**India cannot suppress freedom**

[Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/dr-ghulam-nabi-fai)

May 13, 2023

[Opinions](https://www.nation.com.pk/opinions), [Columns](https://www.nation.com.pk/columns)

The fallacious statement made by the most celebrated Indian diplomat, Dr. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs during SCO meeting in Goa on May 5, 2023, that “Jammu-Kashmir Was, Is And Will Always Be India’s Integral Part,” deserves some clarification. It also needs to be supplemented by some observations from the Kashmiri perspective.

First, the assertion makes a mockery of the United Nations Charter and International Law. Dr. Jaishankar knows it well that his erroneous outburst regarding Kashmir violates the United Nations Security Council resolutions which were agreed upon by both India and Pakistan. Indian official position was articulated by Sir Goplaswamy Ayyangar, Indian delegate to the United Nations at the Security Council on January 15, 1948 that “the question of the future status of Kashmir, whether she should withdraw from her accession to India, and either accede to Pakistan or remain independent, with a right to claim admission as a Member of the United Nations – all this we have recognized to be a matter for unfettered decision by the people of Kashmir, after normal life is restored to them.” Second, it is a historical fact that when the Kashmir dispute erupted in 1947-1948, the United States, Great Britain and France took the stand that the future status of Kashmir must be ascertained in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the people of the territory. Third, Kashmir is not and cannot be regarded as an integral part of India because under all international agreements, which were agreed by both India and Pakistan, negotiated by the United Nations, endorsed by the Security Council and accepted by the international community, Kashmir does not belong to any member state of the United Nations. If that is true, then the claim that Kashmir is an integral part of India does not stand.

[Major transfers in Railways Department, notification issued](https://www.nation.com.pk/16-May-2023/major-transfers-in-railways-department-notification-issued)

Fourth, If Indian contention was correct then why Ms. Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights said on July 8, 2019, that both India and Pakistan should give the people of Kashmir right to self-determination. She added that the people of Kashmir should be included in all talks between India and Pakistan.

Fifth, does Dr. Jaishankar remember that Ms. Helen Clark, the Prime Minister of New Zealand told the Parliament on October 15, 12004 that, “It is perfectly obvious to the whole world that Kashmir is a flashpoint for tensions between the two countries. Most countries do not regard it as simply an internal affair.” Even one of India’s well-known authors, Ms. Arundhati Roy confirmed it by saying ‘It’s (Kashmir) not ever been really a part of India, which is why it’s ridiculous for the Indian government to keep saying it’s an integral part of India.’

My viewpoint was confirmed by a survey conduct by Robert Bradnock - an associate fellow at the London-based think-tank - Chatham House on May 26, 2010, that 74 % to 95 % of the people of the ‘Valley of Kashmir’ want Aazadi. Dr. Jaishankar should look back and refresh his own memory when he told Mike Pompeo, American Secretary of State in Bangkok on August 2, 2029, that, any discussion on Kashmir will only be with Pakistan and only bilaterally. (The Times of India, August 3, 2019).

[PTI leader Shehryar Afridi arrested under MPO](https://www.nation.com.pk/16-May-2023/pti-leader-shehryar-afridi-arrested-under-mpo)

So, it is fair to say that India will get nowhere by explaining away Kashmir as an integral part of India. India is promoting this narrative because she trembles at any attempt to resolve the Kashmir crisis because she is frightened by its outcome.’ When a former Defense Minister, Krishna Menon, was questioned as to why India would never hold a free self-determination election in Kashmir, he confessed that all of India’s political leaders knew it would lose. And would 900,000 soldiers be needed in Kashmir if the main opponents to India’s occupation were but a handful of militants”? The question answers itself. This is the time that world powers, including the United States should realize that given a chance, the people of Jammu & Kashmir could be instrumental in providing a way out of this catastrophic cycle of violence. Kashmiris are an educated people. They have a strong tradition of peace and religious tolerance. They have a developed political consciousness. Their land is rich in national resources and economic opportunities. Kashmir has an abundance of fertile land, vast forests, a network of waterways which could produce enough hydro-electric power to support not only its own people, but large areas of India and Pakistan. And mor importantly, Kashmir’s unsurpassed natural beauty has attracted tourists throughout history. Lastly, it is a simple task for heavily armed military troops to maim and cripple the civilian population and muzzle the voice of political leaders, like, Shabir Shah, Yasin Malik, Masarat Aalam, Aasia Andrabi, etc., journalists, like Asif Sultan, Irfan Mehraj, Fahad Shah, Gowhar Geelani, and human rights defenders, like Khurram Parvez. What is difficult, however, and what is necessary, is to harness the strong feelings of the Kashmiri people for peace, justice and Aazadi (freedom)!