**‘An Army general has no right to say these things. I would have thrown him out’ | The Indian Express**

Related. In this Idea Exchange,Union minister and former J&K CM Farooq Abdullah talks about why General V K Singhs revelations shocked him,why they confirm his worst fears about the Army,and why Kashmir will never be with Pakistan. This session was moderated by Senior Editor (Legal Affairs) Maneesh Chhibber. Maneesh Chhibber: Were moving towards the next general elections. What is your assessment of the current situation? Well,none of us can say how people will behave when elections come. Its only in the last month or so that things start to take shape. I think what will also give a little direction is when the polls in Delhi and Rajasthan are through. Maneesh Chhibber: The BJP has announced Narendra Modi as the PM-in-waiting. I dont favour Modi. I dont think hell be good for the nation and thats not just because Im a Muslim. I dont think hes just and I dont think hes good for Muslims. You need a politician like (Jawaharlal) Nehru… To him,India mattered,not Hindu,Muslim,Sikh or Christian. I think Id like to see a leader like that. I need a leader who really will carry everyone,every religion. Ravish Tiwari: Modis supporters say that in the past 10 years he has benefited everybody,including the minorities of his state. He is a one-man band,hes authoritarian and not democratic. Once he decides something,no one else dares go against it… I wont run away from the country,as someone else has said. Id rather fight. Ravish Tiwari: One of the complaints about the UPA regime is that it doesnt have a decisive leadership. You will have a decisive leader,dont worry. It may not have been announced,but it will happen. D K Singh: Youve headed the Jammu and Kashmir government thrice. Were you aware of your ministers being paid by the Army? No. I was chief minister for a long time. I never knew the Army was playing such tricks. I knew that they were handling voting. I saw that myself in Doda when I went for the 2002 elections. The people refused to come to the meeting place. There was this shop there. The shopkeeper told me,Fauj ne kaha hai ki hum tumhari taang torh denge agar tum aaoge (The Army has said they will break our legs,if we went)… So I saw that very clearly. I suppose I know but I dont want to expose it as it would be against national security. But I didnt know ministers and NGOs were being paid. Its most shocking. I spoke to an opposition leader recently and he also said that this should never have happenedand he belongs to the BJP. The tragedy is that none of us in Parliament can question the Army budget. It is totally untouchable,and therefore whatever money was given,we dont know for what purpose it was being given. Now we have tremendous Pakistani propaganda. Im very sorry to tell you,as a Kashmiri,I feel sad that many of my people still look towards Pakistan. Even though they are part of India,in their hearts of hearts,they are not Indianmaybe because of unfortunate incidents that took place… The Army suddenly became God Almighty. One day,when Omar (Abdullah) was travelling from Srinagar to Jammu on the national highway,he wasnt the CM,but he was an MP,his caravan overtook the Army vehicle. A Captain made him stop and was about to shoot him,saying How dare you cross my vehicle?. If this happened with Omar,what do you think an ordinary Kashmiri citizen faces? I dont know what Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is doing in New York. But if it was me there,I would be the last man to trust Pakistan or the ISI. Thank god in India,the Army is not the commander. Politicians are in control. But things are different on the other side. D K Singh: After hearing General V K Singhs allegations,you must have checked with Chief Minister Omar and done some inquiry within the party? When I heard this,it literally shook me. I said God Almighty,can an Army general do this?. I read the statement made by the Chief Minister of AssamSo if I reveal what he told me as the Eastern Commander?. It really shook me and I said Thank God,hes not my commander-in-chief today. If he can move the Indian Army to the Capital without informing anybody,that is something really surprising. Dilip Bobb: Singh has suggested there was no way that Omar could not have known about this. I am Omars father,but I do not know what Omar does and what Omar means. Omar is Omar,Farooq is Farooq,I am very different from my son. Main Sufi aadmi,Farooq to ye hai (Farooq is a Sufi man). Maneesh Chhibber: But since it concerns your party,you must have spoken to your colleagues? I am sitting here. So should I now call up? How will that look? When I go,Ill ask them. Singh gave only one nameGhulam Hassan Mir. And I know my brother Mustafa Kamal got defeated in Gulmarg constituency because the Army played tricks there. Im absolutely certain now. Manu Pubby: V K Singh also claimed in an interview to The Hindu that there were two things that the secret Army unit paid for. One was the 2011 panchayat polls. Secondly,he said the stone-pelting had stopped thanks to them. Was the Army involved in these? The people came on their own,the largest congregation for voting. They came because they said this is for our own good,where we elect our own people and improve our lives… To say that the Army did this is absolutely wrong. Singh also said that the Army conducted those cricket matches,but that was because the JKCA (Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association),the state government as well as the Army joined hands. It was all three of us who came up with the KPL (Kashmir Premier League). We paid for it,the state government. And all the equipment was given by the JKCA. Manu Pubby: Do you think Singhs comments will damage the civilian government in J&K in the long run? I dont know whats happened to us that such a small nation has such a strong ISI and such a strong way of doing things… There are many things we have to be careful about. When you publish,do not attack the Army,because you dont want to lower its guard… There was a meeting,there were ex-generals,I was also invited. I asked,Why do you Pakistanis have such hatred towards Hindustan?… They said,You will stop our water. I replied,Are we such people? Where will we take the water? Hum to power project nahin kar paaye Chenab pe,jo mera dariya hai (We couldnt even build a power project on the Chenab,and thats our river)… However,the army has drilled this into Pakistans mind that India will shut off its water… Maneesh Chhibber: Do you think General V K Singh will drive a wedge? He has created fear,not a wedge. He has created fear that What is the Army doing?. That is why I want an inquiry. To find out that the money you bring in,where does it go. Why did you seek it,and whom did you give it to? And what accounting do you have for that? I dont think the Defence Minister has spoken about it. Ravish Tiwari: You were also with the NDA. That government sacked Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat (after he went public with his opposition to the government decision of appointing vice-admiral Harinder Singh as deputy chief of naval staff). Do you think similar strong action should be taken? Yes,it should be taken and should be taken now. Because there a number of people in military service even today who are associated with this whole thing. They should be exposed and thrown out. Someone stands against the Army Chief and cant even be found!… Dont you think it is necessary that this should be exposed? Tomorrow one of them might be army chief. D K Singh: In 1984,when your government was toppled,Mir was one of the legislators who defected. There were several people who defected in 1984,including my brother-in-law. Politicians ka koi bharosa hai (Are politicians to be trusted)? Manu Pubby: So the former Army chief should be punished for what he has done? As a citizen,wouldnt you want to know what has been done and why exactly its been done. Even if its done in secret,those people must be brought to task. The Army should be completely out of politics and have nothing to do with it. D K Singh: How can you stop a general from talking? An Army general has no right to say these things. I would have thrown him out. There are certain things that are in national interest that have to be hushed. There are so many things that I know,that I cant tell you. I cant even tell my wife because they arent meant for the general nation. Maneesh Chhibber: Had it not been J&K,and if the Army was listening to the conversation of the Chief Minister and his colleagues,then would the reaction of the Centre be different? I dont know what the reaction of the Central government would have been. But there is a painful thing that they use that Muslims are not to be trusted. That factor of trust is still missing. That is the general feeling. Even when I was dismissed in 1984,it was mistrust. I am not anti-India. I fought the election. In 1989,on the day of Prophet Mohammads birthday,I had just seen boys who had come from across the border. I said to them I am standing before the Hazratbal shrine,I wont lie to you. Nothing will change,boundary will not change,border will not change,dont take to guns. We will fight for our rights with normal means,not by killing innocent people… Weve been through that. Weve been through rapes,murders,disappearances. God knows how much tragedy we have inflicted on our people… For what? Are we better off with Pakistan? Where thay can shoot a man coming out of a mosque? Where they can shoot a man at the church? What Pakistan are you thinking of? Are we not better off here? At least we are alive here,we are democratic,and in a democracy,we can change things. Ravish Tiwari: Isnt free Kashmir a possibility? How do we survive? In the middle of nuclear China,nuclear Pakistan,nuclear India. What have we got? Total dependence today on the government for our development,for our peoples pay. We steal 70 per cent of power,70 per cent! Yeh kehna bada aasaan hai hum independent ho jayenge. Kyun (It is easy to say we will be independent. Why)?… Are you going to become the 53rd or 54th state of America? At the same,we say that the promise you made to us,of autonomy,why dont you give that… What is the necessity of taking that away? And each time threatening us that we will remove Article 370… Dont you think it crosses peoples minds that they want to gobble us up… I count myself lucky we have 370 and nobody could have a home here… So we are a part of India,who says we are not a part of India? But for gods sake,trust us. You dont trust us,that deficiency of trust is the thing that is responsible. What is lacking in Farooq Abdullah? Am I not fighting for my country? Alright,we have some dumb people like Syed Ali Shah Geelani,but all are not like that. Do justice with the Kashmiris. I cant speak much about Akhilesh but Omar is doing as best as he can. He faces many problems. He faces problems from his own people. He faces them everydaystrikes or the CRPF killing somebody. Anubhuti Vishnoi: Is it difficult for younger politicians? I dont think there is something like young or old. I think in my state it is nice to have a young fellow who can climb the mountains,which I cannot. Very frankly,I thank god I didnt become the chief minister because I would have been in the box by now,because it is a very difficult state… It might be beautiful,but everybody has a mind of their own. The guy from Jammu thinks one way,the guy from Ladakh thinks differently and the guy from Kargil thinks differently and the guy from Kashmir also has a mind of his own. Over there,one goes mad just thinking… Honestly,you dont know what to do at times… After Friday prayers,people are throwing stones. What is the point of throwing stones after prayers? Do that before praying… At times,I dont understand what is with PDP president Mehbooba Mufti wanting to sit on the CMs chair. She will lose her sanity the second day. Maneesh Chhibber: Are you certain that after the next elections in the state,the Congress will remain your ally? Next elections nobody knows who is going to be whose ally. Maneesh Chhibber: But you will not go with the BJP? That is one we have decided on. D K Singh: You supported 33 per cent quota for women? I want to see the day when there is 50 per cent reservation in Parliament and the kind of saris that come… Somebody will wear Chanel,somebody Estee Lauder. We should have open thinking. Now if you are a rose,shouldnt one at least appreciate the beauty of a rose. We cant even do that. Why? If we do that,then he is naughty. Suanshu Khurana: The recent Zubin Mehta concert gave a lot of sleepless nights to the state. Do you think it could have been handled differently? I think one of the best things that happened was that Zubin performed. But what I was afraid of was that Zubin is a Jew. And I thought that the ISI would target him in Kashmir. And the orchestra was not Israeli. It was the philharmonic orchestra from Germany,Munich… Zubin would have performed for a larger gathering in a stadium. But we were afraid that if anything went wrong,it would have a national connotation and that it would not go very well for India… I have just come back from Cuba and Chile and people in Chile have seen Zubin Mehtas concert! They could not believe how beautiful the state is,and I said our women are far more beautiful. People are still scared that Yamraj is sitting in Kashmir. That is why that trust is missing. I am not saying that mistakes have not been made,but we are bearing the brunt. There was a time when the British ruled over us and now we are walking as friends with the British. Similarly there have been 65 years since Independence and we have made mistakes and we are paying the price for that.