

<http://www.risingkashmir.in/news/political-future-of-kashmir-has-been-fantasized-33140.aspx>

Saturday, 15 Sep 2012

THE DAILY
RisingKashmir

Political future of Kashmir has been fantasized

Saturday, 15 Sep 2012 at 12:32

Dr Vijay Sazawal

This is in response to the article, “Pakistan’s Reality Check on Kashmir” written by Shujaat Bhukhari in Rising Kashmir. I have read the article with great interest. As much as some Kashmiri commentators and columnists like to fantasize on the political future of Kashmir, the reality is that what will happen at the end, to a large extent, will depend on the deal that India and Pakistan will cook among themselves and get the major powers to endorse. Kashmiris can have a decisive role in the process, but that will not happen unless Kashmiris realize that such a role will only come out of a well thought out political strategy and not because these parties will come begging to Kashmiris to hear their wishes and grant them unconditionally.

Kashmiris have two choices – they can continue to ignore reality and aspire for impossible dreams (in my childhood we would call such wishful thinking as khayali pullao), or we can make the best out of a bad situation. The former approach is not only a favorite of the hard-core lobby personified by Syed Ali Geelani, but I would also lump the JKNC and the PDP with the same lobby, since fuzzy rhetoric apart none of those entities really want to see a change in the political status quo.

The Mirwaiz faction, on the other hand, knows the reality but this group does not command loyalty or passions to the same pitch that leaders of the status-quo lobby do. The media could show its smarts, but prefers the wishful thinking in so far as the solution to the Kashmir dispute is concerned. So Farooqs, Bhats and Lones do not know how to carry masses along. The net result is that the political status quo will continue.

In my commentary on “The American Policy and Kashmir Dispute,” published by this esteemed newspaper about 6 weeks back, I mentioned the prescription that some American policy makers have suggested. I strongly believe that if Kashmiris are proactive in demanding demarcation of the international boundary, many options for self-

governance are possible on either side of the international border that will not be finalized without the assent of the major powers who do want to see Kashmiris treated with dignity and fairness. In return, the entire deal – from international border demarcation to quality of self-governance – forms a single package that will involve approval of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). I would like to propose that we move towards that goal now, rather than later, when India has a strong possibility to be a permanent member of the UNSC.

Such an approach will require courage on the part of Kashmiri politicians, and Kashmiri commentators and columnists have to get real to allow such a process to proceed. In my humble view, we can continue as usual or do something remarkable to bring peace and prosperity in the entire region.

The author can be contacted at www.KashmirForum.org