

Confession of the President

The cat is out of the bag

Nevertheless it was an open secret all along that what began as a CIA-financed and ISI venture created at the time of Soviet occupation in Afghanistan has now degenerated to the present avatar of monstrous terrorists. They are nothing more than robots programmed to kill people indiscriminately. Zardari's confession that the terrorists are the creation of Pakistan has let the cat out of bag.

By G L Jalali

Of all the dead and living Pakistani politicians, 59 year old Mr. Asif Ali Zardari appears to be the most sincere politician, notwithstanding the charges of corruption that have been levelled against him in the past. He was known as Mr. Ten per cent because he would charge ten percent commission or graft for the work done as a minister in the government headed by his slain wife Benazir Bhutto. He had to remain in prison for a number of years. At last he was exonerated and freed by former President Parvez Musharraf. After the assassination of his wife Benazir in Rawalpindi. His Pakistan Peoples Party was voted to power. He was elected the President of Pakistan in the teeth of severe opposition from his political rivals.

Whatever may be his minus points as politician, he wants that Pakistan should have cordial relations with India. He was candid enough to confess that "Pakistan deliberately created and nurtured militants and extremists outfits on the very soil of Pakistan in order to achieve some short term objectives". Addressing a meeting of a select group of bureaucrats and retired army officers President Asif Ali Zardari said, "Let us be truthful and make a candid admission of the reality." It is very much the realisation that Islamabad created a Frankenstein which has proved disastrous for the very existence of this so-called Islamic country (Pakistan). President Zardari meant to say that Pakistan's security and intelligence agencies under military rulers (dictators) created this curse and nurtured the Jihadi organizations for the fulfillment of their internal and external agenda.

The military rulers of Pakistan dubbed these outfits as "assets" in the furtherance and promotion of strategic objectives, particularly in Afghanistan and Kashmir. In Afghanistan they wanted to keep India out of picture and turn the Pushtoon dominated mountainous country into a vassal state, thereby forging close links with the central Asian states and ward off Iran's influence over the subcontinent. Moreover these rulers were interested in spreading the Wahbani ideology. It was, so to say, religio-cultural transformation of Afghanistan purely in the interests of Pakistani feudal class who had the key to political power in its hands. As regards Kashmir, they wanted to grab Kashmir because the very issue of Pakistan, to quote former rulers of Pakistan, is an "unfinished agenda of Partition".

The very thinking of President Zardari on these two issues is radically different from that of military rulers of yesteryears. In an interview with the Daily Telegraph president Asif Ali Zardari said frankly that Pakistani Army was now "set to go after the elements" it had supported. "Terrorists of today were the heroes of yesteryears until 9/11 occurred and they began to haunt us as well", he added.

Thank God, President Zardari has ultimately confessed that Pakistan based terrorists were purposely created and nurtured by the government of Pakistan purely as a matter of state policy to achieve

some long term and short term objectives. This is what New Delhi has been telling the international community since the time Jihad was launched unofficially against India by Pakistan. But world's big Powers did not take any cognizance of India's startling revelation despite furnishing strong and convincing evidence.

Many countries, which were themselves the victims of Islamic terrorism, came to realise this fact rather very late when much water had flowed down the river. There occurred tremendous change in the attitude of the United States after the tragic and shocking episode of 9/11. The world's supreme power understood what Islamic terrorism meant and realised the need to eradicate it for the benefit of the humanity and world peace.

Pakistan has now realised that the biggest threat to the very existence of Pakistan comes from the terrorist networks like the Taliban and not from India which sincerely wants to have harmonious relations with it. Former Prime Minister of India Atal Behari Vajpayee once said aptly : "A country can change its friends but not neighbours." In the past Pakistan never lost "any opportunity to buy enmity with its immediate neighbouring country India." Now good sense has prevailed upon the rulers of Pakistan. This is what we can understand from the recent utterings of President Zardari.

In the course of his interview to the Daily Telegraph London President Asif Ali Zardari said that "Pakistan Army has to finish off the assets of yesteryears as these have turned into Frankensteins, threatening to devour their creators". He also made it clear that Pakistan's all powerful Army would not hesitate to eliminate the militants whom army once patronised and supported for the purpose of unleashing proxy war with India in J&K state which has been continuing for the last two decades.

There has been absolutely no letup in violence since 1989. We know that Pakistani army has been successfully fighting Islamists in Swat Valley. It has retrieved the valley from the clutches of Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullha Masood who has been killed. There was a time when only the writ of the Taliban ran in the Swat valley. Pakistani Army has killed prominent Taliban commanders in the valley. But it may take sometime more for the normalcy to return to the strife torn Swat Valley.

Political observers are of the opinion that President Zardari could not announce this policy statement without the consent of Army. He as the head of the state in which Army has always been to the centre of the stage cannot make such a bold statement without "the tacit approval of the army". He must have consulted General Keyani prior to the issuing of the statement.

All these developments should be seen in the light of President Asif Ali Zardari having agreed to give up "some of the key powers he wields as President." These purogatives are relating to the dissolution of Parliament and the appointment or sacking of army chief. Former President General Parvez Musharraf was first to acquire these special powers by getting the constitution amended in the Parliament.

By issuing this "pro-India" statement President Asif Ali Zardari wants to please Washington which is exercising diplomatic pressure on Pakistan.

Whatever may be the reason, New-Delhi should remain grateful to President Asif Ali Zardari for confessing bluntly that Jihadists fighting the proxy-war against against India and triggering bomb blasts in other parts of the country have been officially nurtured by the government of Pakistan. This confession is the first of its kind since the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

Islamabad is proverbially notorious for uttering lies. The game of uttering of lies started in 1947 when Pakistani tribals, abetted by regular Pakistani army invaded Kashmir. All the Pakistani leaders right from Mohammad Ali Jinnah, to Sir Zaffar-Ullah Khan, who was Pakistan's representative in the UNO, flatly and vehemently refused that there was Pakistan government's hand in the barbarious tribal invasion of Kashmir in 1947. In fact tribal guerrillas and Pakistani regulars were led by General Akber Khan. "The Tribal hordes armed and supported by the Pakistan government and led by the officers of the Pakistan army entered the state from Hazara district in the NWFP along Muzaffarabad - Srinagar road on October 21, 1947. The government of Pakistan denied that there was any involvement of Pakistani army in the Tribal Raid which was the first successful armed invasion of Pakistan on J & K state. Indian security forces repulsed the invasion. At last the government of Pakistan issued a statement, stating the "Pakistan would continue to give moral and diplomatic support to Kashmiris in their struggle to liberate Kashmir from Indian stranglehold." This was the indirect confession of Pakistani involvement. On January 1, 1948, India, under pressure from certain vested interests, took the Kashmir issue to the United Nations . On January 12, 1948 "to provide a smoke-screen to Pakistani aggression, President PoK, decided that 99,000 volunteers were being trained to liberate Kashmir" (Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir, Page 89). In August, 1965 Pakistan sent hundreds of trained infiltrators to capture Kashmir through internal sabotage.

"A force of 30000 men comprising both regulars and Mujahids (Razakars), was organised under the command of General Malik to launch a subversive campaign on a large scale. As soon as the snow melted, hundreds of infiltrators, disguised as local Kashmiri Muslims, entered the valley on August 5, 1965." Pakistan at an early stage, denied its involvement as was its wont. The infiltrators could not make much headway as local Muslims were not willing to support them. However, on September 1, 1965, the Pakis- tani Army launched a massive attack with tanks in the Chamb Jaurian sector. Their main objective was to "take over Kashmir through a blitzkrieg." Pakistan again failed in its sinister designs against India.

Ignominious defeat suffered by Pakistan in the war of 1971 and the loss of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) was rankling in the mind of Pakistani rulers. They were convinced that they "cannot take Kashmir through force". They decided to launch proxy war against India just to take Kashmir. General Zia-ul-Haq proved a master strategist who gave an impetus to religious fundamentalism. He created the Taliban who, at early stages, were fully supported by the United States. The latter utilized them against the Russian forces in Afghanistan. It was through the US support that Russian forces were evicted from Afghanistan. Zia nurtured these terrorist outfits. Pakistan's ISI partitioned them and utilised them for purpose of achieving both long and short term gains. In a special broadcast to the nation, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, erstwhile Foreign Minister of Pakistan, pledged his country's full support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their struggle for self-determination (January 30, 1990).

Khan Bahadur Khan, Pakistan's Minister of state for Religious Affairs, declared openly, "We are resolute to liberate Kashmir which is the lifeline of Pakistan". In all the international forums, Pakistan has been saying that there is no official patronage to the terrorist groups. Now, Asif Zardari's bold admission has let the cat out of bag. "Pakistan's creation of and support to Jihadist groups in order to further its foreign policy objectives is settled history. From the 1990s, the state and especially its security establishment saw purpose in unleashing its "holy warriors" to secure so-called strategic depth in Afghanistan in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal - and to bleed India in Kashmir." (Editorial The Hindu, July 13, 2009).

In 1999, Pakistani army occupied big chunks of the Indian territory in the Kargil sector. The government of Pakistan denied that its army had clandestinely occupied Indian territory whatsoever. Indian army pushed back the Pakistani troops in a bloody war that lasted for a number of weeks. Pakistan refused to take-back the dead bodies of Pakistani soldiers who were killed in the war, notwithstanding the rebuff received from the international community for the blatant lie that there was no involvement of Pakistan in the Kargil incursion.

Pakistan has all along been denying that the terrorist groups were officially nurtured by Pakistan and there existed any terrorist training camps in Pakistan. The Frankenstein created by Pakistan ultimately turned against it, causing havoc throughout Pakistan. These adverse circumstances compelled President Asif Ali Zardari to admit that the terrorists and fundamentalist groups were created and nurtured officially by the government of Pakistan.

We must appreciate this bold admission of President Asif Ali Zardari who has been constitutionally elected by the people of Pakistan.

Zardari's statement has aroused widespread interest and speculation both in India and Pakistan. "Nevertheless it was an open secret all along that what began as a CIA-financed and ISI-sponsored venture created at the time of the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan has now-degenerated to the present avatar of monstrous terrorists. They are nothing more than robots programmed to kill indiscriminately (The Tribune, May 14, 09)

Now the Pakistani establishment has realised (as one can gauge from Zardari's bold admission) that Islamic terrorism poses a grave threat to the very existence of Pakistan and world peace. It is time when Pakistan should extend the hands of friendship to India and stop abetting terrorism against India which is emerging world's topmost economic power in years to come. By sponsoring terrorism Pakistan has not gained anything. Instead, it is cutting deep at the very roots of the country (Pakistan)

Zardari's remarks rekindles the hope that good days are ahead of Pakistan "The democratic regime is apparently "sincere and means well by its neighbours. It desires to break with the past. Even before this, Mr. Zardari made it plain that he carried none of the old ideological baggage, especially with regard to India" (The Hindu, July 13) India must reciprocate and tell Islamabad once again that it should stop terrorism in J&K state which is a part and parcel of secular India. Let Islamabad mend its ways! That should be the final message from New Delhi to Islamabad.