

# The Flames of Kashmir and the Path to Liberation.

Text Of Presentation Made At The Symposium Held To Commemorate Kashmir Black Day, Organized By The Kashmir Study Forum—Sri Lanka, On 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010:

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## **Introduction:**

What are the historical factors and political-strategic dynamics that account for the crisis and conflict in Kashmir? We know that the dispute over Kashmir has the potential for yet another war between India and Pakistan, far more devastating than the two before, including the possibility of nuclear attacks and potential unthinkable devastation throughout the South Asian region—and beyond. Such a war shall plunge humanity into the depths of self-destruction. So, the stakes are deadly and decisive for the liberation of the people of Kashmir, conjoined with the survival of planet Earth and Humankind. So the topic deserves deep analysis and reflection.

## **Strategic Rivalry and Contention:**

The crisis and conflict in Kashmir is no longer an internal, local or regional matter. It is simmering and spilling over in the context of intensifying rivalry and competition to gain and hold strategic advantage in the region between India, Pakistan, China, – and increasingly, the US and Russia. The crisis and conflict is a result of a political and strategic chessboard, where Kashmir is the prize and the people are the pawns. Let us try to get some picture of this chessboard and the workings of its dynamics and compulsions, and how each player is jockeying for, and advancing their position. This analysis is being presented to educate those who would place their faith in India, Pakistan, China, Russia or the US, or any other reactionary agency or imperialist power in seeking the path of liberation for the people of Kashmir, as much as it is to show that there could be no genuine liberation for the oppressed people of the world within the imperialist system and the structures of domination exercised by it. As for the UN, it has proven to be an instrument of world imperialism and all its resolutions in favor of justice remain pieces of paper. Just take the case of Palestine. How many resounding resolutions condemning Zionism as racism and the genocidal crimes and aggressions of Israel, yet Israel continues to expand and consolidate its bloody occupation of Palestine. The UN sanctioned the war of occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan by the US and its coalition. The people of Kashmir, like the people of Palestine- and elsewhere, would have to shed their illusions about the system of imperialism and all its neo-colonial puppets and agencies. They should learn to adopt a scientific revolutionary vision, line, strategy and program that would rise above all religious and sectarian divisions and external power manipulations, in order to forge their principled unity as the *oppressed people of Kashmir*, so they may wage people's war to establish the People's Democratic Republic of Kashmir. The path of liberation lies in the oppressed masses building their own independent, self-reliant organizational fighting capacity to wage revolutionary struggle to transform the world and themselves, in unity with the oppressed people of the world - and so become emancipators of humanity. Only such a universal, liberating vision, strategy and program will overcome all enforced divisions and hierarchies, and deliver genuine human liberation. Now, let us analyse the strategic chessboard within which the liberation struggle in Kashmir is unfolding.

## **Global Context:**

First of all, the US economy, along with the global economy- continues to slouch in its cyclical recession. *Trillions* of dollars are being injected into the vital circuits of US Finance Capital, just to keep the economy afloat, attesting to the extreme parasitism of decadent Capitalism-Imperialism – that Lenin had masterfully analyzed. Yet, no long-term sustainable solution is in sight, except for cosmetic and drastic reforms to stay afloat and play to polarized electoral constituencies. The magnates of Finance Capital dealing and wheeling in Wall St, continue to manipulate the international stock markets in a do-or-die battle to stay alive, by devouring competitors and amassing even more fortunes. This simply serves to intensify and compound the economic crisis. The whole financial system of the US empire is being undermined internally by the logic of Capital in its final, extreme stage of parasitic decay and destruction-in the era of Imperialism. The depth and effects of the profound and abiding structural consequences of the Financial Melt-Down confronted by the US empire, and their combined overall consequences for the global political economy, and the future of humankind, is yet to be fully comprehended. The US empire is in a desperate struggle for survival, as the world's undisputed nuclear super power. Aside from its economic crisis- and because of it- the US is embroiled in a most volatile political-strategic quagmire in the Middle-East, from which it cannot extricate itself. This not Viet Nam, where the US forces were defeated and kicked out by the glorious protracted people's war led by the Vietnam Workers Party, guided by Ho Chi Min and aided by Mao Tse Tung and the Chinese Communist Party, and the sacrifices of the Chinese people. The raging anti-war movement within the US, fired and fuelled

by the armed national liberation struggle of the Afro-American nation led by the Black Panther Party, combined with resounding anti-war resistance around the world, forced the US to make a strategic retreat. Dominating the Middle-East and controlling its vast energy resources, where the genocidal occupation of Palestine by Israel, is the cornerstone, is the key to exercising global hegemony and world domination. This structure of domination is not expendable for the US, nor for its reactionary allies.

However, the structure of imperialist domination of the Middle-East constructed by the US is over-extended and becoming extremely vulnerable. Sustaining, expanding and consolidating this structure of domination, with Israel as the guard dog and the lackey Arab states of the region as trusted allies, while suppressing the widespread rising resistance and opposition to US/Zionist domination is a foremost strategic priority of US imperialism. This is why Israel has continued to carry out genocidal crimes against the people of Palestine for over six decades, and recently Gaza, and openly flouted and violated international laws and commissions. That is why Israel must break the back of the Palestinian national liberation struggle. That is why Israel continues to expand and consolidate its power – all with the backing of US imperialism, to the tune of \$ 3 billion a year, along with the unfailing political, economic, diplomatic and military support provided-. Unleashing the mad-dog terror of the Israeli Zionist State is *vital* necessary to maintain the imperialist structure of domination of the Middle-East, led by US imperialism. This is also the reason that the regime in Iran must be brought down and changed. A whole new political-economic-strategic architecture must be constructed in the region, that guarantees US global hegemony. Iran is the principal regional force that threatens this structure of domination. Along with the regime in Iran, Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon must also be bombed and razed to the ground, if the mission is to succeed. These compulsions will surely add fire and fury to the rising, raging resistance and rebellion of the oppressed people of the Middle-East and beyond, against their common oppressor. The US is engaged in the desperate search for restructuring the political-strategic contours of the Middle-East by strengthening its parasitic loyal Comprador allies, while displacing/ overthrowing unreliable and potentially dangerous regimes and players. However, all these regimes and players, including the UN, and the politics of US imperialism are being discredited by many forward thinking anti-imperialist progressives and revolutionaries. They are seeking a way to unite with the anti-imperialist-revolutionary struggle of the people of the world to bury this system and build a whole new world of universal human emancipation – here on Earth. This is a truly life-threatening situation for the US empire- and for the whole system of imperialist domination. In the meantime, other global and regional power blocs are emerging and expanding, which threaten US strategic superiority in maintaining its position as the sole imperialist global super-power. All these intensifying contradictions and horrifying conflicts generated – and to be generated- by this structure of domination will only mean even more devastation, misery and degradation of the people, with horrendous costs to global security and human freedom.

### **The Strategic Game Plan:**

It is in this international context that all the major players involved in Kashmir are calculating their survival and advantage, within a strategic game plan. Pakistan has to deal with the Taliban, and collaborate with the US and NATO, while the country is plunging into political turmoil, social crisis and violent unrest. China is making critical inroads into the strategic map of the region and beyond. The US and India are keenly concerned about Chinese expansion and are strengthening their strategic partnership, while Pakistan is disturbed with this partnership. In this volatile and shifting geo-strategic context, each player is interested not in resolving the Kashmir question by honoring the sovereignty of the Kashmiri people, but finding ways to ‘control and pacify’ the Kashmir question. The typical method of pacification is repression combined with negotiation. Therefore, while there will be efforts between the major protagonists and players to seek some middle-ground and make some token pledges and compromises- like opening up railroad and highway connections-, they will contend and scheme to advance their own strategic interests over the others. The only result that can be expected is a continuation – perhaps with an even more abominable modification- of the status-quo, where Kashmir will remain a deeply divided, helplessly dependent, pathetic neo-colonial puppet state, while the masses of oppressed people will be held hostage and made to pay the price. There will be no liberation for the people of Kashmir. There could even be diabolical players that would seek to gain from a war between India and Pakistan. Now, this is the horrifying, deadly imperialist/ neo-colonial matrix within which we have to seriously discuss the path of liberation of the people of Kashmir.

### **No Illusions or False Prophets:**

The above scenario should show that there is no just and lasting solution possible unless and until these structures of domination – this system of world imperialism, which have led to a perpetual state of genocidal terror, aggression and occupation and to the poverty, misery and degradation of the vast majority of the people of the world – this evil system of

universal destruction- is resisted, overthrown and uprooted and a new world of freedom is conquered by the suffering, toiling masses of the world. It is time to think about the South Asian revolutionary process that can unite all the raging anti-imperialist liberation struggles in the Region, where the liberation of Kashmir will be an indivisible and integral component. As it is, the South Asian region is a storm center of world revolution, where Maoists in India are spearheading a powerful revolutionary assault against the foundations of the Indian Comprador-Capitalist State. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) had almost got the monarchist-comprador state by its neck through years of protracted people's war, before it had capitulated. Yet, the revolution is not over. It has simply gone underground. Nor have the oppressed people of Assam, Missoram and Nagaland given up their struggle for liberation. Imagine these powerful revolutionary movements and liberation struggles forming into a single common anti-imperialist united front determined to overthrow and uproot the structures of imperialist domination and feudal oppression that have enslaved the people for thousand years.

### **Duplicity of the Oppressor:**

The history of the origin, evolution and formation of the sovereign state of Kashmir is of consequence when one is seeking to construct the path of liberation of the Kashmiri people. I am not referring to the eventful history of being once ruled by a Moslem, then conquered by Ranjith Singh, then sold to the British East India Company and then ruled by a Hindu Maharaja, who then ceded Kashmir to India. None of this is essential for defining and constructing the modern democratic and independent State of Kashmir. I argue that the "Instrument of Accession" whereby Maharaja Hari Singh ceded Jammu-Kashmir to India, a document signed by him and Lord Mountbaton, is neither legally, politically or morally valid. Who the hell is a Maharaja to sell the country and its people just so he could save his sorry skin from his own enemies, and who the hell is Lord Mount Baton to sign it? And who the hell is Nehru to simply annex an independent state and nation on the undertaking of a Hindu Maharaja ruling over a majority of Moslems, and who had lost favor with the people? More than that, just listen to the depths of duplicity and treachery that Nehru – and India – would go to. On October 27, 1947, Sri Jawaharal Nehru would state that "I should like to make it clear that the question of aiding Kashmir in this emergency is not designed in any way to influence the State to accede to India. Our view, which we have repeatedly made public is that the question of accession in any disputed territory or State must be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people, and we adhere to this view". Then he turned around and told Hari Singh that he must sign "the Instrument of Accession" if he wishes India to militarily bail him out of the imminent armed siege. Then, even after the coerced accession and occupation had been effected, , on June 26, 1952, Nehru declares that " If, after a proper plebiscite, the people of Kashmir said ' we do not want to be with India' , we are committed to accept it though it might pain us. We will not send an army against them. We will accept that, however hurt we might feel about it, we will change the constitution, if necessary". Now, after 63 years of genocidal armed aggression and occupation, the army and police are still there, empowered with special legislation to kill, abduct, terrorize, torture, burn, loot and rape as they please- with complete impunity. Today, the Indian state claims that Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union, a principle which is non-negotiable. So much for the right of self-determination. The annexation and occupation of Jammu-Kashmir by India remain illegal and immoral, and no one is bound to respect them. These are brokering arrangements made by the various dominant Colonial-Comprador powers and agents each trying to score advantage over the other, where the life and future of the people of Kashmir do not enter the calculation. All political developments since and under this colonial 'Instrument of Accession" have no legitimacy, including the lines, divisions and demarcations and all the elections which have set up governments and administrative structures, since these are the unified apparatus and mechanisms of exercising domination, division, repression and *occupation*.

### **Right of National Self-Determination:**

What is of essential value in seeking an independent path of justice and liberation for Kashmir and the region is the recognition of a historic civilization, where diverse nations, nationalities and communities with distinct cultural traditions and religious beliefs – Islam, Hindu, Buddhist – have historically formed themselves as the People of Kashmir. This civilization has endured the ravages of the ages by the sheer toil and sacrifice of its people – mainly the peasants, handicraftsmen, tradesmen and other producers who had cohabited for centuries. The land of Kashmir has been nurtured and sustained by the people, as it has nurtured and sustained them. Kashmir belongs to its people. Kashmir does not belong to either India or Pakistan or China. Kashmir does not belong to the vast Indian bureaucracy built around the Srinagar comprador elites, who profit from division and conflict. Kashmir belongs to its people who have shed their blood, sweat and tears and so nourished this incredibly beautiful Land. They have the inalienable right to exercise their right of national-self-determination i.e. - their right to collectively decide upon their life and future and the form of state where they shall exercise democratic freedom without external compulsion or control. The Kashmiri people should be given the right to discuss, design and decide upon a form of state that shall guarantee the unity, equality, dignity, security, autonomy and democratic freedom of all it various

nationalities and communities, where such a state shall maintain its territorial integrity, national sovereignty, independence and neutrality, and not be coerced or manipulated by any external power. This is a foundational principle for establishing lasting peace, security and stability in the region, and for chartering the path of liberation.

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