

Pakistan Must End its Complicity against the Kashmiri People

By Abdul Majeed Bhatti*

On the eve of Pakistan's Independence Day, the violence in Kashmir threatens to plunge relations between India and Pakistan to levels not seen during Modi's reign. "The Indian policy of killing innocent Kashmiris is part of a strategy to break the spirit of Kashmiris; alter the demography in Jammu and Kashmir; and convert it into a Muslim minority from an overwhelming Muslim majority state," Foreign Office spokesperson Nafees Zakria told reporters at the weekly news briefing. The vicious cycle of violence is not new and nor is the poorly worded condemnation from Pakistan's foreign office. In fact, since 1947, successive Pakistani governments have failed in their commitment to liberate the Kashmiri from the despotic Hindu rule.

From championing UN plebiscites to the internationalization of the Kashmir issue, Kashmiris have found little solace in Pakistan's public stance to assist them. The main reason behind the failure to resolve the Kashmir dispute—suggested by some—is the permutation in the number of solutions. Whilst this may be true, it is not the principal cause. There are three main solutions on offer, and Stephen Cohen in his book *Shooting for a Century* describes the Kashmiri solutions contingent on hyphenation, de-hyphenation, and re-hyphenation of the Line of Control (LoC).

Hyphenation simply equates to solidifying the LoC between India and Pakistan into a permanent border—a status quo solution that formally splits Kashmir into Azad Kashmir part of Pakistan and Occupied Kashmir part of India. De-hyphenation is about turning the LoC into a soft border between the two countries and allowing free movement of goods and Kashmiris across the border. Re-hyphenation on the other hand equates to a mixture of the previous two solutions, and is intended to give Kashmir some semblance of independence, but with Pakistan and India administering aspects of economic and foreign policy.

The underlying reason for not settling the Kashmiri dispute has nothing to do with the various solutions on offer. Leaving aside foreign power interference and internal challenges faced by both India and Pakistan in selling Kashmiri solutions to their own people the principal cause appears to be Pakistan's reluctance to use its military might to liberate Kashmir from Hindu dominance.

The Kargil conflict in 1999 was the last time Pakistan used military power against India to lay foundations for sweeping victory against the Hindus and the subsequent emancipation of Kashmiris. At America's behest the victory was cut short, and Washington proceeded to exploit Pakistan's intervention in Kargil to spur the Indian electorate to vote for the BJP and topple the Congress from power.

The ascendancy of the BJP in the elections proved to be a watershed moment in bilateral relations between America and India, and ushered in a new period of strategic cooperation. This period also coincided with a steep decline in Pakistan-US relations. Since September 11, 2001, America has molded Pakistan's role in the sub-continent to curb the prominence of militant groups and to protect India's territorial integrity by acting as a perpetual buffer zone from militant attacks.

The recalibration of Pakistan's foreign policy under America's tutelage was a huge bonanza for India. It assured the Hindu elite that the intractable problem of Kashmir would remain frozen thereby preventing other indigenous secessionist movements splitting from mother India. Therefore, for the past seventeen years, the resolution of the Kashmir dispute has not moved forward.

Unable to quell the zealous desire of Kashmiris to free themselves from Hindu rule, Washington and Delhi quickly realized that India could only counter China—as envisioned by American strategist—if the Kashmir dispute was permanently resolved. In this endeavor, Pakistan's public role of supporting Kashmiris is at odds with its efforts to seek an amenable solution to India and America via back channel diplomacy. Pakistan's complicity in aiding and abetting America and the Hindu elite is the major reason why Kashmiris continue to suffer.

The only solution to the liberation of Kashmiris is for Pakistan to engage India militarily and annex Kashmir. Under the rule of the Uthmani Khilafah when India was just a wilayah, the mughul wali Aurangzeb fought Hindu rebels for twenty-five years and brought much needed peace and stability to the region for Muslims, Hindus and people of other faiths. If Aurangzeb was able to muster such a feat - at a time when the Hindu population was much greater than the Muslim population - then consider what Muslims of Pakistan and India can achieve today, if they join forces and work for the e-establishment of Khilafah Rashidah (righteous Caliphate) upon the method of the Prophethood.

* Written for Ar-Rayah Newspaper – Issue 143