

The Post 9/11 Environment: Extremism Violence Terrorism and Bigotry

Lal Bakhsb Jiskani

Visiting Faculty Member, Pakistan Study Centre,
University of Sindh, Jamshoro

The terrorist attacks on twin towers of the World Trade Centre and on the Pentagon had been heinous crime not against a single country but the entire innocent humanity. It was indeed defining moment for the two great civilizations which had set a global agenda.

Pakistan was confronted with both a threat and an opportunity as some countries believe it as a consequence of the horrific acts of 11 September, 2001 and the resultant United States response. In this respect Pakistan was asked to comply with the United States interpretation of the causes of, and remedies against international terrorism. In exchange, Pakistan would "cut a break" with respect to its lingering "issues". To be more precise, Pakistan was asked to:

- a) Cut its ties with Taliban Government in Afghanistan;
- b) Be helpful to us and coalition plan and to attack and occupy Afghanistan;
- c) Counter the anticipated extremist (Anti-American) fallout likely to occur from the above within Pakistan;
- d) Reduce sectarian violence within Pakistan; and
- e) Curb alleged Pakistan state support for Jihadi and /or terrorist activities related to Kashmir issue.

If the offer is to be accepted the Pakistan will get facilities and a kind of support from International Financial Institutions and the United States would not put too much official pressure on the military regime to "democratize". The United States also held out the 'promise' that it would at least look with fresh eyes with regard to the Kashmir dispute of course with underlying this implicit arrangement, the United States further promised not to target

Pakistan as a facilitator or harbor for international terror, if it complied with the United State global war against terrorism.¹⁴

Pakistan Government promptly accepted the United State 'offer' (perhaps it was an offer Pakistan could not refuse) and ever since both the United State and Pakistan have complied with the terms of the implicit agreement, soon in the country, the dysfunctional Anti-terrorism courts which had been introduced by the former Government of Mian Nawaz Sharif restored. Several militant organizations, terrorists, sectarian and Kashmir Jihadi groups were banned and many of them were arrested and their financial sources were seized. Pakistan also dropped its erstwhile support to Taliban and became frontline state in the war against terrorism. Thus the regime has been officially typified as proactive and in accord with the U.S. interest in the region and Pakistan has benefited from this perception. The Musharraf Government had been considered by the U.S. decision-makers part of the solution not part of the problem. Similarly, Pakistan has largely been forgiven for its past transgressions including nuclear testing, the Kargil operation, the 1999 military Coup, the legal framework order etc. Thus, Pakistan has resumed its long-standing security relationship with the United States and the country has become privy to international assistance from the G-8, especially, the United States.¹⁵ Pakistan had also received \$ ten billion as an Aid package for social development in the country. But it was legitimate for Washington to criticize Islamabad for not using a major share of the Aid for economic development for its people.

The U.S conferred, the status of a major 'non-NATO ally' on Pakistan in June 2004. If we go back in the annals of the history of freedom movement one can see that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan had

¹⁴ Robert Wirsing and Mohan Malik (eds.) Religion Radicalism and Security in South Asia, Honolulu, Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies, 2004, pp.387-411.

¹⁵ Charles, H. Kennedy, Political Issues: 2004, Pakistan – 2005, Oxford University Press, Karachi, p.11.

been inspired not only by Lord Macaulay, but by Shah Waliullah as well. Sir Syed's mission was to preserve the future of the Muslim community. There were conservative elements opposed to him who were anxious to ensure the religious identity of community and the premier traditional institution where this need was nurtured was the Darul Uloom at Deoband. Ali Garh was considered loyal to the British, Deoband hostile. Ali Garh worked against the congress, Deoband did not favour separatism. Ali Garh and Deoband were to exercise profound influence on the Muslim mind from opposite directions. It is noteworthy that the Deoband is not the name of a seminary, but the name of a creed. The Ulema of Deoband wrote tracts against Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism and carried out a Jihad against Qadianis. Interestingly enough, on the political arena, the Deobandis especially Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi issued a FATWA to associate with the Congress, but under no condition was it possible to cooperate with Ali Garh. It was a sad comment on Deoband. Only Allama Shabbir Ahmed Usmani (1885-1949) was supporter of Pakistan Movement.¹⁶ One can say that militant Islam had emerged from Deoband School of thought which destroyed the peaceful fabric of the society and political militancy emerged from the partition of Bengal.

After the creation of Pakistan "the Objectives Resolution" was passed by the constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 12th March 1949. The objectives Resolution opened the doors for induction of theology in governance and produced the mantra of "Islamic Ideology" which continues to resist being clearly defined. The first constituent assembly of Pakistan, which was entrusted with the framing of the country's constitution under which the first elections were to be held, failed to deliver for nine years, instead it brought religion into the affairs of the state, created alienation between the two wings and divisiveness between provinces by its narrow vision of lackadaisical social functioning it precluded the holding of the country's first elections. If there is any group of men

¹⁶ Kazmi, M.R., *Pakistan Studies*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp.53-53.

who are responsible for the country making a false start, it is the men who made up the first constituent assembly of Pakistan. It is they who committed Pakistan's two original sins-no constitution-no election for first nine years-when the both were critically needed to give the country a right start. The original sins instead of being washed clean became rooted in the country's political culture.¹⁷

Kashmir is the Central problem between India and Pakistan and it has drained the economic resources of both countries and continues to push them to the age of disastrous conflicts.¹⁸ The fact is that Kashmir is not simply a piece of territory, but a land inhabited by people with their own dreams and political aspirations, struggling to win their rights. It would be prudent to listen on their voices and discover what they want. There are three parties that have a stake in the issue; the Kashmiris, India and Pakistan. Pakistan has a historical claim and geopolitical interests, clearly having a tremendous stake in the issue and it is unrealistic to contemplate leaving Pakistan out of any final settlement of the Kashmir dispute.¹⁹ Indian held Kashmir contains the highest concentration of army and security forces. They have license to kill, detain and torture. It has caused uprising in both the parts of Kashmir. It is well said that resistance and guerrilla warfare in modern history have symbolized the struggle of the weak against the strong. India has exploited the post 9/11 environment in Kashmir as an issue of terrorism accusing Pakistan of sending fighters across the border.²⁰

Ten years conflicts have attracted Jihadi elements from Pakistan and other countries. They cannot operate without local

¹⁷ Khalid Hussain, 1947, Partition: Its Objectives and the Outcome, Karachi: Daily 'Dawn' dated October 13, 2007, p.13

¹⁸ Sumantra Bose, The Challenge in Kashmir, 1997, p.109

¹⁹ Rais, Rasool Bakhsh, Hostage to History: The India Pakistan Confrontation in the Nuclear Age, An article published in Pakistan 2005, (edited by Charles H. Kennedy, Synthia A. Botteron), Oxford University Press, 2006, pp.84-87.

²⁰ Lodhi, Malleha, 'Dawn', Karachi, dated 4/02/2002

cooperation. India and Pakistan had been locked in a costly struggle in Kashmir's Siachen area for the past twenty years. Why fighting on no man's land, an area almost at the roof of the World (16000-19000 feet above the sea level). The Siachen conflict continues literally to bleed the two countries.

Thus, the issue of Human Rights and its sheer violation and Terrorism are at the centre stage of India and Pakistan policies. There are nine principal Kashmiri insurgent groups engaged in terrorist activities in both the parts: occupied Kashmir and the Pakistan's side of Kashmir.²¹ Millions of people suffer due to insurgency and acts of terrorism on both sides of the Kashmir State and the question hovering over every body's mind is whether the time is ripe for settling the Kashmir issue.

Religious education and violence in Pakistan have strong links. Madressahs were established about some time in the sixth century of the Muslim Calendar / 11th Century A.D. These seminaries were once known throughout the Muslim world for their best Hanafi Teaching. Presently there are about 40,000 in Pakistan giving religious education with low-cost accommodation and meals and some employment prospects. Today American and European people believe that these places are breeding grounds for violence, terrorism, sectarian violence and suicide bombing. In September 1996, Taliban, mainly Afghan refugees educated in madressahs in NWFP marched on Kabul, toppled the Government of Afghanistan and implemented Shariah (Islamic Law) – they used violence against men and women publicly.

Can anti-American sentiments in madressahs be stopped without a change in the foreign policy of the U.S.? Are some madressahs really involved in organized violence? These questions agitate the mind. Madressah curricula need to be changed and over all reforms may bring relief in removing violence from Pakistani

²¹ Indu Singh, Ajay Saksena, Human Rights in India and Pakistan, Delhi: Deep Publication, 2004, pp.206-208.

society. The decade long struggle against the Soviet army promoted pervasive militarization and Madressahs did not escape this.²²

Today, Pakistan is an active member state in coalition with the U.S global war against terrorism and is fighting courageously against extremism, terrorism, foreign mercenaries Jihadis and Al-Qaeda men and sectarian violence but without active support of the masses, the dream of eliminating terrorism cannot come true.

We have indeed deviated from the ideals and vision of the Quaid that is why we are failure in achieving our goals which he had and visualized for Pakistan. With the passage of time these dragon seeds of terrorism have become monsters fully grown up, their naked faces could be seen in Waziristan, Vana, Miram Shah, Lal Masjid, Swat, Karachi, Quetta, Islamabad and other parts of the country where these monsters are staging such ghashlier acts of terrorism and mayhem.

The founder of the nation the Quaid-i-Azam wanted Pakistan to be a secular state. It is evident from his speeches and statements on three vital constitutional and political issues:

- i) His views against mixing religion with politics.
- ii) Condemnation of theocracy and
- iii) Equal rights and status for the minorities.

While addressing people of the US he said: "In any case Pakistan is not going to be theocratic state – to be ruled by priests with a divine mission."²³ What we need today is the secularization of politics, society and education and abolishing the Objectives Resolution. A secular constitution and true democracy on the basis of historic Lahore Resolution of 1940 will help Pakistan build a new as secular, democratic forward looking and progressive country. The Quaid had a dream about it.

²² Christopher Candland, Religious Education and Violence in Pakistan, Charles & Synthia, op.cit., pp.230-233.

²³ Jinnah Speeches and Statements, Comp: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, Karachi: 1968, p.118.