

# ing the fundamentals

BY MUSHAHID HUSSAIN

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security, media, psychology, law, forensics and politics, having ready profiles of terrorists and extremist groups, analysing intelligence traffic round the clock, and working outside the ambit of any ministry or existing intelligence outfit.

Even a country like the United States faced the same problem after 9/11, and the Americans finally sorted it out by creating a new body, the Department of Homeland Security, going outside the traditional framework of the FBI, the Justice department and the CIA, since these were found to be inadequate, ill-equipped and ill-trained to the task of combating terrorism at home.

The other major development of last week, the December 17 Reuters interview of General Musharraf regarding Kashmir, has drawn both brickbats and bouquets. It is important to understand from the interview's transcript what was said in which context. He was asked "would you accept independence of Kashmir as an option for Kashmiris in a plebiscite?" to which he responded that "I don't want to discuss solutions", adding "We are for a plebiscite. Pakistan is for a plebiscite." But when questioned again on the independence for Kashmir option, General Musharraf responded: "No ... we are for the United Nations Security Council resolutions whatever it stands for. However, now we have left that aside. We keep saying if we want to resolve this issue, both sides need to talk to each other with flexibility. Coming beyond stated positions, meeting half way somewhere. Now there are a number of solutions which have been propounded. I don't want to get involved because if we get involved in solutions without even having started a dialogue process, we are going to slide back."

For the greater part of the past decade, Pakistan's Kashmir policy has evolved on the premise of 'going beyond the stated positions', which would also have been the essence of any compromise flowing from the 1999 Lahore Summit, in return for India accepting the disputed status of Kashmir rather than repeating the mantra of Kashmir being an 'integral part of India.'

While, at one level, the formulation in the Reuters interview is a continuation of General Musharraf's own earlier stand of 'moving beyond stated positions' on Kashmir, however, stating that 'now we have left that (UN resolutions) aside' was an unfortunate formulation since it would be wrong at this stage to delink Kashmir from UN resolutions, given the legitimacy these provide both for Pakistan's stand as well as the Kashmir freedom struggle. In any case, it is a bad diplomatic bargaining position to play all cards early on in the game and even specify the bottom-line before negotiations with an adversary

have begun. Thankfully, this flexibility was made conditional to Indian reciprocity.

Pakistan is fortunate to be dealing with a politician of Atal Behari Vajpayee's stature, who himself has demonstrated more flexibility towards Kashmir than any other Indian leader. Although the 'composite dialogue' (Kashmir plus seven other issues) was initiated under Gujral in June 1997, Vajpayee formally agreed to it at the Lahore Declaration that he signed with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. He also agreed to a ceasefire with the Hizbul Mujahideen in July 2000, accepting to negotiate unconditionally with the Kashmiri leadership including the APHC 'within the framework of humanity.' And he did a U-turn by inviting General Musharraf to Agra, discarding his almost two year insistence that India would not negotiate with Pakistan's military regime.

However, given the absence of institutionalised decision-making in Pakistan, there is a proclivity to make or change policy through pronouncements, which sometimes may not be well thought through as to their ramifications, like earlier statements on building the Kalabagh Dam, recognising Israel or agreeing 'in principle' to send troops to Iraq. Like the Kashmir statement, all these too had to be reversed or clarified.

Ironically, probably for the first time in Pakistan's history, the Establishment and anti-Establishment positions on Kashmir and India policy are now congruent, which is a good sign. In any case, unlike India, there is no political constituency in Pakistan today that seeks confrontation with India.

In the past, whenever civilian politicians negotiated on strategic foreign policy issues they were denounced as a 'security risk for selling-out'. Bhutto faced false allegations of a 'secret deal on Kashmir' at Simla. Junejo was accused of a 'sell-out on Afghanistan' by signing the Geneva Accords, although it is a little known fact that General Zia acquiesced to the Geneva Accords only after he received a personal phone call from President Reagan in January 1988. Benazir was subjected to so much suspicion when she hosted Rajiv Gandhi in Islamabad in 1988 that, during her second tenure, she was too afraid to even go to the SAARC Summit in New Delhi in 1995, preferring to send President Leghari instead. And when Nawaz Sharif hosted Vajpayee in Lahore, there was such a hullabaloo as if Kashmir was being given away on a silver platter to India, although it was the first time that an Indian leader was coming to Pakistan after accepting Kashmir as a dispute to be resolved through bilateral negotiations.

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On Kashmir, the hard fact is that as Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko told his Pakistani counterpart, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, at the Tashkent Summit in January 1966, when questioned as to why Kashmir's self-determination was excluded from the final declaration: "You can't get on the conference table what you failed to achieve on the battle-field." Pakistan's bottom-line on Kashmir has to be in a settlement woven outside the status quo, i.e., rejecting any scheme that seeks to make the LoC into a permanent international boundary.

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# Rethinking the fundamental

BY MUSHAHID HUSSAIN

Last week's two major developments are illustrative of a major malaise in the Pakistani system, namely, the absence of an institutional mechanism to combat critical areas like terrorism or to formulate well thought through decisions on key issues.

Take the December 14 assassination attempt on General Musharraf in the heart of the military's 'cordon sanitaire', the most serious breach of his personal security. That his Sunday route, timing and location had been apparently carefully mapped out by the terrorists should be a wake-up call to the Establishment, given the lackadaisical, reactive, ad hoc approach to security matters. The focus invariably is on form (highly-visible, ill-trained gun-toting men strutting about) rather than substance (trained professionals working quietly to pre-empt terrorism with low visibility).

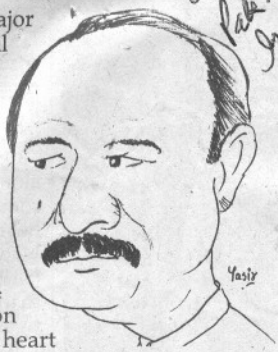
The result, therefore, is not surprising: the usual blame-game (the proverbial 'foreign hand' with al Qaeda now coming in handy!), turf wars (disowning responsibility for bureaucratic reasons) and inane orders to 'immediately catch the culprits.'

The predictable outcome: the state with its myriad of agencies is clueless as to how it happened or who did it, not surprising given the abysmal track record. Not so long ago, one of General Musharraf's own predecessors was blown up in the sky traveling under military security in a military plane to a military cantonment for a military function along with his key military colleagues. And to this day, how Zia was knocked out remains shrouded in mystery.

The injection of violence into Pakistan's body-politic is both dangerous and reprehensible, whether it was done by the state in the case of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's politically-motivated hanging or the elimination of General Zia and his military colleagues through the still-mysterious air-crash, or the unprecedented organised scale of target killings as part of a sinister design to divide Pakistanis through sectarian terrorism.

All the more reason that lessons need to be learnt from the latest attempt on General Musharraf's life. Why don't Pakistani policy-makers realise and understand that despite talk of tackling terrorism, Pakistan still has no institutional machinery which is dedicated to combating, containing or pre-empting homegrown terrorism? Yes, there are almost a dozen intelligence organizations (ISI, IB, the three armed services intelligence bodies representing the Army, Navy and Air Force plus the four provincial Special Branch bodies that work under the police) but none has the exclusive mandate for combating terrorism. The Federal Government passes on the buck to the provincial governments taking the bureaucratic plea that 'law and order is a provincial problem', while the provincial governments say that since it may be RAW or al Qaeda, therefore, it's a foreign policy, or Federal problem!

What is needed is a dedicated, full-time Anti Terror Task Force, with its own independent office and staff, manned by professionals drawn from intelligence,



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Even a country like the United States faced the same problem after 9/11, and the Americans finally sorted it out by creating a new body, the Department of Homeland Security, going outside the traditional framework of the FBI, the Justice department and the CIA, since these were found to be inadequate, ill-equipped and ill-trained to the task of combating terrorism at home.

The other major development of last week, the December 17 Reuters interview of General Musharraf regarding Kashmir, has drawn both brickbats and bouquets. It is important to understand from the interview's transcript what was said in which context. He was asked "would you accept independence of Kashmir as an option for Kashmiris in a plebiscite?" to which he responded that "I don't want to discuss solutions", adding "We are for a plebiscite. Pakistan is for a plebiscite." But when questioned again on the independence for Kashmir option, General Musharraf responded: "No ... we are for the United Nations Security Council resolutions whatever it stands for. However, now we have left that aside. We keep saying if we want to resolve this issue, both sides need to talk to each other with flexibility. Coming beyond stated positions, meeting half way somewhere. Now there are a number of solutions which have been propounded. I don't want to get involved because if we get involved in solutions without even having started a dialogue process, we are going to slide back."

For the greater part of the past decade, Pakistan's Kashmir policy has evolved on the premise of 'going beyond the stated positions', which would also have been the essence of any compromise flowing from the 1999 Lahore Summit, in return for India accepting the disputed status of Kashmir rather than repeating the mantra of Kashmir being an 'integral part of India.'

While, at one level, the formulation in the Reuters interview is a continuation of General Musharraf's own earlier stand of 'moving beyond stated positions' on Kashmir, however, stating that 'now we have left that (UN resolutions) aside' was an unfortunate formulation since it would be wrong at this stage to delink Kashmir from UN resolutions, given the legitimacy these provide both for Pakistan's stand as well as the Kashmir freedom struggle. In any case, it is a bad diplomatic bargaining position to play all cards early on in the game and even specify the bottom-line before negotiations with an adversary

have begun. Thankfully, this flexible approach is conditional to Indian reciprocity.

Pakistan is fortunate to be dealing with the former of Atal Behari Vajpayee's stature demonstrated more flexibility to any other Indian leader. Although the 'dialogue' (Kashmir plus several other issues) initiated under Gujral in June 1999, formally agreed to it at the Lahore Summit, and signed with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, agreed to a ceasefire with the Indian government in July 2000, accepting to negotiate with the Kashmiri leadership in the framework of human rights, turn by inviting General Musharraf, and his almost two year insistence not to negotiate with Pakistan's military.

However, given the absence of a decision-making in Pakistan, the make or change policy through a process which sometimes may not be visible as to their ramifications, like the building the Kalabagh Dam, the agreeing 'in principle' to send the Kashmir statement, all these to be clarified.

Ironically, probably for the first time in history, the Establishment and the opposition on Kashmir and India are congruent, which is a good sign. India, there is no political confrontation today that seeks confrontation.

In the past, whenever civilian leadership was on strategic foreign policy, denounced as a 'security risk' for facing false allegations of a 'secret deal' with Simla. Junejo was accused of a 'secret deal' by signing the Geneva Accords. A little known fact that General Zia was in Geneva only after he received a phone call from President Reza Zardari. Benazir was subjected to so much pressure she hosted Rajiv Gandhi in Islamabad during her second tenure, she went to the SAARC Summit in Islamabad preferring to send President Pervez Musharraf when Nawaz Sharif hosted Vajpayee. It was such a hullabaloo as if Kashmir was away on a silver platter to India the first time that an Indian leader visited Pakistan after accepting Kashmir as an integral part of India resolved through bilateral negotiations.

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On Kashmir, the hard fact is that the Minister Andrei Gromyko told the Pakistani counterpart, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, at the summit in January 1966, when questioning India's self-determination was a declaration: "You can't get on with what you failed to achieve on the Indian side's bottom-line on Kashmir. The Indian government woven outside the status quo scheme that seeks to make the line an international boundary."

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