

Indian Express April 3, 1990

Kashmir perspective

Sir,

One cannot but agree with Brig H S Yadav's assertion (IE Mar 23) that Kashmir problem today is essentially a counter-insurgency problem. But then political action is also a part of counter-insurgency. In fact counter-insurgency is one operation in which military action and political action go side by side – one complementing the other. What is, however, important is the timing and the nature of such political action. We seem to have gone wrong both with regard to the timing and the type of the political process that we wish to start. What political action can be started at a time when, as in Kashmir today, the insurgents/terrorists rule the roost and stand menacingly between the government and the people.

As far as the type of political process that need to be initiated is concerned, it must be aimed at de-indoctrination the mind of the masses to wean them away from the insurgents. Nothing much may seem to have been done by the National Front Government in this regard so far but this may also be due to the fact that military action has so far been unsuccessful in freeing the common man in Kashmir from the stranglehold of the terrorists. Hence the need for stronger military measures even before any political measures can be taken. The real source of worry to the nation, however, should be the efforts on the part of some opposition parties towards the revival of the political set-up that existed before the advent of Governor's rule. It must be remembered that it was this very political set0up under which the present insurgency not only started but also thrived. Reviving that set0up would be as ridiculous as it would be suicidal. What pains one most in this regard is not the antics and gimmickry of Rajiv Gandhi but the attitude of the Left parties. Is it their lack of knowledge or some party interests that determine their policy, one wonders.

The bane of the Indian Government since the Nehru days has been that in an attempt to strengthen the nationalist forces in Kashmir, it has depended too much on individuals while it has ignored the masses. These individuals have all along used their position to black-mail the Indian Government for gaining a free hand – not for doing good to the people but for perpetuating corruption and filling their coffers. For fear of losing their support and thereby harming the national cause, no one questioned their phenomenal rise from rags to riches. Nor were these individuals asked why, even after they had received billions and trillions of rupees as aid from the Central Government, the Kashmiri peasant had remained where he was before Independence – still unable to earn enough during summer to be able to pull through the winter months, which he continues to spend in the plains of Jammu and Punjab in search of work.

Not many people in J&K will probably agree with Brig Yadav that Jagmohan has out-lived his utility in Kashmir. Jagmohan is, as a matter of fact, a phenomenon that has to be seen to be believed. It is amazing the way the influence of the Governor is felt from the highest to the lowest to make them work as never before. It is generally believed that if Jagmohan cannot control the situation no one else can.

**MAJOR K BRAHMA SINGH (Retd)
JAMMU**