

5 August and the Politics of War in Occupied Kashmir

5 August 2020 marks the first anniversary after the revoking of Article 370 of the Indian constitution, effectively annexed Kashmir to the Indian Union. The liberation of Kashmir has posed interesting perspectives to the keen and observant believer. The focus is the how the concept of Fard (obligation) drives the believer to find solutions to problems that at face value do not seem possible. Allah (swt) says in the Quran, ﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾ **“Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear...”** [TMQ 2:286] And implementing the Hukm of Jihad must be possible, otherwise Allah (swt) would not have made it an obligation (Fard).

Allah (swt) commanded, ﴿وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ﴾ **“And slay them Wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out”** [Surah al-Baqarah 2:191]. It means that our energy must be spent on fighting the enemies, just as their energy is spent on fighting us, and on expelling them from the areas from which they have expelled us. Allah (swt) said, ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً﴾ **“O you who believe! Fight the Unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you: and know that Allah is with those who fear Him.”** [Surah at-Tawbah 9: 123], And RasuAllah (saw) warned, «مَا تَرَكَ قَوْمَ الْجِهَادِ إِلَّا ذُلًّا» **“No people abandon Jihad except that they are humiliated.”** [Ahmad]. RasulAllah (saw) said, «وَالْجِهَادُ» **“And jihad will be performed continuously since the day Allah sent me as a prophet until the day the last member of my community will fight with the Dajjal (Antichrist). The tyranny of any tyrant and the justice of any just (ruler) will not invalidate it.”** [Abu Dawud]

These and many other evidences make it clear to the believer that the law of Allah (swt) must be implemented. The thought process demanded by these and many other evidences is that Allah (swt)'s Hukm must be established. This defines the will to find a solution. Hence war and preparations towards liberation is a must. The talk of war opens up many question as to the possibility of success in war. Whilst victory and defeat is from Allah (swt), as believers we are required to look for the tangible outcome, that of victory. Let us consider this in the case for the options available to liberate Kashmir.

The presence of nuclear weapons on both sides means that war will be fought under conventional means, as any nuclear option will automatically lead to mutually assured destruction (MAD). The conventional equation does not favour Pakistan, at least on paper, with India outnumbering Pakistan almost three to one in all conventional aspects.

The theatre of war has no boundaries, so what prevents Pakistan from encouraging an armed insurgency in Kashmir, in parallel with the Pakistani army declaring war in Kashmir? Out of a total population of twelve million in Kashmir, nine million are Muslim, most of whom are now completely anti-Indian. So sniper attacks, IED's and ambush are now a real possibility in Kashmir, which the Indian forces have to contend with. So even if India were to put one million troops into Kashmir, they will not manage to suppress the insurgency, if these Muslims were supported militarily and with weapons. Until today, the Muslims of Occupied Kashmir have not lost hope in “Kashmir banagay Pakistan” (Kashmir will be Pakistan) and still enshroud their martyrs in the flag of Pakistan. The US has learnt costly lessons in Iraq and Afghanistan where home grown insurgencies have been difficult to control. If the US has not succeeded in these areas, how will India manage in Kashmir?

From India's perspective, it would consider increasing the number of troops in Kashmir. However, the internal situation of India is not one of stability, even compared to that of Pakistan. There is a myriad of insurgencies across India. There are estimates of as many as 68 major organisations, deemed as terrorist groups, within India. The range of numbers and spectrum can be debated, but what cannot be debated is their existence and the burden of countering them via army operations. So India can move the troops from one region to

another, but then the discussion moves from the realm of military to political. There is a political cost to movement of troops from one front to the other, even in a short conflict. Moving troops from the Naxalite insurgency to Kashmir may strengthen the Naxalite insurgency movement, who will deem this an opportunity to declare secession. So now, the decision has wider implications and either a political deal has to be made with the insurgency movements, which means ceding political space, inevitably weakening India's position or there is no military option to transfer the troops. Hence, internally, India is stretched and restricted by its own domestic problems. This is besides the almost two hundred million Muslims in India that the BJP government has decidedly alienated.

Externally, along its borders, India is similarly stretched with a wide range of border conflict, including disputes India has with China. These are the regions where for over a decade, Chinese and Indian troops have been involved in regular clashes. Indian troops located here cannot be transferred out. There is strategic consideration here. The recent Indian Chinese Conflict in Galwan Valley is a continuation of a broader strategic battle between the US and China, and hence potentially making the border with India part of China's vital sphere of interest. This means that China will not only remain on the border and maintain tensions, but will be interested in weakening and pushing back India.

This conflict has its own dimensions. On June 13th 2020, Nepal's parliament unanimously agreed to change the map of the country to include territory claimed by its southern neighbour. India described the move as "untenable" and said it violated the understanding that boundary disputes would be solved through dialogue. The timing is interesting as it coincides with the heightened tensions between India and China. Hence a Chinese Indian conflict in the Galwan Valley resulted in Nepal reconsidering its borders with India. Does India have the luxury of thinking others won't do the same in the event of a war in Kashmir?

Consider also the strategic region of the Chicken's Neck, known as the Siliguri Pass, the passage from India to the north-eastern states. The red region labelled stand of is called Doklam, part of the Doklam plateau. India has been trying to encourage Bhutan, since 2018, to deploy more soldiers in the disputed Doklam area. If China occupies this region it could control the movement of traffic along the Siliguri Pass, thereby choking supplies to the Seven Sisters states, or preventing the Indian army from suppressing a local inspired rebellion.

Given the current tension, if China takes a very aggressive posture with Bhutan in return for security and support, will Bhutan support India or back off under pressure making the Siliguri Pass vulnerable to Chinese attacks?

These are practical examples of where a third country has chosen to take advantage of a China-India faceoff, for its own territorial designs. So if there was a wider conflict between China and India, would other countries also raise tensions with India? In political terms, it is hedging bets. So whilst Japan and South Korea are aligned with the US, they still maintain relationship with Chinese because the US has only been around in the past 200 years, but China has been their neighbour for the past 4000 years.

Wang Xianfeng, a press officer at the Chinese mission in Islamabad, on 11 June 2020 tweeted: "India's actions of unilaterally changing the status quo of Kashmir and continuing to exacerbate regional tensions have posed a challenge to the sovereignty of China and Pakistan and made the India-Pakistan relations and China-India relations more complex" and then promptly withdrew the tweet four days later. This is an evidence of China trying to bait Pakistan in to discussion of Kashmir in the current standoff. This is similar to the post US operation in Abbotabad, where the Chinese made a statement that an attack on Pakistan is an attack on China. The Chinese see Pakistan as a potential balancer against the Indians and the US. So what is China suggesting via this tweet? In the 1962 war, the Chinese Ambassador in Islamabad visited General Ayub Khan and asked him why he had not taken advantage of the situation to seize Kashmir. The parallels are intriguing and compelling.

Thus the real use of political analysis is to help define policies that could be used to counter external enemies. Within this backdrop, if Pakistan were to declare war over

Kashmir, all the above considerations have to be taken into account by the Indians in their response. So in reality, how is India going to face off this challenge? China's problem with India is not a border skirmish, rather it is India's alignment with the US, who is using the whole region to contain China. The possibility of China engaging in a limited war in any one of these regions at the same time as Pakistan entering Kashmir would be the end game for India. The Chinese timed the 1962 Indo China war to coincide with the Cuban missile crisis. Documents released from that period indicated the fear the US and India had of Pakistan entering the war. The then US Ambassador to India commented "the nightmare of a combined attack by Pakistan and China, with the possibility of defeat, collapse and even anarchy in India, was much on my mind". Today, China is much stronger, and the US is not only weaker, but heavily distracted.

The above discussion poses a fundamental question, in the event of war, what is India's policy? India has no policy other than the US, and the US is not a viable policy. Trump is in election year, and facing major problems. The economy which is normally the key issue in US elections, has fallen apart, and Trump has fallen back to the ultimate blackmail, national security, after the black lives matter movement. So other than providing similar political and diplomatic support, what else can it do? When Russia annexed Crimea, the US stood and watched and just imposed sanctions, primarily because this area was not part of the US vital sphere of interest. So is Kashmir and the tension with China really in the US vital sphere of interest? When black lives in the US don't matter, do brown lives, thousands of miles away matter?

The reality indicates that war is a real possibility, yet our corrupt civilian and military leadership do not undertake it. The above discussion applies to those who actually believe in Islam as a solution and are prepared to sacrifice to achieve the goals of Islam. However, the current leadership is so bereft of thinking, Islamic or otherwise, that it does not even consider a limited war. A limited war now over Kashmir would solve many problems for the current government, even from a narrow, nationalist point of view. First, the sagging fortunes of the army would go to an all-time high. Secondly, the current fractures in the political medium would disappear as anyone trying to counter war in Kashmir would be taken as a traitor. Third, the economy would be given a kick start as it is well known that the best solution for depression is war. However, the current leaders are so bereft of independent thinking that they are unable to think this way. The reality is that the policies they pursue are thought up their masters, the colonialists, and they just implement for personal benefits. They have not made war forbidden for themselves alone, they have made it forbidden for the decades-long Kashmir insurgency. Upon the order of the colonialists, they have imposed a stance that the Kashmir insurgency is "terrorism" and work to eradicate it, granting the Hindu State much needed relief.

The solution to Kashmir is Jihad and this will not occur via corrupt leaderships who seek solutions in the Kufr thoughts that originated the problem. It is only through the Khilafah (Caliphate) on the Method of Prophethood, that is sincere in the implementation of Islam and cares for the hardships of the Ummah, will not only Kashmir be liberated, but the whole Muslim world from this corrupt Kufr system.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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