**PM Khan Storms into Second Round**

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The optics of US Vice President Kamala Harris meeting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the buzz created around the QUAD meeting hosted by US President Joe Biden faced just as powerful second round by Prime Minister of Pakistan who was awarded an opportunity for a second virtual address to the 76th Session of UN General Assembly on September 24, 2021. Among other subjects, PM Khan came out with forceful advocacy of the People of Afghanistan, flagged the virus of Islamophobia and told the woeful story of the People of Jammu and Kashmir.

The prime minister has skilfully, and following the mandate of the UN Secretary-General (under article 99 of the UN Charter), flagged him for convening a global dialogue on countering the rise of Islamophobia. Mandate under article 99 was used by UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld to visit Srinagar in March 1959 and assess the economic and political situation of the people in Jammu and Kashmir.

Advocates of inter-faith (Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and people of no faith) all over should act in the interests of a tolerant world, which is free of lynching mobs as we saw in India, killing and burning women and children as we saw in Myanmar and other places guaranteeing freedom of religion. We need to focus on a Global Dialogue, hosted by the UN. The OIC (Pakistan in particular) and Pope could take a lead role.

Prime Minister came with a full and well-prepared defence of the People of Kashmir. He filed a charge sheet against India for her crimes in Jammu and Kashmir and enumerated eight significant Indian actions taken under her “reign of terror” backed by a 900,000 occupation military force. The June 2018 and July 2019 OHCHR reports had put this estimate between 500,000 to 700,000 forces and described the habitat as the world’s highly militarized place.

Unfortunately, Jammu and Kashmir governments have continued as partners in sinning against their own people!

It is important to point out that at a meeting of the UN Security Council held on December 8, 1952, the Indian Government (representative Mrs Pandit) conceded that “…after careful examination and assessment by its experts, the Government of India had come to the conclusion that a minimum force of 28,000 was required to carry out its responsibilities.” Indian representative added, “However, on complete disbandment and disarmament of the Azad Kashmir forces, and as a further contribution towards a settlement, the Government of India is prepared to effect a further reduction of 7,000 to a figure of 21,000 which is absolute and irreducible minimum. It should further be emphasised that this force will have no supporting arms such as armour or artillery.” Prime Minister of Pakistan and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights have made a case against the presence and number of Indian occupation forces in Kashmir.

India has offered to keep a final reduced military force of 21,000 personnel and has assured that this force would “have no supporting arms such as armour or artillery.” In addition, the UN Security Council Resolution of April 21, 1948, has placed a discipline of three restraints on the behaviour, number and location of this army.

Indian army has been admitted into Kashmir under an agreement (contested) with the Government of Jammu and Kashmir. According to this, the Indian army is a subordinate supplement to Kashmir forces and the Government of Jammu and Kashmir could terminate its presence any time. The final disposal of the presence of the last Indian soldier in Kashmir is in the hands of the UN and Kashmir Government – a representative Government comprising of all major political elements.

Prime Minister’s speech has set a task for us and the world. We need to flag the illegitimate and unlawful presence of the Indian army in Kashmir. Until we can go through an UN-supervised Plebiscite in Kashmir, we need to campaign for bringing the Indian army down to a non-arms bearing number of 21,000 soldiers.

There is a strong case for the reduction in the number of Indian army. It is unfortunate that Jammu and Kashmir governments based at Srinagar have continued to overlook this fact and have continued as partners in sinning against their own people. There is an urgent need to seek a credible defence and protection of the people of Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) by a neutral force as proposed by Canada at the 235th meeting of the UN Security Council held on 24 January 1948.

Prime Minister has flagged the illegal and unilateral measures taken by India in occupied Jammu and Kashmir since August 5, 2019. He catalogued that India has jailed senior Kashmiri leadership; imposed a clampdown on media and internet; violently suppressed peaceful protests; abducted 13,000 young Kashmiris and tortured hundreds of them; extra-judicially killed hundreds of innocent Kashmiris in fake “encounters;” and has imposed collective punishments by destroying entire neighbourhoods and villages.

It raises the ceiling of our responsibility. We shall have to refer back to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN Human Rights Council and ask them to reconcile their responsibilities with this new development and charge sheet against India, lodged at the General Assembly by the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Prime Minister has highlighted the “double standards” practised by the world community on the question of human rights. He referred to India as the “most glaring case,” where the RSS-BJP regime is being allowed to get away with human rights abuses with complete impunity.

PM Imran Khan cited the forcible snatching of the mortal remains of the great Kashmiri leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, from his family; denying him a proper Islamic funeral and burial, per his wishes and Muslim traditions, as the most recent example of Indian barbarity. Prime Minister said, “Devoid of any legal or moral sanction, this action was even against the basic norms of human decency,” he said, adding: “I call on this General Assembly to demand that Syed Geelani’s mortal remains be allowed to be buried in the Cemetery of Martyrs with the appropriate Islamic rites.”

There is an urgent need to join in the demands made by the Prime Minister of Pakistan from India. These are:

o Reverse its unilateral and illegal measures instituted since August 5, 2019;

o Stop its oppression and human rights violations against the people of Kashmir; and

o Halt and reverse the demographic changes in the occupied territory.

Prime Minister of Pakistan has highlighted, “India’s military build-up, development of advanced nuclear weapons, and acquisition of destabilising conventional capabilities, can erode mutual deterrence between the two countries.”

There is no alternative to dialogue and peace. We pray that the instrument of dialogue returns into the hands of the leaders of India and Pakistan. But we should also take into account the caution of the Prime Minister. He warned of another “conflict between Pakistan and India,” if the environment of mistrust is not corrected.

The government of India should accept the fact that no armies on earth have ever defeated a people. British could not occupy India for long. Same went for Russia and America in Afghanistan beyond a point. Similarly, Indian military and political control in Kashmir has its sell-by date.

Thank you, Prime Minister Imran Khan, for highlighting the wrongs done to the people and habitat of Kashmir by the Indian Government run by RSS-BJP ideology!

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