
Conference Report

Kashmir conflict can be solved, but not with British involvement

by Poul Rasmussen

Of all the perpetual conflicts left in the wake of British imperial rule, that centering around Kashmir ranks among the most tragic. Since the 1947 partition which led to the creation of Muslim Pakistan, at the cost of 1 million lives lost in the massive dislocations of population, the region has been in a state of semi-permanent conflict, breaking out three times into open war between Pakistan and India. The British partition policy along religious lines was a recipe for strife: Although most of the princely states with which Britain's Lord Mountbatten was dealing chose to accede to Pakistan or India according to whether they had Muslim or Hindu majorities, respectively, the Maharajah of Kashmir, a Muslim entity, opted for India.

A 1971 agreement between the Indian and Pakistani governments, known as the Simla Agreement, called for a negotiated solution to the Kashmir dispute, but was seen to conflict with a United Nations resolution from 1949 calling for a plebiscite in Kashmir. Increasingly, over the last 20 years, tensions have risen to fever pitch and violence.

Now the situation is in a clinch: India is relying on military force against what it perceives to be Muslim fundamentalist-terrorist threats from Kashmiri soil; Pakistan is calling for accession of the Muslim Kashmir to its state; yet Kashmir, if a plebiscite were to be held, would probably opt for independence.

There are two ways of approaching the Kashmir issue: Either one takes up a position (pro-Pakistan, pro-Indian, or pro-Kashmir) and faces off against the perceived enemy; or one looks at the conflict from above, so to speak, and identifies the geopolitical scheme which the British Empire followed in 1947. The former approach can only lead to exacerbated conflict, whereas the latter makes it possible to identify a solution in the higher, common interests of all.

An unusual debate in Denmark

On June 2, the Kashmir Society of Denmark held an unusual international conference on Kashmir, in the Danish Parliament. It was unusual because it allowed for debate on both approaches. Filling the large hall were members of parliament from Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the United

Kingdom, in addition to Pakistani and Kashmiri political figures and press, and numerous Danish participants.

From the opening remarks by Danish MP Elizabeth Arnold, it was clear that the first approach was well represented: The focus would be on allegations of human rights violations in Kashmir by the Indian military, and calls for an international U.N. intervention to force through a plebiscite in Kashmir. Most speakers elaborated on this leitmotif, calling for steps to be taken, which ended up in the final resolution passed by the gathering. These included: an end to the violence in Kashmir; the release of all political prisoners; open borders; withdrawal of Indian military forces and transfer of power to a civilian government; free access to Kashmir for human rights organizations, press, and humanitarian groups; initiation of a political dialogue among Kashmir, Pakistan, and India; and, a free and fair plebiscite in Kashmir.

Yet, it was not simply an open-and-shut affair. Dr. Z.U. Khan, an adviser to the Kashmir government who presided over the conference, issued broader outlines for the conference, defining the aims as 1) to provide a documented update on the situation in Kashmir, and 2) to have a "free and frank exchange of views" on the origin and nature of the crisis. Dr. Khan himself presented a chronology of events from the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan to the present, before listing the points which were to appear in the resolution.

The most rabid speech was delivered by Max Madden, a U.K. parliamentarian who is also from the British Kashmir Society and the Kashmir Human Rights Organization. Madden, who raved that "no one can decide for Kashmir except the people of Kashmir," proceeded to decide, in no uncertain terms, for the people of Kashmir. "I say to the Indian government, and to my own, and to the governments of Europe," he shouted, that "elections should *not* be held in Kashmir."

Arguing that elections would be boycotted by the Kashmiris and the results used by the Indians to establish a "mandate to murder as in Punjab," which borders Kashmir, Madden called for outright United Nations intervention. "The United Nations has a legal and moral responsibility and obligation to secure the self-determination for the people of Kashmir." This is to be accomplished through a U.N. take-

over: "It may require a period of U.N. administration of Kashmir," he said. "So be it. And it may involve the whole region; so be it."

LaRouche's view presented

The second approach was presented by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach of *EIR*, who had been invited to offer an alternative view. Her speech elaborated on a concept which Lyndon LaRouche had developed in answer to a question on Kashmir during a conference in Washington last February (see *EIR*, March 18, 1994, p. 49).

The issue, she said, could not be defined as a Kashmiri, Pakistani, or Indian issue, but had to be seen as a conflict created by British geopolitics. The solution for the region lay in grasping this and overthrowing its parameters.

Expanding on LaRouche's characterization of the conflict, she introduced material exposing the malthusian goals behind Great Britain's manipulation of the subcontinent. Citing a National Security Council memorandum, NSSM-200, authored by Henry Kissinger in 1974, and works by various writers who have put forward the *Limes* thesis, according to which the world must be divided between a prosperous, populated North and a depopulated, ravaged South, she presented the case that the goal of these forces is to wipe out most of the nations of the Third World.

The audience was shocked to hear that India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh topped the list of 13 countries slated in Kissinger's 1974 document for drastic population reduction schemes, on the grounds that growth of the population of these countries represented a "national security threat" to the United States.

"The vision that these malthusian geostrategists have for the wars of the future," she said, "is what Samuel Huntington called the 'Clash of Civilizations,' whereby the peoples of the 'zones of turmoil' will engage in wars among themselves, couched in religious terms: Islam, Hinduism, Confucianism, Orthodox Christianity, and Western Christianity are to kill each other off in unending strife. The aim is to reduce the world's population to 2 billion, as the organizers of the U.N. Cairo conference have suggested. More recently, the Finnish 'philosopher' Pentti Linkola was presented on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* May 24 as having a 'novel solution' for 'overpopulation' and 'dwindling resources,' namely 'annihilating most of the human race. End Third World aid and asylum for refugees, so millions die. Try mandatory abortions for those with two children. And then find some way to get rid of the extra billions of people.'

"It is in this context that the Kashmir crisis must be located. From the standpoint of these writers, if war could be sparked between India and Pakistan, escalating to the use of nuclear weapons, millions of people could be eliminated, thus effectively reducing the world's population."

To defeat this malthusian agenda for genocide, she emphasized the need for the intended victims to break out of

the psychological profiles within which geopolitical thinking would confine them. Citing LaRouche's recollections from the region in 1946, when Muslims and Hindus marched and fought side by side for independence against the British, she called for a revival of that struggle, "but in a different form; it is a question of uniting Pakistanis, Indians, and Kashmiris in a struggle for independence and development against the *thinking* of the British."

With the notable exception of the British members of parliament sitting in the front rows, who were observed nervously scribbling notes and passing them around to one another, the overwhelming majority of those present signalled their support for *EIR*'s view with generous applause. Not only neutral observers, but also leading Pakistani and Kashmiri personalities present requested copies of the speech, while Pakistani media in attendance also conducted interviews.

British admit their agenda

The final session of the conference included interventions representing the first approach, to be sure, but the atmosphere had been decidedly altered. One U.K. parliamentarian who took the floor, Gary Waller, seemed to answer *EIR*'s plea for rational solutions, by insisting that "all the speeches here today have been rational." As for Madden, he inadvertently confirmed *EIR*'s charge that the policy content of geopolitics is malthusianism. Responding to a question, Madden blurted out what British intentions really are for the region, beneath the pious talk about "human rights."

Madden said, "I've always wondered why in a world where we've seen the British Empire disintegrate, the Russian Empire disintegrate, why is it that alone of the great countries of the world—let's remember, by the end of this century, India will have the largest population in the world—why it alone should be Union of India and its present boundaries continue forever? I think there cannot be any immunity to India to the sort of pressures that we see in the rest of the world, and it might well be that the Constitution of India may be amended, there could be a new constitutional settlement in India. . . ."

"We all hear from Indians that they have the largest democracy in the world, but many of us question that very fundamentally."

No one in the audience missed the point. Kashmir seemed to have disappeared from the agenda. Madden was saying that Britain seeks the breakup of India, again, apparently on grounds of its demographic growth!

The fact that an honest exposition of how British geopolitics works, historically and now, should be so well received by a gathering of forces otherwise caught in the clinch of the regional conflict, indicates that there is potential for the very dangerous crisis on the subcontinent to be defused and conducted to a rational solution, in full respect for the human rights and sovereignty of all—minus the British.