[Kashmir and peace](https://nation.com.pk/23-Feb-2019/kashmir-and-peace%22%20%5Ct%20%22_new)

Samson Simon Sharaf February 23, 2019

After the suicide attack on an Indian police convoy at Pulwama, Kashmir is once again making international headlines. India seized Pakistan’s preoccupation with the visit of Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman to launch a relentless smear campaign. Within minutes, the anti-Pakistan blitz and anti-Muslim sentiment spread across the country. India and not Pakistan, in a series of knee jerk reactions and jingoism made Kashmir the subject of international headlines. In this frenzied activity, Pakistan imposed caution and held out an olive branch.

Kashmir is neither terrorism nor a territorial issue. It is a question of hearts and minds, emotive factors and the democratic principal of choices. A long history of over 600,000 deaths invokes bitter memories of Kashmiris massacred in nearly a century by extremist Hindus (groups that form BJP), beginning July 13, 1931. This includes the violence in Srinagar Jammu, Poonch and the untold Jammu Himachal Pradesh massacres in 1947. In the recent uprisings (already three decades old), over 100,000 Kashmiris have been killed by Indian security forces and Hindu hardliners. This ‘Blood Memory’ combined with repression has passed through generations to a point that wheeling dealing Kashmiri politicians have become irrelevant. Atrocious incidents become a rallying point for youths who have taken the course of events in their own hands.

If India does not arrest and resolve this trend through diplomacy and inclusive engagements, the sentiments of insecurity and repression will overflow the brim into Indian heartland. BJP by taking the communal route has opened scars that shall bleed India for a long time. Then India may have no option but to depend on Pakistan for its stability.

At its core, buying and selling Kashmir between the Sikhs and East India Company was mercantilism. International law and rulings of Indian and Kashmiri courts, consistently refuse to cede paramount authority to India. 1948 UN Resolution and many others that followed maintain the principal of self-determination. UNSC has been consistent that amendments to Indian constitution do not substitute UN resolutions. The struggle is legitimate and cannot be branded as terrorism.

Indian obsession and historic predisposition of hate against Pakistan is taking its toll on the internal stability of India. India’s sustained quest to terror brand Kashmir and malign Pakistan for sponsoring and abetting is reaching a dead-end. European Union has asked India to concentrate on human rights violations. China remains firm on the issue of Masood Azhar. President Trump has contradicted the earlier statement given by the spokesperson and shown a positive tilt towards Pakistan. Indian complicity in fermenting terrorism in Pakistan through its agent Kulbashan Yadev has been exposed at ICJ. Many Indian intelligence and terrorism networks in Pakistan have been exposed. Yet Pakistan is exercising restraint.

Indian trigger happy tactics are yielding results to contrary. International Olympic Committee has withdrawn Olympic places from India for refusing visas to Pakistani shooters. In precedence, International Cricket Conference will find it difficult to expel Pakistan from the World Cup. By bending to pressure, the ICC could begin the process of its own dissolution. Cricket, a gentleman’s game could run risk of being divided forever. Yet India is desperate to make sports an instrument part of state policy.

The biggest setback was the visit of Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salam to India. Pulwana was not mentioned. The Saudi foreign minister minced no words about the UN Resolutions on Kashmir and the right of self-determination by Kashmiris. His denunciation of Iran joining the Indian rant was firm and curt. He said something that Pakistan had refrained from. The delegation truly represented itself as ambassadors of Pakistan.

India has to wake up to the realities in IHK and international politics. Vitriolic Indian media and equally hyper ruling elites are prisoners of a time warp and historic predispositions. They are damaging India’s cause. While the world is moving ahead, Indian ranting and panting is not good for peace.

An article by Andrew Korybko in Global Research preempted Indian dreams. He wrote, “As astounding as it may sound to most observers, the global pivot state of the 21st century isn’t China, the US, nor Russia, but Pakistan…  An objective look at the country’s geostrategic and domestic capabilities reveals that it’s in a prime position to influentially shape the contours of the coming century”. In the past Robert Chase, Emily Hill, Paul Kennedy writing for Foreign Affairs also determined Pakistan a pivot. Positioned on confluence of Central, West and South Asia Pakistan in past played a pivot and in future ‘an indispensible pivot’.

Already, Pakistan’s influence world over is extending. Pakistan has a role in West Asian and Central Asian security. It emphatically assisted Sri Lanka in defeating the Indian sponsored insurgency. It restored peace and stability within despite sponsorship of India and other states. The nation is undergoing rebuilding. Pakistan is positioning itself for a role in which ‘war or violence as instrument of policy has no role’. Peace, engagement and diplomacy are the preferred options.

Pakistan’s quest for peace illustrated in the victory speech of Prime Minister Imran Khan is the direction that Pakistan is following. He wants multi-tier framework of engagements and diplomacy. India’s reactions have nullified the goodwill and stalled people to people contacts. Somehow, Indian stratagem seems to nullify Pakistan’s attempts at resetting the course as something under Indian pressure. Pakistan will not let it happen and will do so in its own interests and timings.

Prime Minister Imran Khan’s response to Indian threats was curt, credible and unambiguous. For those who understand strategy, it was a statement premised on peace. His words “Pakistan will not think to react but will react” was a measured response indicating that engagements and diplomacy are the only response to crises and assurances for peace.

Given the readiness of military and nuclear structures, India would most likely restrain itself from overt kinetic operations. The fairytale of Surgical Strikes will continue to be the bedtime story of Indian media. India will resort to other means.

Pakistan has been removed from the MFN list and trade stands suspended. Pakistani TV channels are off Dish TV. Photographs of Pakistani cricketers have been removed. All this brings good tidings. Pakistan’s indigenous agriculture and machine tool sector will register a comeback. The Soymeal lobby in Pakistan will have to find other means of making quick bucks. Web TV will replace the Indian Dish TV. Terrorism and separatist movements in Pakistan may intensify but Pakistan’s law enforcement agencies with battle hardy experience are and capable of nipping them in bud, whilst Pakistan will keep exposing Indian spies and networks.

If Indian blitz is believed, India will very soon begin the herculean engineering effort to divert water of rivers flowing into Pakistan in toto.  This means taming the entire Himalayan and Karakorum Range. How it will be done can only be answered by Modi’s gods from outer space. The only diversion from Chenab to Ravi will have to be through tunnels of limited value. Discretion may dictate that India not tamper or violate IBWT. So as a surgical strike, India will toy with the idea of harnessing waters of River Ravi. This will entail building more dams and headwork that stop ingress of River Ravi in Jassar and Kasur. Such a measure will take decades.

India is headed a very destructive course. The only recourse is repeatedly etched in history; ‘Honour aspirations of people’. All routes pass through Kashmir and Pakistan is the only rotator arm that can guarantee India its long term security.

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