

# KASHMIR: DANGERS AND PROSPECTS

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## **Kashmir: Dangers and Prospects**

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The Kashmir Movement has entered a critical and decisive phase and it is, therefore, imperative to analyze the current situation in the light of global trends, twists and turns of diplomacy, and conditions prevailing in the country; and to identify the dangers facing Pakistan and Kashmir movement. Moreover, it is also necessary to give an outline of the required strategy for facing these conditions so that future opportunities can be availed of.

The issue of Kashmir is not merely territorial; it is of saving the jugular vein of Pakistan and the future of 12 million people. The principle and the formula under which Pakistan and India achieved freedom from the British rule in 1947 apply for determining the permanent status of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. India is in the occupation of a big portion of the State in violation of the United Nations' Resolution as well as its own pledges and guarantees. Kashmiris have never accepted this occupation even for a moment. They have been waging a political struggle against this since the Day One and when the Dogra rulers and the Indian leadership tried to conspire for establishing military control on the people, they revolted and got one-third of the State liberated. The popular political struggle continued until the system of oppression and suppression resulted in a situation where there was no option but to start Jihad. This is continuing since 1989 and this is the result of this Jihad that Indian rulers have now started talking about 'some solution'. It is because of the struggle and sacrifices that India now talks about Ramazan and cease-fire. Otherwise, neither Ramazan had come for the first time nor had Jihad begun in 2000; nor is the APHC a new creation.

Pakistani nation and Kashmiri Muslims are all for peace, but peace is not merely the absence of war. Peace can be achieved only on the basis of truth and justice. Cease-fire is not the issue, the issue is to remove those causes and conditions that have compelled the people of Jammu & Kashmir to rise in arms against the Indian military onslaught. India is interested only in releasing the pressure of movement while the people seek a judicious solution that allows them to decide about their political future with their free will that is to be ascertained through a plebiscite under the international auspices according to the UN resolutions. Thus, the start of talks is not the issue. There have been scores of rounds of talks during the past 50 years, and all have been inconclusive. Only such talks could prove useful as focus on the real problem and are held in such a framework as may lead to the solution of the problem.

Refreshing the basic facts in mind is essential for developing an understanding of the current phase of the Kashmir issue, and dangers and prospects in the future.

First, though India may keep repeating that Kashmir is its integral part, the fact is that Jammu & Kashmir is a disputed territory whose disputed nature UN, European Union, OIC all have accepted, and even India has admitted in the past that it needs a solution. Then, the matter is not about the Line of Control (LoC) and making it an international border, it is about giving an opportunity to the entire State, which was a political unit and still is so, to decide its future. The UN Resolutions provide that legal, political, and ethical framework through which the Kashmiri people can decide their future. Tripartite talks are necessary, but their objective should be to do the needful for the implementation of the UN Resolutions, and not a start of a new debate.

Second, the basic point is that if India, especially its bigot BJP leadership, is showing its intention for talks, it is for three reasons:

1. Despite the forceful occupation for 53 years, unrestrained use of military might especially for the last 12 years, India has failed to suppress the will of the people of Jammu & Kashmir with its military power alone. It is now being admitted at every level that the people are not ready to live with India in any situation or any condition. For India, therefore, there is no military solution to the problem. Economically as well, this is proving to be a costly game. This is why there is all the clamor about finding a solution. But, instead of adopting a clear and straight path for the purpose, all effort is on diffusing the movement and then finding a way that is politically beneficial to India but not to Pakistan and that also catches the Kashmiris in yet another snare.
2. Pakistan's principled stance and firm stand as well as its becoming a nuclear power along with India have forced India to thinking that it cannot achieve its objectives only by increasing its war effort.
3. The new trend of the world opinion is forcing it to take interest in the Kashmir dispute just to make the region safe from the danger of nuclear war. World conscience was asleep; it was the show of nuclear capability that forced the P-5, G-7, and the UN Security Council to take interest in the issue. In spite of this realization, the effort is not on seeing at the issue through its real perspective. Instead, the effort is to find out such an alternative way that may diffuse the issue. Nevertheless, international pressure is acting as a catalyst.

It is because of these three reasons that 'some solution' is being talked about and pressure on Pakistan is increasing with every passing day, which has assumed

dangerous dimension especially because Pakistan's economy is not in good health. The military regime is doing all what it could for its international acceptability. In this entire perspective, the need is to understand what is meant by the so-called 'Oslo Process', and what are its implications for Kashmir.

Like the Kashmir issue, the issue of Palestine is on the UN agenda and 53 years old. Both issues precipitated in war for three times. This is quite another thing that in the case of Palestine, Israel got complete upper hand in 1956, and 1967 and partial one in 1972 whereas Pakistan though faced defeat in 1971 but because of its defense in 1965 and then because of war-games of 1987 and then with going open about its nuclear capability in 1998, our performance remained quite different from that of Arabs. Pakistan's is a stronger position and a détente against any aggression. The Camp David process was started in 1978 and the Oslo process in 1993, but it came to a close in 2000. Palestinians had to launch Intefada al-Aqsa that has infused a new spirit in the Palestine issue. It seems appropriate that important aspects of this process are explained so as to benefit from the Palestine experience:

1. Instead of a comprehensive and all-inclusive solution to the Palestine problem, the main issue(s) are sorted out through an incremental and piecemeal approach. The main issue and its permanent nature are taken in the last. Confidence Building Measures are taken, peace is achieved in exchange of pieces of land, and thus a solution is arrived at, if at all, very slowly.
2. The United Nations Resolutions are put on the back burner, and new options are discovered through talks.
3. International institutions and other governments are kept out, only Israeli and Palestinians try to find a solution with American assistance. Other Arab countries are excluded one by one, though they all should separately enter into agreements with Israel and accept Israel's existence as legitimate. They, however, should have no role in resolving the Palestine issue, which should be resolved only through 'bilateral talks'.
4. The establishment of Palestine State and the issues of the status of Jerusalem and sovereignty are delayed while the issues of limited powers, partial control, economic development, and trade are attended first.
5. 'Elimination of Terrorism' is declared the most important issue. The Palestinian Authority is, thus, obligated to guarantee Israel's protection and reign in resistance forces. The freedom movement is likened to

'terrorism', and peace and Israel's security are brought under a joint sovereign strategy.

6. During this long peace process, Israel had the opportunity to erect new settlements in Arab lands and while it could retain control and sovereignty over 78 percent of Palestine (i.e. since before 1976), the control of only 3 percent and then of 27 percent of the remaining 22 percent, which consists of the Gaza Strip and West Bank, was to be handed over (without sovereignty) to Palestinians. Practically however, Palestinians have achieved only 40 percent of the West Bank and 80 percent of the Gaza Strip from the 22 percent of what is left of Palestine. The rest is still occupied by Israel. Moreover, since the Camp David and Oslo Accords, almost 200,000 Jews have inhabited Israeli settlements.
7. Extraction of new concessions from Palestinians at every new phase, and Palestinians' political, military and economic dependence on Israel.
8. Delaying final stages by 3 to 6 years and keeping suspended the real issue of Palestine's sovereignty, status of Jerusalem, and the return of five million Palestinian refugees.
9. New ideas were presented continually throughout this entire process. For example, 'control without sovereignty', 'joint sovereignty', 'divided sovereignty' – though these are mere well-sounding words and illusions.

Palestinians are, therefore, realizing that they could achieve nothing except humiliation. Recently, Sharon himself said: "Oslo is dead."

The doomed Oslo process and the rejuvenating Intefada in Palestine serve as a warning to the freedom movement in Kashmir. Leah Rabin, widow of the slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, has admitted in clear words in her husband's biography "Rabin: Our Life, His Legacy" that Rabin, as Commander-in-Chief, employed every method of oppression and suppression against the Intefada but ultimately reached the conclusion that Israel cannot subjugate a nation that is not willing to live under it, and that this was the thing that led him to recognize the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

It is the verdict of history that only those who can offer sacrifices for freedom can achieve and protect it. Talks after giving up struggle prove futile. When your pressure is effective, your stand is principled and firm, your ranks are united, and your vision is mature, then you remain dominant and victorious on the negotiation table as well.

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