

The Business

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Gas management plan

A gas load management plan approved by the Cabinet Committee on Energy (CCoE) two months ago to deal with supply shortages this winter, was revealed during a joint press conference of Omar Ayub, Minister for Energy and Nadeem Babar, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Petroleum. Load management plans for the gas and electricity sector have been a common feature for decades and the priority accorded to each sector in terms of access to gas has not significantly varied. It is important to highlight the fact that gas development plans year after year, decade after decade, reflect the predominance of structural issues that remain unresolved to this day. The shrinking supply of domestic natural gas, with a price tag well below all imported fuels including Liquefied Natural Gas, remains a major stumbling block in the smooth and economically viable operations of Pakistan's gas sector. Demand rises significantly from upcountry areas during the winter months because gas is used mainly by the domestic sector for cooking as well as fuel for vehicles. It is, however, quite unfortunate that gas is used for heating purposes as well.

Domestic gas output has been shrinking over time, and sector experts have condemned the use of this scarce resource for domestic use; and have persistently urged governments to use domestic gas to enhance efficiency. In this context while the decision to accord least priority to the CNG sector is appropriate yet the fact that CNG continues to be supplied as fuel for vehicles is baffling especially given that the Prime Minister has repeatedly declared that the country should move towards electric cars. Another major problem associated with domestic gas sector is its much lower cost of extraction and consequent price relative to imported gas/fuels. Lending agencies have been recommending that Pakistan brings the price of local gas at par with the price of imported fuel to ensure that domestic gas is used optimally in economic terms.

This stipulation increasingly implies that as domestic gas shortages rise, Balochistan, Sindh, and to a lesser extent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are increasingly unwilling to purchase the expensive imported LNG. The government is facing considerable criticism for not booking LNG cargoes in June when price is typically low to be delivered in December when the price is high. His response is that the suppliers charge December rates for cargoes booked in June - a claim that can be challenged on economic grounds because a supplier receiving payment in June would earn money on the capital and therefore not likely to charge the higher rate that he may project for December.

Safeguarding the basis of our Islamic system

MIRZA ASLAM BEG

The killing of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsin Fakhri-zadeh is not about Iranian Nukes, because "our enemies are against the basis of our Islamic System, and they will never cease their enmity" - Ruhollah Khomeini. This is the 'fundamental truth' that I would like to discuss, as to how relevant it is with regard to Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan and how capable we are to defend our values, our faith and belief.

Iran: In their first attempt, the US failed to get the release of their hostages taken by the Iranian revolutionaries. The adventure turned into a disaster. Next they encouraged Saddam to invade Iran, which turned into an eight-year long blood bath, with Iran crossing the Shatt al-Arab, to capture Basra, when Saddam used chemical weapons, supplied by the civilized world, to stem the Iranian offensive. Then followed the series of crippling sanctions and embargos, for the next thirty years that also could not break the will of the Iranians. Early this year a loose coalition was formed under the Warsaw Plan, to punish Iran preceded by Trump's targeted assassination of Iranian General, Qasim Solemani. The Iranians launched pre-emptive strike, attacking Saudi Arabia and not USA or Israel. It was no ordinary attack, as described by a noted American journalist:

"In the early hours of 14 September 2019 - when the Iranian Air Force launched 20 drones and precision-guided cruise missiles at Abqaiq, one of Saudi Arabia's most important oil fields and processing centers, causing huge damage. It was a seminal event. The Iranian drones and cruise missiles

flew so low and with such stealth that neither their takeoff nor their impending attack was detected in time by Saudi or US radar. Israeli military analysts, who were stunned by the capabilities the Iranians displayed, argued that this surprise attack was the Middle East's "Pearl Harbor." After Pearl Harbor of 1941, America joined World War II, but in this case Trump did not come to the aid of Saudi Arabia. He only sent a token force of 3000, ensuring that Saudi Arabia will "pay us for everything we are doing for them. That's a first."

During the 2006, Hizbollah-Israeli war, Hizbollah defeated Israel, using a few thousand free-flight rockets. Now Iran and its allies, have amongst them over a million free-flight rockets and "some precision-guided Iranian missiles." As if that was not enough - there are thousands of suicide bombers, waiting for orders to jump into the cauldron. As regards the development of the atomic bomb by Iran, Trump helped Iran by pulling out of the nuclear deal which may have encouraged Iran to carry out enrichment of uranium for the device. Similarly America helped Pakistan, join the war against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, which provided cover for enrichment of uranium and development of the device. Despite the American Watch-dog's positive report about Pakistan's Nuclear Programme, the American President, year after year, verified before the Congress, to the contrary, that "Pakistan was nowhere near the stage, where it could assemble a nuclear device."

Afghanistan: For the last over four decades, the Afghans have defended the "Basis of their Islamic system," against the mightiest of the mighty of

the world. In 1989 when Soviets retreated, Afghan Mujahideen were denied their right to form the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. A civil war was induced which led to emergence of Taliban rule. In 2001, America unleashed its "shock and awe" strategy to occupy Afghanistan to force the Taliban, give-up their demand for the Islamic Emirate.

Taliban were not ready to oblige, because "we cannot be cheated again, as we were cheated in 1990 by, both - America and Pakistan" - Mullah Omar. Afghans have paid a very heavy price defending the 'Islamic System' adding a new chapter of armed resistance against the two super-powers of the world - a feat, which goes unparalleled in the annals of human struggle to protect ones faith, values and belief. Masha Allah.

Taliban are in no hurry to see American troops leave Afghanistan, because it is they who "have the Time, while the enemy holds the Clock." The ground realities, starkly suggest the 'comfort level' of Taliban as described by a noted Pakistani analyst: "The Taliban even now, control most of the rural territory, run a shadow government, collect taxes, dominate the night and are a bulwark against the IS; as demonstrated by their successful operations in March 2020 to dislodge the IS from Kunar and surrounding areas. And if over 150,000 troops from some 50 most powerful countries (2011) for over two decades could not stabilize Afghanistan; a handful of around 2000 troops can hardly make an impression. And the regime in Kabul stands on artificial and temporary moorings as President-elect is in no mood to extend a blank cheque and

blanker cover towards it anymore. "PM Imran Khan's recent journey to Kabul is considered ill-advised and ill-timed. Ghani stands on foreign legs and would be swept away by Taliban tidal waves in a matter of time."

Pakistan: Pakistan has not been very successful, defending its "basis of Islamic system," because from the very out-set, it joined the Cold War, siding with the United States, which "took control of our political and security systems, retarding healthy growth of our democratic and social order." But the worst happened to Pakistan in 2007, when US allocated a sum of US\$ 1.4 billion, for Perception Management of the Pakistani nation, as if we were the "Red-Indians" to be disciplined. And shamelessly our government allowed such funds to be dished-out direct to institutions, NGOs, individuals and for that matter, to anybody willing to achieve the purpose, with the result that a mindset has now developed amongst our educated lot, who talk of liberalism and secularism and a social order, where the individual, and not God is supreme. This is the phenomenon which has created a dangerous social conflict in Pakistan, while our democratic order is so deeply fractured.

Therefore, the need of the hour is to seek "social harmony" based on a just democratic order that could safeguard the 'basis of our Islamic system' resonating in harmony with Revolutionary Iran and Jehadi Afghanistan, to provide the much needed strategic depth of security, to this part of the Islamic world, under attack.

— The writer, a retired 4-star General, is former COAS, Pakistan Army.

EUROPEAN UNION RETAINS BAN ON PIA FLIGHTS



India's democracy

A.G. NOORANI

It is not fashionable to cite old classics. But if one turns to Roman, Greek and, more so, the English classics, one is struck by their relevance to modern times. Take this, from John Stuart Mill's essay on representative government: "There are nations who will not voluntarily submit to any government but that of certain families, which have from time immemorial had the privilege of supplying them with chiefs." This applies to South Asia.

He added, "But there are also cases in which, though not averse to a form of government - possibly even desiring it - a people may be unwilling or unable to fulfil its conditions. ... Thus a people may prefer a free government, but if, from indolence, or carelessness, or cowardice, or want of public spirit, they are unequal to the exertions necessary for preserving it; if they will not fight for it when it is directly attacked; if they can be deluded by the artifices used to cheat them out of it; if by momentary discouragement, or temporary panic, or a fit of enthusiasm for an individual, they can be induced to lay their liberties at the feet even of a great man, or trust him with powers which enable him to subvert their institutions; in all these cases they are less unfit for liberty; and though it may be for their good to have had it even for a short time, they are unlikely long to enjoy it."

India is passing through this dangerous phase. It ought to have known better. Indira Gandhi all but tore up the constitution during her regime and installed herself as a dictator. A wave of anger swept across the country and she lost the 1977 election. But the small men who formed a government fell apart over the loaves and fishes of office. In 1980, the people returned her to power, unmindful of her past record.

Now, Narendra Modi is following in her footsteps. He undermined the cabinet, suborned the civil service, but his greatest challenge was political. As soon as he came to power in 2014, he called for a 'Congress-free India'. He began campaigning from day one.

Hyderabad just held municipal elections. Modi was about to descend to the city to campaign against two parties: the Telangana Rashtira Samithi and the All India Majlis-i-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, which was founded by the legendary Bahadur Yar Jung and now led by the indomitable Asaduddin Owaisi. Modi sent his deputy Amit Shah to campaign for the BJP. Owaisi asked, "Why not Donald Trump?"

There is no doubt that Modi enjoys popularity across the country, though it is on the decline. He was elected to power in 2014 and 2019. Why? By common consent, the government led by the extraordinarily upright Manmohan Singh was scarred by his ministers' corruption. He was perceived as



'weak'. Nor did he receive the support of his party and its president Sonia Gandhi, which it was her duty to extend. She was focused on grooming her mediocre son. The Congress is in a deep crisis.

Modi is out to wipe out not only the Congress but also all regional parties and establish one-party rule. To what can we attribute his rise? Besides presiding over the Gujarat pogrom in 2002, Modi oversaw the state's economic revival. Businessmen courted him and vice versa. He portrayed himself as a 'strong man', and the country fell for him.

But Indians are not alone in falling for the 'strong man' myth. Countries like Hungary and Poland also revel in democracy in form, but dictatorship in reality. In The Myth of the Strong Leader, Archie Brown writes: "The central misconception, which I set out to expose, is the notion that strong leaders in the conventional sense of leaders who get their way, dominate their colleagues, and concentrate decision-making in their hands, are the most successful and admirable."

"While some leaders who come into that category emerge more positively than negatively, in general huge power amassed by an individual leader paves the way for important errors at best and disaster and massive bloodshed at worst. ... [T]he myth of the strong leader is a central thread which unifies the discussion of democratic, revolutionary, authoritarian and totalitarian leaders. Those in the first of these categories can do far less damage, precisely because there are constraints upon their power from outside government."

"It is, nevertheless, an illusion - and one as dangerous as it is widespread that in contemporary democracies the more a leader dominates his or her political party and cabinet, the greater the leader. A more collegial style of leadership is too often characterised as a weakness, the advantages of a more collective political leadership, too commonly overlooked." Stalin and Mao created famines, as did Churchill in Bengal.

Thatcher had to be booted out of power by her party, while Attlee is highly regarded by history. This is true of both domestic and foreign policies. Modi is in decline. Witness the mammoth protests by Punjab's farmers. But his end is not very near.

A diplomatic victory for Pak-



DR JUMMA KHAN MARRI

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held in Niamey Niger, has unanimously adopted a resolution condemning India's illegal action of revoking Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir's (IIOJK) autonomous status and its various steps to change the demography of the Muslim-majority region. In a Resolution adopted unanimously by the 47th Session of the OIC in Niamey, the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) reaffirmed its strong support for the Kashmir cause. The OIC in its resolution also categorically rejected illegal and unilateral actions taken by the Indian government in occupied territory since August 5, 2019.

Weeks before Niamey conclave there was a spate of conflicting reports and rumours that Kashmir was not on the agenda of the OIC foreign Ministers Conference. Slanted and speculative news items were also published by a section of the media to the effect that in view of Indian pressure the OIC had decided not to take up the issue of Kashmir at its scheduled meet-

ing. But, as it turned out later, this was no more than empty kite flying and a cleverly devised disinformation campaign orchestrated by New Delhi to demoralise Pakistan and indirectly defame the OIC.

Taking notice of the hostile propaganda, Pakistan, on the eve of the Council of Foreign Ministers' session, approached the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir for holding an emergency Foreign Ministerial meeting via video conference to discuss the worsening situation in IIOJK. The Foreign Ministers of other Contact Group member countries, i.e Azerbaijan, Niger, KSA and Turkey and the representatives of the OIC-Independent Permanent HR Commission (IPHRC) responded positively to the initiative.

It is important to note here that the OIC Foreign Ministers conference came at a critical juncture - at a time when the Indian occupation forces in IIOJK have stepped up their military operations against the people of Kashmir, especially targeting the youth and women. India has callously exploited the current COVID-19 pandemic to intensify its military crackdown and further consolidate its unlawful occupation in IIOJK.

Analysts have rightly described the stand articulated by the OIC conference on Kashmir as a diplomatic victory for Pakistan. Pakistan, as a leading member of the Organisation, took the occasion to apprise the participants on the latest situation in the Occupied Valley. Expressing solidarity with the suffering people of Kashmir, the OIC conference adopted a strongly worded resolution, asking India to cancel the issuance of domicile certificates to non-Kashmiris

as well as other unilateral and illegal actions, including 'Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Order 2020', 'Jammu & Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate Rules 2020', 'Jammu and Kashmir Language Bill 2020' and amendments to the landownership laws designed to convert the Muslim majority into a minority. In this regard, India has been asked to refrain from taking any steps to alter the existing demographic structure of the disputed territory in violation of international humanitarian laws.

The OIC also condemned in the strongest possible terms the human rights violations perpetrated by Indian army and police in the occupied territory and other acts of Indian barbarism that have caused unspeakable suffering to the innocent Kashmiri people. Deplored the state-sponsored terrorism and crimes committed by Indian occupation forces against people of IIOJK, the alliance of Muslim countries censured extra-judicial killings during fake 'encounters' and 'search-and-cordon' operations and demolition of homes and private properties as crimes against humanity. The OIC Foreign Ministers also reaffirmed the views expressed in the unanimously-adopted Communiqués of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir in its Ministerial meetings held on September 25, 2019 and June 22, 2020.

Among other things, the OIC document urged India to fulfil its international human rights obligations and allow the OIC special representative on Jammu and Kashmir and the OIC Fact-finding Mission to visit IIOJK. It also strongly urged India to implement recommendations of the two reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on

Jammu and Kashmir and called upon the international community to review their engagements with India and call it to account for disregarding the international humanitarian laws and UN resolutions.

The Niamey Conclave has once again proved that the question of Kashmir is of utmost importance for the Muslim Ummah which recognises that Jammu and Kashmir as the core dispute between Pakistan and India, and its just resolution is indispensable for the establishment of durable peace in South Asia. The official statement said OIC summit also acknowledged that the people of Jammu and Kashmir are the principal party to the dispute, and they should be included in any peace dialogue process to determine their future. The Kashmir dispute which is basically a question of granting the right of self-determination to the people of occupied valley has been on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council for over seven decades now.

In recent months India has been widely criticised by various human rights organisations for its atrocities against minorities, particularly Muslims in India and the people of Kashmir. Today, India is isolated due to its aggressive policies and disputes with almost all neighbouring countries. As pointed out by many foreign observers, the UN and all big powers must take serious notice of India's intransigent policy on Kashmir which poses a serious threat to peace in the region. The OIC too should follow up its resolution on Kashmir by concrete actions such as raising the issue at the UN and sending a delegation to New Delhi to probe human rights abuses against the oppressed people of the Occupied