

Book Reviews

The Malaise in Kashmir

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Jagmohan: *My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir*
New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 12th ed. 2018

Jagmohan's *My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir* is a masterpiece. The book was first published in September 1991 and this is the 12th edition. It has also been translated into several Indian languages. The latest version covers developments till February 2018.

Highly detailed and, in fact, almost encyclopaedic in scope, it runs into nearly 1000 pages. The author has brought all his professionalism and expertise to bear in dealing with a most complex issue. Being cathartic the book is inevitably suffused with bitterness. This is understandable and even inevitable, as Jagmohan, while he was being systematically undermined by those at the Centre, had to deal with the two-fold threat of a lethal and well organised terrorist movement and a malicious disinformation campaign against him.

In 25 chapters and 30 appendices, the book encapsulates not only the tumultuous events of his tenure as governor from April 1984 to July 1989 and from January to May 1990, but also outlines the significant developments from 1947 to date. Additionally, it performs an excellent service of delineating Kashmir's history from ancient times and traces its deep rooted cultural and religious linkages with the rest of the country. It also underlines the fact that the Valley is but a small part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir; and other parts of the state, like Ladakh, Jammu, and Kargil have a deep sense of having been neglected by the local authorities.

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The book does well to trace the origins of the mess that is Kashmir to the Maharaja's initial dithering as to whether or not to accede to India, India taking the Kashmir issue to the UN, Article 370, and the Delhi Agreement of 1952. The attention to detail is demonstrated by the manner in which Appendix XX rubbishes Alistair Lamb's argument that Indian forces had landed in Kashmir prior to the signing of the Instrument of Accession. Appendix VI draws attention to the assurance given to India by the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) that plebiscite proposals were not binding on India, if Pakistan did not implement Part I & II of the UN Security Council resolution of August 1948.

The book draws attention to the two-faced nature of Kashmiri politicians and asserts that: "They could be secular as well as communal, democratic as well as dictatorial, accessionist as well as pro-Pakistan. The underlying motivation was not principles but power..." Shaikh Abdullah personified this characteristic and could be, "a communalist in Kashmir, a communist in Jammu, and a nationalist in New Delhi." The book graphically exposes Shaikh Abdullah's duplicity. From 1947 to 1952 he was proclaiming that Kashmir's accession to India was irrevocable, but at the same time he was speaking of the possibility of its independence with people like Warren Austen of the US State Department, Michael Davidson of the *Scotsman*, and Sir Owen Dixon of UN fame. Of course, after 1953 he "virtually toed the Pakistani line" and was in touch with Pakistani authorities through the workers of the Plebiscite Front, and was a prime accused in the Kashmir Conspiracy case. Indeed, it was his pro-Pakistan approach which encouraged Pakistan to make another bid to grab Kashmir by force in 1965.

The book is equally scathing in its criticism of the Kashmir Accord of February 1975, the Rajiv-Farooq Accord of November 1986, as well as the subsequent elections of June 1977 and March 1987. His reason for criticising the Kashmir Accord is that by keeping Article 370 intact, it failed to change the constitutional relationship between the Union and the State and was thus no more than a device to bring Sheikh Abdullah back to power. The Kashmir Accord was therefore "another manifestation of the old habit of entertaining illusions," and nothing was done to put an end to the playing of the communal card and the Kashmiri identity card. In a similar vein, the Rajiv-Farooq Accord

has been rubbished as "another reflex of spurious democracy and the habit of nursing illusions." In effect, it was no more than an unwritten agreement to form a coalition government with a 60:40 power-sharing ratio.

The book suggests that the National Conference used fascist tactics to contest elections during the period 1975 to 1986 and they "ceased to have any real meaning for democracy or the national cause." They were mere exercises for keeping alive unpatriotic elements. Unscrupulous leaders used these as an opportunity to "whip up communal and local prejudices... and maintain their complete sway by resorting to almost treasonable activities." As to the March 1987 elections the book candidly mentions that there were "grave misgivings about their fairness."

An entire chapter entitled 'Frightened Pigeons and Forsaken Community,' is devoted to the Kashmiri Pandits and their eviction from Kashmir. This not only puts to rest the widely propagated myth that the author had engineered their flight from the Valley but also highlights the horrors that they were subjected to and the vicious and tendentious disinformation campaign undertaken by organisations like Committee for Information on Kashmir and the Peoples Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). No wonder that the author while addressing the Rajya Sabha stated: "India does not require outside enemies; we are our own worst enemies."

The book underlines that through 1988 and 1989, in the last phase of his first tenure as governor, he had warned the Centre of the deteriorating situation in Kashmir, but regrettably no corrective action was taken. I can vouch for this because even I, in Delhi in the Ministry of External Affairs, was picking up signs of Pakistan's machinations in Kashmir. In fact, our first protest note in the matter was handed over by me to the Pakistan Deputy High Commissioner in 1988.

Jagmohan details at great length the nature and pattern of subversion and terrorism in Kashmir, the breakdown of the administration, infiltration of all institutions including the police, and of course the Pakistani hand in it. It notes that regrettably Rajiv Gandhi and his coterie showed no inclination to understand the nature of the problems facing Kashmir, much less evolve measures to deal with them. Those who followed Rajiv Gandhi were no better and went on, "to create whirlpools of confusion and contradictions, not only

for themselves but also for those who were willing to lend a helping hand in extricating Kashmir from the intricate web of subversion and terrorism."

There is an exhaustive analysis of the roots of the crisis in Kashmir, ranging from a host of negative forces such as an attitude of permissiveness, spurious democracy, deception and duplicity, to administrative collapse and rampant corruption. It, however, accords pride of place to Article 370, as the provider of the strongest support to Kashmiri separatism and alienation. Quoting from the author's diary, the Article, "breeds the microbes of subversion. It keeps alive the unwholesome legacy of the two nation theory." It is no surprise therefore that the author makes a compelling case for the removal of Article 370. The book provides a straight forward solution for the Kashmir crisis: the removal of unhealthy elements, the putting down of the forces of terror with a heavy hand, the trial of those involved in anti-national and terrorist activities, the holding of elections after restoration of law and order, the undertaking of massive development work, and the eventual abrogation of Article 370.

There is an optimistic note welcoming the moves made by the Modi government in Kashmir and vis-a-vis Pakistan. I do not wholly share this view. Errors have been made. For starters, it was prima facie wrong to tie up with the PDP whose links to separatist elements are clear, whose agenda is poles apart from that of the BJP and whose leaders are as prone to doublespeak as those of the National Conference. It would have been much better to have imposed Governor's rule for a couple of years to cleanse the Valley of the negative forces, before holding fresh elections. Furthermore, the common minimum programme agreed to between the BJP and PDP put paid to any thoughts of reviewing Article 370 and specifically suggested that dialogue should be initiated with all groups, irrespective of their ideology and predilections. This would mean dialoguing with separatist outfits, which sends out wrong signals.

This authoritative work would have been even more attractive with better proofreading and tighter editing, to remove repetitions. Its many readers would also have benefitted had the international dynamics of the issue been addressed in greater detail. For instance, the book does not cover the manner in which Pakistan dragged India into a virtual war on human rights in

the UN Commission on Human Rights from 1993 to 1995 after having assiduously ratcheted up terrorism in the Valley. Happily, we were able to decisively thwart Pakistan in this matter in 1994, but the margin was thin. Had Pakistan got the upper hand there would have been severe adverse ramifications in Kashmir. The significant lesson obvious from hindsight is that Pakistan had carefully planned and prepared its campaign against India in Kashmir, with its local and international dimensions feeding off each other. Local in the form of generating and supporting a vicious terrorist movement in Kashmir and international by way of mounting a jihad against India at international fora on alleged human rights violations in Kashmir, which had the potential of placing the issue, once again, on the agenda of the UNSC.