A Brief Note For The Consideration Of 'Kashmir Peace Conference' In New York

Kashmir: A Way Forward And The Prospects For The Future

1. Every peace-loving person would welcome the holding of a 'Kashmir Peace Conference' on July 24th and 25th in New York. This is because peace within human society today is the prime need of humanity and hence every initiative in this direction is a welcome move.

2. The unprecedented enhanced status of the peace agenda in our age rests with the fact that it is only in the conditions of peace that the human community could today respond to the existing deadly enviro-human crisis, that is, environmental degradation, on the one hand, and enviably unjust human mode of existence, on the other.

3. The basis of all hitherto existing inter and intra-human conflicts and confrontations has always existed in the given unjust social systems, with each one based on the dictum that 'might represents right' and that 'force is the ultimate tool of justice'. However, the existing social system has evolved as the most threatening one—with the environment posing a fatal threat to all bio-phenomena and the human relations assuming the most unequal and inhuman form, based solely on the motivation of self-interest whose only purpose is to maximise money by all means, grab power by hook or crook and adopt a lifestyle geared to eating, drinking and be marry.

4. The agenda of military solution has become so hateful and unproductive today that even the line of perpetual war pursued by the chief leader of the ongoing global corporate system, George W. Bush, has proved futile and led to the creation of a more dangerous, insecure and unstable world.

5. Obviously, in the newly-emerged world scenario, the only wayout for every conflict, including Jammu-Kashmir, lies in taking the peaceful route and shunning the confroritationist way for good. Hence, the present occasion is a suitable time for starting a dialogue on the issue of Jammu-Kashmir between the three related parties, that is, India, Pakistan and Jammu-Kashmir people. The opening, whether bilateral or trilateral, may be decided by the two big parties, India and Pakistan.

6. The responsibility to initiate the peace process morally falls on New Delhi, having been the main party in the dispute. Here, a 3-fold initiative taken by New Delhi, that is, to declare a unilateral ceasefire for some months; reduce the level of violence and human rights' violations in the state; and sanction additional funds for the development of Jammu-Kashmir, may help in breaking the log-jam between the parties concerned.

7. The Kashmir Peace Conference is requested to make an appeal to all sides that they may please undergo a serious review of their respective standpoints and policies which have brought heavy losses to them and terrible sufferings to Jammu-Kashmir people, especially the Kashmiris. Giving up the 1947-perspective of getting the whole of Jammu-Kashmir for their respective units, they should now adopt a Natural-Human Centric viewpoint that enjoins upon them to establish a partnership between India, Pakistan and Jammu-Kashmir people. India should prepare itself to abandon its rigid position, which holds Jammu-Kashmir as an integral part of India, while Pakistan should get ready to give up its traditional slogan of getting the problem resolved on the basis of 1948-49 UN resolutions. The Jammu-Kashmir people should adjust themselves to the reality that Jammu-Kashmir is a multi-ethnic unit in which no single ethnic community enjoys an absolute majority and hence the slogans of self-determination and plebiscite have no relevance in this case. All should prepare themselves for a collective answer to Jammu-Kashmir tangle. A change in the respective mindsets of the three parties concerned can work wonders for South Asia and consequently the world.

8. The Kashmir Peace Conference may please further underline the three-fold social truth, that is: (a) The people of India, Pakistan and Jammu-Kashmir are historically one people, with a common genetic code and ancestry and speak the same languages and follow the same culture, habits, norms

and forms; (b) In the present era, they are, despite having been two nations, confronted with similar problems, that is, the criminalisation of politics, violation of the rule of law, miscarriage of justice, increasing crime, lawlessness and violence, back-breaking corruption, inequality, poverty, unemployment, houselessness, degenerating cultural norms, worsening environmental resources, like air and water pollution, decreasing the availability of drinking water, land degradation, deforestation, threat to bio-diversity, etc. Even in this scientific age, India and Pakistan remain among the poorest countries of the world and, financially, both are in ruins whose fiscal deficits have risen to mounting proportions; (c) Now they have entered the phase of a common future with SAARC as their newly-emerging social identity.

9. Taking into account the above facts, it can be seen that a just and a realistic solution to Jammu-Kashmir problem resides in a formula that reconciles the interests of all parties concerned. In our opinion, the following three-point proposal well serves the aspirations and interests of the three parties, that is, India, Pakistan and Jammu-Kashmir along with the world community.

a. The respective national aspirations and interests of India and Pakistan be balanced by jointly entrusting to them Jammu-Kashmir's sovereignty in the constitutional form of Indo-Pak condominium in regard to Jammu-Kashmir's defence and foreign affairs.

b. The regional aspirations and interests of Jammu-Kashmir's people, especially Kashmiris be met by constitutionally accepting Jammu-Kashmir as an independent state, enjoying sovereign power in all matters, except defence and foreign affairs.

c. The ethnic aspirations and interests of Jammu-Kashmir's different ethno-regional communities be accommodated by giving maximum possible constitutional autonomy to each of them. Jammu-Kashmir state-level matters may include: the Head of State, High Court, Election Commission, Human Development Commission, Environmental Commission, Planning Commission, etc.

10. Apart from satisfying the ethnic, regional and global urges of the three parties concerned, the above formula further offers the former (that is, the three parties concerned) and the world human community new development prospects. It delivers to them in many other ways. It suits the world community by defusing one of the most dangerous global flash-points. It benefits the South Asian community by removing the blockades to its socio-economic development, common market, a joint defence, etc.

11. It further serves India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu-Kashmir by making them equal partners in economic development in which each India and Pakistan provides an equal amount of finance, while Jammu-Kashmir State contributes its share in the form of natural resources. Also, Jammu-Kashmir people get additional advantage by virtue of their becoming the citizen of the two countries and obtaining the facility of trading with them.

With great regards and thanking all participants in The Kashmir Peace Conference in anticipation.

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