OPINIONS

Quarterly Round Up

Uri Attack, In Indian Occupied Kashmir, 17 Indian Soldiers Killed By Insurgents

Ambassador (R) Tariq Osman Hyder*

This well reported development was extensively covered as it unfolded hence it is not required to go into its details, what is important is the Indian reaction and the response from Pakistan.

Though reportedly the Indian PM has asked for evidence to be provided, given the pressure of Indian hawks in the Cabinet and the BJP it was expected that India may initiate some kind of military action along the LOC, and in any case to step up its assistance for the BLA in Baluchistan and would certainly diplomatically try to isolate Pakistan at a time when Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan are at low ebb and there are perceptual differences with the USA. Hence India launched 10 days after the Uri attack what it called "surgical strikes" across the LoC. The Pak Army rebutted that any such strikes had been carried out and most probably heavy firing by Indian artillery and machine guns took place. India was also unable to provide any credible evidence of its claims. The USA's justified apprehensions of the escalation of tension between two nuclear powers will hopefully remain a constraint and limiting factor to some extent

The backdrop and trigger had been the resurgence of the protest movement in Indian occupied Kashmir as the youth and others have taken to the streets to protest the killing by Indian troops of the charismatic young insurgent leader Burhan Wani in the beginning of this July. The curfew in Kashmir has been for the longest period to date. Indian security forces have tried to quell the protests with shotgun shells using pellets but this has damaged the eyes of over 300 protestors eyes and leaving a significant number blinded. Over 80 protestors have been killed till now. The four attackers are logically most probably from the Kashmiri insurgency itself spurred by the repression and human rights

* Ambassador (R) Tariq Osman Hyder is Expert on International Relations & Former Pakistan Ambassador to Turkmenistan and to South Korea.

violations against the peaceful demonstrations. There is no hard evidence to the contrary.

Though the situation has quietened down since then it remains a serious potential flash point and can become more worrisome.

1. There is an urgent need on the part of both Pakistan and the USA to reorient their foreign policy approaches to each other so that relations improve.

2. If this is not done both India and Afghanistan will become more intransigent with all its consequences which will have its adverse fall out on US policy to stabilize Afghanistan and its priority that the Pakistan and India concentrate on economic progress.

3. If some semblance of working level talks between India and Pakistan can be restarted through the good offices of the USA, difficult though it may be, and India lessens its heavy hand in that part of Kashmir under its control, the situation will continue to be on the boil leading to more incidents.