

MEETING WITH SIR MICHAEL JAY

SPEECH IN SENATE COMMITTEE

Reference to be provided by Prof. Khurshid

PROF. KHURSHID AHMAD



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Prof. khurshid Ahmad

Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you very much Sir Michael for a very frank and I must say considered and a balanced response. The issues, the Chairman raised were really tricky but you have handled them with great sagacity.

My first observation is that in all Senate Committees, particularly this one, we have never operated as members belonging to government or opposition. I belong to the opposition but I must say that what the Chairman has said in his initial statement reflects the thinking of the Pakistani people and the Parliament in general. One may differ with some words or the way a particular point is presented but I think on the whole, he has correctly and ably represented the concerns of all us. Having said so, I want to raise three issues very briefly.

First, I think terrorism, which somehow has become issue No. 1, the World today particularly, if you look to the recent session of the General Assembly, it seems as if this is "the Issue". But I think at least four years after 9/11 (2001) time has come to seriously reflect as to where we are going and whether we call it a war or simply a campaign or with any other word, it is degrading us and dragging the world into a quagmire. Our main concern relate to two particular issues is : (a) arbitrary manner and counter-productive results of the current phase of terrorism and (b) the integral yet neglected link of so-called terrorism to; the policies pursued (b) the US in particular and the West in general including Great Britain. I emphasis policies and not merely certain events. Policies that have been pursued somewhat assiduously neglecting the feelings of the people in the Muslim and Third World. Now a gloss is being put by suggesting that as if, it is a war of ideas and values, a new version of the former "evil ideology" of Communism and an illusionary "evil empire" is being thrust over the Islam and the Muslim world. I think nobody is for terrorism, including those who have committed some such actions. I have read some very important observations by those who had been involved in some such acts and they too confess that they themselves regard this to be evil. Yet, they were forced to resort to them for certain over riding considerations. So, I think unless we address those issues and challenges, the phenomena of terrorism cannot be resolved. As the present focus is on an elision war and not on real causes of terrorism consequently the world has become more insecure during these four years. We are playing in the hands of the terrorists and doing what the terrorists wanted to achieve. It is "Bin Ladinism" that is gaining currency. That is one issue that I would like you and the leadership in the West to reflect upon.

Secondly, I am deeply concerned about some grave fall-outs of this so-called war. Here too I want to invite your attention to at least two areas: one, is not a fact that whatever was achieved during the last two hundred years in the fields of International Law, agreements in respect of certain norms of state behaviour, commitment to certain codes of conduct, a vision of specific expectations from the civilized countries of the World the role of the U.N. and respect for its Charter and Human Rights, everything is under threat. It seems we are re-writing International Law

and destroying many a great achievements of humanity. This is a very serious challenge. Similarly its consequences for even the values of the West, may the humanity so much cherish, democracy, human rights, freedom, and privacy are under threat. These are extremely important concerns and we all must reflect on these aspects of this so-called war. Is it not a fact that our one-dimensional obsession with terrorism may lead to the destruction or delusion of these achievements?

Thirdly, I would like to express my concern about another fall out of 9/11 as well as that of 7/7 for the Muslim Community in general and Pakistani community abroad in particular. I am not informing at least your good self that there have been the reports in U.K. press (The Guardian and The Independent) that shows that discriminatory actions against Pakistanis have increased almost six-times in the post-July situation. This is a very important issue for us both from the human view point as well as from the perspective of U.K.-Pakistan relations.

Finally, I would just make three very short observations. First about the issue of Palestine, particularly the supposedly "two state solution". I am afraid we all are paying a lot of lip service to it. We should be definite about what we mean by "the State". Palestinian State should mean a state in recognized terms of international law and not just a "municipality" under this rhetoric. This must not take a form of Bantonization of the Palestinian land and establishment of 'centones' under Israeli suzerainty. While one may welcome the Gaza withdrawal but I think 3"0U have to go deeper to see whether it has any real linkage with the road map proposed by the Quartet. Whether the whole idea of a unilateral withdrawal represents a de-linking from the whole concept of road map? And what is happening after that and what is the state of Gaza, a grand prison without its own airport, without any sea links, with road links, controlled by Israeli check-posts. Is this a movement towards real peace and emergence of two states, or only one state and an appendage with some semblances of pseudo autonomy?

About Kashmir also, I would like to say that I was disappointed by the statement of the British Prime Minister made in India where differentiation between state terrorism, individual acts of violence, and national liberation struggle by the oppressed was ignored. The question of the right of a people to resist oppression and occupation was confused with terrorism. I think an earlier statement; I mean the 1996 statement at the Labour Party Convention at Brighton. If I remember correctly, a resolution reaffirming the original principled position on solution of the Kashmir dispute under UN Resolutions was adopted on that occasion. The present position of the British Prime Minister is a departure from that Labour Party resolution.

And finally I would only say that yes, we have very much appreciated what you and others did in Bosnia but it should have been done much earlier, much earlier, when the Bosnians were mercilessly butchered and driven out from their homes, when the UN safe heavens had become awesome hells. I would invite you to go through the autobiography of President Alija Izzatbegovich which has been published in English from U.K. which reveals the whole story and we find how after playing havoc with the lives of the People, some response and that too in a very mutilated form was given. Yet whatever was done, we appreciate it and thank you and the NATO, very much for that.
