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Kashmir
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Subtexts of Kashmir policy

SECOND OPINION



KHALED AHMED'S URDU PRESS REVIEW

Nawaz Sharif promised 'conquest of Kashmir in three months' as chief of IJI. Later he was threatened, and nearly killed, by Sipah Sahaba and by Lashkar-e-Tayba to whose chief, Hafiz Said, he apologised after a tiff. Ramzi Yusuf hurt himself making the bomb to kill Ms Bhutto in Karachi and it was the leaders of Sipah Sahaba who went to see him at the hospital

KASHMIR HAS TO BE TACKLED LATERALLY, NEVER straight. The reason is nationalism and past strategic mistakes. People forget that there has been a policy ebb and flow on Kashmir. Leaders want to switch it off to get on with the business of governing Pakistan. Others want to stoke the fires to get to rule Pakistan. These are the cruel facts about a policy with no exit strategy.

Quoted in *Khabrain* (4 June 2004), ex-foreign minister Gauhar Ayub said that one delegation led by foreign secretary Shamshad Ahmad was shocked to hear from Indian foreign secretary Sulaiman (sic) Haider that prime minister Nawaz Sharif had sent a message to India that Kashmir be put on the back-burner. He said Shamshad had complained to him and when he asked Nawaz Sharif whether he had actually sent the message, he denied it.

Both Nawaz Sharif and Ms Benazir Bhutto have tried in their own way to put Kashmir on the back-burner to save Pakistan from folding as a state. But at least Nawaz Sharif was a warrior in opposition, promising 'conquest of Kashmir in three months' when he was contesting election as chief of IJI. Later he was threatened, and nearly killed, by Sipah Sahaba, the prime militia doing jihad for Pakistan; and by Lashkar-e-Tayba to whose chief, Hafiz Said, he apologised through his lieutenants after a tiff. Ramzi Yusuf hurt himself making the bomb to kill Ms Bhutto in Karachi and it was leaders of Sipah Sahaba, the jihadi militia, who went to see him at the hospital.

Quoted in *Nawa-e-Waqt* (5 June 2004), PMLN chairman Raja Zafarul Haq said that prime minister Nawaz Sharif recalled Pakistani troops from Kargil after army chief Musharraf requested him to do so. He said this was confirmed in the book *Battle Ready* written by CENT-COM American army commander General Zinni. Daily *Pakistan* wrote that, according to Zinni, Nawaz Sharif was not ready to withdraw forces from Kargil but was persuaded by Musharraf.

There was nothing wrong in getting America to stop the Operation after it became apparent that it had gone beyond the point of 'highlighting the Kashmir issue'. Whether Nawaz Sharif did it on his own or Musharraf got him to do it, the point is that Pakistan did it to save its neck. We can say Pakistan was damaged by Kargil; but if we change tack as a result of it, it would be the best lesson learnt by us.

Columnist Javed Chaudhry wrote in *Jang* (5 June 2004) that at a seminar in Washington Carnegie Institute speakers came to the conclusion that unless the factories of jihad were closed the problem of terrorism would become worse. Mufti Shamzai of Karachi was such a factory of jihad. He was non-sectarian and believed in the unity of all Muslims. But since he was a factory of jihad, resentful of the powers that inflicted suffering on the Muslims of the World, he had to be shut down. He was killed like the Hamas founder Sheikh Yassin. This is a message for all Muslims and it says: 'We have to save our great religious leaders from America and its friends who think that the factories of mujahideen have to be shut down'.

Mufti Shamzai was a factory of jihad that has gone wrong for Pakistan for many reasons. His pupils are now trying to do to Pakistan what Pakistan's innocent citizens don't deserve. It is easy to say that the Jews or the Americans killed him just like Sheikh Yassin but hard to prove it. It certainly reflects on the state of our mind.

Columnist Nazeer Naji wrote in *Jang* (6 June 2004) that the Sindh government could not be removed just

small that no political party could function there. She said if Skardu Dam was built 60 percent of Hunza would disappear under water. She said that her Alliance would contact PONM because it demands an independent state of Gilgit-Baltistan.

National consensus seems to be converging on Basha Dam, the highest ever in the world, inundating a part of the Karakoram Highway and dangerously storing water in a seismic region. It is possible that it would be laid aside as a tough project. An alternative Skardu Dam has no feasibility but Hunza people will protest and the world will listen to their voice.

Quoted in daily *Jang* (6 June 2004), British high commissioner Mr Mark Lyall said that in the past there were only 6 visa officers in the high commission; now there were 40. The commission received 1,500 visa requests daily but the visa section had capacity of entertaining only 900 of them. He said there were 18,000 visa applications pending. He said the visit visas were taking 4 weeks while settlement visas took 5 months to clear. Rejection rate was 30 percent while student visa rejection was 65 percent. Daily around 100 applications were found to be fraudulent some of them forwarded by members of parliament. British visa section in Islamabad was the largest in the world.

It is not the first time that our politicians have defrauded the British High Commission. But the High Commission has not always been vigilant about whom it sends to the UK on a visa. It has been issuing visas to extremist clerics who have radicalised the Pakistani community there. Of course, we can't stop the UK from sending their Hizb al-Tahrir to us, as if in revenge.

According to *Nawa-e-Waqt* (9 June 2004), a Hindu member of National Assembly Krishan Bheel got up and informed the house that a Hindu Sadhu had been found slaughtered in Sanghar in Sindh. No one in the National Assembly paid any heed to him. He then said that if a Muslim religious leader was killed the Hindus expressed their sympathy but the death of an innocent Hindu had moved no one. He looked around and found that all the MNAs were busy talking and no one had heard what he was saying. He staged a walkout from the house. Still no one paid attention to Krishan Bheel and no one came to appease him.

Only the Muslims have the quality of not feeling for anyone who is not a Muslim. The non-Muslims are supposed to be 'zimmis' despite Musharraf's joint electorates. Our MNAs cannot be blamed. They are a special breed. They are supposed to concentrate only on the problems of the Muslims.

According to *Jang* (11 June 2004), Lahore corporation was planning to get rid of its Muslim garbage collectors because they did not come to work and were actually employed as peons in various offices. Over 300 Muslims were recruited in 'solid waste' collection but they were all *sifarishi* and did not report to work. Christian employees who worked full hours had protested. The city government had got rid of over half the Muslim sanitary workers and was now reserving the jobs only for Christians and non-Muslims.

Lahore corporation had announced many years ago that the dirty jobs were reserved only for Christians. It was an ideological decision which has been saved from violation by employing Muslims and paying them but allowing them to actually work elsewhere. ■

because it failed to stop sectarian murders. In fact the whole of Pakistan was under the scourge of sectarianism. If government change was necessary what would the rulers do with Gilgit where sectarian fire was burning for many months? In fact the fire of sectarianism in Karachi was first started in Punjab and the party that was behind sectarianism was based in Punjab.

Prize-winning columnist Naji disagrees with prize-winning columnist Javed Chaudhry on sectarian killings in Pakistan, but Naji is nearer the truth. Yet Javed Chaudhry is nearer to the soul of the Urdu readership.

According to *Nawa-e-Waqt* (5 June 2004) a religious party in Indonesia Nahdlatul Ulama had issued a *fatwa* deeming it un-Islamic for voters to cast their vote in favour of a woman candidate. The party belonged to East Java and had 40 million followers. The *fatwa* will also affect the candidature of President Sukarnoputri.

This kind of thing is true of all Muslim states although, electorally, Indonesia has once again sidelined the clerical parties. But Indonesia had a Jakarta Charter embedded in its Pancha Shila of 1945, which promised Shariah. The seed is there and the clergy is not going away anywhere.

According to daily *Jang* (6 June 2004) Ms Malika Baltistani of Gilgit-Baltistan National Alliance spoke to an audience saying that the Northern Areas were so