

Indian Express (magazine), May 21, 1989

Kashmir: Turmoil in the Valley

Sir,

Your cover story "Kashmir – Turmoil in the Valley" (Express Magazine, April 30), presents a fairly accurate assessment of the prevailing situation in the Valley. However, some of the factors responsible for the present state of affairs in Kashmir could, perhaps, be further emphasised.

The anti-India activities and the apparent support that they receive from a sizeable section of the people in the Valley must be viewed in the context of the fact that in Kashmir (as in other parts of the country) religion still plays an all important part in politics. The pro-Pak element is, therefore, at an advantage in as much as it is easier to associate Islam with Pakistan. Consequently, though India's wrong policies may have helped the pro-Pak element in subverting the loyalty of the Kashmiris, not all anti-India activity could be considered as being the direct result of such policies.

It would not be correct to say the Congress (I) is trying to use the Kashmir card to its advantage. What is happening in Kashmir will, in fact, clearly go against it both at the State as well as the national level. The Central leadership is pursuing wrong policies probably under a misconception that such policies help in strengthening the national cause. One such policy is that of appeasement which gives an impression of our being shaky about our moral and constitutional right in Kashmir. This in turn keeps the issue of accession alive and the floodgates of subversion open. It must be remembered that good cannot be achieved through evil means and that if the Kashmiris have to be saved from the clutches of religious fanatics then they must be treated fairly and justly.

Although the recent spurt in the activities of the pro-Pak element in Kashmir is undoubtedly due to the entry of a large number of Pakistan-trained saboteurs in the Valley, this could also perhaps be explained by the Benazir phenomenon in Pakistan. The pro-Pak element can perhaps present Pakistan in better light today than it ever could during the past forty years. Any tendency to take the Kashmiris for granted must, therefore, be checked.

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