



Kashmir insurgency: It's changing trends

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ABSTRACT

Separatism has always been a popular concept in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, especially in Kashmir. This discontentment among Muslims of the valley in particular (mainly those who were against the accession with India) could never be won over or even accommodated by the ruling people and has resulted in the revelation of militancy and insurgency. The paper is an analysis of the discontents among the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It will throw light on the blatant manipulation of the electoral process in 1987 that led Kashmiris to believe that they would remain permanently marginalized in the current political dispensation. They were led to feel that 'the bullets will deliver when the ballot had failed'. The main thrust of the paper is to analyze the Kashmiri rebellion that began as a call for 'Azadi' or freedom in 1989 and was transformed into different trends in the succeeding years. This paper looks into the various reasons which could be identified for the proliferation of armed insurgency. It analyses the dominant militant groups like Hizbul Mujahideen, JKLF, Ikhwan or renegades, Jihadies and Fidayeen groups; the Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad; their organizational structures; support bases; strategies and objectives. The paper will also throw light on popular disillusionment with increasing militancy and growing crime tendencies among proliferating armed groups. Finally, the paper also critiques the response of various governments at the center and the state.

Keywords— India, Pakistan, Kashmir, Insurgency, Discontent, Separatism, Resentment, Alienation, Plebiscite front, Accord

1. INTRODUCTION

Unrest in Jammu and Kashmir is not a new phenomenon because separatism has always been a popular concept in the state. The discontentment among the Muslims in the valley could never be won over or even be accommodated by the ruling people which resulted in the revelation of militancy and anti-national tendencies. The insurgency in Kashmir that began in 1988 was exclusively Muslim. Neither Hindus nor Sikhs from the state have joined it but while it was a Muslim revolt against Indian rule, it is not necessarily an Islamic one. [1] The people of Kashmir have all the intense resentment of a people who feel they have been wronged. Popular alienation and militancy have fed each other. Pakistan has not been slow to exploit the situation and, indeed to sponsor and set up several instant groups. [2]

The insurgency started by the Kashmiri nationalists who advocated an independent, secular democratic Jammu and Kashmir. However, since the 1990s there has been a marked transformation in the terms of discourse with which the 'Kashmir hibernation struggle' (insurgency) sought to express itself. The nationalists, fighting for a secular, democratic Kashmir have increasingly had to give way to Islamist voices, for particularly to the Jamaat-e-Islami and then to even more radical groups based in Pakistan. (Initially led by the youth of Srinagar for what they called Azadi, later largely usurped by Pakistan, and finally turned into a war against India). [3]

There has always been a pro-Pakistan lobby in Kashmir because of geographical proximity and religious affinity. The first organization that kept the anti-India sentiment alive was Jamaat-e-Islami of Kashmir which was founded in 1942. This organization is strictly religious and has been pro-Pakistan since its origin. Inspired by the Jamaat-e-Islami of Pakistan and affinity of ideology with it this organisation still functions in the state and has remained active since its origin. [4]

Later on, in 1947, a student organization named Pakistani student's federation was also formed by Mohammad Shafi Qurashi. [5] Seven years later he became an important leader of the Political Conference, the first pro-Pakistan party that came into existence in June 1953. It was founded by G.N. Karra, a dissident senior leader of National Conference, who in his dispute with Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah could not secure support in India. The party continued to profess faith in secularism and its members often called themselves as Gandhian Pakistani. [6] Qurashi was arrested by Bakhshi Government in September 1956, for his anti-national activities. [7] Shaikh Abdullah threw dissenters into prison or across the Ceasefire Line "Against the politics of Hadri Chadri (Hoodlum Politics) there were scores of voices like Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Prem Nath Bazaz, Jagan Nath Sathoo, Mir Abdul Aziz, Pitamber Fani, and other hundreds of young men. All of them were either sent across the Ceasefire Line or put behind the bars". [8] The Enemy Agents Ordinance came in handy. After 1953, it was used by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad against the Sheikhs men. [9]

In fact, the origin of most of the separatist group can be traced to the Plebiscite Front formed by Mirza Afzal Beigh and other companions of Sheikh Abdullah, who had been arrested in 1953. [10] Plebiscite Front was launched on August 9, 1953, to mobilize support for the holding of a plebiscite in the state to settle finally the issue of accession. This group directly or indirectly patronized a number of secessionist outfits until the date of its dissolution in 1976. Many of them don't exist anymore while others have become active these days. [11] Awami Action Committee was formed by Moulvi Farooq when he was ousted from "Action Committee" at the instance of Shaikh Abdullah. Action Committee was formed in the case of the theft of the holy relic. In 1963, Awami Action Committee of Moulvi Farooq that initially followed a pro-Pakistan line came into existence. This party has remained active throughout the years and also supported Farooq Government in 1986. [12] Among the entire separatist group JKLF has been the most vociferous and active since 1966.

Two events triggered agitations, led in each case by student leaders who are now prominent in the state's politics. One was Pakistan's war of aggression in August-September 1965. The other was the Indra-Sheikh Accord in Feb. 1975. [13] After the famous holy relic theft and its restoration case, Ghulam Mohammad Shaikh (Who was nabbed for anti-national activities in Delhi) formed the Students and Youth League. [14] When the Shaikh and his close associates, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg and Maulana Mohammad Sayyid Masoodi in prison student leaders like Fazlul Haq Qurashi, Nazir Ahmad Wani and Mohammad Altaf Khan (Azam Inqilabi, took to the streets holding demonstrations. The Jammu and Kashmir Students League was established in 1963-1964 under Beg's patronage. However, except JKLF it was Al-Fateh that remained famous for its anti-national and disruptive activities since 1965. It was headed by Ghulam Rasool Zehgeer. The outfit was involved in clashes with security forces in 1970, looting of tehsil education office in 1970 and Hazratbal Bank dacoity of 1971. It was also found that the group had also conspired to kidnap and murder some eminent personalities during 1971 elections. [15] However, in 1978, a new outfit Al-fateh was formed by G.M Shaikh and he recruited to it some diehard fundamentalists like Nazir Ahmad Wani, Mian Sarwar, and Salim Zehgeer. [16]

As far as the early signs of the outfit are concerned, in the first instance of its kind, some youths were arrested in 1967 for allegedly attempting to murder a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan in Nawa Kadal area in Srinagar. Their trial in the Nawa Kadal Conspiracy Case though held in-camera, evoked keen public interest. Next came, in 1968, an attempt to steal rifles from the rooms of the (NCC) in the Islamia College. [17] Afzal Beg a brilliant lawyer led the defense team which included Sheikh Nazir Ahmad who is now General Secretary of the National Conference.

Meanwhile, in 1967 some college teachers were arrested for being the "Core Group" of Mohammad Maqbool Bhat's Kashmir National Liberation Front. He had been arrested and sentenced to death in 1966 for the murder of an intelligence officer. Bhat was committed to guerilla warfare and to the State's independence, not accession to Pakistan. He escaped from prison in 1968, only to be arrested in 1976, and was executed in 1984. The Kashmir Liberation Army, of which ex-Major Ammanullah Khan was a member, was his creation. Ammanullah Khan set up the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) in the United Kingdom in 1978 with Dr. Farooq Haider of Rawalpindi.

Events in the state, meanwhile, were taking their own course. On January 13, 1971, the authorities claimed that they unearthed the Al-Fateh group. Its members were alleged to have been plotting to storm the Hazratbal branch of the Jammu and Kashmir Bank as part of its plan to "liberate Kashmir by resorting to armed struggle", Ghulam Rasool Zahgeer headed this underground outfit which had been setup in 1967-68. Prominent among its members were Fazl-ul-Haq Qurashi, Nazir Ahmad Wani and Azam Inqilabi. [18] Beg defended the accused at their trial but he was before long in the thick of parleys with Parthasarathi which led to the 1975 Accord, that split the group. Zahgeer supported Afzal Beg's Plebiscite Front. Nazir Ahmad Wani and others opposed its new policy. The rift led to the birth of the Jammu and Kashmir People's League on October 13, 1974, with Qurashi as its chairman.

The People's League marked water shed. Its founders shot into prominence later - Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Bashir Ahmad Tota, Azam Inqilabi, Abdul Hamid Wani (alias S Hamid) who was President of the Young Men's League, and Shabir Shah, its General Secretary. The two had been arrested on October 3, 1974. The League was stoutly opposed to the 1975 Accord. The Shaikh and New Delhi also had acquired an opposition force they could not suppress in the new clime of the 1970s as they had done in the 1950s. But the People's League had to see multiple splits and mergers. Azam Inqilabi left it soon after to set up his Islamic Student's and Youth Organisation, later renamed Islamic Jamiatul Tulaba, under the leadership of Tajamul-Islam, a student wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami. As Shaikh suffered an unprecedented low due to his 1975 Accord his former close associate, Sufi Mohammad Akbar parted company with him over the Accord and attracted some support. Shaikh Abdullah held sway because of his commanding personality, resources of muscle. Even though Shaikh remained popular in the valley even after signing the Accord of 1975, it was taken as the surrender of Shaikh by the people of Kashmir. [19] Thus an undercurrent an anti-center sentiment could not be wished away which enriched the soil of secessionist forces. Upon his death, Farooq Abdullah succeeded him with ease, but Indira Gandhi ousted him from the office of Chief Minister in July 1984.

Farooq Abdullah became immensely popular. There was no less than 72 day's curfew in Srinagar during the first three months alone. But he was not cut out for the role. Farooq Abdullah made his peace with Rajiv Gandhi and returned to power as the leader of NC-Congress coalition government under an accord with him in November 1986. By common consent, the opposition Muslim United Front (MUF) would have won no less than 20 seats in the Assembly Elections in March 1987. Their rigging proved fateful for two reasons. First, the candidates and their polling and counting agents were not only cheated but imprisoned and beaten up. (Every Kashmiri politician and journalist narrates horror stories about the cheating in the past elections. They point out that if the Muslim United Front had been allowed to win the 15 or 20 seats they claim it is likely to have won in 1987, history would have been very different. Sayyid Salahuddin, the HM leader, who was cheated out of his seat as a candidate Sayyid Yusuf Shah might today have been in electoral politics.) Secondly, having backed the MUF enthusiastically, Kashmir youth lost faith not only in the election process but the political system itself. [20] When the attempt by the young protagonists to capture state power through

constitutional means was scuttled by rigged state elections, they felt 'the bullet will deliver where the ballot has failed'. [21] It was in police control rooms and Kashmir jails that the first generation of Kashmiri militants was born. They took the arms. All those who later spearheaded the insurgency had participated in the election process in one capacity or another. [22] Thus seeds of revolt, sown in the fertile field for years, were ready to sprout. Events provided the opportunity for an organized expression of resentment at different times, with different moods.

2. 1990-1993

The years 1990-1993 were the boom period of armed struggle in the valley, a time of immense turmoil and sufferings but also of great enthusiasm and optimism about the mass movement. During 1990-1992 droves of young men, determined to avenge humiliations, abuse and brutality endured at the hands of the Indian state, would leave their homes in cities and villages, either to undertake the hazardous LOC crossing or seek training and arms in militant camps established in the valley. The valley was rife with Indian troops, but they were unable to gain the upper hand over guerrillas fervently supported by almost the entire population. [23]

Two features of the Azadi movement during this phase merit emphasis. First, the insurgent groups fighting Indian forces consisted overwhelmingly of local Kashmiri recruits, in sharp contrast to 1947-1965. [24] According to official figures all the guerrillas (844) except two who were killed in fighting during 1992 were from Kashmir. [25]

Second, the insurgency was initially very largely specific to the valley. In the early 1990s, the guerrilla made first inroads into Jammu in the Doda district, a huge mountainous expanse covering the northern part of the Jammu region. The vast area and forbidding terrain make it an ideal base for guerrilla fighters. However, due to its demographic and political factors, rather than merely topography and geography made Doda district into one of the toughest zones of the guerrilla war by 1992. [26]

As the armed revolt rapidly acquired a popular character owing to the severe and indiscriminate nature of Indian repression during 1990, Pakistan sensed that a long-awaited window of opportunity for it had finally opened in Kashmir. A conscious policy decision appears to have been taken very quickly in Islamabad, in fact, to curb the independence sentiment that clearly lay at the foundation of the movement. Pakistani leaders became aware of the need to assert more Pakistani control of the uprising..... [27] They floated a rival group, Hizbul Mujahideen. With a sudden and total cessation of funds and arms supplies from Pakistan, the JKLF's calculation went completely awry. They not only had difficulties in fresh recruitment and training of cadres but, more important, faced a new lethal enemy in the Hizb.

The Hizbul Mujahideen's ascendancy and its agenda for Islamization was the hallmark of this phase of militancy (1991-1993). Using the prism of religion, the problem was articulated in terms of the Muslim valley waging an Islamic movement against the Hindu Indian State in order to accede to Islamic Pakistan. The Hizb faced two challenges in the valley, namely, the JKLF's secular ideology, and the Kashmiri Pandits. Pakistan and Azad Kashmir's Muslims were considered as a part of the millat. (The Islamic Community Worldwide).

The split of militant groups: The ideological polarisation between the JKLFs goal of Kashmir Banega Khudmukhtar (Kashmir will be independent) and the Hizbul Mujahideen's demands of Kashmir Banega Pakistan divided the militant ranks sharply and set in motion the fragmentation of the movement. The valley witnessed a mushrooming of militant groups up to 1993. [28]

Popular disillusionment: By 1994 the Azadi movement had reached crossroads. The underlying decision in the movement -the existence of the two competing definitions of 'freedom' and 'self-determination', the rallying of 1990 had been laid bare by the rise of pro-Pakistani militants as the fighting force of a population that was still largely independent. Mysteriously murder of several prominent leaders of the Srinagar intelligentsia, known for independents convictions, Human right activists and Clerics or Moulvi's, disillusioned the masses. [29]

Militant factions began turning the guns on each other. New recruits entering the fray were driven more by the glamour and power of the gun than ideology. They start interfering in the daily life of the people. Many militants extorted donations from the people, forcing people to offer food and shelter. [30] Some were engaged in illegal sale of timber and contract killings. People realized that Azadi was not around the corner. The mass processions demanding Azadi had long ceased, they were becoming disenchanted.

Militant lost face and people felt angry for having undergone severe hardships for nothing. Pakistan perceived it as a sign of fatigue among the Kashmiri militants, and in order to keep militancy alive, a conscious policy decision appears to have been taken to push foreign militants in the valley.

As a result of this change in Pakistan's Kashmir policy, numerous Jihadist outfits in Pakistan began turning their attention towards Kashmir. These Pakistani jihadists were playing a key role in fighting in Kashmir, eclipsing even the local Kashmiri groups. [31]

3. 1994-1995

This phase was marked by retracing steps in search of political avenues for negotiations, growing instances of people's resistance, opposition to militants; misuse of the gun, and determined efforts to regain Kashmiri control over the movement.

Popular disillusionment with increasingly fragmented militancy was the most critical factor in reversing the direction. The militants' halo of heroism was gradually giving way to a painful realization among the public that because of the phenomenal expansion of the armed struggle, the ranks of freedom fighters contained politically shallow people, opportunists, and even criminals. [32] By mid-1994 it was reported that "Kashmiris are sick of growing criminal tendencies among proliferating armed groups". [33] The gun for Jihad had backfired.

Many militant leaders like Ghulam Nabi Bhat, brother of Maqbool Bhat, Javaid Ahmad Mir, Ammanullah Khan, and Azam Inqillabi joined the fray in protesting against the prevailing 'gun culture' and favored exploring political opinions.

Regaining Kashmir Control: A critical feature of this phase was conscious and sustained efforts to wrest the initiative from pro-Pakistan and foreign 'Islamic warriors', and reassert Kashmiri control over the movement.

4. 1995-1996

The hallmark of this phase was continuing the decline of the Kashmir component of the movement, surrender of militants, the emergence of counter-insurgents or pro-India militants and rethinking of the gun option by the important leaders and high level of militant losses. During this period the Kashmiri component of the militant struggle earlier marginalized by Pakistan's secret agencies was on the retreat. There was a snapshot of the exhaustion and loss of morale that gripped the valley in 1995-1997. The JKLF was crushed, most of the other guerrilla groups formed in the early 90s had disbanded or become defunct. The sole survivor, HM was facing a determined offensive from the counterinsurgency forces and their new allies, the 'renegades' or the government's militants and with the result, foreign mercenaries increasingly replaced Kashmiri militants. The pro-Pakistan militants were also alarmed at the turn of events, 'rendering Kashmiris irrelevant in Pakistan calculations and making the 'guest militants' not only the prime force in the movement against India but virtual masters of the scene'. [34]

Counter-Insurgents or Renegade Phase

The counter 'insurgents' were guerrillas who gave-up the struggle against India and enlisted as auxiliaries in the Indian war on insurgency, termed 'friendlies' by the army, these pro-Indian militants earned the epithet of 'renegades' by the other side. They joined hands with the army and the Rashtriya Rifles in particular which protected, funded and armed them in return for fighting the Hizbul Mujahideen. [35] Some among them were criminals while others were men of weak political commitment who had joined the guerrilla war at the peak of Azadi fervor in the early 1990's, discovered that they have no stomach for a protracted fight against the huge Indian forces and opportunistically switched sides. But others were genuinely disillusioned by what they perceived as Pakistan's corrupting influence on the struggle and the willingness of the pro-Pakistan hardcore to perpetrate violence against those among their own people who did not agree with them. [36] Those disillusioned in this manner included front-ranking militants who had been active in pro-Pakistan guerrilla groups in the first half of the decade. [37]

Organisation Base and Mobilization

Human Rights Watch/Asia obtained overwhelming evidence of the fact that these groups are organized, armed and protected by the Indian army and other security forces and operate under their command and protection despite the Indian government's claim to the contrary. The government uses the groups in a number of ways; as informers who watch and report on the activities of the militants; as spies to infiltrate existing militant organization, or as members of paramilitary "renegade" organizations to attack members of Jamaat-e-Islami and Hizbul Mujahideen and other militant groups. Numbers of these militants are also used to support Indian government policies. In public statements, Kuka Parray indicated his group's support for the elections and intention to field candidates and ensured that people in areas under its control voted despite the militants, boycott call.

Government officials have described the recruitment of former militants as a rehabilitation programme while that might be the starter goal of the government's efforts, as of April 1996, no rehabilitation programmes were functioning. In an interview with the Human Rights Watch/Asia, Gopal Sharma, Inspector General (IG) of Police, acknowledged that since August 15, 1995, the government had agreed to pay Rs 5,000 to any militant who surrendered AK-series assault rifles and varying amounts for other small arms. Sharma also stated that upon surrendering their weapons, the militants were supposed to be sent to designated rehabilitation centers (Jammu or Srinagar) where they may be paid Rs 2,000 a month for six months. At the time when Human Rights Watch/Asia met IG Sharma, he claimed that once such center had been established in Jammu and another was to be created in Srinagar. However, a report by India Today published in March 1996 noted that no one was lodged at the Jammu center.

Two large concentrations of such counter insurgents - also known as 'pro-Indian militants' and 'Ikhwanis' emerged around the town of Pattan (Baramulla) in the northern valley and around the town of Anantnag in the southern valley. Smaller groups sprang up elsewhere. Their emergence was a great help to India's security forces. [38]

For the first time since the eruption of the insurgency, Indian authorities had the benefit of local collaboration. Some of the former guerrillas were absorbed into a special counter-terrorism force of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, known as Special Task Force (STF) or Special Operation Group (SOG) which has become notorious since its formation in the mid-1990s for corruption and brutality. Others were given the status of a special police officer and attached to paramilitary and army units operating in their localities, especially to four specialized and notoriously brutal counterinsurgency army formations collectively called the Rashtriya Rifles, created to fight guerillas in the Kashmir valley and war zones of the Jammu region. Four RR formation of approximately ten thousand soldiers each operate in designated zones of responsibility in northern valley districts (Kilo Force), Southern valley district (Victor Force), Doda-Kishtiwar in Jammu (Delta Force) and Rajouri Punch in Jammu (Romeo Force). With their assistance, Indian forces were able to reassert a significant degree of control over Srinagar and other valley towns and some rural areas of the Valley.

Group Profile of Counter-Insurgents

Who and how many are these counter-militants? The People's Rights Organization (PRO) of New Delhi has prepared an informative profile of these counter-insurgent groups. The report has identified eight groups: The Ikhwan-ul-Muslimoon, led by Jamshed Sheerazi alias Koka Parry, which is the strongest and most feared of these groups, and is spread all over the valley but it was especially strong in Anantnag and Baramulla districts; the Muslim Mujahidin, led by he called himself Azad Nabi, which also has its base in Anantnag; The Muslim Liberation Army led by Chaudry Jallaludin, which is concentrated in Kupwara district; the Ikhwan

(or J&K Ikhwan) led by Liyaqat Ali alias Hilal Hyder, which also has its base in Anantnag; and smaller groups such as Indan Albaraq also of Kupwara; the Hussani Commandos operating in Budgam district, Taliban operating in Srinagar district, and Kashmir Liberation Jihad Force. The People's Rights Organization (PRO) report details the process which helped the Indians to procure the services of these counter-insurgents; the inter-group rivalry and fight for hegemony between the militants such as Hizbul Mujahideen and Ikhwanul Muslimoon; the militant's policy of physical extermination of those whom they consider enemies of the Kashmiri people or agents of the Indian Army; the criminalisation of militancy, etc. [39]

5. THE RATIONALE FOR VIOLENCE

Like other secessionist groups, it was also in the fray for Kashmir's independence. Unlike them, however, (Ikhwan-ul-Muslimoon) Koka Parry and his men were fighting for Kashmir's 'liberation' not from India, but the pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen and the Jamaat-e-Islami. [40]

These militants or 'renegades' who have been grouped into several organizations also include militants who after their release from detention were forced to join one or the other of these organizations on pain of death. Majority of these militants under the protective control of Rashtriya Rifles have played havoc with the life and property of common people, killing, wounding, blasting, burning, looting, snatching, plundering, molesting, abducting, and extorting. In order to ensure their safety, their camps have been set up at various places alongside those of RR and BSF. Their interference in various government and semi-government departments had been causing tremendous problems and harassment to those working in these departments. These government-sponsored organizations have already imposed several general strikes across the valley with the open and active enforcement by the Para-military forces. This was perhaps to underscore the importance and validity of such calls given by the APHC and pro-freedom militant outfits which were faithfully responded to.

It is important to mention that these pro-government outfits have through physical and mental harassment been compelling the shopkeepers in the township of Islamabad (Anantnag) and Baramulla to disobey the strike call issued by pro-freedom organizations. Even in the civil lines areas of Hyderpora in Srinagar, the regular army tried to force the shopkeepers to open their shops in defiance of a general strike called by the APHC in protest against the holding of elections.

Meanwhile, the Indian agencies had succeeded in deeply planting their men in different militant organizations. Several of its office-bearers were persuaded to take on the HM and were promised regular supply of arms and ammunition. Many boys by these agencies were planted in the form of new recruits. [41] In several areas of the valley where this outfit had set up its units numerous members of the HM were killed in an ambush. In many cases these recruits were unidentified and association of many with the now suspect outfit was not known. Therefore they would invariably catch the HM activists unaware, kill the workers and sympathizers of Jamaat-e-Islami and destroy and loot their properties. In this way, Indian agencies succeed in getting a number of freedom fighters and sympathizers of independence movement eliminated. [42]

One such pro-Indian and government-sponsored militant outfit was Ikhwanul Muslimoon operating under the cover of the Rashtriya Rifles in parts of North Kashmir including Hajin, Sumbal, Safapur, Naid-Khai Bandipora, and Pattan. This group also spread its activity in Ganderbal, the township bordering the capital city of Sopore, the stronghold of the Jamaat-e-Islami. A couple of informers working with the forces were enough to track down the pro-independence militants, intimidate the population, kill, loot and burn. The chief of this group of government-sponsored militants was a folk-singer turned - militant - turned renegade namely Yousuf Parry, alias Koka Parry alias Jamshed Shirazi. Though an illiterate and unable to communicate even in Urdu he takes pride in having murdered hundreds of Kashmiri Muslims actively involved in freedom struggle launched against India. He openly admitted that he has one point programme namely to wipe out the HM and Jamaat-e-Islami. "Yes, we have killed about 125 of them and forced hundreds of them to flee for their lives. And we will continue to kill them". [43] This group was not only involved in extortion and looting, but his men also ran an illegal trade in timber and precious walnut wood, under the nose of the district administration and the security forces. Rows and rows of trees have been reduced to stumps. Admits Parry; "I do not lie, yes I get the trees cut or how else do you expect me to sustain my men. Pakistan does not pay me". [44]

Since he was launched by the Military Intelligence Parry has been given a lot of coverage by the motivated Indian print and electronic media. He was presented as a messiah whose influence was spreading from North Kashmir to South Kashmir. He has carefully cultivated his image in his stronghold. By keeping the Hizb at bay, he enjoys some level of popular support, says a Hajin resident. "This way neither Hizb nor armies bother us". Interview with some people of Hajin also revealed that "he held Darbar every Thursday where he doles out money to the poor and to the families who have suffered at the hands of Hizb (HM). However, within a year the misdeeds including murder and plunder being committed by Ikhwan -ul Muslimoon were published in the same print media including India Today.

Parry's role in the election of 1996 cannot be denied. Political observers in the valley warned that the strategy to encourage Parry could backfire if and when polls are held.... It was widely believed that he would field his men as independents. In fact, one factor the center considered while deciding to hold polls - until the election commission decided otherwise- was that Parry would get people, at least those in his turf, to participate. "The idea was to make the voter turnout look slightly more respectable than it otherwise would have been, says an administrative official.

Another pro-Indian outfit, Muslim Mujahidin (MM) first targeted the town of Patan in north Kashmir, created havoc with the life and property of the people especially with that of Jamat-e-Islami and HM. [45] As in the course of accomplishing their task in the garb of the pro-freedom organization, camps for them were established alongside the camps of the Indian forces. This group along with Ikhwanul Muslimoon also started its activities in Islamabad and several villages in south Kashmir where for a few months they

launched sustained anti-Jamaat-e-Islami activities and carried on the same nature of work as their counterparts had done in Pattan area in north Kashmir. This group had been creating problems for local Auqaf (endowment) management headed by then Qazi Nissar Ahmad a local religious leader. After the execution of Qazi Nissar (allegedly by Hizb) reign of terror started in the South, by killing, destroying and looting the property of people associated with Jamaat-e-Islami. The shopkeepers were forced to defy the calls of strikes given by All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) or any pro-independence militant organization. Whenever they responded to these calls they were punished in different ways which include not allowing them to open the shops for several days on end. This group was led by Azad Nabi, who was expelled from his party about a year ago on charges of being pro-Indian. Since then he had been leading a group of his fellow's militants (renegades) and directly recruited agents as chief of Muslim Mujahidin.

Another strong renegade militant Papa-Kishtiware is said to have served in the Border Security Force of India (BSF) before joining anti-Indian militancy and in course of time was captured. About a year after his release, he not only had his job intact but also started in helping the forces in nabbing the militants he knew. Later he shifted to his newly bought house at Frisal in Pampore. Soon after, a camp of the government-sponsored militants belonging to the Ikhwan-ul Muslimoon was set up near his house. The extent of the savagery of the nature called Kishtiware can be gauged by the destruction of life and property he wrought in Pampore. In a matter of some weeks, he killed 147 men, young and old and set on fire over 225 residential houses. Once the Development Commissioner of the District was humiliated by this arrogant criminal in front of the hapless town's people who had gathered there to air their grievances. Even the continuous strike by the shopkeepers for about six weeks did not end the miseries of the people. So afraid were the people of this army-backed terrorist that those, who complained about the senior army and civil authorities, had to go into hiding for fear of revenge. In fact, Ghulam Rasool Azad was one of those who had to pay with their lives. [46]

When the campaigning for elections of 1996 started the Kishtiware, 'gang' started the campaign of herding the town's people into the hijacked bases and taking them around the parts of civil lines area under heavy escort of Indian forces. These hostages would be compelled to raise slogans in favour of the candidate of the political wing of Ikhwan -ul Muslimoon i.e., Awami League.

The name of another government sponsored militant group, the Taliban was deliberately chosen to create confusion with the militant Islamic Afghan group of the same name. Mian Basheer Ahmad, a Congress leader in Kashmir has been Taliban's principal patron. The Taliban also works with the Indian army in Kashmir and operates in the area of Kangan on the outskirts of Srinagar.

In the 90's, some pro-freedom militants were also blamed for carrying out killings of civilians. The state actors, however, have been accused of widespread human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, custodial disappearances, rape, torture, arson, extortion, etc and the acts, various human right groups, allege have been used as an instrument of state policy. Instances are galore where women were gang-raped and families killed by the state actors. "When state privatizes or subcontracts law and order, the result is mayhem," says Khurram Pervaz. [47]

'This clearly shows what the intention of the state was; it was not to protect people but to control them by installing fear in them. By employing non-state actors for killings, the state tries to evade responsibility', adds Khuram. [48] The armed forces make no secret of this, one officer of the RR said, "We are deliberately corrupting them (i.e., the surrendered militants)" with wine and money". In his view, they were to be used till the Parliament and Assembly polls were over. 'Then we will disarm them' he says, 'or they may just decide to kill them, as the army has already been doing'. [49]

6. ROARS OF PEACE

A widespread revulsion against violence and the realization that freedom remained a far cry gave rise to votaries of peace with honour. But lack of effective leadership which could respond to the changing situation with creative alternatives was absent. [50] The popular mood was captured by a group of ex-militants who decided to shun the violence and hold unconditional talks with New Delhi. Some top former leaders of the militant movement, including Babar Badar (chief of the Muslim Janbaz Force), Imran Rahi (deputy chief of the Hizb), Bilal Lodhi, former chief of Al-Barq, Abdul Gani Lone (Hurriyat leader) and Ghulam Mohi -ud din (chief of Muslim Mujahidin) declared their opposition to Hurriyat and set up the forum for the permanent resolution of Jammu and Kashmir. [51] In a significant departure, they did not insist upon Pakistani's involvement in negotiations. This political initiative offered an alternative platform to the Hurriyat, which was criticized for pursuing rigid policies and 'zero achievements'.

The Indian government responded positively and invited their Forum of Peaceful Resolution of Jammu and Kashmir for talks at New Delhi. Home Minister (S.B Chavan) constituted a committee to consider the Forum's proposals for building confidence by releasing all detainees, restraining the security forces, calling off offensive operations and disarming the 'renegade militants'. [52] The acts were responded to in Kashmir and acted as a catalyst in bringing several militant leaders to the negotiating table. The Hizbul Mujahidin's former chief, Ahsan Dar, and Azam Inqilabi also welcomed the initiative. This kind of situation favored the government and the Forum's initiative was soon overtaken by the government's decisions to hold the Lok Sabha elections of 1996. In September 1996 elections were held after a gap of almost a decade to constitute a new Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. This election was severely marred by the low turnout in most valley constituencies and pro-Azadi areas of Jammu, widespread allegations of people being forced to vote by security forces and 'renegades' especially in rural communities, and other forms of fraud. [53] Farooq Abdullah was duly reinstalled as Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir.

However, these elections could not end the violence in Jammu and Kashmir. No doubt 'armed militancy has been partially contained for the time being, and a brutalised population compelled to seek temporary relief, yet neither have the people of Kashmir valley given up their aspiration to be 'Azad' nor will the assembly elections engender a democratic solution. On four occasions in the past 1947, 1952, 1953 and 1975 the people of India were made to believe that the problem had been solved. Past seven years 1989-1996 shows the vacuity of such claims'. [54]

7. THE FIDAYEEN OR SUICIDE PHASE 1999-2002

In Kashmir, more than 70 fidayeen attacks have taken place so far and the bulk of the raids have been attributed by Indian security sources to one militant group, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), with its headquarters in Pakistan's Panjab province. Most of the rest have been attributed to Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) which was active in Jammu and Kashmir in the mid-1990s. [55]

In a Fidayeen attack, the attacker, highly armed, breaks into the target area (highly fortified camps of Indian security forces) and inflicts destruction and random casualties and tries to escape. In this, there is a chance, though remote, of the attackers, escaping. The fidayeen are highly motivated whereas in case of suicide attacks, the attacker commits the actual act singlehandedly and comes laden in with explosives on his body, is otherwise unarmed, and the possibility of his survival is zero. [56] However, in both these cases attackers almost never return from these penetrate-and-kill missions - their aim is not to save their own lives but to maximize the fighting psychological impact on the enemy by inflicting death and destruction of their targets. [57]

The Let us mouthpiece Jihad Times (published in Pakistan) discussed suicidal warfare in Kashmir. LeT refers to members who execute such operations as Fidayeen (those who dare their lives) while JeM refers to its khudkush Shaheed dasta (self-sacrificing martyrs units). [58]

Fidayeen attacks started after the Kargil operations and the first Fidayeen raid occurred on 13 July 1999, when two guerillas simply barged into a Border Security Force (BSF) headquarters at Bandipora, a northern valley town, firing indiscriminately from automatic rifles and lobbing grenades. One militant who penetrated into the camp was able to kill two officers, a sub-inspector, and the wife of a constable and injured five others. [59] Subsequently, there was a series of such attacks, against army and police headquarters. In most of these incidents terrorists (militants) were killed after inflicting casualties and damage but in a few cases, they managed to escape under cover of darkness. The Rashtriya Rifles (RR) posts at Nutnus, Keegam, and Beerwah in Budgam were attacked. In these incidents, the militants surprised the posts killing 11 personnel while 10 militants were killed in retaliation. The fifth attack was on an Intelligence Bureau (IB) post guarded by a section of the BSF at Handawra. Three militants entered the post and killed one and injured another. The army surrounded the post and all the militants were killed.

Between 12 July 1999 and 3 September 1999, five attacks had taken place where a new strategy of entering security force posts by surprise and firing on the personnel was being tried. These were clearly 'attacks with little chances of escape'. Keeping in view such incidents the security of all camps was reorganized by erecting double barricades at the gate, setting up double sentry posts, ensuring total access control, setting up perimeter lights with standby generators and having only two-hour shifts for the sentries. The aim was to deny the enemy ingress the camps. Once the enemy entered the camp the battle was lost. In each encounter, if a couple of members of the 'terrorist' team were killed and we were safe behind our prepared defenses the enemy was bound to give up such attacks. However, each time they succeeded in entering the camp and killing our personnel, it would mean a victory for them, even if all of them were killed subsequently. [60] The worst case would be if they succeeded in entering the campus and killing of some of our personnel and escape.

These followed number of 'attacks with little chances of escape' on the RR Camp at Batapura and the Indo-Tibetan Border Force (ITBP) at Ajas, Bandipora. On 7 November 1999, the militants targeted the Corps Headquarter at Badami Bagh. They succeeded in entering the main gate and went into the office of the Public Relation Officer (PRO), killing him and six other personnel. Two militants were killed and one escaped. This was followed by an attack on the camp of a Divisional Headquarter at Barahmulla, on 27 November 1999; there was an attack on the Special Operation Group (SOG) at Shergarhi in which five SOG personnel's were killed.

There were at least 55 fidayeen attacks between mid-1999 and 2002, usually executed by two-man teams. Among these thirteen attacks took place on a different target in the year 2000, and 29 attacks took place in 2001 making that year the high point of the fidayeen campaign. There was no intelligence for any of these attacks. Except for the attack on BSF on the Kokernag and the attack on the Central Reserve Police Force at the Srinagar Airport, the militants could not penetrate the defenses. In all other cases, they were able to enter the posts and inflict casualties. [61] According to Indian counterinsurgency authorities, 161 military, paramilitary and police personnel died in these attacks (the Indian army alone lost 82 men), and 90 militants perished while executing them. [62]

8. ORGANISATION BASES AND MOTIVATION

Who were the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and what motivated them to undertake such attacks? The LeT the armed wing of the Jmiat-i-Ahli Hadith, a Pakistani religious group that draws its inspiration from the Wahabi school of Saudi Arabia. Its parent body the Markaz-e-Dawa-wal-Irshad at Muridke at Lahore in Pakistan runs a huge network of schools and social service centers that attract thousands of young men, trains them and instills in them a love of Jihad. They are against democracy as a concept and believe that the Sharia is supreme and all laws are laid down there and their religious leaders interpret these laws. Its leader Hafiz Mohammad Syeed says that "God has ordained every Muslim to fight until His rule is established. We have no option but to follow God's order". [63]

Emboldened by their success in operations, they chose a prominent location, the Jammu and Kashmir legislation Assembly building for the next attack. Three militants managed to enter the Assembly building. In this attack, 24 civilians and 9 uniformed personals died. Again the attack was a success. In other attacks, the Awantipora Airfield and the Army Camp at Zakurah were hit.

In December 2001 a heavily armed fireman squad managed to enter the compound of India's parliament building in New Delhi where hundreds of parliamentarians and government ministers were present at that time. The attackers were killed by security officers after a forty-five minute battle with guns and grandees. Nine other people including security staff, parliament stewards, and

a gardener tending the grounds also died. With the result, the relations between India and Pakistan countries deteriorated more. India authorities said the raiders were Pakistanis helped by three Kashmiris and a war-like situation was created on Indo-Pak borders. However, in response to US pressure, in January 2002 General Musharraf announced a crackdown on Jihadi groups operating across the LOC from Pakistan territory. LeT and JeM were banned along with the other groups in Pakistan. But only after four months lull, these people again struck in fidayeen style in the year 2002 on the Army Camp at Trehgam and Police Post at Kokernag, then there were series of attacks in Rajouri and Poonch. The Police Post at Chaktroo, the Army Camp at Sunderbani, the BSF Camp near Rajouri and the Army Camp at Surankoot were targeted. The next attack was on Ragunath Temple in Jammu. On 14 May 2002, they targeted a Camp at Kaluchak near Jammu city housing families of Indian soldiers, where more than 30 people were killed. The Army Camp at Chassana was next to the target followed by the Aksharadham Temple in Ahmadabad. [64] It is to be mentioned here that Kashmiris did not welcome these civilian killings and attacks on religious places but took strong note of it. The All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and other groups favoring "self-determination" organized protests in Srinagar against the massacre. In an interview given to an Indian News agency by satellite phone from his mountainous base, the top Hizb Mujahideen commander for the Jammu region condemned the carnage (in Jammu) as inhuman and un-Islamic and said, he 'suspected that the massacre was carried by foreign militants'. [65] However, it is to be attested here that suicide warfare in Kashmir is not exclusively a 'cross-border' phenomenon, but rather is the product of the incendiary infusion of the ideology and tactics of trans-nationalist militancy into a brutalized, desperate local environment - that is a conjunction in internal and external factors. 'The group insecurity of Muslim life and identity in India had as a natural consequence the assertion of an Islamic identity in Kashmir. To make matters more complicated was the sheer brutality of the Indian army responsible to the Kashmiri struggle, which was seen by many, by both Kashmiri Muslims as well as Indian Hindus, in purely religious terms. On the other hand, the Pakistani factor has been of major significance in the rise of the Islamists'. [66] In May 2000 JeM carried out its first suicide attack in the Kashmir when a militant exploded a car bomb at the entrance to the Srinagar headquarters of the Indian Army of 15th Corps. The militant was Afaq Ahmad Shah, a High School student of Khanyar Srinagar, born in 1983 into a religious family. Like Nadeem Khateeb, he was internally tormented by what he saw around him and eventually decided that he could no longer be a passive witness. Thus if Ashfaq Wani, Hameed Sheikh, and Yasin Malik personify the intifada generation of the azadi movement, Afaq Shah and Nadeem Khateeb represent its fidayeen generation.

By the end of 2002, however, it was clear that the frequency of fidayeen raids had decreased significantly as compared to 2001 or even 2000. But the situation in Kashmir did not change. The Indian security forces battling armed militants in the valley say that the number of militants might be lower but that they are more dangerous and dedicated and they carry more weapons on them than ever. [67]

In the State Legislative Assembly on 12 March 2005, State Home Minister A. R. Veeri gave the following figure for the year 2003-2004: A total of 2,470 militants were killed in various encounters with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir, of these 1,494 were killed in 2003 and 976 in 2004. Also, 714 security forces lost their lives while fighting terrorism in the state during the last two years. 384 were killed in 2003, while 330 lost their lives in 2004. This information was furnished in written reply to a question from assembly member S D Shariq. On the other hand, militants also claimed that as some are killed, the vacuum is easily filled with new recruits, as there is 'a long waiting list' of those who want to join and fight Indian troops. Levels of violence have remained high despite developments in the peace process (like a resumption of Srinagar - Muzafferabad bus service) over the course of 2004-2005. In April 2005, officials reported that 144 persons were killed, including 111 militants and their commanders, 21 civilians, and 12 security force personnel. In the same period in the previous year, 130 were killed including 54 militants, 41 civilians, and 35 security force personnel.

All militant organizations that were active at that time had rejected the peace process. Some outfits had asked their cadres to increase the attacks on the Indian Forces. In an interview published in the newspaper Greater Kashmir in late April 2005, Sayyid Salahuddin, chief of the Hizbul Mujahidin and United Jihad Council, asked his cadres to increase their attacks in Kashmir. [68] Earlier that year he officially rejected an invitation to meet the Hurriyat leaders in Pakistan.

By and large, there was a qualitative change in the situation in the Kashmir. The Indian army and paramilitary forces waged a relentless battle to crush the militancy within a couple of years. The Indian troops came with a heavy hand and succeeded in eliminating or capturing the top-brass of the leading militant organizations like Mohammad Yousuf Ganie, alias Naseeb -ud din Gazi, the onetime deputy supreme commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, its former divisional commander Nisar-ul Islam, Ghulam Mohammad Mir alias Shams-ul Haq, Hizb's Amir-e- Aala, its intelligence chief Fayaz Ahmad Mir, Mohammad Arif Hussian Qazi, alias Haji hailing from Jammu, commander in chief of Harkat-ul-Ansar, Qari Zarrar of Pakistan, who has been the chief commander of the outfit, Nayeem Khan alias Saifullah, Ghulam Nabi Baba alias Parvez Baba, (arrested) Abul Fazal, Ali Mohammad Dar alias Burhan -ud din Hijazi, deputy chief of Hizb, Ghulam Hassan Khan, alias Engineer Zaman alias Saif-ul-Islam, chief commander of Hizb, Mohammad Abbas Malik, alias Abbas Rahi of Doda (killed in Srinagar) and finally Ghulam Rasool Dar alias Gazi Naseer -ud din, chief commander of operations along with his financial controller and publicity chief Fayaz Ahmad Dar at Zainkot outskirts of Srinagar etc. Dar's elimination marks the climax of the long-running hunt that began soon after he took charge in November 2003. The breakthrough came when the intelligence agencies began intercepting calls made by him on his Thursdays hand held satellite phone. India is among the few countries in Asia with a significant satellite signal interception capability, which is enabled by a string of listening stations run by the Research and Analyses Wing's National Technical Intelligence communication centre. [69]

These things demoralized the separatists and the common Kashmiri too because 'the struggle after so much violence, sufferings and sacrifice have not led to the realization of independence'. There was a feeling of exhaustion and loss of morale that gripped the valley, particularly with grudging respect for the coercive power of the Indian state. However, this all does not mean that militancy has died in Kashmir. For all reasons, the calm in Kashmir after a prolonged period of turbulence was an imposed one due to a

massive campaign of arrest, torture, and harassment. Even Indian military spokesman said that they have been able to drain the morale of the depleted member of separatists in Kashmir, but what is the need of the hour is the political initiative to take care of the needs of the locals and give them healing touch. [70]

They (the Kashmiris) have all the intense resentment and feel they have been wronged. With the result, popular alienation and militancy have fed on each other. On the other side, Pakistan has not been slow to exploit the situation and indeed to sponsor and set up several militant groups. So as long as alienation from India continues and Pakistan keeps supporting the insurgency, militancy will return again and again.

The years 2008 and 2010 mass rebellion though without any support from Pakistan and militancy, over the transfer of land to Shri Amaranth Shrine Board is a perfect indicator. The land transfer proved a major provocation to launch another form of protest. Provocations are all there but how and when they burst into public protestations remains always unpredictable.

9. REFERENCES

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