

# 'Self-determination for the Kashmiris'

**Nisar A. Memon breaks his silence since 2009, for people of Kashmir and for water security of people of Pakistan.**

**What are your comments on the claim made by the Indian External Affairs Minister in the UN General Assembly that Kashmir is an 'integral part of India'?**

This statement must be seen in the historic context of diverting the world's attention from the state terrorism being perpetuated over people of Kashmir who are finally saying 'no more' to forceful occupation for almost 70 years which has now reached its culmination of independence movement of Kashmiris with curfews for over 100 days.

It was most hilarious to listen to the Indian External Affairs Minister defying the world and saying 'Kashmir was, is and will be ours.' She conveniently forgot the UN Resolutions of 1948 calling for self-determination by referendum in Kashmir to determine the will of Kashmiris for their future. She even forgot that her own founding Prime Minister Nehru had given his commitment to resolve this outstanding international dispute through plebiscite.

No amount of oratory will let India escape from their commitment to the world body, no amount of dreams of Kashmiri domination will let India escape the realization that it is neither a democratic country nor a civilized one. It neither differentiates between its own people or ones who like Kashmir are kept in chains by force. Its own treatment of Dalits and other minorities is well-known to world as against Pakistan where Sikhs and Hindus of India come for pilgrimage and Buddhist of the world visit Taxila.

**Do you believe the current uprising in Kashmir is moving in the right direction?**

The movement of independence by Kashmiris has always been in the right direction towards 'azadi'. It is now visible to the world that people can fight guns, chemical weapons and rubber bullets of state machinery with their will without any outsiders fighting with weapon support but just the diplomatic, political and moral support of Muslims of Pakistan, the world, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and people of Pakistan, including Gilgit-Baltistan, which achieved independence from Dogra Raj in 1948 despite Delhi's support.

Kashmiris worldwide in Belgium, UK, USA and other countries, like Palestinians, are raising their voice for justice and fair play by the world community against extremist Hindu Raj and Zionist Raj both cooperating in armaments and intelligence-sharing from next door Afghanistan. The voice we raised in NATO and UK when our Senate Defence Committee visited to apprise them of tens of Indian Consulates in Afghanistan on the borders of Balochistan, which were not for visa issuance but for creating disorder by infiltrating their Naval intelligence officers and financing dissent in Pakistan. They failed miserably and were so desperate that had to send their armed forces to fight in Pakistan on instructions of their spymaster who is now adviser to Indian Prime Minister. At this point I am reminded of a couplet, 'Zulm phir zulm hay, bharta hay to mit jata hay, Khoon phir khoon hay girta hay to jum jata hay'

**Do you have a workable solution regarding amicable settlement of the Kashmir dispute?**

Yes only one: 'Implement the resolutions of UN and give the right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir who have been forcefully illegally, immorally occupied

for last 69 years. Generation after generation of Kashmiris have been subjected to Nazi-like genocide in WW II. No number of media bans of both national and international media can hide the suffering and struggle of proud Kashmiri people against the atrocities of armed forces of India against unarmed people.

Armed Forces Special Powers Act which has given the army powers to disregard basic human and civil rights including habeas corpus indicate their ruthless state policy-making which must be withdrawn and war crime investigation must be launched by ICJ. Indian armed forces must surrender to the will of Kashmiri people and I will say Kashmiris must allow them to peacefully retreat while implementing UN Resolutions.

The fallacy of 'Kashmir is ours' by Indian leadership must not be uttered nor dreamt of since the Kashmiri movement has shown to the world it is homegrown and genuine movement where thousands have laid down their lives and millions suffered at the hands of black laws and powers given to Indian armed forces to keep people in control by curfews and picking children, women and old in violation of international law and practices. Kashmiris are at war with the mighty Indian state and have awakened the conscience of people of the civilized world.

USA must not allow visas for travel to those whom they denied visas due to their role in burning Muslims of Gujrat and in Friendship train between Pakistan and India. India did not burn train and Muslims but torched the process of peace in the region. The national interest of USA cannot be served by relationship with extremists who have captured power in Delhi which is challenged by its own people like Chief Minister of Delhi and many Indian parliamentarians. USA must not just see the Indian market size but see the size of violation of human rights and should not pardon individuals and follow the principles of justice laid down by their founding fathers.

The Indian Army has resorted to new tactics in its clampdown on the Kashmiris. Your thoughts on this.

The use of pellet guns against innocent protestors has again manifested the barbarity with which New Delhi seeks to assert its illegitimate claim. The heart-wrenching photos of children, women and elderly blinded and disfigured by these gruesome acts is compelling proof of India's oppression.

**Will the trumped up 'surgical strikes' have any impact on the international community?**

Certainly. The world has woken up in shock to see the intransigent attitude of Indian rulers, both civil and military and world is now openly calling for restraint and value of negotiation for resolution of international outstanding dispute over Kashmir between the two neighbours.

If India continues on warpath in the region, soon world will be left with no option but to ostracize them as sponsors of state terrorism. India must remember that its historic domination of peace-loving Buddhist people of beautiful Bhutan, which is landlocked and Indians enforce their will by getting hydel energy on their terms. Indian extremists should not treat the people and nations around with same yardstick. Bangladesh Awami League government supports India but the people of Bangladesh do not. Similarly, it is rulers in Kabul and not people of Afghanistan who will be enticed by their contributions of buses and military equipment which is market for Indian products.

**In addition to its already existing disputes with Pakistan (Siachin, Sir Creek), India has opened more fronts such as the Indus Waters Treaty, sabotaging Saarc, etc. Is this behaviour justified for a country aspiring to become a major regional player?**

You must understand India's compulsions and its history of terrorism. It has 1.3 billion people which need to be fed.

Instead of controlling population growth which Sanjay Gandhi started but was killed by its own extremists, just like Indira Gandhi was shot dead by Hindu extremists. They acquire territory but they have dispute with China and Pakistan. Sir Creek dispute was almost on the verge of resolution but their war machinery stopped it to have reason for their existence. Siachin is a criminal act of moving heavy machinery on the mother glaciers and aggravating climate change in the region causing glacier melt and floods like one we witnessed in Ataabad Lake. The glaciers they are killing are now taking revenge on soldiers, who are dying in extreme weather in hundreds. The sooner the Indian leave, the better will be its compliance with international agreements not to allow world to have more than 2 deg. C temperature.

Indus Water Treaty is acclaimed as the most successful between Pakistan and India and needs to be replicated by other countries. In 1947, Pakistan and India won their independence from British which divided the territory physically but its waters were not. Later, in 1960, the six rivers were divided, western rivers of Indus, Jhelum and Chenab for Pakistan and eastern rivers of Ravi, Sutlej and Beas for India. The Treaty never came in dispute due to political differences among the two countries. The wars in 1962, 1965, 1971 and 1999 did not affect it, because the it has dispute resolution mechanism such as bilateral talks, then arbitration and later going to International Court of Justice.

India's constructing Bagliar and Krishan Ganga dams on Chenab and Jhelum against provisions of the Treaty was taken up by Pakistan under the dispute resolution mechanism and got an award which also needs to be implemented. Instead, the extremists in India want to abrogate the agreement without reason. However saner elements in India have warned its government against doing so. Pakistan considers it an act of war. In my view it is yet another bogey by war mongers in India. In fact, IWT is an achievement of leadership of two countries and the World Bank to complete the partitioning by dividing the waters. The partitioning will only be complete when Kashmir is liberated from India.

**India claims to have an independent media. Is this claim justified in the manner its so-called 'free' media is toeing the official line?**

Media in India today is no more free, since it has not allowed its own as well as free world media to visit Kashmir and see and report human rights violations. It is putting lid on army atrocities where people are killed by point blank firing, injured by rubber bullets which have blinded hundreds, use pellets causing skin diseases and disable hundreds. World remembers the killing of Kashmiri lying helplessly under debris and Indian soldiers firing him to kill and then walking away.

**Any other aspect that you may wish to mention.**

We urge the people of India stop intransigent attitude and see reason and international law in dealing with Kashmir liberation movement. India by running away from SAARC is disrespecting the collective South Asia leadership and vision.

Pakistan's soft image is now gaining currency and no amount of Indian propaganda will affect it. Our defence is impregnable. Don't risk war which is not good for people of India and Pakistan. As a first step stop barbaric killing of Kashmiris and allow the media to visit Kashmir; restrain your army in its exercise of black laws. Indian soft image is gone and now world can see its true image. **S**

*Nisar A. Memon, former Minister of Kashmir & Northern Areas, State & Frontier Regions and Information, former Senator and Chair of Standing Committee of Defence & Defence Production. He is currently focused on water environment and is Chairman of Water Environment Forum, Pakistan, which held a national conference from October 17-19, 2016 in Islamabad.*