

The Betrayal of Occupied Kashmir Continues Unabated

The October 2020 interview by Moeed Yusuf to Karan Thapar generated a wave of discussion within Pakistan in successive weeks, setting a narrative from the regime. Expectedly, there was some degree of elation within ruling circles over the manner by which Moeed Yusuf “handled” Karan Thapar. There seemed to be jubilation that Pakistan’s advisor on national security and strategic policy planning to the Prime Minister had given Karan Thapar a “Jaw breaking” response. The reality is somewhat different however. For careful observers, the current narrative is a continuation of the complicity of the Pakistani civilian and military leadership in supporting India, in annexing Jammu and Kashmir.

The alignment of India with the US, as a counterweight to China, is well understood, as is Washington’s need to settle the Kashmir issue to free up India so it can focus on China. What is not so well understood is how the Pakistani civilian and military leadership allowed, supported and facilitated the Indian government in their actions to revoke Article 370. Beyond that, it has worked to cement the Line of Control as a permanent border.

The Indian plans to revoke Article 370 were publicly known. The pro-Indian Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, amongst others who form part of the mainstream regional political parties of Jammu and Kashmir, met and signed the Gupkar Declaration on 4 August 2019, a day before the Indian action of revoking Article 370. It was primarily signed to safeguard and restore special status, along with Article 35A, of the erstwhile state Jammu and Kashmir. So, at face value, the Gupkar Declaration was to publicly denounce the imminent revoking of Article 370, a day later. So, if India’s plans were no secret to the political leadership in Kashmir, they were no secret to the civilian and military leadership of Pakistan.

The Pakistani civilian and military leadership was a motionless observer over this and other activities, indicating that they had decided upon inaction. Indeed, on 5 August 2019, the Foreign Office¹, “...reiterated that Pakistan will continue to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to the indigenous Kashmiri people’s struggle for the realisation of their right to self-determination.” This clearly indicated that military options were not on the table, giving the Indian government a free hand in suppression and oppression of the Muslims in Occupied Kashmir. Furthermore, the Bajwa-Imran regime prevented Muslims from crossing the Line of Control from Pakistan’s side, thereby mitigating critical support for armed rebellion inside Jammu and Kashmir.

The pre-5 August 2019 problem for India, managing an essentially Muslim Occupied Kashmir, exacerbated post-5 August 2019. The brutal measures and curtailing of basic rights moved the bulk of the Muslims, even the so called “moderate” in Kashmir, into such an anti-India position that the former pro-Indian chief minister Farooq Abdullah stated²: “Today Kashmiris do not feel Indian and do not want to be Indian ... They are slaves ... They would rather have the Chinese rule them.”

The Indian government had arrested the pro-Indian politicians like Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti post-5 August 2019. The impasse that the Indian government is facing and needs to solve is the task of trying to develop a new political leadership in Kashmir. The beginning was the panchayat elections in Jammu and Kashmir, equivalent to local body elections, which were last held in December 2018. These were

¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1498236>

² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1581318>

scheduled to be held in February 2020, but were postponed due to “law and order reasons,”³ with no future date declared. The inability of the Modi government to force the Muslims of Kashmir to accept the new status quo was a problem. What the Modi government needed was a way to break the political will of the Muslims of Kashmir, making them feel that they have no other option but to submit to the new status quo. The civilian and military leadership of Pakistan duly obliged by initiating steps to declare Gilgit-Baltistan a separate province of Pakistan, justifying Modi’s annexation of Occupied Kashmir as *quid pro quo*.

Since 1948, the stance of Pakistan towards Occupied Kashmir had been to abstain from consolidating any part of liberated Kashmir territory under its control, thereby maintaining its disputed status and keeping it alive in the UN. However, the decision by the Bajwa-Imran regime to grant Gilgit Baltistan provisional provincial status effectively legitimized the Indian action of revoking Article 370 on 5 2019, on a reciprocal basis. India privately welcomed the decision as its unilateral actions in Jammu and Kashmir would be practically and effectively reciprocated in Gilgit-Baltistan by Pakistan, thereby removing the Pakistani claim of violation of UN resolutions. This was effectively stated by the pro-Pakistani Hurriyet leader, Syed Ali Geelani in a statement⁴: “This unfortunate and unwise move is particularly more detrimental in the context of India’s 5 August 2019 aggression. With this, Pakistan is handing India a baton to beat it with. India would welcome this opportunity as a blessing in disguise and use it to justify its 5 August 2019 decision of revoking Kashmir’s special status and merging it.”

The burning question is what was Pakistan’s imperative for declaring Gilgit-Baltistan a fifth province? Whilst the population in Gilgit-Baltistan may have some genuine grievances and concerns, this could have been efficiently and sufficiently served without altering the status quo. Moreover, the people of the current provinces have a myriad of grievances and concerns under the current colonialist system.

The significant consequence of provincial state is to make the Line of Control the *de facto* border. Beyond that, it would remove the right of Pakistan in claiming leadership of the Muslims in Occupied Kashmir. The Muslims of Occupied Kashmir would have to produce a leadership to deal with Modi’s government on their own, without any support, political, military or otherwise, from Pakistan and critically, under the new status of being a union territory.

Significantly, on 4 November 2020, the Jammu and Kashmir poll panel announced⁵ local elections, previously postponed in February 2020, as taking place from 28 November onwards. One wonders whether Modi’s government would have had the confidence to declare these elections, if Pakistan had not taken steps to declare Gilgit-Baltistan as a fifth province. Again, the Gilgit-Baltistan elections endorsed the reciprocal nature of the Modi exchange with the Bajwa-Imran regime.

This then explains the political context of Moeed Yusuf’s interview to Kiran Thapar, as well as the content of the interview and the current narrative derived from it. The interview revolved around the themes of the UN Kashmir resolutions, cross border terrorism and towards the end a discussion on the context of a solution of the Kashmir, all rather meaningless subjects within the context above. The discussion of UN resolutions was dubious given that even Western scholars regard the UN as a tool for colonialism. The discussion of cross border terrorism whilst predictable from the Indian side, opened a

³ <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/jammu-and-kashmir-panchayat-elections-postponed-over-law-and-order-issues-2182191>

⁴ <https://thekashmirwalla.com/2020/09/pakistan-risks-losing-moral-high-ground-by-changing-status-of-gb-geelani-representative/>

⁵ <https://thewire.in/politics/jammu-and-kashmir-district-polls-eight-phases-november-28>

Pandora's Box for Pakistan. Given the revelation of Pakistan having evidence that India was behind the Army Public School attack, incriminates the previous army leadership. It raises the pertinent question of why was the Raheel-Nawaz regime so quick to declare the end of the good Taliban bad Taliban policy and initiate cross border action in Afghanistan? In another words, Moeed Yusuf and Karan Thapar were bringing into public discourse that both countries and their respective intelligence agencies have been initiating violent proxy actions in their opposing countries. However, the most telling part of the interview was the last part when Moeed Yusuf and Karan Thapar move onto the discussion of the next steps. Moeed Yusuf stated, "Look, Karan, Pakistan stands for peace. Pakistan stands for a conversation that moves us forward. And Pakistan stands for a region that grows. First thing, let's be clear about this. Nobody in Pakistan is talking war. You impose war, you'll see what happens, and you saw what happened last year."

Given that Pakistan's civilian and military leadership has ruled out war, whilst nothing has changed in the past year with Modi's intransigence in place, exactly what leverage does Pakistan actually have in pressurizing India to reverse its 5 August 2019 actions? Since Pakistan has relinquished any political support for the Kashmir movement, the underlying message is clear. The people of Kashmir must find their own way out. The treachery of surrendering Occupied Kashmir is plain for all to see. Whilst the civilian and military leadership uses terms like moral, diplomatic and other support, these are meaningless in the absence of coercive measures.

India was a nation ruled by the Muslims for hundreds of years and it was only due to the likes of Mir Jaffer and Mir Sadiq that the British gained a foothold in India. So today, we are capitulating to Mushriks like Narendra Modi's cadres. Allah (swt) states in the Quran, يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ ﴿٩:٢٨﴾ "O you who believe, the Mushriks are impure (najis)." [9:28]. So, how can it be that Muslims capitulate to those whom Allah (swt) describes as impure. To think that idol-worshipping Hindus actually carry any dominance over us is in itself an indication of the impure thought carried by our civilian and military leadership.

In another verse of the Quran, Allah (swt) states, إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ﴿٤:١١٦﴾ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿٤:١١٦﴾ "Verily! Allah forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners in worship with Him, but He forgives whom he pleases sins other than that, and whoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, has indeed strayed far away." [4:116]. They are those whose basic thinking is so low that Allah (swt) will never forgive them. How can we capitulate to the Mushriks when we have a strong and brave army, built on the desire for martyrdom, willing and able to fight and liberate Kashmir? It's because of the contemporary Mir Jaffer and Mir Sadiqs embedded within and directing our civilian and military leadership. The possibility to take back Occupied Kashmir is there for all to see, but it requires a belief in following the obligations of Allah (swt), as obligations and to trust Allah (swt) gives victory, not America. That is why this corrupt system that produces such corrupt civilian and military leaderships must be uprooted and replaced by the Rightly-Guided Khilafah (Caliphate) on the Method of Prophethood. It is only through the Khilafah that we will be able to liberate Kashmir and all other occupied lands, unleashing our Mujahid army to bring the world under the protective shade of Islam.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Khalid Salahudin – Pakistan**