

*The Kashmir
Struggle
from
Peoples'
Perspective*

The Supplement

November, 2019

Note

In our September 2019 publication "The Kashmir Struggle from Peoples' Perspective: A Collection", it was said,

"The so-called international community, which actually means imperialists and their compradors, remains within the confines of advising both the countries for restraint and expressing shallow concern for human rights in a passing manner. The moves of US imperialists are in line with their designs for using the services of the rulers of both the countries for their interests in South Asia particularly Afghanistan. Russian imperialists and China have also reacted in frame of their own designs for hegemony in the region rather than any concern for rights of people in Jammu and Kashmir."

This supplement in hand is in continuity and further elaboration of the point.

The Comrade Publications

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Kashmir Developments further Expose the Enemy Camp of Imperialists and their Allies

People of Kashmir on both sides of the Indo-Pak border are fighting for recognition and exercise of their right to national self-determination. Objectively, it is part of the struggle for national liberation from imperialist oppression. It is because feudal comprador rulers of both the countries serve as tools of imperialist oppression against people of all the nationalities in these countries. In addition to that Kashmir is also a victim of annexationist misdeeds of both the reactionary regimes – inherited from the legacy of aggression and occupation of their colonial masters.

Above stated also needs to be conceived at subjective plane of consciousness. It means right to self-determination should not be taken as merely an end in itself. It should rather be placed in broader frame of national liberation from imperialism, a common cause belonging to all the nationalities residing in both the countries.

Like any contingent of oppressed people fighting for a just cause, people of Kashmir need to identify and differentiate their friends and foes from among the world forces. They must keep in mind the character of different world forces in relation to people of the world as well as their specific role in relation to the struggle of Kashmiri people. The reactionary character of all the imperialists and their allies in the world calls for placing them in camp of enemies of the world people; including people of Kashmir. On the other hand, all the workers and oppressed people of the world belong to the peoples' camp

with a friendly relation to Kashmiri peoples' struggle for national liberation. Countries aspiring for independence, nations aspiring for liberation and people aspiring for revolution constitute the world stream of friendly forces for the just cause of Kashmiri people.

Specific role of different forces in relation to a specific struggle is shaped according to the nature of the contradictions and their specific state in a given world situation. The present role and behavior of imperialists and their allies in relation to Kashmir struggle is being *essentially determined* by the principal contradiction between imperialism on one side and the oppressed peoples and nations of the world on the other side. At the same time it is also being *influenced* by inter-imperialist contradiction as well as the contradictions among their subservient allies. Implication of this factor, specific to Asian region, is that various imperialist powers are jostling to expand and consolidate their sphere of influence in the region at the cost of the sphere of influence of their rival imperialist powers. Another implication is that rulers of India as well as Pakistan are using the Kashmir issue to raise bogey of national chauvinism for security and consolidation of their reactionary regimes against people. Indian rulers have shamelessly announced that the only pending issue regarding Kashmir is how to grab the territory of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (POK). The Pakistani rulers talk about the right to self-determination for Kashmiri people, but restricting themselves to the talk of self-determination only for the Indian part of Kashmir, they openly refuse the same right to the people of Pakistan occupied Kashmir and go to the extent of showering bullets to suppress this right. Both the regimes, thus, are dead

set against the Kashmiri peoples' right to self-determination.

History tells that no imperialist power really supported the Kashmiri peoples' right to self-determination which actually means the united exercise of free will of Kashmir nationality on both sides of the border of occupied Kashmir territory. Their goodwill umbrella was always reserved for one or the other reactionary regime against the interests of Kashmir nationality. All the imperialist powers have operated as sworn enemies of Kashmiri people. After restoration of capitalism in China, Chinese expansionists have also joined the camp of enemies of the Kashmiri people. Change in geopolitical and geostrategic conditions has led to changes in positions of imperialist powers regarding Kashmir. But the running thread continues to be the security, expansion and consolidation of imperialist hegemony in the region. There was a time when US and Britain favored Pakistan and talked about 'independence' of Indian part of Kashmir. The underlying purpose was to pressurize the Indian state to fall in line with world imperialist strategy of Anglo-American camp. In present world scenario, the significance of India as a reactionary subservient ally has increased in the eyes of US imperialist camp. Now they are much more concerned about the stability of the reactionary state of India; a big market as well as important counterweight to China in their military-political strategy regarding the region as well as the world. That is why now-a-days the 'terrorism' in Kashmir is so pinching for US imperialists that it calls for snubbing the Pakistani rulers to desist from 'export' of terrorism into Indian part of Kashmir.

Most of the anti-people regimes in the world are taking

opportunist positions regarding Kashmir. Reference point for these regimes is India v/s Pakistan rather than Indian state v/s Kashmir people. It means Kashmiri people are not a party worth considering in the issue of Kashmir. It means that democratic rights of Kashmiri people, particularly the right to self-determination, need not to be taken into account in the solutions of Kashmir problem.

Another opportunist position is that India and Pakistan should solve Kashmir problem bilaterally. It means that fate and future of Kashmiri people should be given in the hands of the rulers of India and Pakistan. Along with this it is also being said that they should solve this problem “peacefully”. This concern for peace between India and Pakistan is not for the safety and security of Kashmiri people but it is for the safety and security of the foreign investment in India and Pakistan. Had they been really concerned for the peace of Kashmiri people they would have not washed their hands off the bitter reality of the clamp down on Kashmiri people by Modi regime. No doubt a few voices of some imperialist leaders are being heard against the clamp-down in Kashmir but without even mentioning the suppression of right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people. Motive behind such voices is to convey a goodwill gesture to Pakistani regime or to please the Diasporas of Pakistani and Kashmiri origin in the respective countries of such imperialist leaders out of concern of Parliamentary calculations.

Such a situation indicates the overall weakened state of imperialist powers in matter of handling their relationship with comprador regimes in a situation of deepened economic and political crisis of imperialist system and in context of the

intensification of the principal contradiction between imperialism and people of the oppressed countries.

Responses of Various Countries to the Kashmir Development

Britain: “Prime Minister (Boris Johnson) and Prime Minister Modi discussed the current situation in Kashmir”, a Downing Street spokesman said in an official readout of the phone call on August 20. (The Hindu, August 21, 2019)

“The (British) Prime Minister made clear that U.K. views the issue of Kashmir as one for India and Pakistan to resolve bilaterally. He underlined the importance of resolving the issues through dialogue.”

France: France's Foreign Minister has advised his Pakistani counterpart to address the Kashmir issue through dialogue with India, according to a statement from French government (Economic Times, August 22, 2019)

ET has learnt that over the last two weeks France has been working behind the scenes to garner support for India at the UN Security Council on the Kashmir issue. For instance it blocked China's move at UNSC, when Beijing sought an open formal session on Kashmir issue and pushed for a statement from informal UNSC session at the behest of Pakistan.

Germany: On the eve of biannual summit visit by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the German ambassador to India Walter J. Lindner said, “Germany supports the EU position in the matter... Our position remains that Article 370 is an internal matter for India. But we support dialogue between India and Pakistan; any restrictions (in Kashmir) should be lifted as soon as possible.” (m.times of India.com, Oct. 30, 2019)

Russia: Backing India's stand on Kashmir after scrapping of Article 370, Russian envoy Nikolay Kudashev said the country recognizes the Indian government's decision as an internal matter.

“Abrogation of Article 370 is a sovereign decision of the Indian government. It is an internal matter of India and such issues can be resolved between India and Pakistan under Shimla and Lahore agreements. Our views are exactly the same as India's”, Kudashev said. (India Today Web desk August 28, 2019)

USA and China: The response to the Kashmir development (of August 5, 2019) is a bit complicated affair for USA and China. They want to support both of India and Pakistan but try not to alienate any of them for different reasons.

China is biggest rival, other than Russia, of the USA. USA is actively pursuing the policy of its containment. India has a geo-strategic importance for USA to implement this policy. Therefore USA cannot afford to alienate India. On the other hand President Trump is trying to get rid of Afghanistan imbroglio before next presidential elections in USA on November, 2020. Compromise with Taliban is necessary to come out of Afghanistan. Pakistan can play a crucial role in this compromise. Hence USA cannot afford to alienate Pakistan. In such a situation, Trump administration is trying to balance India as well as Pakistan while responding to the Kashmir development of August 5, 2019.

On the one hand Trump praised Modi to skies in Howdy-Modi mega show in USA. Going out of way, he attended this meeting of Modi with Indian diaspora,. Normally US

President does not attend some meeting by Prime Minister of some country with the diaspora of his country.

On the other hand, in order to please Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, President Trump offered, more than once, to mediate to help India and Pakistan resolve Kashmir problem, knowing well that India has been consistently opposing any third party intervention in the Kashmir problem.

US State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortagus, in her statements tried not to appear favoring either India or Pakistan. Speaking on August 5, she urged India to engage in discussion with those affected by the decision. She went out of her way to emphasize that New Delhi considered its action relating to Kashmir an internal issue, though she also added, “We are concerned about the reports of detention and urge respect for individual rights.”

In her another statement (Economic Times August 9, 2019) she said, “The US policy has been that Kashmir is bilateral issue between India and Pakistan. It is up to two countries to decide on the pace and scope of talks on the issue... It is something that we have called for calm and restraint by all parties. We want to maintain peace and stability.”

Responding to a question of Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's allegation of human rights violation in Kashmir, Ortagus said: “I really don't want to go beyond what have been said because it is such a tenuous issue. There are reports, as you have mentioned, of detention and restriction of residents in Jammu and Kashmir and again that is why we continue to monitor this very closely.”

As far as China is concerned, it has dual motive in dealing

India and Pakistan in context of Kashmir problem. It wants to maintain decades old relation as an “all weather friend” with Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan is partner in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is part of China's strategic Project of linking China with Europe under One Belt One Road (OBOR). After the abrogation of article 370, China helped Pakistan internationalize this issue by making it an agenda of UN Security Council.

China responded positively to Pakistan with Chinese representative Wang Yi saying that Kashmir issue should be properly and peacefully resolved based on UN charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreement. Moreover, Wang Yi raised the matter in his UN General Assembly speech in September invoking UN resolutions on Kashmir again. This was clearly a pro-Pakistan response.

On the other hand, China required an improvement in its relations with India in order to neutralize it as a partner in US's policy of containing China. Moreover, India is a big market for Chinese exports. China is second biggest trade partner of India after USA. So keeping above mentioned considerations in mind and in view of upcoming second informal summit between Prime Minister Modi and China's President Xi Jinping, Chinese spokesperson, replying to a question said, “So you are paying attention to the Kashmir issue, right? China's position on Kashmir issue is clear and consistent.” Jing told the reporter adding, “We call on India and Pakistan to engage in dialogue and consultation on all issues including Kashmir issue and consolidate mutual trust. This is in line with the interest of both countries and common aspiration of the

world.” This was a significant shift in Chinese stance over Kashmir.

Such a response of imperialists and their allies is due to the increasing corrosion to their capacity for kidnapping and derailing the national aspirations of the people in oppressed countries on to a self-defeating course of refuge in lap of one or the other imperialist power.

Response of so-called Muslim Countries

To the dismay of Pakistan the 'Muslim' countries with whom Pakistan has enjoyed longstanding “brotherly” relationship for decades have stayed away from condemning India's crackdown in Kashmir. The responses and reactions from Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) or 'Muslim' countries supported India excluding Iran, Turkey and Malaysia. Afterwards even Turkey realigned with Indian position during UN General Assembly when President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told the world body that it was imperative to “Solve Kashmir problem through dialogue.”

While Saudi Arabia expressed concern over India's unilateral decision to scrap Kashmir's special status and imposition of crippling security lock-down, the UAE called it New Delhi's internal matter. Not only this, UAE's ambassador in India even praised this brutal attack by Modi government on Kashmiri people. According to the Gulf News, referring to this development, he said, “We expect that change would improve social justice and security and confidence of people in local governance and will encourage for the stability and peace.”

Amid lockdown in Kashmir, UAE bestowed on Modi the country's highest civilian award Order of Zayed as a mark of his efforts to boost bilateral ties between two nations. Modi

was also honored with Saudi Arabia's highest civilian award. On March 1, 2019 India was invited as a "Guest of Honor" to participate in 46th session of OIC meeting.

Other Gulf countries Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman have not issued any statement. Due to the absence of expected response from Muslim countries on Kashmir issue in favor of Pakistan, Prime Minister Imran Khan asked Pakistanis not to get disheartened by silence of Islamic countries on Kashmir. He said that Islamic nations might be silent on Kashmir now but there would come a time when they would have to speak up.

This development once again showed that the rulers of theocratic countries have no religious conviction other than their vested economic and political interests. Once again economic and business interests have cut across religious identities.

Volume of trade between India and Muslim countries is about \$100 billion. While this figure for Pakistan is \$44.262. UAE is the third largest trade partner of India after US and China. Biggest move came from Saudi Arabia's Aram co. which has invested \$15 billion in India's Reliance. The Saudi Crown Prince has said they would be investing \$ 100 billion more in the years to come.

The experience exposes real content of so-called Islamic cooperation as 'cooperation' of the reactionary allies belonging to imperialist camp. The response of these regimes, including large number of subservient regimes, is being dictated by compulsions of retrogressive economic thrust and reactionary political designs directed against peoples' camp.