

**By Sidharth Mishra**



*An uncompromising and perhaps uncompromisable struggle of two ways of life, two concepts of political organisation, two scales of values, two spiritual attitudes.” – Josef Korbel, UN official on India-Pak dispute on J&K*

Last week, I came across some interesting data circulated on one of the retired defence personnel email groups. Titled “Eye-Opener”, it said, that the Kashmir valley consisted just 15 percent of the total land area under the Indian control. The data pointed out that the largest chunk was with Ladakh with 59 percent, and then Jammu with 26 percent.

Thereafter, it took to the argument that 85 percent of the area under Indian occupation was not Muslim majority and thus to paint the state as “Muslim-dominated” was incorrect. To counter those of overall Kashmiri majority on the basis of language spoken, it said, just 55 lakh of the 1.25 crore population spoke Kashmiri with Dogri, Punjabi, Hindi, Pahari, Gujjari, and Ladakhi also spoken by a large number of people of the state.

Then there was a proposition that there are 22 districts in J&K, out of which only five – Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla, Kulgam, and Pulwama, are under the sway of the separatists. Thus, it said, “Separatists’ writ runs over just 15 percent of the population which are Sunni Muslim dominated.” It added that stone-pelting, hoisting Pakistani flag, and anti-India demonstrations were in just these five districts in Kashmir valley and that the other 17 districts have never participated in such activities.

Citing the statistics, the note bemoaned the fact that this small percentage of population and area dominate the discourse on the state and the remaining areas are seldom given “enough space”. It said that Poonch and Kargil despite having more than 90 percent Muslim population have rarely had anti-India or separatist protest.

Given the circulation of such data which has some authenticity about it on the social media has certainly helped clear the impression that the whole state was under siege or that the whole state has risen against Indian sovereignty. Therefore when a Syed Ali Shah Geelani refuses to open the gates of his house to visiting members of the All-Party delegation, he only strengthens the silent support of the Indian masses to the government’s decision to “act tough.”

It is clear now that the Centre has decided to have a two-pronged strategy to handle the situation. While the political arm of the government would continue to harp on the need for dialogue - and even lobby abroad, its administrative arm would continue with its tough stand. The only concession it would allow is to replace the pellet guns with Pelargonic Acid Vanillyl Amide (PAVA) shells.

The government's real intent was best showcased by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's points man in the state Ram Madhav. The BJP general secretary at a recent seminar said, "In strategic discourse, it is said while talking is a strategy, not talking is also a part of the strategy."

"We need a particular security culture in this country. This, we terribly lack. As a nation, we are a romantic people. We are very happy with slogans. We do not know what we mean when we make statements. Every leader tirelessly makes this statement that we have to have a political solution... Political solution is simple and final that J&K is an integral part of India," Madhav said at the seminar under reference.

There is also an assessment within the government that the current unrest in the Valley is different from those in the past as it has excessive religious dimensions and its objective is to apparently establish a theocratic state. Those who handle Kashmir within the government also believe that the Hurriyat doesn't have much to offer in the present situation, as the "unrest" is not controlled by them.

There is a conviction within the government, both in New Delhi and Srinagar, that Pakistan is playing a proactive role in fomenting violence in the limited area under the influence of those, who support their authority over the valley. A few weeks, back we had discussed in the Notebook about the shift from Sufism to Wahabism in the state. The Wahabi upsurge is being felt across the globe and unrest in the Valley is possibly an effect of this turmoil.

What does that bring us to? What would be the government's way forward on the issue? The answer lies in the data circulated in the internet groups and Madhav's delineation at the seminar. The move has already started to get reflected in the tough stance the government has adopted in the past few days.

The visit by Home Minister Rajnath Singh, the senior most Minister of the Modi government, to the two global powers – Moscow and Washington, within a week is considered significant as India has raised the pitch on the issue of "terror export" from Pakistan. At the recent G20 meet and East Asia Summit, Prime Minister Modi, too, raised the issue of isolating terror groups and asked the international community to acknowledge this instigator of terrorism.

## Delhi has new canon on Kashmir

Written by Administrator

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Modi has probably taken a leaf out of the report by the UN observers in the valley submitted way back in 1953.

*"Kashmir is one situation you could never localise if it should flare up. It would influence the whole Muslim world. [It is] potentially the most dangerous in the world,"* said

**Ralph Bunche, senior UN official in February 1953.**

This explains the new direction in Indian diplomacy to bring Kashmir out of the closet. The idea probably is to bring the world around to realise that it was a case of Islamic terror of the same genre in Kashmir as being witnessed in the other parts of the globe. Interesting, and worth watching!

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