

INDIA PUSHING SOUTH ASIA TO MILITARY CONFRONTATION: MASOOD KHAN



Sardar Masood Khan, President Azad Jammu and Kashmir, has said that India is playing with fire by stoking religious hatred, xenophobia and intolerance in the wake of the Pulwama incident.

“India’s extremist government supported by violent extremist groups is pushing South Asia to military confrontation and war and is making a futile attempt to hide its own gruesome crimes against humanity in the Indian Occupied Kashmir”, he made these remarks during his various speaking engagements and interactive sessions at Georgetown University Doha, Qatar University and the Brookings Institution-Doha Centre.

Instead of adopting a path of diplomacy on Kashmir, he said, India is threatening Pakistan with military aggression. “In its own interest, India must not commit this mistake because if India goes down this dangerous and treacherous path, Pakistan would retaliate instantly with dire consequences for India”, said the President.

The President applauded the role of Qatar for promoting peace in

Afghanistan despite heavy odds and insurmountable difficulties. A similar process, he said, could be started in Kashmir and Doha could play the role of a facilitator. Such a process should be conceived within the framework of the United Nations Charter and the Security Council resolutions on Kashmir in which the will and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir have been put at the centre, said President Masood.

The President said that empowered by black laws - Armed Forces Special Powers Act and Public Safety Act - India has been brutalizing the people of Jammu and Kashmir with impunity for the past several decades. "It (India) is so emboldened that now it thinks it can attack Pakistan with the same impunity and go scot-free. This is not going to happen and India would be made to pay a heavy price for any misadventure", he said.

The President said that the people of Azad Kashmir and Pakistan are ready for an independent and impartial international investigation into the Pulwama incident. He, however, added that such an investigation, should include in its remit the horrendous human rights violations and crimes against humanity committed by Indian occupation forces in IOK, which include excessive and disproportionate use of force, massive killings, blinding of over 6000 people, sexual violence, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary arrests, detentions and torture, as well as curbs on freedom of expression and rights to health and education. "This is the bigger reality of Kashmir which cannot be brushed under the carpet or eclipsed by India's incitement to hatred against Kashmiris, Indian Muslims and Pakistan", he said.

Sardar Masood Khan said that empirical evidence over the past 71 years suggests that there is no military solution to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Had it been possible, he said, India would have long

ago subjugated the occupied territory and annexed it to the Indian Union through state terrorism , but it has not succeeded and it will never succeed.

The President stressed that the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan believe in the path of diplomacy, dialogue and negotiations - all political and peaceful means - under the auspices of the United Nations or through structured engagement between the parties of the dispute - Pakistan, India and the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The President also appealed to the international community to step forward to avert a war in South Asia which would be detrimental to Pakistan and India as well as to the entire neighborhood of South Asia.

Stability in Kashmir, he said, can only be brought about by putting an end to the relentless repression of the Kashmiris by occupation forces seen day in and day out. India must stop beating the drums of war and pushing the region to the precipice of destruction and self-annihilation.

“The permanent members of the UN Security Council - China, Russia, United States of America, United Kingdom and France - must play their role in the maintenance of global peace and security, counsel restraint and responsibility and activate multilateral diplomacy for de-escalation and resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Responding to a question, the President said, track-two diplomacy in regard to Jammu and Kashmir is dead and it would be good to revive it.

The AJK President said that India was in denial of the overwhelming reality of Kashmir and was trying to hide its own crimes through a false narrative. “Now it was trying to justify its occupation and atrocities in Kashmir by whipping up Hindu Fundamentalism and communal intolerance”, he said.

The President also interacted with the diaspora Pakistani Kashmir

community in Doha and responded to their questions in regard to the efforts of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir in dealing with the current situation created by India, the status of Gilgit-Baltistan, the role of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and the 13th Amendment, Kashmiri refugees, as well as AJK Government's priorities regarding the rule of law, good governance, and accelerated economic development.