

COMMANDO PRESIDENT'S REVERSALS
ON KASHMIR

TERJUMAN-UL-QURAN

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Among the seemingly unlimited and unending problems and troubles the Muslim Ummah is facing today, the most tragic is the deficiency, poverty and bankruptcy of our leadership in terms of faith and commitment, understanding and foresight, and representation of the people's aspirations. This has taken away the capabilities of the heart and the mind to ponder and adopt the correct way. The very people who had been entrusted with managing the affairs are bent upon ruining the wealth and resources of the nation. While Allah alone knows what is going on in the minds and hearts, there is no other way for humans but to make judgments from what is apparent. Seeing the performance and taking into account the declarations of those who happen to rule the Muslims, or rather those who have been imposed on them, one cannot help saying that our house has been ruined by its own protectors!

The latest manifestation of this tragic situation came in the form of a statement that General Pervez Musharraf made rather casually and carelessly on the delicate issue of Kashmir – an issue of great strategic importance – on 25th October during an Iftar party, hosted by his own information minister. Without considering the consequences and implications of what he was going to say, he said it in an off-the-cuff manner, as if he could not help saying it. After getting a negative response to his utterances from the serious and sincere people of the country and, more than that, faced with the Indian inflexibility and obduracy, his cohorts and cronies started coming out post-haste with strange interpretations of his remarks.

Even children are taught to “think before you speak”. But our leaders are such that they do not bother to think even after having said something. Now he is complaining that he was ‘misrepresented’. Who did misrepresent you? Your own information minister? Or the journalists you had gathered there?

He is himself to blame. If someone has misrepresented him, it is none but the person of General Pervez himself. Whether he really misrepresented himself, or just spoke his mind, the fact is that he has badly misrepresented the national consensus in the country, of the nation, from the days of Quaid-e-Azam to date. He should rather face impeachment for the crime he has committed.

National Stand on Kashmir There is a national consensus on the issue of Kashmir on the following points:

1. The state of Jammu & Kashmir is a single unit, and any decision about its future should be based on this fact.

2. While a decision about the future of the state has yet to be made, India has occupied two thirds of the territory, and its claims for accession are just a ploy and a deception with no constitutional, legal, political and moral justification.
3. It is the people of the state who have to decide about its future with their free will – which would be ascertained by a plebiscite under the international aegis.
4. Kashmir's is neither a dispute over land, nor is it about demarcation of borders; nor is it a conflict merely between India and Pakistan, as Kashmir's are also a party to it – who, in fact, have to make the final decision.
5. Kashmir represents a case of India's hegemonic designs, and is a matter of life and death for Pakistan – because its basis is the same as the one on which Pakistan was established with the partition of India. Along with this, it is also about the future of the Muslims of the state (who enjoy an overwhelming majority), as well as Pakistan's strategic and economic interests, and its civilizational identity.

There has been a consensus on these five points. This also explains Pakistan's principled position that the issue should be resolved according to the wishes and free will of the people of Kashmir, as envisaged in the UN resolutions of October 13, 1948 and January 5, 1949 and other resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council. After assuming power, General Pervez Musharraf himself reiterated this position and, after some ambiguity about the freedom struggle and the alleged cross-border infiltration in his speech of January 12, 2002, he forcefully repeated and explained the principled stand during his address at the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on February 5, 2002. It would be useful to recall his words in order to better understand the complexity and implications of the recent retreat:

We have given this long excerpt from his speech because it was a clear and complete expression of the national consensus. While the nation is still committed to it, the General himself has taken a reverse plunge and tried to shatter Pakistan's Kashmir policy and subject it to Indian and American designs and demands. But, without getting any benefit from the bargain, he has lost all that was our political, legal and moral high ground and a source of strength for the resistance movement in Kashmir. Facing embarrassment, he is now talking about returning to the principled stand.

Change in Kashmir Policy Apart from his address of February 5, 2002, there appears to be a pattern in his statements since his speech of January 12, 2002. His gradual retreat reached its peak point and completed full circle on October 25, 2004 with his statement that amounts to negating the national Kashmir policy

- First of all, there came an assurance of stopping 'cross-border infiltration'

- Then came an announcement about not allowing the use of Pakistan's territory in terrorist activities against India (though the Occupied Kashmir is not an Indian territory and LoC is not a border, and the same people inhabit Azad and Occupied Kashmir)
- It was followed by putting an end to all kind of meaningful support and backing of the resistance movement in Kashmir
- Without any legal or political mandate, a scandalous statement about 'setting aside' the UN resolutions was made during an interview to the Reuters
- Now, in the statement of October 25, which is being called 'food for thought' though it is devoid of all thought, the option that has been put forward in 10 different forms during the period from 1950 to 1997 has once again been presented as a new way, in his own reckoning, though it constitutes a basic change in the policy. What is more is that it has been presented as a principle, which is wrong in and for it: a way other than the one that is unacceptable to India should be suggested.

This is a major change, which can only be termed 'strategic retreat' and 'political blunder'. It's very basic assumption itself is unacceptable, because the issue is not about India's or Pakistan's acceptance, it is about the right of self-determination of 15 million people. This principle is not subject to one's acceptance or lack of it. If this rule is accepted, there would be no hope for getting rid of the colonial powers all over the world, since no colonial power or occupation force willingly gives up its domination. A colonial power leaves only when it is forced to leave and when it becomes impossible for it to retain its control and maintain its occupation.

Yet another deviation that has been committed is the stupidity of changing the focus of the issue by talking about the division of the State of Jammu and Kashmir into seven parts, thus shattering its unity. The real issue is about 'accession' of the State, but it has been changed into one of 'division' of the State.

The third main issue is about the status of these territories. Various proposals of autonomy, UN trusteeship and joint Pakistan-India control have quite thoughtlessly been presented in the shape of different possible options. This would open up the doors for America's global game. What is most tragic is that there has been no concern as to the consequences and implications of each of these options for Pakistan's security, sovereignty and strategic interests in the region, or what impact it would have on those who are struggling against India's illegal occupation for the last 57 years and have offered great sacrifices in the way.

The fourth wrong is that Northern Areas have conveniently, and in a style that markedly shows lack of foresight, been counted as one of the seven parts. Until now, all governments had realized its strategic importance and accepted it a part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, but made it contingent upon plebiscite. There were historical factors and reasons of location for this long held

position. In spite of representation in the Kashmir assembly before the Partition, this region was not part of Kashmir as was the rest of the State; nor was it included in the sale-purchase that resulted in Dogra rule in Jammu and Kashmir. This region was included in Pakistan as a result of the struggle of its people. This is why this region was never counted as part of Azad Kashmir. Our territorial link with China is through this region, which borders with two of China's provinces. In his oratory, General Pervez Musharraf overlooked all these details and talked about considering this region, too, for 'autonomy', international trusteeship and sunder joint control with India. May God bless us!

Whenever military men, unaware of the nuances and fine details of politics, governance, and diplomacy, usurp power and try to deal with such issues; whenever an individual gets a chance to set aside collective and institutionalized decision-making and arrogates to himself all arbitration, then the nation's fate is defined by blunders, reversals and false starts.

Views of Western and Indian Observers Pakistani nation and those of its politicians who enjoy its respect are protesting against this political vandalism. But it is revealing to review how Western analysts and Indian political observers, journalists and intellectuals view General Pervez Musharraf's position. Of particular interest are the comments of Britain's weekly *The Economist* (Oct 30-Nov 6) under the title "Commando Diplomacy", Rajamohan's in the *Indian Express* (Oct 27), John Sheren's, Ludpuri's and Muralidhar Reedi's in *The Hindu* (Nov 8). David Dudas' *Kashmir Diary* on Nov 10 in India's another daily *The Tribune* merits attention of Pakistan's policy-makers and politicians.

However much gloss the media managers of the General and he himself may try to put on his proposals, they amount to nothing save a complete retreat from our national policy and objectives on Kashmir and stabbing in the back of the Kashmiri resistance movement. They should realize what Indian analysts and intellectuals are saying.

With reference to the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Bus service and Gas Pipeline, he says that Pakistan is now ready to 'delink' these issues from the 'core issue' of Kashmir, that the US has had a special role in this change – and the US Secretary of State Colin Powell has already taken credit for this in his statement on Oct 18.

The express surprise over Foreign Office's explanations of Oct 29 on the General's speech of Oct 25, and says that General Musharraf's utterances reflect and commando style, who is playing this game to pave the way for his U-turn.

Whatever gloss the media manager of the military rulers might try to put on General Pervez Musharraf's views, the international media, and specially the Indian media, have exposed the features of his proposals and mirror the Commando President's reverse jump. Added to it is the indifference and disdain with which Indian leadership has responded and the way it has refused to

budge from its position. This has taken out all air from the balloon of the General's wishful thinking. Complaining about the wrong signals from India, now he says that if India sticks to its mantra of 'atut ang', we will start talking of the UN resolutions again! Unfortunately, our rulers are neither aware of the ups and downs, twists and turns in the history of the subcontinent, nor are they really conscious of the mentality and designs of the Hindu leadership. They neither grasp Brahmin's politics, tactics and deceptive moves, nor are they cognizant of those machinations and plots that are a hallmark of the Congress and Hindu leadership of India. But, Pakistani nation will not let them this self-destructive path and will never let anyone betray the grand struggle of the people of Kashmir.

Dangers of One-man Rule an analysis of General Pervez Musharraf reverse jump brings to fore some lessons:

First, it is a result of weak democratic institutions, concentration of all powers in one man's hands, and his being above all laws and accountability. This also clearly shows that one-man rule is the most weak of all systems, where such blunders are committed that change the direction of history for the negative.

The question is: who has given the General the authority to make policy statements? His is not a position of a lay commentator; his position demands him to manage Pakistan's policy and safeguard it like a trustee. He has no right to make public his personal views. According to the Constitution, policy-making is the business of the Parliament and the Cabinet, which is answerable to the Parliament. In spite of all the additions to his powers in the Constitution, President cannot deviate from a decided policy and issue statements. He is bound to act upon the advice of the Cabinet on all such issues. It is a great irony that neither the Parliament is consulted, nor does the Cabinet discuss important issues, nor the Foreign Office is taken into confidence, but the President issues statements in a commando style and deviates drastically from the decided policies on basic issues, and the members of the ruling party, instead of impeaching him, start coming up with strange interpretations and indulge in beating about the bush! The malaise lies in concentration of powers in one man's hands and in the lack of accountability. The Parliament has been rendered totally ineffective!

Then, it is an established fact that in politics and diplomacy, flexibility on principled and maximal position is not shown until the opponent has played all his cards. It is ironic that India is in occupation of two-thirds of Kashmir, yet we are showing flexibility. Initiative and proposal should come from India, and ours should be a well-gauged response. It is quite opposite in this case: the occupying force is sticking to its position, whereas we are anxious to present our imaginary, last, minimal position at the very start.

It is time to say it loud and clear that this task demands a political leadership that is really aware of all historical facts and adept in the nuances of international diplomacy. Military has its own

approach and training that are meant for other kinds of jobs. It is none of the military command's business to try its hand on important and delicate diplomatic, political and professional fields. Indeed, military is kept for defense, but war and peace are too important to be left on Generals. It is a hallmark of dictatorship that one man begins to consider himself as above the need to consult anyone, he views himself as the embodiment and repository of all wisdom, and thinks of his utterances as the truth and the law of the land. But this is what brings destruction. It gives rise to Hitlers, Mussolinis, and Stalins, and to a culture of sycophancy, flattery, and vested interests. In such a situation, decisions are not made on the basis of facts and merit, and national interests are sacrificed. In contrast, in a democratic system, decisions are made in the Parliament, the Cabinet is bound by certain rules and is restrained by certain restrictions, statements are not issued in an irresponsible manner, nor 'national consensus' is imposed, institutions play an instrumental role and national interests are not sacrificed at the altar of personal interests. Indian journalist Kuldip Nayar, whom the General had passed on his views even before his public utterances on Oct 25, expounds the cause of problem:

The real reason for Pakistan's weakness is the notion of considering oneself above the Constitution, law, Parliament, collective decision-making process, institutional discipline and accountability, and continued tolerance of this situation. Without correcting this situation, Pakistani nation cannot remain safe from the gross blunders of the nature of utterances of Oct 25. Is it not time to take to task those who play havoc with the national interest? Will the Parliament and the nation rein in such a short-sighted leadership, or will continue to present themselves for a ride?

A Review of Ground Realities We need to keenly observe international situation. The post-9/11 atmosphere, which has been created, cannot remain for long. Anger and disquiet of people all over the world against America and Iraqi people's resistance will have far-reaching effect. The war budget of the United States has now become equal to the war budget of all the countries of the world put together. Its annual trade deficit has reached \$550 billion, which is 5.7 percent of its GDP. Its budget deficit exceeds \$400 billion. The rate of saving has dropped considerably in America, and it depends on other nations' savings for its development, rather survival. Almost 80 percent of the whole world's savings, i.e. \$2.6 billion daily, is being consumed by America. As a consequence, America has become the most indebted country in the world. The gulf between the U.S. leadership and the people all around the world is increasing day by day and the volatile situation is taking a new shape. The challenge is about realizing the critical nature of present time, which demands patience and courage, foresightedness and learning lessons from history. The time will be with us if we take the course of patience, prudence and wisdom.

Similarly, the ground realities in Jammu and Kashmir, too, have assumed great importance. In spite of employing all forms of state repression, India has failed to keep the people of the region under its control. All know that dejection with Indian government and Delhi's rule is not confined to the

Valley but is extended to Jammu. Each of the liberal and secular journalists from Pakistan who visited Occupied Jammu and Kashmir recently concurs that the people of the region are not at any cost prepared to live with India. In the words of a representative of the secular lobby “alienation from Delhi is complete and irreversible”.

This is the reason why India, which had succeeded in capturing commandos from Pakistan in the 1965 war, feels totally helpless before a few thousand mujahideen despite the presence of its 700,000 troops in the region. While it is the sacrifices of the people of Occupied Kashmir that have kept the resistance and freedom movement alive – a fact that is proved by martyrs graveyards – those of the mujahideen who have gone there from Pakistan and Azad Kashmir are heroes of the people there, who are given full protection and, in case of martyrdom, whose funeral processions are participated by 40,000 or even 50,000 of local population. Each funeral is like a plebiscite against the Indian occupation and domination. This is why the leader of the resistance movement, United Jihad Council, and Hurriyat Conference Syed Ali Shah Gilani has opposed General Pervez Musharraf’s proposals and, instead, asked the Pakistani nation not to show signs of exhaustion or weakness when Kashmir’s are valiantly resisting the oppressive regime and are ready to offer any kind of sacrifices. Kashmir’s expect steadfastness from Pakistanis. Islamic history is full glorious examples of those who stood against all odds for the cause of truth. Even today, innocent Muslim masses in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Chechnya are pitched against much stronger enemies. It is beyond comprehension why Pakistani leadership is losing patience?

When the U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger talked about Taiwan, China’s leader Mao Dze Dong had silenced him saying curtly, “we can wait for 100 years on this matter.”

The people of Jammu and Kashmir have been struggling for 57 years now, which has increased manifold since 1989. Does it behave us to adopt any course other than that of support and pride with respect to the courage and aspirations of a brave and courageous people? Time is with us; India cannot face this revolutionary force for long. No hegemonic power in history has been able to maintain its domination forever and every nation that has resolved not to surrender before foreign domination and oppression has, sooner or later, attained independence: Such days (of varying fortunes) we give to men by turns. **(Al-e Imran 3:140)**

Have we forgotten this lesson of history and the law of Allah? Independence, faith and dignity are not sellable commodities. The Kashmiri nation’s answer to the \$5.2 billion package announced by the Indian prime minister is clear: we want political freedom; economic package is not our goal. While Kashmir’s have given their answer, what would be the answer of the Pakistani nation? What would be the answer of the Pakistan army, whose very raison d’etre, the foundation for its existence, is defense of the country, realization of the objective of Kashmir’s freedom, and restraining Indian ambitions in the region? Is this army for running businesses, managing profitable enterprises, profiteering from real estate ventures, and occupying civil services and politics? Or is it for the defense of the country, support of the weak and freeing Pakistan’s jugular vein from the

grip of the enemy? The current position is that the chief of this army has given such a proposal, in contradiction with his constitutional, legal, moral responsibility, that amounts not only to dividing Kashmir but to wipe it out from the map of this region.

Our National Responsibility and Its Demands How can this dangerous game be tolerated? It is the responsibility of the Parliament and the nation to come forward and play their due role, make the institution of national accountability really effective, hold onto the national consensus that was built by Quid-e-Azam himself, focus its all attention on the principled position with full confidence and perseverance and adopt a policy of unstinted support to the resistance movement of the people of Kashmir, and take sound measures for enhancement of Pakistan's economic, moral, military and political strength so that this nation can achieve its right, help the weak and stop the aggressor from aggression:

And why should not you fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)? – Men, women, and children – whose cry is:

“Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and rise for us from the one who will protect; and rise for us from The one who will help!”

(Al-Nisa 4:75)

To provide strength for this cause, and to use this strength as a trust of Allah for own defense as well as for the support and aid of the weak is all worship. This is what Iqbal has reiterated forcefully, and repeatedly, in his poetry.

However daunting might be the challenge before the Muslims – in Kashmir and Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq, Mandanao and Chechnya – there is only one way to be successful in the battle between the right and the wrong, between the good and the evil: Faith, Piety, and Jihad. Retreat, compromise on principles, and giving in under pressure does not lead a nation to a life of dignity and independence.

Retreat and defeat is not the destiny of this nation. Its hallmark is continued struggle and its preparedness for all kinds of sacrifice for the realization of its historical aims and objectives. It is the weak-willed who flow with the tide. In contrast, a Muslim, in the face of unfavorable circumstances, strives to stem the tide and change its direction. Here lies the secret of dignity and success. Those who have assumed leadership of Muslims today should refrain from taking the direction air blown by others, and instead adopt the course of boldly charting out their own plan for the realization of their aims and objectives.

This is the path that Iqbal and Jinnah teach us to take. Will those who tire not using their names day in and day out resolve to heed to their advice?
