally sponsored terrorism and extremism in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab which still continues.

Political compulsions in Pakistan oblige the leaders in Islamabad to keep Kashmir issue alive and burning and it is raised again and again in

international forums and conferences of the Islamic nations in spite of the hard fact that Kashmir will remain where it has been for the last 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 maintaining her pressure on both the countries. The present and prevailing realities in Kashmir have certain imperatives.

Now there is popular government under Farooq Abdullah. The people of the valley have again voted him to power in the hope that peace, law and order will be soon restored and insurgency terminated. It is high time that Article 370 is scrapped to affect the complete integration of the valley with the rest of the country and the outdated parochial demand for autonomy to the State is frankly denied. Abrogation of Article 370 is a must to settle the controversy forever. The other imperative is the return of the migrant Hindus and Pandits to the valley. Farooq Abdullah's recent announcement that there will be no special package for them and that they can return to the valley if they want is a matter of great concern. The recent killing of many members of the minor community in the valley is really disturbing. The administration should do something urgently and effectively to identify itself with the people and undertake confidence building measures on war footing.

It will go a long way in soothing the injured feelings of the people and in checking the situation of alienation. It is high time that the State

Government rises to the occasion with the assistance of the Union

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Government and restores law and order and contains militancy. The issue of supremacy of the army in antimilitancy operations is also irrelevant. The army is best suited to supervise, coordinate and implement the various anti-insurgency measures undertaken by different security and law enforcement agencies.

The present Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah should think of national interests above everything else and not try to seek prolonged stay in office and his party's domination in the policies of the valley at the cost of integration, secular character and unity of the state. He should not insist on autonomy under Article 370 because it will set a bad precedent and then many other States, particularly in the northeastern parts of the country, will demand for special treatment, status and autonomy. And actually their case is far stronger than that of Kashmir in this matter.

We should not commit the past mistakes on this sensitive and complex issue. First we committed a serious mistake by taking the issue in 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 Shimla Agreement. While discussing Kashmir with Pakistan the vacation of aggression by her in POK should also be raised. The Gujrat doctrine, in relation to Pakistan, need not be stretched too far and should be to the extent of right response from the opposite party lest it should be construed as our weakness.