**BJP in a state of denial on Kashmir’s history**

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Various Indian leaders have indulged in rhetoric regarding Kashmir, which they illegally occupied on 27 October 1947 and have been claiming it as an integral part of its Union. Pakistan tried to liberate Kashmir from India’s clutches during the 1947-1948 limited war but when only one-third was liberated, India approached the UN Security Council, seeking a ceasefire. The UNSC obliged but went to the extent of approving Resolutions on Kashmir, recognizing Kashmir as a disputed territory and seeking a solution to the issue through a plebiscite for Kashmiris to express their option for joining Pakistan or India. India welcomed the Resolutions then.

In the last seventy-two years, Kashmiris have seen their fortunes wane because various Indian governments have reneged on their promise to abide by the UN Resolutions and gone to war with Pakistan but the Kashmiris’ fate did not change.

Narendra Modi’s rise to power ushered in the era of extremism and terrorism as he had a special plan dubiously known as 44plus for Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). It represented the number of seats Modi’s fanatical political party required to win a majority in IOK in the 2014 elections. The heinous plan was thwarted by Kashmiri Muslims turning up in great numbers to cast their vote denying BJP the majority it sought.

More woe was in store for the Kashmiri Muslims in particular and Indian Muslims in general, because in 2019, riding on the coattails of radical Hindus, who were promised Hindu supremacy, Modi won the elections again. Wasting no time, on 5 August 2019, Modi rescinded Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution pertaining to Kashmir. The former gave special autonomous status to Kashmir, while the latter forbade non-Kashmiris from acquiring property in Kashmir or settling down there. Following the abrogation of Article 370, India illegally annexed Kashmir and Ladakh into the Indian Union, much to the chagrin of the Kashmiris. Removal of Article 35A, enabled Modi to approve regulations enabling non-Kashmiri Hindus to settle down in IOK, changing its demography and turning the Muslim majority of the Illegally Indian Occupied Kashmir (IIOK) into a minority. This would enable the Indians to get a majority vote for accession in their favour if ever a plebiscite is held. To deter the Muslims of Kashmir from protesting against the illegitimate actions, Modi preempted them by deploying additional troops on the eve of issuing his controversial diktat, locked down the entire Valley, which remains inaccessible to date, sent armed goons from his fanatic and rabid Muslim baiters Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) of which Modi remains an activist even as the Prime Minister and takes pride in it.

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To further disenfranchise the Indian Muslims, the draconian Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), and the all-India National Register of Citizens (NRC) was imposed in December 2019. Entire India, including Hindus went aflame protesting against this gross ignominy. There were riots in New Delhi even when US President Donald Trump was visiting the Indian capital. COVID-19 has suppressed the protest rallies but the anger and angst of ordinary Indians is still simmering.

International Human Rights organizations, the United Nations and the OIC have taken cognizance of the radical actions of the fanatic Hindu groups, the genocide of Muslims in general and Kashmiris in particular and passed resolutions condemning the atrocious attitude of the fascist regime in India. The Modi regime remains unmoved by domestic or international concerns.

In this backdrop Indian intransigence to persist in calling a disputed region as its own continues unabated. Amit Shah, Home Minister of India, on 17 November 2020 declared: “Jammu and Kashmir has been, is and will always remain an integral part of India. Indian people will no longer tolerate an unholy ‘global gathabndhan’ against our national interest. Amit Shah, Home Minister of India.”

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Secretary General, Washington-based World Kashmir Awareness Forum, in his article carried in most local English dailies on 28 November 2020 titled ‘Does Amit Shah Need a History Lesson on Kashmir?’, has rightly responded by logically taking apart the various myths presented by India to support its claim. Starting with the instrument of accession purportedly signed by the Dogra Maharajah of Kashmir on 27 October 1947. The outgoing British government had asked the princely states to opt for either Pakistan or India. Kashmir was expected to accede to Pakistan because of its being contiguous to Pakistan and its majority population being Muslims, who were keen to join Pakistan because they had suffered for decades under the tyrannical Dogra Raj. Fearing a betrayal by their erstwhile tormentor Hindu Maharajah Hari Singh, Kashmiri Muslims started agitating. Faced with the insurgency of his people, the Maharajah fled the capital Srinagar, on 25 October 1947 and asked India to send its army to help him crush the rebellion. India, coveting the territory, set one condition on its armed intervention, that the Maharajah must sign an Instrument of Accession to India. The Maharaja signed but the British Viceroy Lord Mountbatten accepted it subject to the reference to the people, which never took place. The clock took a full circle when the UNSC too in its Resolution declared a plebiscite under the aegis of the UN to be the solution to the impasse, which India continues to deny.

*Dr. Fai recommends that the UN Secretary General should be asked to facilitate the Kashmiris by taking their position into consideration and aim at a settlement within a reasonable time-frame, providing for a transitional period, if necessary, for a calming effect.*