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Dealing with a hostile China

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TIME TO ACT

India blaming Pakistan for the current turmoil in Kashmir is nothing new. Since the outbreak of militancy over two decades back India has been hammering the same point and the response has been negative from across the border. Lashkar-e-Taiba founder Hafiz Mohammad Saeed provokes India that 'Wani's death will fuel jihad in Kashmir', Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif expressed support for Wani. By all these can we assume that Pakistan has no share in Kashmir militancy? Can a Kashmiri terrorist leader hiding in Pakistan issue a threatening statement without the consent and approval of Pakistani masters? In all these years of turmoil no one can doubt the unyielding commitment of the security forces to maintain law and order in the face of extreme odds. The casualties they suffered in all these years in the face of duty command respect. It is high time India should refocus its policy towards Kashmir and Pakistan. A proactive policy which has longtime impact to address the issue with a new perspective would surely get better dividends. India's policy towards these issues were never result oriented whether it was Pervaz Musharraf visiting India and snubbing India's directives on press briefing ahead of the famous Agra summit during the Prime Ministership of Atal Behari Vajpayee or Prime Minister Narendra Modi meeting Nawaz Sharif in Ufa and later on Modi visiting Pakistan and having tea with Sharif have not produced the desired results except some good ops and publicity rather the situation has worsened further today. What an irony governments 'restrain' policy has made the State Police a law enforcing agency receiver of brick bats. This could be one of the reason when PDP came in power with BJP in coalition has been stressing for reducing army, paramilitary role in counter insurgency and removal of security bunkers. Both State and Union Governments will have to work out a solution to bring normalcy to Kashmir at the earliest. It is time to act and not to involve in blame game or appealing for peace.

SCS DISPUTE

Though the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague has ruled against China in a bitter row over territorial claims to the South China Sea (SCS) that is likely to ratchet up regional tensions and India will be watching the ruling carefully, because it would have implications for India's security and economic interests. India has a range of interests in this region like creation of a 'blue' ocean economy including protection of offshore infrastructure and maritime resources, safety of trade and sea lanes of communication and a regionally favourable geostrategic maritime-position. The dispute dates back to 2013 when Philippines lodged its suit against Beijing, saying China was in violation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to which both countries are signatories. It had questioned the validity of China's '9-DashLine' through which China claims almost 90 per cent of the South China Sea. It has also challenged China's constructions on some of the rocks and land features in the sea, asking the Court to define them as 'low tide elevations', "rocks" or "islands" each of which have different implications in terms of EEZ. All eyes were watching for reaction from the Asian political and military powerhouse, which had fired off a barrage of criticism even before the decision by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague was announced. China asserts sovereignty over almost all of the strategically vital waters in the face of rival claims from its southeast Asian neighbours. The Chinese contention were first enshrined in a map drawn in the 1940s with a nine-dash line stretching south from China and encircling almost all of the sea, although it says Chinese fishermen have been using it for centuries. To bolster its position it has rapidly turned reefs into artificial islands capable of hosting military planes. India will have to trudge carefully especially after the NSG fiasco where China made its stand strong to keep India out of the elite nuclear club over and above when it has economic interest in the region especially tie up with Vietnam for oil explorations and maritime resources besides maritime trade lines.



Rejoice in life!

The Upanishads are not anti-life, they are not for renouncing life. Their approach is whole: life has to be lived in its totality. They don't teach escapism. They want you to live in the world, but in such a way that you remain above the world, in a certain sense transcendental to the world, living in the world and yet not being of it. But they don't teach you that life has to be renounced, that you have to escape from life; that life is ugly or life is sin. They rejoice in life! Upanishads say that the world is the manifest form of godliness and godliness is the unmanifest form of the world, and every manifest phenomenon has an unmanifest noumenon inside it. When you see a flower, the flower is only the manifest form of something inside it, its essence, which is unmanifest, which is its soul, its very being. You cannot catch hold of it, you cannot find it by dissecting the flower.

For that you need a poetic approach, not the scientific approach. The scientific approach analyses; the poetic perspective is totally different.

The science will never find any beauty in the flower because beauty belongs to the unmanifest form. Science will dissect the manifest form and will find all kinds of substances the flower is made of but will miss its soul. Upanishads are the very soul of this country, and of all the people who have been religious anywhere. They will rejoice in Upanishads, because Upanishads teach wholeness. The relative has to be lived as the relative, knowing

that it is relative, changing, and remembering continuously the unchanging. Abide in the unchanging and go on living in the changing. Remain centred in the unchanging, but allow the changing, beautiful world to move around you with all its seasons, with all its colours, with all its beauty, splendour. Enjoy that too, because it is the manifest form of God.

This is a very holistic approach. Religion consists in discovering the unmanifest in the manifest. It is not a question of escaping anywhere; it is exploring your innermost depths. It is exploring the silent centre, the centre of the cyclone. And it is always there; any moment you can find it. It is not something that has to be found in the Himalayas. It is within you! The Upanishads say that to choose between absolute and relative is wrong. Any choice will make you partial; you will not be whole. And without the whole there is no bliss, there is no holiness; without the whole you are always going to be a little bit lopsided, insane. When you are whole, you are healthy because you are total. The relative means the world, the changing, phenomenal world, and the absolute means the unchanging centre of the changing world. Find the unchanging in the changing.

And it is there, so there is no question; you just have to know the technique of discovering it. That technique is meditation. Meditation simply means becoming attuned to the unmanifest. The body is there, you can see it; the mind is there, you can see it too. If you close your eyes you will see the mind with all its activity, with all its working.

How many of us know about the truth

Y. R GUPTA

The government that claims to be secular and nationalist is observing the Black Day of 13th July as a Martyrs Day every year thus pouring salt on the wounds of the Hindu community which suffered untold atrocities at the hands of the Muslims during this completely communal movement which later spread up to the farthest corner of the State that is Kotli and Mirpur and thus keeping this communal tension alive. The happening of that day is not likely to be taken as free form prejudice unless supported by authentic and impartial version available and leave the readers to form his own opinion, as to whether the persons who were killed as a result of the police/military firing during these communal disturbances, merited being officially declared as National Martyrs.

A British military officer helped one Abdul Qadir, a religious fanatic from Peshawar to enter Kashmir in the guise of his cook. He was an excellent speaker at a meeting at Khanqa-i-Mualla, he was invited to speak and he made a speech there of highly seditious and communal nature, quoting frequently from Quran in support of his inflammatory statements. He was naturally arrested and charged before the Court. The crowds not only resisted the arrest and shouted objectionable slogans, but also threatened to obstruct the work of the Court, which was then held within the premises of the Central Jail.

On the 13th of July 1931, the day fixed by the Court for hearing of the case, communal disturbances of the worst type took place in Srinagar city and it suburbs resulting in the looting and burning of Hindu shops and houses on a large scale and the death of about 13 persons on account of police and military firing.

In their memory, the governments that succeeded the Maharaja after Independence, and which claimed themselves to be secular and nationalist, are observing the black day of 13th of July as a National 'Martyrs Day' every year thus perpetuating pin-pricking to the other community which suffered untold atrocities at the hands of the Muslims during this completely communal movement, and keeping the communal tension alive.

Here is how G. S Raghavan formerly Editor of the Hindustan Times the Nation, the Sunday Times, and other papers, described these happenings in Srinagar in his book THE WARNING OF KASHMIR published in 1931.

He says: "The hearing in Jail fell on 13th July. On that day, a mob stormed the Jail and demanded admittance along with the Sessions Judge. When the Judge had passed the gates, the crowd also attempted to get in. The other gates had been forced and the inner gates were attacked, at the suggestion of the Judge, two muslim lawyers representing the accused, harangued the visitors to go out of the Jail precincts. Finding that there was no possibility of ingress, the crowd went out and started stoning officials and set fire to the police lines. The police force was then called in. All efforts to pacify the unruly mob proved futile. While there was commotion outside the Jail there was also disturbance inside, prisoners tried to force the iron gates. About this time, certain prisoners were being taken from the Court to the Jail. The crowd stoned the policemen and the prisoners were liberated. The prospect was by no means satisfactory. The District Magistrate's order was defied, who had been summoned to the spot by the time, declared the crowd to be an "unlawful assembly" and ordered its dispersal. The order was defied and finding that the mob could neither be pacified

13 July (1931)-The Black Day

nor dispersed, the District Magistrate directed fire to be opened. The crowd fell off but later it re-assembled and resumed stoning. It had to be dispersed with a Lathi charge. Part of the crowd, however moved towards the Hari Parbat Fort: the cavalry had to pursue it and disperse it again. A section of the recalcitrant's proceeded towards a place called Maharaj Ganj which is a business locality and loot over an extensive area followed. From Bhoori Kadal to Alikah a long stretch, the Hindu shops were raided. Other localities such as Satakadal, Ganji, Khud and Nawakadal too formed the centers of loot. Bazaar streets were littered with property, books of accounts were burnt: the Hindu shopkeepers were molested, in short, pandemonium prevailed."

"The Hindu merchants lost lakhs worth of goods. Mr. Wakefield has affirmed that the articles were so strewn about the roads that his car would not pass, it is also his testimony that not a single Moham-medan complained to him about his premises having been invaded by the looters".

"The most extraordinary portion of the story was that almost simultaneously with the happenings at Srinagar, there was an uprising at a place named

Vicharnag, some 5 or 6 miles away. It has been stated that untold atrocities were committed there; men owning lakhs were reduced to indigence and women were subjected to the worst possible and the most in decent assaults. A military force was despatched to the place, but by that time the havoc had been completed. Elsewhere, the Hindus were the victims of ambushade. Some lost their lives and many suffered physical injuries. Stray assaults continued till long after".

Such is the origin of the Martyr's Day in Kashmir which is now being officially observed as a National Day by the 'Secular' government of the State.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was among the guilty persons. He was arrested, convicted and sentenced, but was released before completing his sentence as a result of amnesty granted by the Maharaja in 1932. He then established the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and became its first President.

The story of this Black Day will be incomplete without narrating the happenings in the Jammu province. This communal frenzy then spread to the far flung areas of Mirpur, Kotli, Rajouri and other parts of this area giving it a new name and created havoc. Hindu/Sikhs properties, homes were looted and burnt. Innocent people were mercilessly killed and many were converted to Islam forcibly. Religious places of worship of Hindus and Sikhs i.e. temples, Gurudwaras all met with same fate. Many were completely damaged and desecrated, in other few cases, though buildings were not damaged yet sacred God idols, religious books including Guru Granth Sahib badly damaged burnt and desecrated.

These happenings known as '88 NA SHAURASH' (Riots of 1988 Bikram or 1931 Christian Era) are still in the memory of not only survivals of that time but also of their subsequent generations, now refugees of 1947 scattered throughout India and awaiting rehabilitation.

Correspondence exchanged between different official agencies/officers of the State Government and Indian (British) Government is preserved in the British Library in London. Only a few relevant reports out of the voluminous papers are being quoted here which are a proof in itself about the sufferings and atrocities suffered by the Hindu/Sikh community at the hands of Muslims.

Thirty One places of worship were completely destroyed and looted. Cases of forced conversions were reported by the Admin Officer.

Who will take care of private sector?

SHIVAJI SARKAR

The Rs 80,000 crore pay hike bonanza to government employees will benefit about one crore employees and pensioners. However, it does not end here as the States too have approximately the same number of staff. Consequently, another Rs 80,000 crore will be doled out to them subsequently. In other words, about 6.6 per cent people will benefit from this pay hike. But it needs to be understood that entire Rs 1.6 lakh crore will not go as family income. A sizeable amount, almost Rs 40,000 crore will go back to the Centre as Income Tax and at least another Rs 4,000 crore to the States, as many of them levy profession tax.

Notably, adjusted to inflation and heavy tax deductions, the real hike per employee is not a bounty as it appears. At the upper end, high-paid employees may have surpluses, but those at the lower-end will pay higher taxes and in actuality, may take back home less.

This calls for a re-look at our Income Tax policy, but do we have so many employees on roll? Going by 2011 Census, the total number of Central Government employees were around 31 lakh. Besides, the number of employees in various States were far less than the numbers projected now.

It is a well-known fact that except some recruitments largely in security forces, not many have been put on rolls as there is a sizeable number of casual and contractual appointments. Sadly, they will not be beneficiary of the Seventh Pay

Commission's bonanza. Besides, the Government might have estimated a higher payment amount than what is really needed. This both the Centre and the States would not have to pay the earmarked Rs 80,000 crore. It would be far less.

Undoubtedly, the hike has caused heartburn among private sector employees. The Pay Commission has stated that it has tried to have parity with corporate salaries. Is that true? Not really. Except for a miniscule of people at the top rung, corporates are not paying high wages. Except for a few large corporates, many are not paying even what is due to an employee! The Government wage hike, though apparently a benevolent move, is creating severe social disparity.

Average corporate wages in our country varies from Rs 7,000 to Rs 40,000 per month. This is so even with highly reviled software companies. In most cases, if an employee leaves or is sacked, he is often not paid his last month's salary. Moreover, their wages are also not inflation adjusted. Often, the hikes that the corporates announce are adjusted against a supposed higher work target. And the employees are penalised for falling short of it where-in workers suffer the ignominy of wage cuts.

Even in private education institutions, be it a primary, secondary or higher learning college, the faculty members and the employees, despite the so-called University Grants Commission benchmark, hardly gets proper wages. In many

cases, the employer keeps their first month salary as 'security' without giving any written receipt. Many others pay through the bank an amount but asks them to return 15 per cent to 20 per cent, sometimes more, in cash to the employer. Furthermore, smaller companies are not following any formula for wages. It all depends on their needs and hire and fire is the rule.

The employee is often expected to work without pay once a notice has been served to him. Gratuity and other benefits are mostly anathema in such institutions. Alas, as labour unions have been weakened and employers emboldened, there is little succour for the workers. It is good that the Government remains a model employer, especially against the backdrop of total inflation being around 47 per cent since 2010 - an average of eight per cent a year. This has caused major erosion of wages necessitating this pay revision. If private sector employees are not compensated for this erosion of wages, it is a concern for the Indian society.

The Government must review the working system in private sector - it cannot be left to market forces, and payment of wages appropriately to those working outside the Government. The Government cannot take the satisfaction of being a model employer for its direct employees. Giving wage hike to Government employees is good, but the benefit must be equitably distributed and the private sector should be forced to do it for good governance.

ters to Kashmir to fight the so called holy war of Jihad.

The mother of a security personnel who was drowned and killed by stone pelters and supporters of terror has every right to ask these stone pelters the reason for the death of her son who was just performing his duty. Mothers have questions to those spreading hatred in the name of religion and region which they have to answer because their own mother may ask these question may be after sometime, somewhere and to someone.

We cannot make merry if a terrorist or a security personnel gets killed as the sentiments of their respective mothers are attached. Every human being born has to die someday but a mother never agrees to the law of nature because a mother is a mother and all have one.

Sanjay Raina
Chandigarh.

Seventh Pay Commission

Dear Editor,

The Government has done well to implement the Seventh Pay Commission recommendations. In a way this will not strain the fisc but will boost growth and give employees a decent deal.

The argument that an increase in salaries is a drain on the

Dealing with a hostile China

■VIKAS KUMAR

Many commentators have found fault with the government's decision to apply for membership. Some of them have claimed that the decision betrays a lack of understanding of our interests. They have unconvincingly argued that the membership will not give us any benefits in addition to what we already enjoy under the 2008 waiver.

These commentators seem to be confounding the desirability of the goal with its feasibility. Others have questioned the timing and approach. They have argued that the government failed to assess the depth of the Chinese opposition and it should not have invested so much of prime ministerial capital on a relatively minor issue.

The failure in Seoul has also led some commentators to question the government's reported decision to bandwagon behind the US and to remind us of the Nehruvian foreign policy. They seem to have forgotten that in the end, Nehru's India was utterly friendless and isolated (Ambassador Eric Gonsalves' account of his time in Burma after the 1962 war is revealing in this regard).

And, then there were those who called for retaliation conveniently forgetting what happened a few weeks ago when the government "mistakenly" issued visas to Uighur dissidents after China bailed out a Pakistani terrorist. The intense public debate on this issue has failed to address a few basic questions: What kind of relations does China want with us? What kind of relations do we want with China? Do we hold any bargaining chips?

There is a broad consensus within India that China does not seek a relationship of equals. It goes out of its way to block India's ascent and clumsily hides behind procedures, whether on the issue of sanctioning Pakistan-based terrorists or the membership of UNSC (United Nations Security Council) or NSG. China does not mind being the last man standing against India, and Pakistan is ever willing to give it company.

The Chinese media deliberately assumes a highly disparaging and combative tone in its India-related commentary. While the Chinese state-run media reflects its government's attitude toward India and Indians, China's apologists argue that it makes its editorial decisions autonomously.

However, India or at least its foreign policy experts are deeply divided over what constitutes normal relations with China. This involves two issues. How do we conduct our relations with a country that openly attacks our interests? The Chinese government adopts maximalist positions in the international arena and then apologists tell us that we should quietly resolve the issues so that China does not have to suffer a loss of face if its government has to retreat.

But what about our face? It is, therefore, good that the government did not shy away from openly identifying China, while remaining "engaged." The Chinese stand in Seoul strengthens the government against those who believe that India should defer to the Chinese way of doing things.

The other issue is the more difficult one. What are the preconditions for our normal relations with China? Return of Aksai Chin? Reduction in trade imbalance? Support for dismantling Pakistan's cross-border terror apparatus? Support for a seat in UNSC or NSG? We have to honestly admit that in all these cases, China holds all the cards and we do not hold many bargaining chips. For example, if China agrees to return Aksai Chin, what can we give it in return?

India cannot use its membership in Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) to make China yield on the NSG front because the latter does not seem to care much for an early entry into MTCR. Boycotting Chinese goods is easier said than done. The WTO obligations are not the only or even the most important obstacles. A trade boycott is both domestically and internationally untenable. Bulk of imported goods are produced by international manufacturing chains that include China. So, a boycott will hurt friends and enemies alike.

India's free media and internet have excited the consumer, who thanks to our jobless growth does not have the purchasing power to satisfy his newfound needs. Cheap Chinese imports, wholly of Chinese origin, cater to the needs of the economically disenfranchised masses. So, a boycott of these Chinese imports will hurt the ruling coalition, whether NDA or UPA, by denting the purchasing power of consumers.

Our goal should be to reduce dependence on Chinese imports through economic reforms that boost job creation in the manufacturing and agriculture sectors, which will increase the purchasing power of masses and expand the production base. Whether we like the label Make in India or not, that is the only defence against China.

exchequer is absolute piffle. There is popular perception that government employees get good salaries for the little work they do, and any increase in their remuneration is good money going down the drain. The interface between an ordinary citizen and a government servant only reinforces this negative image because the ordinary citizen is made to run from pillar-to-post to get the information or service that is due to him. Government officials, from the peon to the chief secretary have to recognise that they are literally, and not just in the rhetorical sense, servants of the people. They should work and behave as such.

U. B Singh
Rajouri

Women offer Eid prayers

Dear Editor,

All human beings should be equal. A society can only reach the top if both the genders fulfill their potential, and are given the opportunity to do so. Albeit a step in the right direction, it will not amount to much if similar initiatives are not taken to ensure social equality and the end of gender discrimination as a whole.

Prabhnoor,
Viva-e-mail