

RESTORING ORDER IN JAMMU & KASHMIR

A Thirteen Point Plan

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The immediate goal for New Delhi and Srinagar should be to restore peace and security in the violence-affected districts of Jammu & Kashmir so that normal activity can resume. This has to be done by suppressing violence, arresting ring-leaders of protesters and actively countering separatists' plans to direct the pace and scope of social, economic, political and religious life by issuing protest calendars. The political process in the Valley can only be reactivated fully once the security situation has been brought under control. However certain steps can be initiated to restart the political process immediately. These will have to be undertaken at many levels simultaneously within the state.

SECURITY CENTRIC MEASURES

1. **The state police, supported by the central paramilitary forces, must lead an offensive that dis-aggregates the separatist leadership, local ring-leaders and mobsters from the average citizen.** The former must be targeted and the latter protected. To signal a clean break from the happenings of last three months, the state government must effect a change in the leadership at the state, districts and police station levels. Policemen who hail from areas affected by violence, or have families residing in these areas, should be kept out of situations where they are publicly visible in the conflict. Instead of local police, teams of Rapid Action Force, with well-publicised shoot-at-sight orders and equipped with non-lethal means of crowd control, must be employed to control major public demonstrations and prevent mob violence.

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2. The modes of financing of the separatists, mostly by hawala channels, must be unearthed, investigated and blocked. A special joint task force of the state government, Union Home Ministry and the Union Finance ministry must be established immediately with an independent and specific mandate---free of any local political interference---to pursue the money trail. The squeezing of financial support to the organisers and leaders of stone-pelting mobs will rapidly bring an end to these paid protests.

3. In the near-term, the state police force must be equipped, trained and re-oriented for tackling public demonstrations using non-lethal means. Sufficient quantity of modern non-lethal equipment, along with trained manpower has to be inducted into the state police. As more than 500 terrorists are still active in the Kashmir valley and attempts to infiltrate more into the state continue unabated from across the Line of Control, the counter-terrorist capacities developed over last two decades must be preserved. This can be best achieved by training newly inducted police recruits in non-lethal crowd control and inducting them simultaneously with the new equipment in various districts of the state over the next 3-6 months.

4. The intelligence setup in the state needs to be reinforced and reformed. A mechanism must be put in place under the Governor to co-ordinate and optimally use all the intelligence resources in the state---of central agencies, army and the state government. As there are external agencies involved in aggravating the situation, the state government must establish a real-time connection with the central intelligence agencies to receive, collate and analyse the intelligence inputs available with them. These two exercises should be completed within the next one month, by institutionalising new standard operating procedures. This intelligence must be used to conduct specific targeted operations against the separatist leadership, ring-leaders and organisers of mob protests.

5. The Indian army must remain vigilant at the Line of Control and continue with its three-tier deployment to stall any attempts at infiltration by Pakistan before the winter sets in. The Rashtriya Rifles units deployed in the non-urban areas must ensure that any attempts to revive the jihadi insurgency in the state is nipped in the bud. Even if there is an increased involvement of the army in quelling street protests, there should be no dilution of its strong anti-infiltration posture on the Line of Control.

POLITICAL MEASURES

6. The Union government must not announce any unilateral concessions as they would pander to separatists and violent mobsters. Back-channel negotiations with the separatists must be started in the right earnest, but any political or economic packages must be preconditioned to reciprocation by the separatist leadership. All public negotiations or agreements with the separatists though must be entered into only by the duly-elected state government, and not by New Delhi. The divisions within the separatist leadership---Syed Ali Shah Geelani vs Massrat Alam, and Mr Geelani versus Mirwaiz Umar Farooq---must be highlighted and exploited by the state government.

7. The idea that Kashmiris are special must be publicly replaced by the idea that all Indians are special. New Delhi must specify that any political solution will have to be within the Indian Constitution. Any measures for devolving more political powers to the state will also be applicable to all the states of India, along with Jammu & Kashmir.

8. The proposal to review the provisions of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) or its application to various districts must be a political decision, based on security considerations. The need to review the provisions of the AFSPA has been identified by the Supreme Court and other government committees. A decision on it must be taken on its own merit without considering Jammu & Kashmir as a special case. The plan to review the application of AFSPA, however, can be a part of a quid pro quo deal with the separatists. Pending such a political agreement, the review should be based on security inputs and taken by the state government.

9. At the grassroots level, the National Conference and the Congress Party should re-invigorate their cadres and start a political movement in the Valley. Peace marches and public rallies must be held in the areas not afflicted by the separatist violence. They must challenge the separatists to dissociate their political message from religious tools. The dangers of this mixture must be exposed by highlighting the example of Pakistan. Calls from parents to re-open schools and from local businessmen, craftsmen and tradesmen to run their routine lives must be highlighted in these public events. In the affected areas, the local cadre of the mainstream parties must be supported by the party leaderships to conduct small word-of-mouth campaign in their localities. To break the momentum of the separatist protests, the demobilised counter-

insurgent groups from the 1990s and the special operations group (SOG) may need to be revived and used in specific situations and locations.

10. **The state government must immediately announce the holding of elections to local bodies on the return of normalcy in the Valley.** Powers must be devolved to the local bodies, on par with other states of the country on completion of the elections. In 2005, there was over 80 percent voting in the local body polls in the state. The announcement of such polls will reinvigorate the dormant political cadre of the mainstream parties in the state.

11. Although Article 370 of the Indian Constitution has kept the state of Jammu & Kashmir secluded from the rest of the country, it is a constitutional provision and can not be revoked or violated without the due political consensus. However, **the isolation of the Valley caused by this Act must be nullified by providing better inter-connectivity among all the regions** of the state. Better physical connectivity through newer and wider roads, expeditious completion of the Jammu-Anantnag railway line and cheaper and smaller flights will facilitate and spur freer movement of people and ideas within the state. This will lead to greater economic activity and also redress the social imbalance that has crept into the Valley.

INFORMATION & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

12. **Local, national and international media must be encouraged to visit normal areas of the Valley,** outside of the three affected districts, to expand the coverage of Kashmir. Doing so will demonstrate the separatist violence is confined to a small fraction of the state and its population. Srinagar also needs to craft its own public diplomacy campaign, to showcase the normal areas in the Valley, and in other parts of the state. The Hindu- and Buddhist-dominated regions of Jammu and Leh deserve greater media attention, so too the Shia-dominated regions of Kargil and Gurjar-dominated regions of Rajauri-Poonch, all of which oppose separatism. The Islamist agenda of the separatist leadership must be exposed.

13. **The state government must select a number of government schools in Srinagar town and make sure they stay open amidst all calls for strike and protests.** The students and teachers must be escorted and ferried to the school and back under police protection. The symbolism of this one step will hurt the credibility of the separatists and enhance the legitimacy of the state government in the mind of the citizen.