



Media Analysis Center, Kashmir

- The free flow of negative content on Kashmir and its wide circulation on social media is damaging Indian interests locally, nationally and internationally. There is urgent need to counter this content in an organized and efficient manner.
- **Media Analysis Center, Srinagar** - a civil society initiative of Lehar Foundation - is an organized initiative to counter negative propaganda and content on Kashmir locally, nationally and internationally.
- Media Analysis Center (MAC) shall generate content which shall aggressively counter the lies being peddled regarding Kashmir in the domestic, national and international media.
- The content produced by MAC shall include news reports, features, videos and documentaries.
- The purpose is to break the toxic plot that keeps feeding malicious, negative news on Kashmir and circulating the same to deepen stereotypes of oppression and alienation. The attempt is to bring in a reality check on Kashmir and refresh the narrative in a positive, inclusive direction.
- MAC shall also provide a platform to bring together positive and happy voices of aspirational Kashmir youth, within Kashmir or outside. The Kashmiri voices of positivity and growth within India shall act as a force multiplier for the youth within Kashmir.

Madam Mufti Tries The Heroine Act

The Abdullahs are rattled

■ BASHIR ASSAD

The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) came up as a conglomerate of regional and national political parties in Jammu and Kashmir. The biggest partners in PAGD are National Conference, led by Farooq Abdullah, and People's Democratic Party (PDP) led by Mehbooba Mufti. In early November, PAGD said its constituents shall jointly contest the District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

At the time of announcing this decision, PAGD spokesperson Sajad Lone said, "Dr Sahib (PAGD chairperson and NC president Dr Farooq Abdullah) will release every single name with his own hands." Lone is the Chairman of People's Conference.

Turns out PDP President Mehbooba Mufti has proved to be one up on all other constituents of PAGD. Madam Mufti has

brilliantly used the PAGD platform to revive her political career, which had been dealt a nearly fatal blow by her disastrous stint as the chief minister of the erstwhile state of J&K.

Madam Mufti is now gloating with her new-found halo and is firing salvo upon salvo on New Delhi. The National Conference led by father-son duo Farooq and Omar Abdullah is squirming. Aligning with Madam Mufti has placed them in a tight spot.

The Abdullahs are worried that Madam

Mufti is crossing all limits in attacking New Delhi. This does not suit National Conference.

Why Madam Mufti has NC in a tight spot

For over five decades, since Sheikh Abdullah was released by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964, it has been the considered policy of National Conference to be on the right side of the ruling party at the Centre. Yes, NC has done its bit in sparring with the BJP and

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also the Congress from time to time. But National Conference has always maintained a self-imposed *Lakshman Rekha* that its leaders did not cross. Madam Mufti has left them flummoxed.

Madam Mufti, for her part, is fully milking her new-found political legitimacy. She was able to regain lost ground by being part of the PAGD platform. Madam Mufti is doing everything and more to discredit the narrative of New Delhi in Kashmir. This way, she has been able to successfully shift attention from her CM stint marked by master-class corruption and nepotism. Her frontal attack on the Centre has left the National Conference rattled.

Old Kashmir Policy of New Delhi to be blamed for this mess

The Kashmir policy of New Delhi in the past is partly to blame for this mess. For nearly two decades, New Delhi followed the policy of giving space to what was officially acknowledged as the “lesser of two evils”.

This stratagem of fighting a greater evil with lesser evil has taken a heavy toll on the interests of India in Kashmir. By empowering an evil - supposedly the smaller evil - New Delhi gave space to it to grow huge and harden over time.

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Post her release from detention, Kashmir is seeing a new avatar of Madam Mufti. She is no longer collaborating with the separatists. Madam Mufti is now driving the separatist narrative in Kashmir.

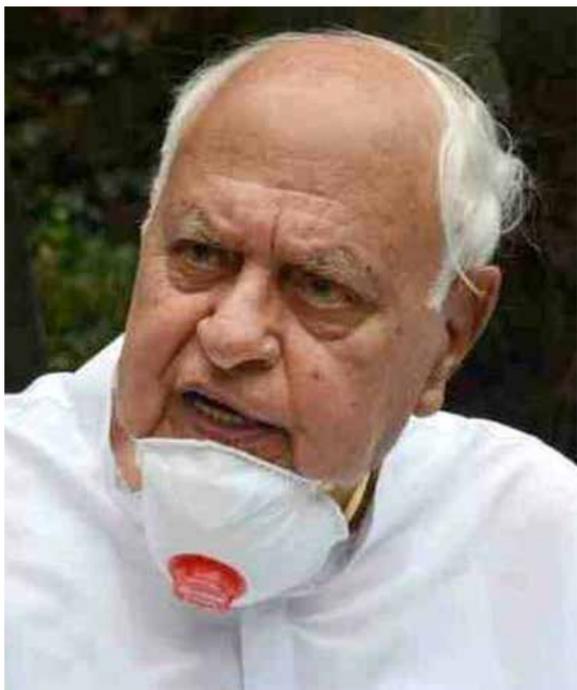
There are verified reports from south Kashmir that in the ongoing polls for District Development Councils, candidates affiliated to Madam Mufti are actively seeking the support of militants. They are getting this support. A promising candidate not affiliated to her was recently forced by militants to withdraw his candidature.

There are also verified reports that some eminent locals in south Kashmir who had taken a position against the candidates affiliated to Madam Mufti are being intimidated to stay indoors and stay quiet.

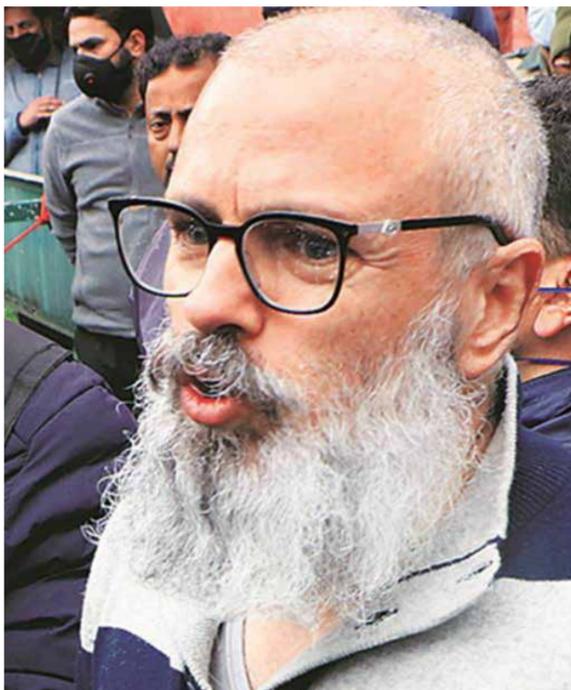
Meanwhile, Madam Mufti is vocal, shrill and strident in her statements. All through this double play, every day Madam Mufti is astutely playing the victim card.

Clearly, New Delhi’s old policy of accommodating the lesser evil has boomeranged. There’s an old saying: Who needs enemies when you have friends like that! Madam Mufti is ably performing the act of separatists in the garb of mainstream politics and seemingly upholding democracy.

Delhi’s strategy should have been No Compromise.



Farooq Abdullah



Omar Abdullah

Former RAW chief AS Dulat had revealed in his book, *Kashmir: The Vajpayee Years* (June 2015) that New Delhi had grave doubts about Madam Mufti, about her links with the Hizbul Mujahideen and the help it provided her and her party during the 2002 elections. Dulat was former PM Atal Behari Vajpayee’s Special Advisor on Kashmir after his retirement as RAW chief in 2000.

Madam Mufti’s deviant behaviour continued. The Public Safety Act (PSA) dossier, based on which Madam Mufti was booked included public remarks made by her against the Army, pro-militant tweets and attempts “to collaborate with separatists”. The dossier against Madam Mufti underlined that there were “confidential reports” that she was “collaborating with the separatists”.

The Waheed Para example

How Double-Dealers Have Flourished in Kashmir

Madam Mufti has been strident in his support. It is difficult to believe that she is ignorant of his double-crossing

■ BASHIR ASSAD

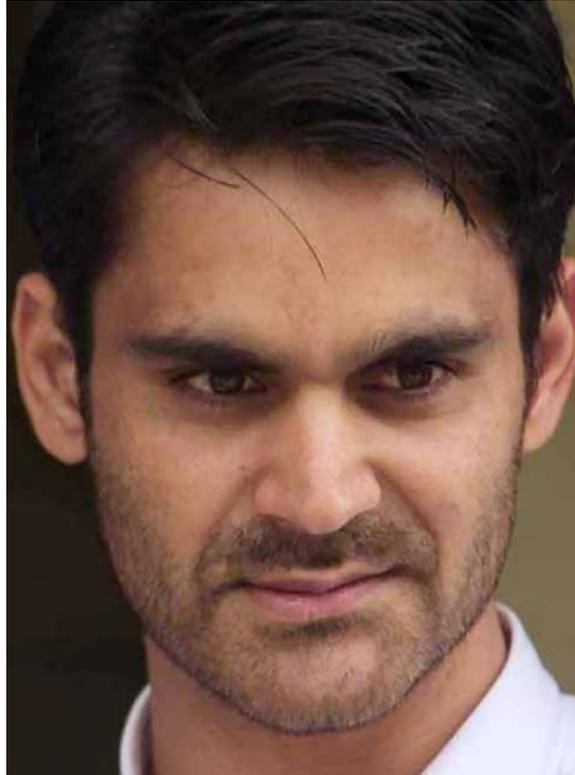
Since 2017, National Investigating Agency (NIA) has been continuously conducting raids, arresting suspects and investigating them in terror-funding and financing cases. NIA has so far arrested more than a dozen people in connection with terror funding and for helping Pakistan to keep the pot boiling in Kashmir.

Kashmir-based political parties on either side of the divide have been highly critical of the frequent raids and arrests carried out by NIA. Madam Mufti, in particular, seems very upset with NIA actions in Kashmir. The fact remains that the business of double agents and double dealers had been flourishing in Kashmir since decades. The learning has been that double agents and double dealers have always betrayed New Delhi in Kashmir. The logical and sound argument is that double dealers, in their capacity as peace brokers, are scared of non-state actors. They don't fear the state.

For them, the state has limitations and inherent constraints in threatening and intimidating collaborators. The non-state actors – the terrorists and their mentors in Pakistan – hold no bars in threatening, intimidating or killing individuals who become a liability for them or who are more inclined towards New Delhi. From government-supported renegades to the latest version of double dealers or peace brokers, every single individual has capitulated to non-state actors.

Kashmir has seen an alarming number of double dealers who were involved in brokering peace with terrorists operating from Pakistan. Initially, it seemed that they were doing a commendable job by helping the state in establishing contacts for the good. Hence there seemed to be no harm in nurturing these so-called brokers. In the long run, it was proved that this trust was misplaced. Driven by fear of terrorists and greed, these brokers (double dealers) have been found to serve the adversaries of the state far more.

At present, more than 20 individuals facing the charges of terror funding and collaboration with terrorists are behind the bars. All of them had established contacts with terrorists locally and also in Pakistan. And all of these double dealers betrayed the nation and the people of Kashmir. They amassed wealth through their duplicity but worked for the adversaries. Serving the interests of India was a mere façade.



Waheed Para



DSP Devinder Singh

The façade of “serving the people”

Many former Intelligence officers are on record saying that these double agents were given money and other benefits for a “cause”. Since these double agents did not achieve anything substantial for the state, the cause remained a distant dream. All of them were found to be taking money from Indian agencies but furthering the agenda of the adversaries of the state. Nayeem Khan, Shabir Shah, Khurram Parvez, Altaf Fantosh, Er. Rashid, Waheed Para, Yasin Malik and others exploited and dismayed both Kashmiris and New Delhi by their shady political and pecuniary dealings.

Para has been much in news lately. PDP

President Madam Mufti has been strident in her opposition to state action in nailing Para. It is difficult to believe that she may be ignorant of his double-crossing.

Para's reckless involvement with terrorists

Para was initially a conduit for the security forces. He gradually became a double dealer. Security agencies have verified reports that Para was recklessly involved with the terrorists. He was giving them money, facilitating their movement, using them for electoral gains and threatening and intimidating his political opponents. Para is Madam Mufti's close confidante. He was engaging in electoral engineering to benefit the PDP, with the assistance of terrorists. Para even facilitated the marriage of dreaded LeT terrorist Abu Dujana in Hokripora near Pulwama.

Para was Secretary Sports Council, a political appointment. In this capacity, he provided government jobs to Abu Dujana's wife and her brother. One more category of double dealers is that of the so-called social activists, NGOs and charitable trusts. They maintain the façade of social service. For this purpose, the government supports these activists and NGOs through various schemes.

The activities of Irfan Shafi Mir

Intelligence agencies have verified reports that these NGOs and social activists are part of lucrative foreign networks. Funds come to them through various known and unknown channels and were used against the state. One typical case is that of Irfan Shafi Mir. Mir was arrested along with Deputy SP Devinder Singh. He was to set up a new outfit called “Bleeding Heart”. Pakistan had realized in 2018 that Hurriyat Conference, the separatist conglomerate created by ISI, would not be able to deliver any more. Mir, who had emerged as a double agent, made frequent visits to Pakistan. During this time, he came in contact with ISI officials as well as top terror leadership. He learnt that separatist groups in the Valley had become defunct after the NIA cracked its whip on their anti-national activities in 2017 following the registration of terror-funding cases.

Similarly, we have charitable trusts run and owned by religio-political organizations like Jamaat-e-Islami. These are funded by Pakistan and other foreign countries. The funds received by them are used for radicalizing the youth in Kashmir.

How Zahoor Watali, Tanveer Ahmad Wani flourished

The business class of Kashmir is also under the scanner of NIA. Zahoor Watali has been instrumental in channelizing foreign funding to various individuals and organizations. Tanveer Ahmad Wani, former president of the Line of Control Traders Association, was arrested for his unlawful activities. There are many such Zahoor Watalis in Kashmir who have been receiving funds from foreign organizations. A good number of businessmen in Kashmir have flourished solely on hawala money. Many of them are under the scanner.

Interestingly, the businessmen involved in hawala transactions are actively into politics too. They are part of the class famously called conflict entrepreneurs.



Arrest of DSP Devinder Singh

The deceit of double-dealing Ikhwanis

Such deceit and double-play was also seen at the time of the Ikhwanis. Initially, when Ikhwanis defected from their militant outfits and turned pro-government in the mid-90s, they provided valuable information about their former outfits, rendering great help to counter-insurgency operations. The situation turned. Many former militants working with the security agencies were found to be in league with militant outfits. They would still lead the security forces to arms recovery from militant hideouts. Simultaneously, they were helping extremists through subversive activities under the pretext of fighting them.

In the years that followed, the police found that several incidents blamed on the militants were the handiwork of counter-insurgents. In April 1999, an attack on the police post in Chogul, Handwara, was organized by some

SPOs. Five policemen were killed, and their arms and ammunition stolen.

On August 14, 1999, a car bomb was detected near the Tourist Reception Centre of Srinagar. Police blamed the militants and claimed that they had averted a major tragedy by “foiling plans of disrupting Independence Day celebrations and the Amarnath Yatra”. The police could not name any outfit. Later, investigation by Intelligence agencies revealed that two Ikhwanis, at the behest of a police officer, had parked the car fitted with a cylinder bomb at the site. The drama had been enacted to help a police officer claim credit.

Official figures reveal that more than 250 Ikhwanis and surrendered militant who worked with Jammu and Kashmir Police and other security forces rejoined militant ranks. Recently, around 10 SPOs working with J&K Police joined militant groups. Naveed Babu,

arrested by Jammu and Kashmir police in a high-profile operation with DSP Devinder Singh and three others, was among those who fled from police and joined militancy.

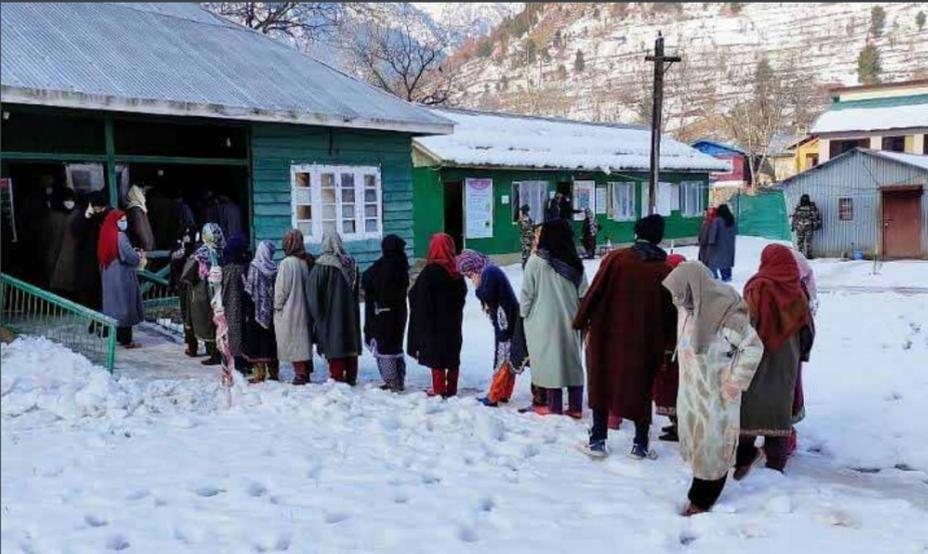
The point I want to make is that Naveed and his likes with militant background seem more prone to joining back militancy. Their chances of betrayal are higher, as compared to their service to the nation. Circumstantial evidence suggests that non-state actors – in this case the terrorists – are able to instill fear among double agents. The double agents are also conscious of the inherent weaknesses and limitations of the state. This fear of terrorists and the softness of the state drives them towards betrayal. They choose life (protected by the state) over death (guaranteed by the non-state). In this way, they indulge in heinous criminal acts against the state. This is natural, because they are now remote-controlled by the adversaries of the state.

DDC ELECTIONS

Celebration of Democracy in the Winter of 2020

District Development Council polls, Kashmir. The festival of democracy. The power of a vote. The smile of a man who votes for peace and prosperity





Colours of democracy in the winter of 2020. Kashmiris line up for 6th phase of DDC polls. 7.48 lakh voters in 31 constituencies will vote today for stability, development, prosperity



Come rain or snow, life goes on. Kashmiris vote for first-ever District Development Councils, bodies of grassroots democracy. Faith in mainstream political system is key, and priority is to meet people's expectations

