

Kashmir issue critical essay



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These claims are often reinforced with partisan interpretation of history and selective evidence. The real attitude and concrete policies towards the dispute, however, are often governed by perception of short term “ national interests” as defined by dominant political elite of the two countries the interests that apparently are irreconcilable and non-negotiable. While each side sticks to its claims over Kashmir, the Kashmiri Muslims continue to pay a heavy price for their defiant struggle against overwhelming odds in order to exercise their right of self determination.

For more than half a century the Kashmiris are oscillating between uncertainty and destitution. They continue to suffer misery and repression under illegal Indian occupation, and despite a stream of strong words and resolutions passed by the Security Council the Kashmir issue is still a bone of contention between Pakistan and India. Rather the situation has taken a quantum leap for the worse. Indian has conceded the Security Council resolutions vindicating the right of self determination for the Kashmiris but has since reneged on its solemn commitment to the international community and the people of Kashmir.

The brutal and blatant Indian repression and state sponsored terrorism against innocent Kashmiri men, women and children had few parallels in the annals of history. The valley has become a festering sore and the miseries of the oppressed people of this valley and the “ terror let loose” by Indian forces is not less cataclysmic in nature than that of Jaliawala massacre ordered by infamous General Rex Dyer. In spite of facing all these hazards, the freedom fighters are exuberant.

They have not only caused the military and political debacle to India but they have also done irreparable damage to Indian's much touted and trumpeted secularism. Would it be too much to assume that Kashmir might well be the graveyard of Indian secularism. Unless sanity prevails to make the B..

Pleadership realize the sheer folly of their politico military aggression against the Kashmiris. In the name of freedom and self determination, the Kashmiris are being injured, mutilated and killed, their women raped, and their children robbed of hope for a better future.

The dispute has shattered their economy polarized their society and festered a culture of violence among the people known for their non violent character.

But the Kashmiris are not only the one's who suffer from the adverse consequences of the dispute. Millions in Pakistan and India are paying a high cost from direct or indirect effects of this issue. Both countries spend huge and unaffordable resources on defence which could be spent more productively on improving the lot of their people.

The Kashmir issue has also led both countries to use their limited scientific knowledge and skills to develop weapons of mass destruction exposing them to an unimaginable holocaust. The dispute and military activities related to it have strengthened the pre-existing culture of violence, promoted glorification of material values and intensified the desire to take revenge from the enemy for the past humiliations. The culture will be a breeding ground for future conflicts between the two countries. Even if the Kashmir problem itself is somehow solved.

The Kashmiris have long history of sufferings and oppression, the worst chapter of which was written by the Dogra rule, particularly from 1931 onwards. Contrary to their hopes the partition of the sub-continent and the emergence of two new states, instead of ending the woes of Kashmiris, multiplied them. Since then they have suffered the consequences of three wars, well documented atrocities by the Indian army since 1989 and often violent activities of the militants, a number of them religiously motivated non Kashmiris.

Since the days of Muslim Mughal Empire, Kashmir has got a prominent Muslim majority population. There are more than eighty percent Muslims and the Hindu population is less than twenty percent. Unfortunately, on the fall of Mughal Empire, the State fell to the British East Company in 1840, which sold it to the Sikh traitor “ Raja Gulab Singh” in 1846, as reward for his betrayal of the Sikhs at a very negligible price of Rs. 75 lac. Hence onward the Muslim population of Kashmir came under continuous torment of the cruel Sikh rulers.

They tried to strengthened their hold on the State with the singular aim of shattering the will of their Muslim subjects, crushing their religious zeal. They cowed them down into accepting the slavery of the Hindu minority. The genesis of the Kashmir issue is that in August 1947, when partition of the sub-continent took place, Lord Mountbatten, the viceroy of undivided India, influenced Radcliff into awarding the predominantly Muslim district of Gurdaspur, situated in the East Punjab, to India.

By this treacherous act, admitted by Lord Mountbatten himself on nation wide British television, the cruel Viceroy not only subjected a Muslim majority area to the cursed Hindu domination, it also sowed the seed from which could crop up the domination of India on another predominantly Muslim State Kashmir, because it is only through a narrow strap in the Gurdaspur district that India was linked with Kashmir. The canker in no time cropped up into the “ Kashmir Problem” that has ever since proved to be a serious threat to the security of the South Asian region.

Pakistan has made a lot of efforts to break the strangled hold of India on Kashmir, including third party’s mediations but the fate of Kashmiris is still trembling in the balance. The first effort was made when immediate after partition India airlifted its forces to Srinagar. When Quaid-e-Azam was informed he ordered Incharge of Pak Army General Gracy, to send forces to Srinagar but the General refused to do so. Mujahideen tried their level best to capture the valley but they were defeated by Indian army as they were not well equipped and trained.

Then India took this dispute to the Security Council. The Security Council decided that a plebiscite must be held in Kashmir. At that time India agreed but after sometime she backed out of her promise. In 1962 Pakistan lost a golden opportunity to conquer Kashmir during Indo-china war. As India requested President Kennedy of America to influence Pakistan for not taking any step regarding Kashmir during Indo-China war. Kennedy pressurized Ayub Khan and he accepted the America influence on these conditions that after Indo-China war America would help in resolving the Kashmir issue through discussion.

In this regard after the Indo-China war Sheikh Abdullah came to Pakistan to initiate some discussion on Kashmir. During his tour of Pakistan Jawahar Lal Nehru died and he had to rush back. Ayub Khan tried to atone for his mistake and he prepared five thousand gorillas form army to capture Kashmir. This operation was given the name of “ operation Gibraltar” and it was done in 1965. All these gorillas caused a lot of destruction in the valley but at least they all were captured or killed by the Indian forces due to lack of planning.

In revenge, India made heavy shelling on Awan Sharif, a village near border. In response to this incident Pakistani forces along with Azad Kashmir forces crossed the ceasefire line by making official announcement. During this war of 1965, at one stage the Pakistani forces advanced upto Akhnoor and they were in a position to capture Srinagar as well but under Soviet Union’s influence Ayub Khan declared ceasefire. In this way Pakistan also lost this opportunity to get Kashmir. The Indian areas occupied by the Pakistani forces were also given bank to India according to “ Tashkent Accord”.

After this war, tension mounted between the two countries upto this extent that they had another war in 1971. This war resulted in separation of East Pakistan as an independent State now known as Bangladesh. The Kashmiri freedom fighters took inspiration from brave freedom fighting display of Afghanis and an upgrade uprising began in the valley. But due to lack of planning and poor diplomatic approach, this brilliant tactical move ended in a terrible strategic blunder. Before Kargil episode, international opinion was focused on Indian army repression in Kashmir.

What a pity that Kargil changed this focus completely. India achieved the world's sympathies through its excellent diplomatic policies and quickly made propaganda against Pakistan mainly through its electronic media. On the other hand Pakistan became isolated in international politics and even China the most reliable friend of Pakistan gave a cold shoulder in these circumstances. The ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan had to call off the whole operation due to huge international pressure.

The most unfortunate aspect of the whole Kargil operation was that although jawans, officers and Mujahideen won the war at Kargil hills, yet they had to descend as Pakistani government lost this war on the diplomatic front. The great uprising is still going on in the valley. Pakistan tried to internationalize the Kashmiri freedom fighting and inhuman behavior of Indian forces through Kargil operation in 1999. Under this scenario of events, it is clear that a change in policy direction is necessary. New objectives have to be formed.

Almost certainly the wings of our hawks have to be clipped. For this purpose the following steps can be taken: One, the line of control can be transformed into the international border between Pakistan and India. India itself has been moving in this direction for a while now- in the event of its inability to stamp out the freedom struggle in Kashmir. This option is, from the Indian perspective, the least disturbing and the most aligned to its prevailing Kashmir stance. However, despite this option having support amongst some Western analysts, it is unworkable.

This is because the line of control has never been accepted by the Kashmiris. Rather, it is simply a temporary cease fire line which marks a cessation of

military hostilities between two antagonists and is expected to remain in place until the dispute is resolved. Two, the valley of Kashmir along with some Northern areas, must be given independence. This option although sounds very well, yet from India's point of view it is not beneficial because an independent Kashmir bordering China will become a permanent threat to India.

Three, Northern areas in control of Pakistan whereas Jammu and Laddakh should be given under trusteeship of United Nations for twenty years in order to eliminate the Pakistan and Indian influence and then after twenty years it should be asked from the people of Kashmir whether they want to become independent or they want to become a part of Pakistan or India. In the light of above mentioned options for the solution of Kashmir issue, the third option is very much applicable as it looks neutral in all respects. So, conceived in this way, it is a reality that Kashmir continues to define parameters of the Pak-India relationship.

And unless it is resolved there is a detente between these two states, there can not be meaningful stability in South Asia, which would allow India the power status it seeks. But as a matter of fact, India has ignored the realities of history its own leaders commitments to a plebiscite in Kashmir, India has denied itself a role commensurate with its power indicators. This is the time now that India must act with the confidence of a great power and more beyond its unacceptable status quo stance in Kashmir. It is clear that India can not maintain status quo in Kashmir indefinitely that is untenable.

Even if Kargil had not happen in 1999, India would have had to accept that it has failed to make Kashmir an integral part of Indian Union through a bizarre mix of the use of military force and elections. Despite the horrible facts of Indian repression in the valley and the failure of lot of efforts mentioned above one may hope that according to the concrete stance taken by Pakistan the things will be changed for Kashmiris and that day is not far away when the Kashmiris will get the reward of their sacrifices and they would also be able to get the palm.