

# Pakistan has a legitimate right to Kashmir!

## The so-called Kashmir dispute.

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First; there is no real issue to dispute. The facts on this conflict are clear. Let me give you these facts:

- **History:** On 26 October 1947 India raided on the Sovereign State of Kashmir and the Indian Army took control of the majority of the territory. This was at the time when newly formed Pakistan and Kashmir had no official army. Therefore, the Indian army couldn't face any armed resistance from Pakistan. However, the Indian army faced strong civilian resistance and there has been a war between the civilians and the occupying Indian troops ever since. Since then the Dominion of Pakistan felt a strong need to build its own army to defend its own land and free the illegally occupied territory from Indian militarization.
- **People:** The Kashmiri people are akin to Pakistanis. Their right to join Pakistan was to be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial UN sponsored plebiscite, which is tragically denied till date.
- **Geography:** From a geographical viewpoint, a look at the map confirms Kashmir belongs to Pakistan. In the imperfect partition of 1947, the regions of Pathankot-Gurdaspur were mischievously taken by India. Otherwise, India would have had no access or land routes to Kashmir. It would have simply been part of Pakistan. Pakistan's river waters emanate from Kashmir. Without water, Pakistan's agriculture, and perhaps demography, is simply not sustainable. India on account of its size and diversity has other water sources, but Pakistan has none! The next war may be a water war. A peaceful solution to a nuclear conflagration is in everybody's interest.
- **Kashmiris** have been struggling against the Indian tyranny since 1947. Historically, their freedom movement has much earlier roots. The Kashmiri freedom fighters are waging a just struggle for national liberation. India's plans to equate Kashmir with the militants was facilitated by the 9/11 terrorism syndrome. The freedom fighters include not only men, but also women and children. India has been inflicting all sorts of atrocities on the hapless Kashmiris.
- The Indian forces, reportedly, committed genocide by killing thousands of Kashmiris. An estimated over 25,000 Kashmiri women have been raped or injured by them. Widows in Kashmir are in thousands, while children have suffered the most. By repeating the mantra of 'cross-border terrorism', India has tried to blame Pakistan for its crimes in Kashmir. Mass graves of over 2,000 people have been discovered in Kashmir. Yet, the flame of freedom cannot be extinguished, since the Kashmiris don't want to be a part of India.
- The question, however, is: how can the Indian government commit such excesses and claim Kashmir to be a part of India? Even worse, how can

Pakistan forsake the support to Kashmiris for the sake of keeping New Delhi in good humor? I am talking here about the Pakistani politician, not the Pakistani Army who was always on the side of the suppressed Kashmiri people.

Pakistan's Kashmir policy has not changed. Nor can it be changed for anyone, including some ill-informed government officials. The reason is simply that Kashmir is not a part of India. In case, anyone has doubts, a referendum can be held in Pakistan on Kashmir being given to India. In a democratic Pakistan, the people decide on key national issues - Kashmir being primary. The people and soldiers of Pakistan are nationalistic and believe that Kashmir has to return to Pakistan. And no sane political leader in Pakistan will relent on the Kashmir cause, as complete national consensus prevails.

Finally, all kinds of stratagems have been tried, but failed to break the will of Kashmiri people. India has fought numerous wars, near wars and even risked nuclear exchange with Pakistan over Kashmir. The world is partly aware of the Kashmiris' plight and needs to be further galvanized. India supported militants in Baluchistan partly as a 'Strategy of Deflection' to embroil Pakistan on its Western borders. Else to equate trouble in Baluchistan with Kashmir. Hoping to achieve leverage or quid pro quo, New Delhi strives to equate Pakistan's internal matters with India-Pakistan interstate disputes.

The tragedy of Kashmir cannot be neglected for long, nor is there any viable solution other than the withdrawal of all Indian security forces from Kashmir. The Kashmiris want freedom from India and will settle for nothing less. Pakistan and the world at large must support their right of self-determination. The US, which stands for human rights, should support the Kashmiri people's struggle for freedom.

Pakistan and India need to resolve the Kashmir dispute on priority basis, rather than relegate it for a later, albeit explosive, timeframe. It is just a matter of time before the Kashmiri people will be masters of their own destiny.