**Waking to war**

B Y F.S. AIJAZUD D IN | 8/22/2019

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| THE United Nations Security Council has outdone Rip Van Winkle. He slept for 20 years and woke to find a changed world. The UNSC slumbered for 50 years to find the embers of the Jammu & Kashmir issue still smouldering.Following India`s abrogation of Article 370, the UNSC hurriedly convened a meetingatthe requestofPakistan,supported by China (a permanent heavyweight). No one expected a definitive outcome. UN hens are known to cluck but lay only sterile eggs.The SC meeting was held on Aug 8, for 90 minutes behind closed doors. Even though no statement was issued afterwards, the Chinese ambassador to the UN Zhang Jun (obviously with the tacit concurrence of other Security Council members) disclosed that the `Council members had `expressed their serious concern` concerning the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir`.They advised that `the Kashmir issue should be resolved properly through peaceful means, in accordance with the UN Charter, the relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements`. The Pakistaniand Indianrepresentatives to the UN followed him, fashioning significance out of stale air.The Security Council chamber has emptied. What is left is the reality that both Pakistan and India have been told by the Security Council superpowers United States, Russia and China to follow a path that has led from the UN in 1948, through Shimla in 1972 and then Lahore in 1999, back to the UN. Both belligerents have been exhorted privately and now publicly to resolve their differences through `bilateral negotiations` No one has specified how an uneager India can be brought to the negotiating table.Conceivably, the US (trusted by Pakistan) and Russia (trusted by India) could be catalysts. China is in an anomalous position.Because of its possession of Aksai-Chin and its un-assuaged interest in Ladakh (which India has annexed), China has become willy-nilly a party to the Jammu & Kashmir dispute. Should therefore a third chair be laid for China at that still elusive negotiating table? Will China participate (to borrow Dr Kissinger`s phrase) in the hitherto `dialogue of the deaf`? It is difficult to see how Prime Minister Modi and his henchmen (Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh) could be persuaded to reduce their belligerent rhetoric, in effect to stop forging their words into swords. Each pronouncement by them seems designed as a pointed taunt at Pakistan, a jab intended to wound.For example, the IAF pilot downed by Pakistani hghters on Feb 26 is being honoured with an award for valour, as is thefemale officer in charge of the flight control room. The only names missing among the honorees are of the Indian marl(smen who, using an Israeli missile, shot down their own Mil7 V5 helicopter over Budgam, killing six of their uniformed colleagues and a civilian. They are probably expecting an award from Pakistan.Sinisterly, India has revoked its previous policy of `no nuclear first strike` Forgotten is Mrs Indira Gandhi`s contention that India`s nuclear programme was only for peaceful purposes. Gone is the declaration by Mr.A.B. Vajpayee (the 1998 Pokhran nuclear test notwithstanding) that war was not an option. India has increased significantly the frequency of cross-LoC shootings, with yet more casualties. The wings of the dove of peace have been clipped and her beak replaced with a nuclear warhead.Peace is defined as a state of no war. Since India and Pakistan are not at peace with each other, when should one expect war? A war using nuclear weapons is MAD(Mutually Assured Destruction) irrational, even unthinkable. If hostilities are to be conventional, is India waiting until September, when France delivers the 36 French Rafale fighter aircraft, which India hopes will provide it aerial superiorityover Pakistan`s American F-16s and Chinese JF-17s? It has already spent Indian Rs11,000 crores on new ammunition, IRs 7,000 crores on `critical armaments`, and a further IRs 9,000 crores on military purchases. Such extravagance begets hubris.While Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to swallow the Kashmiri porcupine, he should read the words of Edmund Burke, who said in 1775, when Britain was subjugating its British colonies (now the United States): `The use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for a moment; but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again; and a nation is not governed, which is perpetually to be conquered.He added: `A further objection to force is, that you impair the object by your very endeavours to preserve it. The thing you foughtforis not the thing you recover; but depreciated, sunk, wasted, and consumed in the contest.Both India and Pakistan should heed Burke`s warning. The writer is an author.www.fsaijazuddin.pk |  |