

Kashmir: new test case for British 'new world order'

by Linda de Hoyos

In concert with the governments of the United States and Pakistan, and with various so-called Islamic networks, Great Britain has launched an offensive to detach the state of Jammu and Kashmir from the nation of India.

The state, which has been disputed by India and Pakistan since the British division of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, is comprised of a Muslim majority. In the last year, Muslim radicals, spurred by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front led by Amanullah Khan and headquartered in London, have fomented a violent uprising against the Indian government, with logistical support and strident encouragement from the Pakistani side of the border. The state has been under Indian martial law for most of the year.

Any pretenses that the Kashmiri revolt was indigenously created by and for Kashmiris have been summarily dropped by the British controllers of the operation, who have exposed themselves with no compunction in a series of initiatives launched from London over the last six weeks.

British whipping up the crisis

London's organizing drive was launched in full force July 12-14 with an "International Conference on the Kashmir Question" held outside Washington, D.C., featuring Lord Eric Avebury, chairman of the British Parliamentary Human Rights Commission. Lord Avebury, who described himself as an "ardent supporter of Kashmir," declared that "there are no words, no pictures that could convey what it is like for you and your countrymen to be crushed under the jackboot of Indian imperialism." Lord Avebury then declared that Kashmir must become the "test case" for a re-classification of "colonialism" within the United Nations' framework, from strictly former colonialist countries to "larger, domineering countries, such as India."

Lord Avebury then called for an internationally supervised plebiscite to be held in Kashmir, and also, exposing London's medium-term aims, proclaimed that a similar plebiscite should be called in the Pakistani section of Kashmir, called Azad Kashmir. In short, Lord Avebury lent his voice to the demand for a Kashmir state independent of both India and Pakistan.

In early August, Lord Avebury was quoted again in the Pakistani and Indian press as calling for a five-year United Nations "trusteeship" over Kashmir, before such a plebiscite

is called. Lord Avebury's proposal received the immediate and hearty endorsement of Amanullah Khan, interviewed in the Pakistani daily, the *Dawn*. Khan, who works closely in London with Sikh separatist Jagjit Singh Chauhan, had previously told reporters that although Pakistan has given support to the Kashmiri militants, "I owe all to Britain."

Over 700 people attended the Washington conference on Kashmir, sponsored by the International Institute of Kashmir Studies in London, the Kashmiri-American Council in Washington, and the World Freedom Movement, headquartered in Akron, Ohio.

Also indicating the international line-up intent on fomenting secession from India were such speakers at the conference as: U.S. Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.) of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, who has also figured prominently as a lobbyist for the Sikh separatist movement; Jamsheed Marker, permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations; and Dr. Abdullah Omar Nasseef, secretary general of the Muslim World League, headquartered in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

In his speech to the conference, Ghulam Nabi Fai, director of the Kashmiri-American Council, declared that Kashmir is the test case for George Bush's new world order. Liberally quoting Henry Kissinger as his strategic mentor, Fai said that the "new world order was defined as the unity of the international community in checking the aggression of Saddam Hussein against Kuwait. The lesson was that the world, united by a common ideal which President Bush defined as 'peace, security, and rule of law,' would stand in the way of unlawful aggression of the stronger against the weaker. . . . For how the world handles growing calls for self-determination in Kashmir, and the growing instability of the Indo-Pakistani region, is a crucial test of how the new order will be shaped, and whether it will evolve peacefully or in bloodshed and chaos."

British parliamentarians find new issue

The Kashmiri conference in Virginia, which was played up as front-page news in the Pakistani press, had been called to place pressure on Washington. Since then, the British have escalated the pressure on the Indian government in New Delhi itself. In August, Gerald Kaufman, the British Labour Party "shadow foreign minister," visited Jammu and Kash-

mir in India (he had visited Azad Kashmir in June), and emerged with a report to the British Parliament. According to the Indian press, Kaufman, who was private secretary to the Soviet-tainted former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, is demanding that the British Commonwealth form an "eminent persons group" to be led by former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, to investigate the Kashmir crisis. Kaufman vowed that such a group would be formed, as soon as the Labour Party comes to power in London. Kaufman claimed in an interview Aug. 11 that Britain has "tremendous concern and interest" in Kashmir—whose beautiful Kashmir Valley was a popular watering hole for administrators of the British raj. Kaufman believes that Kashmiris themselves must decide their fate—independently of either Pakistan or India.

Meanwhile, other British bigwigs addressed a meeting of the Anglo-Pakistani Parliamentary Association and Pakistan Society, held in the Grand Committee Room of the British House of Commons. Member of Parliament Frederick Bennett, a long-standing friend of the Pakistani establishment who has received the highest award given by the Pakistani government to foreigners, declared that the 1972 Simla agreement between India and Pakistan—which calls for a bilateral settlement of Kashmir—"does not preclude solution to the Kashmir dispute under United Nations resolutions [which call for a Kashmiri plebiscite]. Kashmir should be given the right to self-determination as provided by the U.N. resolutions." Bennett was seconded by Tory Member of Parliament Sir John Wheeler.

Another Labour Party MP who visited Pakistan this month, Roy Hattersley, has told reporters that "every pressure should be applied [on India] to end that kind of tyranny [in Kashmir] which is unacceptable in the modern world. Kashmir is a problem for the international community. The international community should assert itself so Kashmir is given the right to self-determination according to the U.N. resolution."

Accordingly, alongside the hoopla have come threats. British Minister for Overseas Development Administration Lynda Chalker told the Indian press that Great Britain will hold talks with India in the context of Britain's overall aid policy, which, she claimed, will "be linked with the conduct of good government. Of course, we shall raise this matter with the newly formed government [of India] very soon."

Pakistan joins in

Notwithstanding the dangers if Kashmir were to become an "independent" state midwived by British intelligence, Islamabad has joined in the anti-India campaign. The Kashmir issue went into a hiatus during the United Nations war against Iraq, to such a point that Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg declared that Pakistan must seek a peaceful solution to the Kashmir conflict. Pakistan has already fought two wars over the state, to no avail, he said.

Beg's statement came in the context of his formulations

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for a "strategy of defiance" against the Bush new world order and Anglo-American pressure for Pakistan to dismantle its nuclear capability, including the cutoff in February of all military assistance to Pakistan, a long-term military ally of Washington.

The "strategy of defiance" would appear to have crumbled in the wake of the decimation of Iraq. Wasim Sajjad, spokesman for Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, was in Washington at the beginning of August, bringing a proposal that the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union should mediate to prevent an arms race between India and Pakistan—an arms race involving nuclear weapons. According to the Pakistani press, both Great Britain and the United States support the proposal. Sajjad met with Secretary of State James Baker, National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, Vice President Dan Quayle, Undersecretary of State Robert Kimmitt, and Assistant Secretary of State Reginald Bartholemew. Bartholemew then flew off to Beijing, where he managed to extract from Beijing an agreement to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, a move that will put additional pressure on India.

On July 22, retiring Pakistani Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg told troops in Sialkot, Pakistan near the Indian border, that "shadows of war" have started appearing over the fast-changing events on the subcontinent, the Press Trust of India reported. Beg said that the "freedom struggle" of the people of Kashmir was "gaining momentum with every passing day and it is now impossible to suppress it. . . . It is quite likely that in sheer desperation India can venture against Pakistan." In an attempt to reassure the army, which has not won any of the three wars fought with India since 1947, Beg said that the Pakistani Army has made giant strides in indigenous military production, enhancing its "war stamina."

On the diplomatic front, Pakistan has formally asked the European Parliament to conduct an independent inquiry into the crisis in Indian Kashmir and alleged human rights violations there. The call is being fielded in the European Parlia-

A tribute to Shahpour Bakhtiar

The following was said in 1979 when Shahpour Bakhtiar became Iran's prime minister, by Prof. Dr. Sadiqi, who had been a member of the cabinet of the "Persian De Gaulle," Dr. Muhammed Mossadeq. It is taken from a conversation with Dr. Sabri-Tabrizi of Edinburgh University, reprinted in the latter's book *Iran* (Mainstream Publishers, Edinburgh, 1988) on p. 263:

"Dr. Bakhtiar, as I know him, has two distinct qualities. First, he has a strong personality which makes him outstanding among many national leaders. He has the courage to step forward in these circumstances, when all are thinking about how to become a hero or achieve a position. Second, he loves and is interested in his own homeland. His interest in the independence of his country is a theme that he has stood by unwaveringly for many years; and I think, at this time in history it is a victory for our nation to see someone like Dr. Bakhtiar in charge of forming a Cabinet and highlighting the everlasting name of Dr. Muhammed Mossadeq . . . a man whose name the mass media could not even dare mention. Bakhtiar had the courage to step in and it is our duty and that of all national leaders to help him and save the country."

ment by MP Kenneth Coates, a member of the Inchcape family. If the European Parliament declines to carry out such an investigation, Pakistan is demanding that it authorize Amnesty International—headquartered in London, of course—to carry out an "independent" investigation.

Pakistan was also active at the summit Aug. 9 of the Organization of Islamic Conference held in Ankara, Turkey. According to press reports, the World Islamic Council pushed a resolution demanding that the OIC take immediate steps toward sanctions against India, and undertake relief work in Kashmir "before the Kashmiri people are annihilated." The actual resolution passed by the OIC calls for a tripartite fact-finding commission to investigate the Kashmir situation, and calls upon India and Pakistan to reach a peaceful solution to the conflict, demanding that both countries withdraw their troops to peacetime positions. The resolution also offers an OIC mediating mission to help defuse tensions. While calling for the Kashmiri right to self-determination, the resolution also invokes the Indian-Pakistan Simla agreement.

Especially since Lord Avebury's conference on Kashmir in Virginia, the Pakistanis appear to be receiving succor from

Washington on the Kashmiri issue. "We do not accept the Indian claim that this [Kashmir] is a part of India," proclaimed U.S. Ambassador to Islamabad Robert Oakley Aug. 11 in an interview with a Lahore daily, "and I daresay if you could get an honest reading of the positions of the governments of the Soviet Union and China, you will find out just about the same. . . . This is an unresolved issue. . . . We certainly think that the people of Kashmir have the right to have a say in determining their own government and their own future."

Oakley also stated that the issue was bringing India and Pakistan to the brink of war. In immediate response, Indian Home Minister S.B. Chavan protested before the Indian Parliament that Oakley's statement was an attempt to fan war hysteria on the subcontinent, and took the American ambassador to task for "disregarding the fact that it [Kashmir] is a bilateral issue, and he is internationalizing it without consideration" of the countries involved.

However, there is no question that Kashmir is a potential flashpoint for war, as pointed out by the Indian Defense Minister Sharad Pawar July 19. Pawar told the Indian Parliament then that Pakistan's acquisition of an unspecified number of M-111 Chinese missiles poses a serious threat to India. India is taking appropriate measures to ensure full defense preparedness, the Press Trust of India reported.

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