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In the light of Feb. 14 attack on a CRP Convoy, the Union Cabinet Minister Nitin Gadkari tweeted that India would 'choke' the water supply to Pakistan. He said that India will divert waters of Eastern Rivers allotted to India and divert them to the people of J&K and Punjab.

It is not the first time that Gadkari had said so. In fact preparations for the full use of waters meant for Indian under Indus Water Treaty were taken soon after the Uri attack when the Prime Minister declared that "Blood and Water" cannot go together.

Diversion of Ravi and Beas would involve a construction of a dam at Shahpur-Kandi on the Ravi and another mega project -the UJH project that will store water for use in Jammu and Kashmir and the balance of water allowed to flow from the 2nd Ravi-Beas Link to provide water to other States.

The Ujh River is the main tributary of River Ravi in Kathua district of Kashmir. Construction of dam on this river will provide hydropower of 196 MW and water for irrigation of 31,380 hectares. The DPR of the project has already been prepared and it is under examination. This dam is expected to be over 110 metres high.

Construction of the Shahpur-Kandi project has already started. The Union Cabinet at Delhi has already approved the project and funds have been made available. The project should be completed by 2023 but the Ujh may take a longer time. Till that time, some quantities of water from Eastern Rivers would continue to flow into Pakistan.

Some of the Indian media made some screaming headlines that India has decided to stop Indus Waters to Pakistan! This was based on

Shri. Gadkari's tweet which said only of India's intentions on the Eastern Rivers and not on the Western Ones which were legitimately meant for Pakistan. Stopping of Indus Water per se would mean a violation of Indus Water Treaty which India will never do.

The Indus Water treaty was a unique one where the waters were not shared but the whole rivers. Under the treaty, Pakistan was allowed to utilize the three Western Rivers- the Indus, the Jhelum and the Chenab and India was permitted to fully utilize the Eastern Rivers- the Ravi, Beas and the Sutlej.

Thus, India was entitled to 33 million acres feet (MAF) of water, of which only 95 percent was said to be utilized and the rest going into Pakistan unused. It is this balance that amounts to 1.6 MAF that is proposed to be stored and diverted to Jammu and Kashmir and other States.

The Treaty also allowed India to draw from Western Rivers for Irrigation purposes upto 642,000 acres in addition to its entitlement to irrigate another 701,000 acres. India has so far not made full use of its rights to draw this quantum of waters from the Western Rivers either.

In this connection two related papers on the subject 3676 of 19th February 2010 and 6174 of 26th September 2016 may be seen. It was pointed out in those papers-

1. India has in no way violated any of the provisions of the Indus Water Treaty and has never stored waters meant for Pakistan.
2. India has not fully utilized the waters meant to be used for itself and was allowing waters to flow into Pakistan that could have been otherwise utilized.
3. India has not readied any infrastructural facilities to divert its own Eastern waters.
4. Building such infra structure and utilizing the Eastern Waters fully would itself be a deterrent more lethal than nuclear capability.

What is needed now is to follow up with India's plans to divert the Eastern Waters fully and in time as was indicated by the Union Minister Gadkari. I am sure the Minister has the capability and the determination to go for a deterrent on Pakistan that will be more lethal than the nuclear capability.

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