

Bangladesh Bans Hizb ut-Tahrir – Why?

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On the 22nd of October 2009, Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh made headline news in all electronic and print media, across Bangladesh and abroad. The Home ministry issued a memo banning all activities of the party, with an allegation, but with no proof, that Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh is a threat to 'public and national security'.

After the announcement, news of Hizb ut-Tahrir has dominated the discussions in newspaper editorials, talk shows, and amongst intellectuals and politicians. The common theme in these discussions is the shock and surprise as to how the government of Bangladesh could take such a step against an intellectual, political non-violent party, whose work is all too well known amongst the masses, especially amongst the politicians, the educated and the professional elites in the country?

It is well known that Hizb ut-Tahrir is a political party whose method is to work in the society intellectually and politically to establish the Islamic system of government, the Khilafah. Whilst the mainstream political parties in Bangladesh are well known to be deeply immersed in corruption, criminality and violence, Hizb ut-Tahrir, in a matter of a few years has built a strong movement comprising of sincere and honest hard working people. Indeed Hizb ut-Tahrir has set a new standard in the political landscape of Bangladesh, and has demonstrated very clearly and profoundly how and what an ideal political party should be.

The question then is, why ban Hizb ut-Tahrir in Bangladesh?

To answer this question, we need to assess the political reality of Bangladesh, where it stands in the current geo-political condition, the specific plans of the foreign powers, and where Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh stands in its protest against all these plans.

Bangladesh Political Landscape

Bangladesh is a country with a population of over 150 Million people, where more than 85% are Muslim. Allah (SWT) has blessed the country with many assets and resources such as a huge hard working population, fertile land, gas reserves of 20-80TCF, coal and many other natural resources and minerals. Additionally, it is a country that is very well placed strategically due to the access it provides to South-East Asia and beyond, through the Bay of Bengal. All these make it very attractive to the world's imperialist powers.

From its creation in 1971, Bangladesh has been a victim of colonial interference. The first Mujibur Rahman government was heavily influenced by India, whose aim was to weaken Pakistan and to ensure its footprints are well placed over the newly created country. Although the US did not recognise Bangladesh till very late, it managed to catch on the game and subsequently succeeded in taking the country under its influence.

As the politics of the country it is dominated by self-interest, corruption, political violence and more importantly lack of vision, commitment and dedication from subsequent leaderships, the country faced rampant corruption and tit-for-tat politics between the two main secular political parties, the Awami League and BNP. The Awami League in both of its terms created rule of godfathers who embroiled the country in crime and terror. It is this very failure of the country's politics that has endangered the country's security and its resources, and brought tremendous hardship and oppression upon the people. The people of Bangladesh now live in a state of despair which the country's dysfunctional politics.

Regional geopolitics and foreign plans against Bangladesh

Bangladesh's relationship with the US

Everyone knows that the US is engaged in a global war against Islam. In fact, it doesn't need analysis as the US pursues it overtly. This war of the US against the rise of Islam means, wherever there are Muslims, they are not free from the dangers of the US's vicious plans. As Bangladesh has a large number of Muslim, they share the sorrows with Muslims wherever they are being attacked in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, Iraq or Kashmir. Therefore, containing the Muslims of Bangladesh and ensuring they do not return back to Islam is one of the highest priorities for the US amongst various other objectives. The US deputy assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian John Gastright stated, "Major US interest in Bangladesh include... democratisation, economic reform and market-opening policies... and counter-terrorism..."

From the above expression it is clear what objectives the US pursues in Bangladesh. The US wants to ensure it controls the government whoever that might be. This can be seen very clearly when we observe the movement of the American Ambassador in the country, where he/she never hides from interfering on all issues, be it domestic or international. Furthermore, US sees Bangladesh as a huge market opportunity with a population of over 150 Million people, so it pursues a policy of economic reform and market-opening, while in reality means enslaving the people to its products and services and looting the country's resources. This is achieved through USAID funds, which is engaged in market-readiness activities for American products and oil companies; and American led institutions such as the World Bank and IMF funds projects which require consultancy, raw material, machinery and maintenance to be bought from countries like the US.

The US sees counter-terrorism synonymous to Muslims turning to Islam for their solutions. Therefore, it engages in all forms of media propaganda and terror to prevent an independent Islamic government arising in the country.

More importantly America sees the strategic importance of Bangladesh's geographical location, which gives it access to South-East Asia. That is why America moved very swiftly in ordering the Bangladesh government to establish an airbase in the Chittagong region and is also working to take control over the Bangladesh navy through various joint activities such as operation "Tiger Shark". Their aim is to establish a permanent naval base in the Bay of Bengal so that it can rapidly respond to any crises in the region. In addition, America has regional objectives to contain China, and monitor India, in their aspiration to be leading players in the regional and international arena.

Bangladesh's relationship with China

China has a strong relationship with Bangladesh. Ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations with China in 1975, the Chinese leadership has consistently advised Bangladesh to move away from India's sphere of influence. China has emerged as a major supplier of arms to the Bangladesh armed forces. Most of the tanks, a large number of armoured personnel carriers (APCs), artillery pieces, small arms and personal weapons in the Bangladesh Army are of Chinese origin. China supplied the 053-H1 Jianghu I class frigates with 4 xHY2 missiles, Huang Feng class missile boats, Type-024 missile boats, Hainan class sub chasers, etc. Also, the BNS Khalid Bin Walid has been retrofitted with HQ-7 SAM from China.

China has also, managed to penetrate into the Bangladesh economy, where most of the raw materials, industrial machineries, etc. come from China. Additionally, Chinese companies undertake many infrastructure projects in Bangladesh.

China has a strong relationship with Myanmar (Burma), which shares its border with Bangladesh. China has already established its military base in the Coco Island (leased from Myanmar), near India's Andaman Islands. This base is considered a listening post over the eastern part of India, including India's ballistic missile centre in the eastern state of Orissa.

Bangladesh's relationship with India

Such moves by China gives both the Americans and Indians nightmares. The US is worried, due to its global and regional policy, and India is worried because all these activities are taking place on its doorstep. That is why as soon as the Awami League government came into power, Air Force Chief, Air Marshal S.M. Ziaur Rahman, was sent to New Delhi to discuss defence ties with India and to import defence equipment, including Advanced Light Helicopters from India (reported in Defense News on 24th April 2009). This was India's attempt to shift Bangladesh's direction away from China to India, using its ally, the Awami League.

India cannot allow Bangladesh to be successful as it will be a danger to its own unity, with many of its states in the North East, the Seven Sisters as they are known, seek independence from India. That is why India seeks greater control of Bangladesh. The continuous interference by the Indian Ambassador in all of Bangladesh's domestic and international affairs, the frequent killings of Bangladeshis in the border regions by the Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) and India's recent vicious attack upon the Bangladesh Rifles (Bangladesh's border security forces) leading to the killing of 70 senior army personnel are all examples of the extent the Indian government has designs on Bangladesh. In addition India is currently using the current Awami government, a well-known agent of India to establish a transit route through the heart of Bangladesh.

India plans to take significant control over Bangladesh's resources such as gas and coal, both directly and indirectly in the name of FDI (foreign direct investment) such as TATAs \$3Billion dollar investment plan in Bangladesh. It has a long-term plan to build the Tipaimukh dam in the northeastern region so that India effectively controls the flow of river water into Bangladesh from both east and west. (the notorious Farraka Dam is in the west of the country). It also continues to use the card of Islamic militancy and violence to achieve greater control over Bangladesh.

What is taking place in Bangladesh is nothing more than a struggle of the various powers in the region to use Bangladesh to their own advantage. Successive governments in Bangladesh have done nothing more than facilitate these plans, some tending towards the US and others to Britain and India. As it is a country of over 150 million Muslims any independent government emerging there will no doubt end the brutal game being played in South Asia. So, it is very clear why these powers have devised such evil plans to take control over the countries affairs in all forms, be it political, economical, cultural, militarily etc. They want to ensure Bangladesh never develops nor pursues its own independent policies but remains a country to be preyed upon by these vultures.

Hizb ut-Tahrir is the only viable Alternative Leadership for BD

From the onset Hizb ut-Tahrir in Bangladesh was able to identify clearly the challenges faced by Bangladesh. By protesting against these foreign agenda's, within a short period, the party was able to gain recognition as the people's spokesman.

In all its campaigns Hizb ut-Tahrir exposed the dangerous plans of these powers, holding the government accountable. The party presented in detail the alternative policies from Islam that will ensure all these challenges are solved, foreign interference removed, and Bangladesh becomes a self-sufficient state with full security for its people, state and resources. Within a very short time Hizb-ut-Tahrir has become a well-known Islamic political organisation in Bangladesh. By addressing the people's concerns continuously and sincerely for no other reason than the Pleasure of Allah, the party has gained widespread support, respect and trust amongst the people. It has attracted doctors, teachers, lawyers, businessmen, students and ulema, and has managed to reach all sectors of society. Hizb ut-Tahrir represents the hope of the people to establish a clean politics in Bangladesh and a politics that does not compromise to the dictates of foreign powers. It has not taken long for Hizb-ut-Tahrir to be seen as the only effective opposition to the current Awami government and Islam as the only alternative system for Bangladesh.

Seeing the growth of the party in Bangladesh, the colonial powers, particularly America took the decision to ban the party. Unable to face Hizb ut-Tahrir intellectually they have taken the stance of banning the party and harassing its members. The Hasina government like all the puppet governments in the Muslim world simply obeyed commands.

Conclusion

Hizb-ut-Tahrir has always stood up for the interest of the people and defended Islam wherever it has worked, and will continue to do so regardless of the enemy plans insha-Allah. It takes courage from the Ayah of the Qur'an:

“They intend to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths. But Allah (SWT) will bring His Light to perfection though the disbelievers hate it” (As-Saff – 61: 8)

Allah (SWT) further says:

“He it is Who (Allah (SWT)) sent His Messenger with guidance and the true ideology to dominate over all other ways of life, even though the disbelievers hate it” (As-Saff – 61:9)

There is no doubt that the Awami League government will fail to stop the rise of Islam in Bangladesh. Banning Hizb ut Tahrir has only demonstrated to the people their utter desperation to deal with the popularity of the party and will only serve to strengthen the resolve and determination of those sincere activists working for the return of the Khilafah in Bangladesh. It is only a matter of time when the sincere people of Bangladesh will overthrow the corrupt puppet regime in Dhaka and establish the Mercy of Allah SWT on the country.