
No talks until cross-border terrorism ends, India to Pak

Apratim Mukarji
New Delhi, March 31

INDIA TODAY said that there could be no talks with Pakistan until it ceased cross-border terrorism and hostile propaganda, turning down the first ever formal offer of peace talks by the military-ruled country. Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Inam-ul-Haque conveyed the offer yesterday to Indian High Commissioner G Parthasarathy at a meeting held, as India pointed out today, at the Pakistani officials' request.

India's firm rejection of the offer, while stressing its desire for an amicable relationship with no aggressive designs on its part, rests on its comprehension that Islamabad's act is not one of its own volition. Pakistan's move has been dictated by external factors, such as, a strong US pressure for mak-

ing it up with the larger neighbour.

Behind the stiff Indian rejection also lies its undiluted perception that Pakistan is failing to substantiate its peace talks offer with concrete actions by reining in Islamic terrorist groups, which are carrying on their terrorist activities unfettered from its soil. "The cessation of Pakistan's cross-border terrorism and the abandonment of its vicious propaganda are essential ingredients for resumption of any meaningful dialogue," said the official spokesman for the External Affairs Ministry, while responding to the Pakistani offer.

At the same time, India called upon Pakistan "to look to the future, to the welfare of our peoples, and for this purpose, give up the path of conflict and senseless violence."

The umpteenth evocation of the Indian stand was however not

entirely bland, as there were two significant embellishments, not for the first time either.

The official spokesman for the External Affairs Ministry pointed out that India had always sought to establish a "relationship of peace, friendship and cooperation" with Pakistan. He also emphasised that India had no aggressive designs on Pakistan and quoted Prime Minister Vajpayee saying on March 21, "We do not think in terms of war and nobody should."

While Pakistan had talked yesterday about its concerns about India's "so-called" aggressive postures, it was India's turn today to point out that Pakistan had in recent months intensified its "State-sponsored" cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

On earlier occasions, Pakistan had made an identical promise of hitting back if taken unawares.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
- 1 APR 2000

Report on Niaz Naik 'mission' discounted

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, APRIL 2. The Government has dismissed speculation in the Pakistani media that Mr. Niaz Naik, former Pakistan Foreign Secretary, may be in the capital for back-channel diplomacy between New Delhi and Islamabad.

Sources in the Government say that it is unlikely that any top official here, let alone any senior political figure, will have time for Mr. Naik.

As a former High Commissioner to India, Mr. Naik has good contacts here and is a regular on the South Asian seminar circuit.

While there may be political motivation in Pakistan to project every visit to New Delhi by Mr. Naik a serious diplomatic mission, sources say he might be here just to attend a seminar.

Diplomatic observers here say India's experience with Mr. Naik as a back channel during the Kargil crisis could not have been a happy one, and that it is unlikely that he carries much credibility with the establishment here.

Informed sources here suggest the Government is in no mood to consider any serious diplomatic interaction with the regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf unless there is tangible evidence of an

end to Islamabad's support for cross-border terrorism.

Secret talks?

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 2. The former Pakistani Foreign Secretary, Mr. Niaz Naik, "suddenly" left for New Delhi to hold "secret meetings" with senior Indian leaders, including the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, and his "close aides", the *Jang* newspaper reported today.

Earlier, he was used by the ousted Pakistan Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, in his "back-channel" diplomacy with India.

There is little doubt that Mr. Naik is now in New Delhi, but that his mission is to "secretly engage" the Indian leadership on behalf of the new rulers of Pakistan, appears to be pure speculation.

An independent verification reveals that Mr. Naik has gone to New Delhi to attend a meeting of the Council of South Asian Cooperation, a voluntary organisation.

Soon after the Kargil conflict ended, Mr. Naik was once again in New Delhi for an NGO meeting and similar "stories" were floated at that time too.

'No' to peace forum

Meanwhile, Islamabad nipped in the bud plans made by activists

of the Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFD) to cross the international border at Wagah-Attari after authorities on the Pakistani side refused to entertain visas of over 100 nationals.

The activists, who were on their way to Bangalore to attend a PIPFD convention, will now try to make their way to India through alternative means. Mr. I. A. Rehman, a functionary, told this correspondent from Lahore today.

"Both Governments should have allowed us to cross the land border on foot. This is a sign of their petty-mindedness," a visibly upset Mr. Rehman maintained.

"The heavens did not fall when we crossed the international border *en route* to Calcutta in 1996 and when our Indian colleagues went to Peshawar in 1998," he said.

'Not a sign of weakness'

UNI reports:

The Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. Inamul Haq, has said his country would wait for a positive response from India for resumption of dialogue.

In an interview to the *Jang* here, Mr. Haq said Pakistan's offer of talks should not be considered a sign of weakness. New Delhi's refusal to resume the talks exposed that "India did not want to resolve the outstanding issues."

No-war assurance, peace sermon to Pakistan

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STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, March 31. — New Delhi today called on Islamabad to give up the path of conflict and senseless violence and emphasised that it had no aggressive designs on Pakistan, even as it iterated its conditions for the resumption of dialogue.

That Pakistan's overtures had not wrought any change in the Indian position predicating the resumption of dialogue on the cessation of cross-border terrorism and hostile propaganda, was evident from the statement of the external affairs spokesman who repeated India's charges of terrorism against Pakistan.



Pervez Musharraf

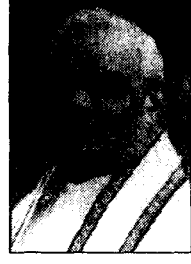
"We once again call upon Pakistan to look to the future, to the welfare of our peoples, and for this purpose, give up the path of conflict and senseless violence," the spokesman said in response to questions on the meeting between the Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan, Mr G Parthasarthy, and the Pakistani foreign secretary, Mr Inam-ul-Haque, in Islamabad yesterday.

Confirming that the meeting had taken place at the initiative of Pakistan, the spokesman said Pakistan had raised concerns about India's so-called aggressive postures against it, and also conveyed its desire to renew dialogue with India.

Denying that New Delhi had any aggressive designs, the spokesman referred to the recent remarks of the Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, during his joint press conference with the US

President, Mr Bill Clinton, in which he had said: "We do not think in terms of war, and nobody should think in those terms in this subcontinent."

It was Pakistan, the spokesman said, which had "in recent months, intensified its state-sponsored cross-border terrorism in the state of Jammu and Kashmir". While stating that India would continue to scrupulously maintain its policy of restraint, the spokesman added, "we will effectively respond, as we have demonstrated in the past, to any threat to our territorial integrity".



AB Vajpayee

On the specific question of a renewal of dialogue, the spokesman said India had always sought to establish a relationship of peace, friendship and cooperation with Pakistan. The composite dialogue process was begun at India's initiative and subsequently the Prime Minister had visited Lahore to reinforce India's goodwill.

Pakistan's Kargil misadventure constituted not only a violation of the Line of Control, but a transgression of the territory of trust. "The cessation of Pakistan's cross-border terrorism and the abandonment of its vicious propaganda are essential ingredients for any meaningful dialogue," he said.

Officials said a resumption of the dialogue was possible only if there was evidence of change in the ground realities and mere statements from Pakistan did not constitute this. India would wait to see a significant change in the level of violence before it resumed a dialogue.

India's increase in defence budget worries Pakistan

REUTERS

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 1

PAKISTAN today said that it feared increased military tension with India after the Central Government raised defence spending by almost a third.

"This (military) activity may, with this latest hike in the war budget of India, lead to more aggressive action and posture by the Indian Government, and in fact, I am afraid we might see some military escalation," foreign ministry spokesman Tariq Altaf told Reuters television in an interview.

He said India had stepped up military and diplomatic efforts against Pakistan ahead of US President Bill Clinton's visit to South Asia later this month.

Altaf said Indian military activity at the Line of Control (LoC) and a \$ three billion increase in defence spending was worrying for Pakistan.

"...This is the largest single ever increase in the Indian military budget... The point noteworthy is that this increase is by \$ three billion,

which is the entire Pakistan defence budget," Altaf said. Altaf said India's increased military spending reflected its aggressive posture and was primarily aimed against Pakistan. Altaf said India's increased military spending reflected its aggressive posture and was primarily aimed against Pakistan.

Altaf said India was trying to keep Clinton away so that he could not use his influence to promote "peace and security" in the region.

"Our reading is that they have been trying to scare away the President from any thoughts of trying his hand at promoting peace and stability in this region and trying to show to President Clinton that they have a different agenda here and therefore he should not try any facilitation role for the resolution of the core dispute (Kashmir) or any kind of role which promotes peace and stability in the region," Altaf said.

"They (the Indians) are primarily trying to send a message to the USA that we are the dominant power and we are trying to establish our hegemony here," he said.

INDIAN EXPRESS

- 2 MAR 2000

KARGIL REPORT

Lack of accountability, coordination

MUCH of what the Kargil committee report has revealed is already known to the nation: while the army acquitted itself admirably in evicting entrenched intruders from inhospitable terrain, there was a massive intelligence failure of army and civilian agencies such as RAW, which allowed the intruders to entrench and fortify themselves for months before being detected. A prime reason for failure is lack of coordination among intelligence gathering agencies. Turf wars have taken their toll — an IB report on activities across the LoC was sent to the PM and top bureaucrats, but not made available to RAW, Military Intelligence or the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee. In other words, matters of national security are treated with the usual bureaucratic apathy. The report mentions that there is absence of public information regarding defence policy and insurgency. If introducing accountability is the objective of making the report public, it is noteworthy that certain portions were deleted before it was placed in Parliament. Public portions of the report do not nail individuals responsible, preferring to dwell on “systemic failures”. This does not make the case for accountability well.

The report does, however, make public something that is long suspected: the Indian nuclear programme has been weapon-oriented for a long time, at least since 1983. While it surely exaggerates when it claims that the tests at Pokhran and Chagai in May 1998 did not add any new element to the Indo-Pak situation — K Subrahmanyam, the chairman of the committee, is known to be a nuclear hawk — the report does reveal that not only senior Cabinet ministers and civil servants but even chiefs of staff of the armed forces are kept out of the loop as far as nuclear decision making is concerned. This means that there is no coordination between India’s conventional preparedness to meet threats from across the border and its nuclear posture, which is alarming. Even though the Kargil report doesn’t reveal anything new, it is clear that things are seriously wrong with the country’s defence management; it amounts to an indictment of political leadership.

THE STATESMAN

1998

Pak giving new twist to militancy: Jaswant

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, March 2. — Having come under international pressure for its backing of terrorism, Pakistan was now trying to bring all the militant groups operating in Jammu and Kashmir under a common banner of the "Kashmir Liberation Army", the External Affairs Minister said during question hour in the Rajya Sabha today.

Attempts were also being made to rope in the J&K Liberation Front (a local outfit as opposed to the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Laskar-e-Toiba) to provide a veneer of perceived legitimacy to the move, Mr Jaswant Singh added. Pakistan's new foreign policy, as pronounced by Gen Pervez Musharraf recently, suggested that it included backing jihads the minister said. An international propaganda campaign was also being attempted by Pakistan, opening offices under various covers in Washington, New York, Riyadh, Brussels and Oslo to spread disinformation on Kashmir. The London office would be the coordinating agency.

The ISI was also trying to get the All Party Hurriyat Conference involved in that exercise, asking it to lobby with non-governmental organisations. There was a dispute over what the London office would be called, Mr Jaswant Singh said. The Hurriyat wanted it to be designated the "World Kashmir Assembly" but the ISI favoured "World Kashmir Mission." Asked to back up his contention that "the international community now openly recognises Pakistan's state sponsorship of terrorism" though no country had made a formal declaration to that effect, the minister said that there were several confirmations of his stand.

The fact that the USA had formed a Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism with India was a major indicator, another was the USA committing itself to working toward bringing the hijackers of IC-814 to justice. The UK had also made clear its concern over terrorism emanating from Pakistan, and Russia had been most explicit.

THE STATESMAN
- 3 MAR 2003

India firm on continuing Lahore bus service

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MARCH 4. India today declared its unflagging commitment to the continuation of the Delhi-Lahore bus run, despite a public demonstration to the contrary in Punjab.

"The Delhi-Lahore-Delhi bus service ...symbolises India's constant endeavour to promote people-to-people contacts between the two countries. We wish the service to continue and will provide necessary security to the bus and its passengers," a Foreign Office spokesman said.

According to the spokesman, a group of miscreants held a dem-

onstration today in Kapurthala district in Punjab against the Delhi-Lahore bus run. (According to a PTI report, about 70 activists of the Shiv Sena led by the party's Punjab unit president, Mr. Surinder Dogra, stopped the Lahore-bound bus near Phagwara and threw stones at it damaging one of the windows. They also shouted anti-Pakistan slogans.) The local police, however, responded quickly to disperse the miscreants and prevented any harm to its passengers. The demonstration appears to be in retaliation to the bombing of the Jammu-Delhi bus, in which nine people lost their lives on Friday.

THE HINDU

- 5 MAR 2000

Pak. massing troops near Kutch

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, MARCH 5. Pakistan has reportedly beefed up its forces close to the Rann of Kutch area in Gujarat to target India's shore-based industry more effectively.

According to highly-placed sources in the Government, Pakistan, after its Atlantique aircraft was shot down by the Indian Air Force, withdrew its paramilitary forces from the area. Instead, it brought in an Army division of around 10,000 troops and an infantry brigade. Pakistan's 18 infantry division and 206 infantry brigade are deployed in these marshlands. Pakistan also inducted its latest Ukrainian T-80UD tanks in the zone, replacing the older Chinese T-85s. Armoured carriers, including tanks which can operate in marshy terrain have added more punch to its strike capability.

Elements of Pakistan's Special Services Group have been positioned to carry out commando raids. These deployments, supervised by the Karachi-based Five Corps, were spread around the fulcrum of Musafir Khas.

Pakistani troop deployment at the frontline in Kutch assumes importance as India

and Pakistan had only positioned paramilitary forces along the undisputed International Border so far. The removal of the paramilitary "cushion" can, therefore, enhance tensions between the two sides, analysts feel.

For the first time, Pakistan has decided to push its "mujahideen" in this zone. Around 150 militants have already been sent from Hyderabad (Sindh) to Nawal Kot, north-east of Pakistan's Badin military base. Another 2,050 militants have been moved to Umar Kot, further north in the same direction.

Besides, 800 militants have been moved from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to Karachi. Of these, around 250 are being trained at the military location of Mithi. These forces are likely to move to forward locations, such as Keeti Bandar and Shah Bandar soon. They are likely to carry out subversive activities on Indian soil, apart from providing a back-up to regular troops.

Pakistan's decision to upgrade its force profile in the Kutch includes the repair of its forward airfields and airstrips. Surveillance radars have been positioned at forward locations including Shah Bandar, Jati and Rahim Ka Bazaar towards the west and Nangar

Pakar in the eastern direction. Additional preparations have also been made to counter possible air strikes. Surface-to-air missiles to target aircraft have been positioned in the Moti Ari-Dandra area.

The revamp of the Pakistani air warfare capability in the area has a key implication. With improved facilities, Islamabad can enhance its capability to strike India's vital shore-based industrial centres, including the strategically vital energy hub of Bombay High. Pakistani F-16 planes are mainly positioned in the south within striking range of India's industrial heartland.

According to analysts, Pakistan's increasing focus on southern deployments to target Indian industry and trade could be driven by the need to off-set India's natural combat advantages in other zones. For instance, a possible Pakistani thrust in Kutch can help counter the Indian Army's natural strategic advantage in Rajasthan's desert terrain. "It is clear that Pakistan would prefer to engage the Indian armed forces either in the mountains of Kashmir or the marshes of the Rann. The desert terrain of Rajasthan for tank battles is not its favoured area of operation", an analyst said.

HO-12 2/3

Farooq demands scrapping of Indus Water Treaty

Indus Pak

JAMMU, MARCH, 6 Terming the Indus Water Treaty as detrimental to the interests of Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, today sought compensation from the Centre for parting the State's Hydel resource with Pakistan.

"We have to part with the water of Jhelum, Chenab and Sindh (Indus)," he said in the Assembly

while responding to a supplementary question by the BJP legislator, Mr. Ashok Khajuria, who demanded scrapping of the treaty with Pakistan in the context of Islamabad promoting terrorism in the State.

Dr. Abdullah pointed out that the State had the potential to generate 15,000 MW of power. "If funds are made available for har-

nessing this vital resource, Jammu and Kashmir will not have to depend on the Central funding for development," he noted.

The Chief Minister pleaded for liberal central funding for power generation and counter-guarantees for taking up of various mega projects, saying that the Centre could not start work on two projects for 20 years. — UNI.

US experts call for Indo-Pak dialogue

New Delhi, March 7

A HIGH-LEVEL team of U S foreign policy experts has advised India and Pakistan not to put pre-conditions for resumption of bilateral dialogue, stating that in the absence of any bilateral mechanism the military tension in the South Asian region is bound to increase.

Participating in a panel discussion here, Dr Richard Hass, former special assistant to Mr George Bush, Mr Stephan P Cohen, a senior Fellow of Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institute, and other experts said that if both countries insisted on pre-conditions, resumption of talks will be difficult. "It is important to communicate," Dr Hass said.

Dr Hass said that India should not hesitate in initiating dialogue with the military regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf. He predicted

that it is bound to happen in the near future. He strongly advocated for President Bill Clinton's visit to Pakistan, stating that "any trip to South Asia should not exclude a country that was an American ally for much of the Cold War era."

He had earlier stated that a failed Pakistan would be a nightmare and would threaten the stability of the region and the world.

Referring to the proposed visit of President Bill Clinton to India from March 20, Dr Hass said that it would help in institutionalisation of the relations. The two countries have yet to lay the foundation for strong bilateral relations.

The experts said that there may be differences of approach on nuclear disarmament and the Kashmir issue, but relations between the two countries could move far ahead in other areas especially in trade and commerce.

(UNI)

'India cool to our repeated talks offer'

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, March 7

CHIEF EXECUTIVE General Pervez Musharraf has said that Pakistan is making all efforts for dialogue with India but the other side (India) is reluctant.

Talking to reporters in Karachi yesterday General Musharraf also dismissed the impression that Pakistan stood isolated in the world comity today.

"Pakistan is not isolated at the international level. Its government has been internationally recognised," the Chief Executive told reporters.

"You have been told wrongly," Gen. Musharraf candidly told the reporter who had asked whether Pakistan had become isolated.

He pointed out that Pakistan had been recognised by the Middle East and China as well as the Commonwealth. He said Pakistan's

relations with Iran were improving. "The French President and the British Prime Minister have written letters," he stated.

Meanwhile, an ISPR release said that Gen. Pervez Musharraf has reiterated that Pakistan would not bow before any pressure and continue to strive for a respectable place among the comity of nations as well preserve its integrity and sovereignty.

He said that the country is passing through a critical stage and the enemy is busy trying to create rifts in our ranks.

"We must remain on guard against evil designs of the enemy. We are to perform the sacred duty of defending the borders as well as contribute positively towards national reconstruction and prosperity," he added. The General, who himself started his career as an air defender, appreciated the services rendered by the army air defence and said that it was heartening to note that the army air defence had

emerged as the most competent and professional arm in a span of just 10 years.



'Pakistan is no longer an isolated nation and has been recognised by the Middle East and the Commonwealth'

Lashkar: Expect another Kargil this summer

10/3
THE PAK-BASED militant group Lashkar-e-Toiba on Thursday warned it had chalked out a new strategy for a "Kargil-like action" in Jammu and Kashmir this summer.

"The Mujahideen are waiting for summer to give a surprise in Kashmir and they have prepared themselves for this new strategy and the liberation of Kashmir depends upon this new round against Indian forces", the outfit's chief Hafiz Mohammad Saeed told reporters at Rawalpindi, a note faxed to PTI in Islamabad said.

On President Clinton's Pakistan visit, Saeed said the outfit does not believe that he would solve the Kashmir issue. "He is coming to Pakistan only for US interests not for Pakistan or Kashmir and those people who expect any sympathy from Clinton on Kashmir should ponder on the history of America that it cheated Pakistan on every occasion."

PTI, Islamabad

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 MAR 2000

ISI meddling in India's North-East, says US official

N.C. Menon
Washington, March 10

A HIGH-RANKING State Department official has been quoted in the *Washington Times* as saying that Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) agency is fomenting extremist violence in India's north-east, possibly working through dissident groups with bases in Bangladesh.

"We believe the ISI is helping the militants in Assam," said the official, off the record.

"Since they attack unarmed civilians for political purposes, the militants meet the classical definition of terrorists." The report also quoted Indian and Bangladeshi sources to say that ISI agents in Bangladesh were encouraging, training and arming some of the militants of the United Liberation Front of Assam and other groups.

According to the *Times*, the comments by the senior US official indicate that Washington also believes Pakistan is working to spread discord in India's North-East, something that India has been complaining

about for years.

Zamir Akram, deputy chief of mission at the Pakistani Embassy here, denied the charges on Thursday and, in turn, accused RAW of sponsoring terrorist attacks in Pakistan and of being behind the sectarian violence in Karachi.

The *Washington Times* also quoted "a senior South Asian diplomat who is not from India" that the ISI had been infiltrated by Islamic militants who were working with fundamentalists in Bangladesh to prepare attacks on India.

"The ISI is active in Bangladesh and has a large number of fundamentalists in the organisation and they have links with fundamentalist groups in Bangladesh," he said. "We are very watchful about it, and if we find any link we try to bring them to justice. We have told the US State Department to be careful about that and keep a watch on their activities." The diplomat added that the ISI was also meddling in the politics of Bangladesh "to destabilise the political set up through fundamentalist elements with links to the Afghans."

J&K isn't the core issue in Simla agreement

ISLAMABAD: India made it clear that Jammu and Kashmir has not been mentioned as "core issue" either in the Simla agreement or the Lahore declaration and asserted it would not be found wanting in settling all differences with Pakistan once Islamabad restored the trust undermined by Kargil intrusions.

"I often hear references in Pakistan to Jammu and Kashmir being the 'core issue' between India and Pakistan. At the same time there are frequent references and actions to suggest that Pakistan even today questions the accession of Jammu and Hyderabad to India. All this is claimed to be a part of the so-called 'unfinished agenda of partition'. There is, however, no reference to any so-called 'core issue' either in the Simla agreement or the Lahore declaration," Indian high commissioner to Islamabad G. Parthasarathy said in an interview to the Pakistani monthly magazine *Herald*.

India committed itself to a process of building trust and confidence, creating a stable structure of co-operation and addressing all outstanding issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir in the Lahore declaration, he said.

Mr Parthasarathy said that the Lahore process initiated by India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee could be revived when the trust and confidence which were severely undermined by the intrusions in Kargil are restored.

"The intrusion in Kargil by large contingents of Pakistan's armed forces, especially from the northern light infantry, has been regarded not only in India but across the world, as a betrayal

of the trust on which the Lahore process was premised," the high commissioner said.

Asked about New Delhi's attempts to declare Islamabad a terrorist state, despite Mr Vajpayee's public statement that a strong Pakistan was in India's interests, he said the Simla agreement specifically states that both India and Pakistan would seek to prevent organisation, assistance or encouragement of any acts detrimental to peaceful and harmonious relations.

"We, therefore, expect the Pakistan government to ensure that it prevents the organisation of terrorist activities on its soil which are being undertaken across the Line of Control (LoC) and the international border," Mr Parthasarathy said. This was the solemn responsibility of the Pakistan government flowing from a bilateral agreement signed in 1972 at the highest level. Commitment to the Simla agreement was reaffirmed in the Lahore declaration, he said.

"There are groups and individuals in Pakistan who cross the LoC and international border with impunity, with the avowed aim of killing Indians, including political leaders and their followers in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere," he said. "The leader of the Lashkar-e-Toiba has publicly proclaimed that his aim is not confined to resorting force in Jammu and Kashmir, but to attack Himachal Pradesh, Junagarh, Manavdhar and Hyderabad. He has spoken of attacking the office of the Prime Minister of India and launching a so-called *Jehad-e-Hind*," Mr Parthasarathy said.

This organisation also advocated the use of

force in places like Palestine, Chechnya, Kosovo and Eritrea and has vowed that it would plant the "Flag of Islam" in Washington, Tel Aviv and New Delhi, he said, adding, "This is an organisation whose headquarters have been visited not too long ago by high functionaries of the federal government of Pakistan."

Other organisations such as Harkatul Ansar, which now called itself the Harkatul Mujahideen, were based like the Lashkar-e-Toiba, within Pakistan. They were predominately run by Pakistani nationals from Punjab and are not Kashmiris.

"The Harkatul Mujahideen's involvement in the recent hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane is well-known... I was personally told by a senior Taliban official in Islamabad that freed militant Masood Azhar's brother, a Pakistani national, was one of the hijackers. Masood Azhar's links with the Harkatul Mujahideen are well known," Mr Parthasarathy said.

Stating that these groups were viewed as fostering terrorism not only in India but also the United States, the high commissioner said, "Regrettably, we have found that rather than such activities on Pakistani soil being prevented, they receive active support from agencies of the Pakistan government. This is widely accepted and acknowledged. I might also mention that there is concern about the activities of extremist groups and individuals based in Pakistan and Afghanistan, who have been linked to terrorist acts in Algeria, Egypt, Uzbekistan, and the Russian Federation." (PTI)

Govt: Kargil report to be implemented soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ON BOARD SPECIAL IAF PLANE,
MARCH 12

IN the first move to follow up the recommendations of the Subrahmanyam Committee which probed the Kargil intrusions, Government today announced an experts' group would be formed to draw up policies and programmes on intelligence gathering based on the committee's suggestions.

"The group, whose shape is likely to be determined next week, will look into ways and means for better intelligence gathering, co-ordination between various agencies and make available accurate intelligence to armed forces," Defence Minister George Fernandes told PTI on way back from forward posts in Northern sector.

He said the formation of the group would be the first step towards translating the committee's recommendations into action.

The Defence Minister, however, made it clear that the existing Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), would continue to function and the proposed group would be confined to the objectives set out by the Subrahmanyam Commit-

He said another major recommendation made by the committee was about the modernisation of the armed forces which was being carried out.

"It is absolutely necessary that we modernise our armed forces. Most of the resources allocated in the latest budget would be spent on modernisation," he said.

The Defence Minister, who was on a two-day visit to the forward areas, could not visit some forward posts as scheduled due to bad weather.

Referring to other recommendations of Subrahmanyam Committee on the Kargil conflict, Fernandes said many of these were already being acted upon.

He said the suggestions to improve the security network in the Kargil sector had also been taken note of and some of them were under implementation.

The creation of a separate corps of the Army to permanently man this sector - 14 Corps - was also suggested after the Kargil war, the Minister said. The new corps set up in September last year has been made responsible for Leh, Kargil, Drass and Siachen areas.

INDIAN EXPRESS
13 MAR 2000

MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2000

MR. CLINTON'S VISIT TO PAKISTAN

GIVEN THE LONG strategic relationship between the two countries going back to the Cold War, the American President, Mr. Bill Clinton's decision to stop over in Pakistan was inevitable. Pakistan was part of the original itinerary but last October's military coup raised some genuine concerns in Washington about the possible signals a visit could convey in the new context. Over-riding national interests have undoubtedly prevailed. It is a decision coloured by American interests and it would be unwise for New Delhi to construe such a visit as a slap on its face. Whatever the spin given now by official spokesmen in Delhi — the few hours versus the five days — the contradictions in India's frenetic campaign to forestall Mr. Clinton's visit to Islamabad were too glaring. On the one hand, Delhi's campaigners conceded that it was none of their business to decide where the American President went or whom he met but, on the other, they delivered the dramatic warning that "the people" of this country would be unhappy if he stopped over in Islamabad. The campaigners included the Prime Minister, Mr. Vajpayee, during a surprisingly belligerent phase of election activity. This was an unproductive campaign that totally undermined India's own interests much like in the case of the earlier demand that the U.S. should declare Pakistan a terrorist State. In both cases it was a partisan agenda that was stretched to make it appear like the nation's and went against the national inclination. Neither demand would have served India's interest in the short or long-term.

As the folly of the campaign against the stopover becomes evident, it is essential that New Delhi abandons its current approach of stridency and aggressive tenor towards its neighbour. This reiteration is necessary be-

cause the danger exists that the BJP-led Government may be tempted to press further its partisan agenda during the visit of the American President. The maturity that attended the marathon sessions between the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, and the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott, seems suddenly to have yielded place to partisanship as reflected in the launch of the unedifying campaign in the last fortnight to try and stop Mr. Clinton from visiting Islamabad. If more such diplomatic embarrassments are to be averted, the Government must keep the focus during the Clinton visit pointedly on the bilateral track, fully exploring the increasing opportunities for economic cooperation. Official spokesmen have reiterated that the Government wants to look beyond the debate over the stopover and focus on a new edifice of Indo-American relationship. An evident American keenness for closer interaction and greater engagement can be tapped to mutual benefit.

After taking the considered decision to stop over in Islamabad, rejecting some sections of domestic political opinion that favoured the isolation of Pakistan and now having to rebut suggestions that a visit would amount to an endorsement of the military Government, Mr. Clinton walks a very thin line. If the visit, rare and long awaited, of an American President is not to be construed as an endorsement of the regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf, Mr. Clinton must take his message of hope to the people of that beleaguered nation, with an emphasis on the imperative of returning to democracy. As the dastardly killing in Karachi of the lawyer assisting defence in the trial of the ousted Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, during the weekend indicates, Pakistan is a nation in dire need of the healing touch.

THE HINDU
13 MAR 2000

MPs concerned over Pak missile deployment

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, March 16. — Lok Sabha members today expressed serious concern over reports that Pakistan had deployed nuclear missiles aimed at Indian cities.

The Federation of American Scientists said Pakistan has stationed M-11 missiles on trucks around the country after loading them with nuclear weapons. Islamabad can also arm its Ghauri missiles with uranium bombs, they added.

Raising the issue during zero hour, Mr Shivraj Singh (BJP) appealed to the government to take up with Mr Bill Clinton the issues of Pakistan's threat to India's security and terrorist activities backed by their Inter Services Intelligence.

Speaking to the Press after inaugurating a photo exhibition on Indo-US relations, the External Affairs Minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, declined comment on whether India would ask the USA to declare Pakistan a terrorist state saying he would not like to preempt the talks.

As for the pictures of Pakistani nuclear sites, the minister said he was studying them. Asked about the alarm over reports of Pakistan preparing the ground for dozens of nuclear-tipped missiles capable of striking Indian cities and military bases, he said "don't be alarmed".

(PTI adds from Washington: US scientists said Pakistan loaded nuclear-armed M-11s on trucks in Sargodha and dispersed them around the country.

Mr John Pike of the "Public Eye Project" of the federation, which released satellite images of Islamabad's nuclear and missile facilities on Internet yesterday, told a press conference that though uranium bombs are a bit heavy for the M-11s, they can still be loaded onto them for a smaller range than the Chinese-built missile's capability. He said Pakistan may fit plutonium bombs, which are smaller in size, on M-11s to obtain full range of the missile.

Mr Pike and Mr Corey Henderson, policy analyst of the Institute for Science and International Security, revealed that Pakistan's heavy water plant, intended for Khushab plutonium plant, has been completed.

Mr Pike said that previously nuclear powers and presumed nuclear powers, except the USA, had only one organisation for making uranium and plutonium bombs because of the high costs involved. But, "Pakistan has two."

India today said the US comments that Pakistan should respect the Line of Control were a reaffirmation of India's long-standing position on the issue.

Mr Jaswant Singh said India had made it clear during the Kargil operations that what was required was termination of the intrusions and respect of the LoC.

The Indian government remained tight-lipped on the meeting of Mr Clinton with Hurriyat leaders, even as the separatist organisation today claimed that US President's decision to grant an audience to the organisation was a confirmation of the US position on Kashmir.

The Hurriyat spokesman told **The Statesman** that the meeting proved that the USA was serious in its efforts to resolve the Kashmir problem.

In the Lok Sabha, members also said Pakistan was flooding India with fake Rs-500 notes in an attempt to destabilise the country's economy.

Mr PR Das Munshi (Congress) said the British High Commission had put up a notice that it would not accept Rs-500 notes, fake versions of which were being flooded into India as part of conspiracy by ISI and other foreign forces to destabilise the economy.

The HRD Minister, Mr Murli Manohar Joshi, said the government was taking all possible measures to stop influx of fake currency notes.

THE STATESMAN

17 MAR 2000

Pak 'amassing' mercenaries along LoC

Huge amount of winter stockings being purchased from European countries

New Delhi, March 19

HUNDREDS OF heavily-armed mercenaries backed by enhanced troop strength have been amassed by Pakistan at certain points along the Line of Control (LoC) in northern Jammu and Kashmir amid reports that Islamabad was purchasing winter stockings from European countries.

Well-placed sources in the Home Ministry said noticeable build-up has been sighted in Shaqma sector in Pak-occupied Kashmir (PoK) opposite to Kaksar area in the Kargil sector.

The sources said some war-hardened Afghan militants in civilian dress were also spotted by the Indian observation posts in the region.

The reports come close on the heels of Defence Minister George Fernandes speaking about a build-up in PoK and warning about the likelihood of a "hot summer" along the LoC.

Senior officers of Pak-controlled Gilgit scouts have visited the forward most posts to take "stock of situation", the sources said, adding apparently troops withdrawn from the international border have been moved to these regions.

Meanwhile, reports from Europe said Pakistan Government had placed orders for purchase of huge amount of winter stockings including snow-boots and mountaineering skiing equipment, indicating that Islamabad could again go in for a misadventure in this sector

after the visit of US President Bill Clinton to the subcontinent.

Besides Kaksar, reports said Pakistani army-men along with mercenaries from four major groups Harkat-ul Mujahideen, Lashker-e-Toiba, Al-Badar and Hizbul Mujahideen have been moved in areas right opposite to Olthingthang in Batalik sub-sector.

The sources said the Pakistan army-mercenary concentration across the LoC was on the Kargil pattern and could have serious security ramifications for India. The reports also spoke of Pakistan building underground shelters for aircraft, an elongated airbase and imparting high-altitude warfare training to its troops in the northern areas.

(PTI)

Clinton may ask Pak. to reduce LoC tension

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 20. The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, during his visit here on March 25, will urge Pakistan to bring the temperature down on the Line of Control by discouraging militants from entering Jammu and Kashmir, the first time Washington will make a summit-level request to Islamabad on the subject, official and western diplomatic sources here said.

Mr. Clinton, in his expected meeting with Pakistan's military ruler, General Pervez Musharraf, will also ask Islamabad to make a "firm announcement" to "officially ban" the militant Harkat-ul-Mujahideen outfit and curtail the activities of the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Hizbul Mujahideen, the sources were quoted as saying by *The News* daily today.

He will further demand steps to "force" the Taliban to expel the terrorist leader, Osama Bin Laden, from Afghanistan and shut down all militant training camps in the mountainous country, they said.

Pakistan will also be asked to announce the schedule for the election process to bring back democracy, they added.

"The U.S. has joined voices

within Pakistan, such as that of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, which has rejected the holding of local bodies elections as a substitute for national elections," the paper said quoting the sources.

Among other things, Mr. Clinton would ask Pakistan to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and express readiness to enter a multilateral moratorium on the production of fissile material in the country, the paper said. — PTI

Mirwaiz Farooq under house arrest

By Our Special Correspondent

SRINAGAR, MARCH 20. The acting chairman of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), Mirwaiz Mohammad Umar Farooq, was placed under house arrest this morning, to prevent him from going to New Delhi in connection with a "meeting" with the visiting U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton.

Mirwaiz Farooq said police cordoned off his residence during the night and he was asked not to go outside without police permission.

THE HINDU
21 MAR 2000

Pak okays Iran to India gas pipeline

11/11 2/11
AFTER YEARS of dithering, Pakistan has finally agreed to let an Iranian gas pipeline to India pass through its territory.

The project was first made public during the reign of Benazir government, which had strongly opposed the idea of allowing a pipeline to India pass through Pakistani territory. Successive governments since then have opposed the project.

Usman Aminuddin, a minister, had however pledged to review the stance of the previous governments in the best national interest. He had said Pakistan could earn Rs 500-700 million just by offering transit facility for Iranian gas to India and some other neighbouring countries.

IANs, Islamabad

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

22 MAR 2000

Indo-Pak talks may not resume soon: USA

INDIA ABROAD NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, March 26. — The USA does not visualise an early resumption of the India-Pakistan dialogue despite the US President's entreaties to Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and General Pervez Musharraf during his visit to the region.

"We have no expectation or no reason to believe that's around," said a senior Clinton administration official when asked if the US team was leaving the region with the hope of an early Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting.

In a background briefing to the Press after Mr Clinton's meeting with Gen Musharraf, the transcript of which was made available here, the official said, "We did not get assurances from Pakistan of a change of their policy vis-a-vis infiltration or other things" in Kashmir.

The official made this observation when asked about Gen Musharraf's reaction to Mr

Clinton's plea for respecting the Line of Control in Kashmir.

The senior administration official said the US President made it very clear, as he had in New Delhi, "our view, the so-called four 'R's: restraint, respect for the LoC, reduction (or) renunciation of violence, and a renewal of the dialogue".

The official said Gen Musharraf did not break any new ground in his position on

■ Editorial: Flop foretold,
page 6
■ Another report on
page 8

the Kashmir issue. Mr Clinton certainly raised the issue of Pakistan using its influence to help build confidence on both sides of the LoC. "But we heard no new assurances from the General", the official added.

Mr Clinton "urged the Chief Executive to develop a timetable and a road map for getting back to national-level civilian rule," the official said.

On non-proliferation issues, Mr Clinton urged early signature of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, cut-off in fissile material production, no export of technologies to other countries, firm export controls and also restraint in the development and deployment of new systems, the official said.

The discussions also covered terrorism, particularly the role of the Taliban, in particular its treatment of women and minorities in Afghanistan, and Mr Sharif's trial.

'Clinton enemy of Islam': The Harkat-ul-Mujahideen chief, Fazalur Rehman Khalil, today sharply criticised Mr Bill Clinton as an enemy of Islam and an ally of India in the protracted and bloody Kashmir dispute, adds AP from Islamabad.

"He has refused to become a mediator and instead has asked Pakistan to crush the people who are fighting a just cause," the Harkat chief said.

THE STATESMAN

Dialogue: India's turn to respond, says Musharraf

Military ruler says initiative must come from the bigger power now

Kumkum Chadha
Islamabad, March 27

PAKISTAN'S CHIEF Executive General Pervez Musharraf has said that he has to keep the sentiments of his people and the dignity of the nation in mind while offering to have a dialogue with India.

Stating that he has made his willingness known for a dialogue, General Musharraf said that he could not "overdo" the dialogue offer.

"It is for India to respond now" the General said. "The initiative must come from the bigger power now," he added.

"There is a feeling in Pakistan that it has been at the receiving end," General Musharraf told a visiting delegation of Indian women who called on him here.

Stating that several hundred people have died in Kashmir, the General said that at least five or six people die along the Line of Control every day.

"This must be the situation on the other (Indian) side also" he said.

The cause of the tension, General Musharraf said, is Kashmir:

"We must remove the cause and proceed further" he said, adding that this could be done "peacefully".

"The need is to be realistic and

frank about the ground situation. The dialogue has never been on Kashmir," the General said.

"The answer is to talk. Why come to the table with conditions," the General sought to know.

The military ruler told the visiting delegation to take his "offer of a dialogue" to the people of India and its leaders, while stating that he recognised the women's intervention in the process of peace.

Making a pointed reference to the increase in India's defence budget, General Musharraf said that India has increased its defence budget by 27 per cent.

Pakistan, on the other hand, has donated US\$ seven billion from their defence budget to the cause of social justice, he added.

Conceding that in the past leaders in Pakistan have been unrealistic about the situation, General Musharraf underlined the need to "leave the past behind".

The Indian delegation, which is on a five-day visit to Pakistan, has undertaken a journey on the Lahore bus under the auspices of the Women's Initiative for Peace in South Asia.

Those who called on General Musharraf include Mrs Nirmala Deshpande, former Member of Parliament, Mrs Syeda Hameed, member of the National Commission for Women, and Mrs Mohini Giri, chairperson, Guild of Service.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

28 MAR 2000

No territorial ambition over Kashmir, says Pak Foreign Secretary

Islamabad, March 29

FOREIGN SECRETARY Inam-ul-Haq said today that Pakistan did not have any territorial ambitions over Kashmir region and it only wanted realisation of the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people in accordance with the United Nations resolutions.

"We don't have any territorial ambitions over Kashmir. We only support the indigenous struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination," he said while addressing the conclusion ceremony of eighth Diplomatic Course at the Foreign Service Academy.

Inam said Pakistan wanted fulfilment of the aspirations of the people of Kashmir region according to the UN Security Council resolutions. He said emergence of unipolar world, following the collapse of former Soviet Union, had raised hopes in the developing world about the mitigation of their problems. "But most of these hopes have not realised and crises have broken out in a number of countries, particularly, African continent," he added.

He said globalisation also has caused marginalisation of the developing nations in the world. He expressed the hope that the countries of the South would work out a joint strategy to deal with such a situation in an effective manner.

Inam emphasised that Pakistan had a deep and abiding interest in the progress and prosperity of the Central Asian region. "As a members of the Economic Cooperation Organisation, Pakistan shares the objective of fostering close cooperation in diverse areas of mutual interest.

The Foreign Secretary said Pakistan was confident that the ongoing political process would create conditions conducive to a lasting peace in Bosnia Herzegovina. He said Pakistan supported the United Nations Secretary-General's good offices mission on Cyprus and favoured a federal solution based on the principles of bi-zonal, bi-communal and political equality of the two communities.

He said Pakistan enjoyed warm and cordial relations with Mongolia. Director General Foreign Service Academy Azmat Ghayur spoke briefly about the activities of the training programme.

(ANI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

30 MAR 2000

End terrorism first, says India

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, MARCH 30. The Government will resume talks with Pakistan only when the Mushrraf regime unconditionally ends its campaign of terror against India.

Commenting on the offer of talks, conveyed by Pakistan through official channels in Islamabad today, highly-placed sources in the Government said there was "no evidence on the ground" to suggest that Pakistan had ended its cross-border terrorism. The Government is fully aware that Pakistan is now under pressure to sound reasonable after the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, administered some bitter medicine to the military rulers during his brief stopover in Islamabad last Saturday.

Until there were clear indications that Pakistan had ended its support to violence against India, all its proposals for talks would be

seen here as "playing to the international gallery", sources in the Government said.

Pakistan's direct offer for talks comes amid daily statements from Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who is now travelling through South-East Asia, that he is ready for talks with India "at any time and any place."

Reeling under the U.S. pressure to change course on Kashmir, the military ruler has indicated that he is ready to use his influence with the militant groups there to reduce violence.

At the same time, he has insisted that India take "reciprocal steps" such as reduction of troop presence in Kashmir and the release of political prisoners.

Sources in the Government said India had no desire to bargain on the terms of renewed engagement with Pakistan. They insisted there would be no compromise on the principle that cessation of cross-

border terrorism must precede the resumption of dialogue.

Mr. Clinton, according to informed sources, conveyed to Pakistan that the onus was on the military regime to take the first step towards rebuilding confidence between the two countries. He also stated publicly both in India and Pakistan last week that without an end to violence there could be no successful dialogue.

Sources here insisted that they would not let Pakistan fudge this issue. They also pointed out that India had gone some distance in indicating that it was prepared to save Gen. Musharraf's face without insisting on public commitments from the military regime to end crossborder terrorism.

All that the Government is looking for is "tangible" evidence that Islamabad has put an end to terrorism. The moment there was credible evidence, India would be ready for talks, the sources said.

THE HINDU

31 MAR 2000

Pak. offers to resume talks

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 30. In what could prove to be an ice-breaking initiative, the Pakistani Foreign Secretary, Mr. Inam-ul-Haq, formally offered to resume the suspended bilateral dialogue during a meeting with the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. G. Parthasarathy, on Wednesday.

So far, all Pakistani "offers" have been made through the media — this is the first time that the "any place, any time, any level" offer to resume talks has been conveyed officially by Islamabad to New Delhi since the military took over power in Pakistan in October 1999.

According to Pakistani sources, the level at which the dialogue could take place would be decided, once the Indian response was received. They said that during talks between the American and Pakistani delegations on March 25, the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, had informed the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, that it was his impression that India was ready for a dialogue with Pakistan.

Clearly, Indian concerns about the Pakistani role in Kashmir remain — especially the infiltration of "jehadi elements" into its territory. It would, however, appear that India is not placing "pre-conditions" for resumption of the talks though there is no dilution of its concerns. The issue of dialogue, it could be argued, is an "open one".

According to the sources, the High Commissioner to India, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, who is presently in Pakistan, would make a similar offer to the Indian Foreign Secretary, Mr. Lalit Mansingh, upon his return to New Delhi.

Though Mr. Inam-ul-Haq stressed the principles of "simultaneity" and "reciprocity" for the dialogue, the significance of the formal offer cannot be missed. It is now up to New Delhi to respond to the Pakistani offer.

The fact remains that the offer for the dialogue comes close on the heels of the Clinton visit — the meeting between Mr. Inam-ul-Haq and Mr. Parthasarathy took place four days after the U.S. President's Pakistan stop-over.

Clearly, the pressure on Pakistan to be more "responsible" on the issue of terrorism is apparent. At a time when there is mounting pressure and concern about regional stability, the offer for dialogue could take some pressure off Islamabad and provide a real opportunity to the two sides to begin the process of contacts once again.

Interestingly, the sources said that Gen. Musharraf had expressed concern over Indian "force levels" in Kashmir to Mr. Clinton. Also, there was a reference to the possibility of Pakistan moderating these groups if India took reciprocal steps.

At the meeting between the Pakistani Foreign Secretary and the Indian High Commissioner, the issue of confidence-building

measures (CBMs) was also raised by Mr. Haq. For instance, hotlines at the "lowest level" across the Line of Control (LoC), a point made by Gen. Musharraf recently, was discussed.

It is a well-known fact that a large number of CBMs were being considered when Pakistan undertook its misadventure in Kargil last year. As and when a modicum of trust is restored between the two sides, the CBM issue can come to life again.

However, the Pakistani position on CBMs seems to have undergone a radical transformation. In his interview to *The Hindu* (January 17), Gen. Musharraf had stated that CBMs were "really cosmetic" and hardly served any purpose. "CBMs without addressing the root cause is just like plucking a leaf from a tree. You go to the root; otherwise it is not going to serve any purpose," he had said.

Given the fact that foreign policy and statements are a "dynamic process", there is little doubt that Pakistan's willingness to think in terms of CBMs once again is a welcome sign. New Delhi needs to resist the temptation of seeing the Pakistani "offer" as a sign of weakness and must consider it on merit. However, there should be no dilution of Indian concerns on the issue of Pakistani support to terrorism. India needs to begin the process of diplomatic contact to see what Pakistan has to offer as far as the dialogue is concerned.

☞ **Musharraf stand: Page 13**

'Resume India, Pakistan talks'

By Our Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI, FEB. 1. Members of the Pakistan-India Forum for Peace and Democracy today urged both Governments to resume dialogue and work towards an agreement for at least six months.

At a press conference here, the former India's Chief of Naval Staff and member of the Forum, Admiral L. Ramdas, said it was important for the process of dialogue to resume otherwise the wedge that has been created in bilateral relations between the two countries after the Kargil conflict and the hijacking could lead to "disastrous" consequences.

In a meeting of the forum attended by the chairperson of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Mr. Afrasiab Khattak, and the general secretary of the Forum's Pakistan chapter, Mr. Iftiqar-ul-Haq, among others here today, a resolution urging resumption of dialogue was also passed.

While stating this, the resolution also said the Forum was committed to promote democracy. The forum was of the view that

the present "state of hostility" only created more social tensions.

Maintaining that military rule had not weakened the resolve of democratic elements within Pakistan, Mr. Khattak said people like him were not "bogged" by the present regime and their very presence in today's meeting was a demonstration of their democratic spirit. He, however, agreed that military rule might have enhanced jingoism at both ends which was not healthy for peace.

Defending their resolution of letting a military regime do the talking from Pakistan, Mr. Iftiqar said suspension of talks would only escalate hostilities and breed distrust between the countries. "This is something which the common man on both sides is opposed to. Thus while strengthening democratic processes we must not recede from talking with each other."

Disagreeing with the official line that Pakistan "back-stabbed" India at Kargil, Admiral Ramdas said signing on the dotted line at Lahore did not mean one had to be slack in their defence. "India paid for their negligence and in-

efficiency of various agencies which failed to detect the intrusion."

On the issue of Kashmir, Admiral Ramdas said India too had to apportion the blame for hostilities in the region. Over the years, he added, successive Indian governments had failed to keep up with their commitments to the people of Kashmir. "What if Pakistan stops abetting terrorism in the Valley but violence still continues, whom will we blame then? So Indian politicians also have to do their bit internally if the Kashmir issue has to be resolved."

Many in the Forum were of the view that no one country could be blamed for the deterioration in bilateral relations. Media personality and a member of the Forum, Tapan Bose, said while blaming Pakistan for Kargil, India should remember that it too had changed its stance on Siachen. "We always wanted demilitarisation of Siachen and during the last talks between the two countries we called for 'status quo'. Why? Simply because the ground situation benefited us at that time."

THE HINDU
- 2 FEB 2000

India to highlight Pak role at US terror meet

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Feb. 3: India will exploit to the hilt the opportunity to highlight Pakistan's role as an exporter of terrorism at the joint working group meeting in Washington early next week.

Delhi wants to seize this chance and convince the Americans to a greater degree of Islamabad's hand in the Kashmir insurgency before Bill Clinton arrives here in March.

Apart from stressing its concern over increasing Pakistan-backed militancy in Kashmir and other parts of the country, India will also focus on the likely fallout of the Talibanisation of the region. These issues top the Indian team's agenda for the first meeting of the Indo-American joint working group on terrorism.

The meeting indicates the

growing seriousness in Washington about Delhi's concerns in particular and about international terrorism in general. It is also a signal to Pakistan, a country so far kept out of Clinton's itinerary, to show real progress on uprooting terrorism from its soil.

The discussions come at a time when the BJP-led coalition is finding it tough to convince the nation that its concerns carry weight in the US. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's statement last month that Delhi would try to convince Washington to declare Pakistan a terrorist state had put the government in a spot, as America came up with a lukewarm response. This meeting, therefore, may come as a face-saver.

The Indian team is led by Alok Prasad, joint secretary (Americas) in the foreign ministry. The Americans will be led by Michael

Sheehan, chief co-ordinator on counter-terrorism. The two-day meeting begins from February 7.

Steps to co-ordinate efforts, including sharing information, are likely to be discussed and a mechanism for regular interaction set up. A decision on opening an FBI office in Delhi may be taken, too. But the main signal that will come out of the meeting will be political, rather than technical.

The meeting will be followed by talks between foreign secretary Lalit Mansingh and his US counterpart Thomas Pickering. Mansingh will try to persuade the Americans to keep Pakistan out of the President's schedule.

But while leading US dailies as well as policy-makers advise against a visit to the country, there are others who feel Clinton should go there to ensure Islamabad is not totally isolated.

THE TELEGRAPH

- 4 FEB 2000

Fake currency being pumped in: Vajpayee

NEW DELHI, FEB. 4. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today indirectly charged Pakistan with attempting to disrupt India's economy by pumping in fake currency notes, even as he said that this country had the potential to become a big power which "all friends and enemies are aware of".

"There are conspiracies going on because enemies don't want to see us prosper. Fake currency notes are being pumped into our country to disrupt our economy," Mr. Vajpayee said at a function here without naming Pakistan.

Asserting that India has "braved" such situations earlier also, he said "we will smash these and we are confident of that".

Several agents of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency had been recently apprehended with fake Indian currency notes in India and Nepal showing evidence of Islamabad's involvement in the operation.



A Customs officer with Wahed Ahmed (sitting down), who was arrested while trying to smuggle fake Indian currency from Pakistan, at the Attari railway station, near the India-Pakistan border on Thursday. — AP

Referring to the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane in December last year, the Prime Minister

said it had caused a *dharam sankat* (dilemma) for the Government as the lives of many citizens were at stake.

Stating that the situation was such that even bloodshed could not have helped save lives of the hostages, he said, "we had to take a decision despite knowing that it would evoke criticism."

"Had the hostages been my family members, I would not have thought for a moment to sacrifice them," he said while addressing a gathering at the inauguration of "Bhagwan Shranbudev International Mahotsav".

Fake currency seized

Customs officials have seized fake Indian currency worth over Rs. 1.02 lakhs from three passengers of the Samjhauta Express, including a Pakistani national, at Attari railway station in Punjab on Thursday.

Fake currency worth Rs. 99,000 was found in the baggage of Wahed Ahmed, 65, a

resident of the trans-Yamuna area of New Delhi, Mr. Arora said. — PTI/UNI

THE HINDU

- 5 FEB 2000

Target: the Indian economy

EXPRESS FOCUS CRIME

Pakistan's latest weapon, counterfeit currency, is being deployed through the common people of India — policemen, small-time politicians and even housewives. **BHAVNA VIJ** reports

FAKE currency notes, printed across the border and smuggled in, have penetrated almost all parts of the country. The alarm button is pressed firmly home because a new angle has been discovered in this racket: the involvement of common people in the distribution chain (see box). From local policemen, politicians and petty businessmen to seemingly harmless housewives, many seem to have been sucked into the racket of circulating fake notes. Some Customs officials are also under surveillance for suspected collusion.

As more cases of counterfeit currency come to light, a strong — indeed almost irrefutable — Pakistani connection is emerging. "Economic terrorism is a new disturbing dimension that has been added to narco-terrorism, which has been perpetrated by Pakistan for the past decade," said an Intelligence official.

Counterfeit currency notes, worth crores of rupees — mostly of Rs 500 and Rs 100 denomination — are reported to have come into India from Pakistan, smuggled through various routes. The quality of the fake notes has startled the Intelligence agencies, because it makes the fraud difficult to detect.

Some amount of counterfeit currency is also being brought into India from duty-free Dubai and Bangkok. But it is the Samjhauta Ex-



Qayamuddin and Mohammed Hamid Khan after they were arrested by the Delhi police with fake currency notes of Rs 100 denomination recently. Express photo

Pakistan by agents known as *sawaris* who could be either Indian or Pakistani. The fake currency notes, mostly of Rs 500 denomination, are hidden in sacks of dry fruits, spices and cloth brought from Pakistan — the same way drugs and small weapons have been smuggled over the years. Most of it goes undetected either due to negligence or the collusion of the Customs authorities, the sources added.

In fact, the Samjhauta Express was notorious for smuggling. That was precisely the reason why the direct Amritsar-Lahore service was discontinued in 1994. The train from Amritsar now terminates at Attari (on the Indian side of the Indo-Pak border) where the passengers' luggage is supposed to be

'The fake notes are being printed in a high-security press at Karachi. Very recently, another printing facility has come up in Peshawar'

press route which has emerged as most convenient and commonly used. Explaining the modus operandi, sources said that the fake currency notes are brought from the Samjhauta Express (passengers), and destroyed in good time, but India has not been so lucky."

thoroughly checked. After that, another rake of bogies goes to Lahore. However, this too seems to have failed to check smuggling.

The *sawaris* bringing the counterfeit currency notes hand over the contraband to agents in India, who are active in the Walled City in Delhi, Meerut, Aligarh and other towns in western Uttar Pradesh. But many agents are also known to be operating in other parts of the country, including the northeastern and southern states.

Intelligence officers have cracked a set of code of words used between *sawaris* and agents. For example, a *thaan* is a consignment of Rs 5 lakh in fake currency, a *badi chappal* is a Rs 500 note, a *chhoti chappal* is Rs 100, *seedha raasta* is the Samjhauta Express route, *kuchcha raasta* is the Nepal route, *pari* is banned chemicals and a 'calculator' is a Mauser pistol.

"Pakistan's ISI has spread its tentacles far and deep," an official said. "They are doing what Hitler tried to do to Britain in the last days of World War II using counterfeit currency as an instrument to wreck the economy. The Nazi fake currency was discovered and destroyed in good time, but India has not been so lucky."

The story so far

- A Pakistani diplomat was arrested in Kathmandu for selling fake Indian currency of Rs 500 denomination.
- A fake Rs 500 note deposited for fees in a south Delhi school was traced to a Pakistan High Commission official.
- A lawyer was arrested in Madikeri, Karnataka, for alleged involvement in the fake currency racket.
- A local Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader was found to be involved in the racket in Uttar Pradesh.
- A Delhi police constable was found to be a crucial link in the circulation of fake notes. He was arrested and fake notes worth Rs 50,000 recovered from him.
- Two locals were arrested in Aizawl with fake Rs 500 notes that added up to nearly Rs 1 lakh.
- Madhubala, a Karol Bagh housewife, was arrested for dealing in fake currency by the Special Cell of Delhi Police. Three others were also arrested.

Clinton offers help on dialogue

Washington, February 4

US PRESIDENT Bill Clinton has renewed his offer of personal help to India and Pakistan "to resume and intensify their dialogue on all issues," which broke down in the wake of the Kargil conflict.

"However, to make progress in this area, the cycle of mistrust and violence must be broken. I am personally committed to do what I can towards this objective," the President said while accepting the letter of credence from newly appointed Pakistani Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi, here yesterday.

He said, "The US is prepared to work intensively to see dialogue between Pakistan and India on all issues resume and intensify."

Here the President's emphasis is

Pak visit still not ruled out

BILL CLINTON has indicated that a visit to Pakistan next month cannot be ruled out. "Well, I probably will visit Pakistan," Clinton told former Pakistani premier Benazir Bhutto at a prayer breakfast meeting here on Thursday.

See also page 14

on "all issues," which, according to observers, include Kashmir -- as envisaged in last year's "Lahore declaration," issued by Indian Prime Minister A B Vajpayee and his then Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif.

Mr Clinton said, "We are mindful that long-standing tensions and disputes between Pakistan and India fuel this (arms) competition indeed, they make it more dangerous."

"The United States believes that this competition is fundamentally destructive -- not only to internationally shared non-proliferation norms, but also to chances for reconciliation between India and Pakistan and for increased economic growth and development in both the countries," he added.

Mr Clinton said, "along these lines, we hope Pakistan will sign the CTBT and take other steps to reduce this costly and destabilising competition, such as those outlined in the UN Security Council resolution 1172." (UNI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 5 FEB 2000

Musharraf's India policy not clear

By Amit Baruah

118-13
fwd

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 6. It is time for the Pakistani Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to make up his mind about his India and Kashmir policy. Does he want to hold a dialogue with India on Kashmir or does he want to forge unity among the "mujahideen groups" to liberate Indian territory?

Gen. Musharraf has repeatedly said he wants to talk Kashmir with India, but said his aim was the liberation of Kashmir through the "mujahideen" groups.

On Friday, he told state-run Pakistan Television that his efforts at dialogue could yield results only if there was a proper response from India. The General reportedly is also ready to meet the Indian leadership.

But, in Muzaffarabad (PoK), he was quoted as saying yesterday: "I am aiming at the struggle for liberation of Kashmir. For the right of self-determination promised to the Kashmiris as per their desires and according to the U.N. resolutions.... They ought to forge maximum unity and derive maximum strength from it."

During the PTV interview, the General said: "I don't agree at all that (these) fighter groups are terrorists. The fight for self-determination has nothing to do with terrorism.... there are some splinter groups, some misguided people who bring bad name to the mujahideen. Those are the people who should desist from

any form of terrorism, whether it is the hijacking of planes or whether killing innocent civilians in bomb blasts. But the real mujahideen, the freedom fighters, do not get involved in terrorist acts. I know that for sure. Therefore, to equate them with terrorists is to be unfair to them."

In yet another contradictory approach, the General has been talking of cracking down on terrorism, specially taking measures to introduce the teaching of "secular" subjects into the syllabus of *deeni madrassas* (religious seminaries).

The time has come to clear the cobwebs from this contradictory approach. The General should identify the "genuine" mujahideen groups and the splinter outfits.

Such a statement would enable all sections in India, including those who favour a dialogue with the Musharraf Government, to make up their minds on talks with Pakistan.

If Pakistan's Kashmir policy is "jehad", then there is no space for a meeting point, no room for a dialogue. The "jehadists" can confront the Indian security forces as they have been doing over the last decade. Despite their tall claims, the "jehadists" have not been able to advance the Kashmiri cause politically in the last 10 years.

In fact, Kargil and Kandahar have revealed that Pakistan trains and arms "jehadi terrorists", whose interpretation of Islam is as

warped as their blind hatred of India and Indians. Today, Pakistan can no longer maintain its "jehadi foreign policy". All kinds of "jehadi outfits" operate against India from Pakistani soil; the areas of doubt have vanished.

By all accounts, Gen. Musharraf is not a "jehadist" personally. But he appears unable to take on the "jehadi forces" for fear of any change in Pakistan's traditional, adventurist Kashmir policy. As is well known, Pakistan's Kashmir policy is as "domestic" as it is "foreign".

As of now, there is little pressure on the Vajpayee Government to engage Gen. Musharraf in a dialogue. If the General musters up the courage to take on these "jehadists", a meaningful dialogue with India could become possible. Till Pakistan sponsors this "liberation struggle", there is precious little to discuss.

A mature, sober constituency in India, which wants peace with Pakistan is in danger of being alienated by these "jehad is not terrorism" statements from Islamabad. The fact is that these "jehadi groups" are almost completely Pakistani; who know little about the culture and traditions of the Kashmir Valley.

However, it is not as if the last word has been said on India and Kashmir. As one Pakistani official told this correspondent some time ago, foreign policy under the Musharraf Government is an evolving affair.

We won't rest till we get back Pok: Vajpayee

HTC and agencies
Jalandhar, February 6

PRIME MINISTER Atal Behari Vajpayee today asserted that the entire Jammu and Kashmir formed part and parcel of India and said that "we will not rest till the remaining part of Kashmir is secured."

Speaking at a function here where he was presented a cheque of Rs 10 crore for the Kargil relief fund, Mr Vajpayee said he had told former Pakistan Prime Minister

Nawaz Sharif that there was no question of "further division of the country along the lines it was partitioned."

Rejecting the demand for a referendum on Jammu and Kashmir, the Prime Minister said as per the UN resolution, a referendum could only be held after Pakistan vacated the occupied portion of Kashmir.

The people of Jammu and Kashmir had on a number of occasions made it clear that they wanted to remain with India, he said,

adding that all elections, particularly the one in 1977, had been praised by independent observers and even by Pakistan.

Mr Vajpayee disclosed that during his visit to Lahore, some Pakistani leaders argued that since Jammu and Kashmir was a Muslim majority state, it should be merged with Pakistan. "But I told them that this argument does not hold any water as India has more Muslims than Pakistan has. Moreover, India had never accepted two-nation theory," he said.

Taking serious note of recent remarks by Pakistan that it would not hesitate to press the nuclear button, Mr Vajpayee warned: "We are committed not to use nuclear weapons but if Pakistan thinks of using it, we will not sit idle." "It is not simple to drop a bomb and get away with it", he said, adding that if compelled, India was ready to wage both a conventional as well as a nuclear war against Pakistan.

The Prime Minister said unless there was trust between the two countries, there was no point in

initiating talks on Kashmir. Hinting at his Lahore visit and the Kargil conflict later, Mr Vajpayee said "India had extended a hand of friendship but Pakistan betrayed us." Even Pakistan's friends did not support its actions on Kargil, he added.

He said Pakistan was again trying to put pressure on India by internationalising the Kashmir issue. "But we will not give in to any international pressure and will only take decisions keeping the country's interests in mind."

'READY TO FACE NUCLEAR THREAT'

Talks only on return of PoK, says Vajpayee

By Sarabjit Pandher

JALANDHAR, FEB. 6. Assuring the people that the Government would not succumb to international pressure to resolve any dispute with Pakistan, the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has laid down the condition that talks regarding the Kashmir issue could only be held to chalk out the modalities of the return of the Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), which, he reiterated, was an integral part of India, under illegal control of the hostile neighbour. *9:25v. PMK*

Though India was committed to not being the first state to use a nuclear weapon, Mr. Vajpayee said the country was fully prepared to give a fitting reply to any hostile eventuality. He said, "we are being threatened with a nuclear attack. Do they understand what it means? If they think we would wait for them to drop a bomb and face destruction, they are mistaken."

He said if Pakistan wanted to avoid a nuclear holocaust, its leadership should come out openly and make an announcement that it would not be the first nation to use nuclear weapons. He was addressing a gathering here this afternoon, after the local Hind Samachar group of newspapers presented a sum of Rs. 10 crores to the Prime Minister's Fund, Shakti, founded after the Pokhran-II tests.

Pakistan would be unsuccessful in its attempt to increase international pressures on India similar

to the majority province. Recalling the official-level dialogue during his Lahore visit, the Prime Minister said India had never accepted the country's partition in 1947 as a "Hindu-Muslim" division of population. "Kashmir is an integral part of India because its people decided so. Moreover, there are more Muslims living in India than in Pakistan," he added saying that India could not accept another partition.

Commenting on the demand for a plebiscite in Kashmir, Mr. Vajpayee charged that it was Pakistan which had not conformed to the pre-conditions, which said it must withdraw all its troops from PoK and hand it over to India. He refused to accept that all elections in Jammu and Kashmir had been unfair. He recalled that under the Janata Party regime in 1977, the credibility of the elections was acknowledged internationally and the people had again decided to remain with India. He asked Pakistan to clarify whether it took the PoK after holding a plebiscite there.

Mr. Vajpayee said India was prepared to resume negotiations with Pakistan only after the neighbour initiates steps to restore the confidence that existed between the two countries during the Lahore process prior to the Kargil conflict. Reeling out statistics on the Kargil conflict, he said the episode had clearly shown the world community that India's efforts for peace were genuine unlike that of Pakistan.

Appeal to PM: Page 13



The chief editor of the Hind Samachar group of newspapers, Mr. Vijay Chakra, (partly seen), hands over a draft for Rs. 10 crores to the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, for the PM's Relief Fund at a function in Jalandhar on Sunday. The Punjab Chief Minister, Mr. Prakash Singh Badal, and the Himachal Chief Minister, Mr. P. K. Dhumal, are also seen. — PTI

to the manner in the past in which it had failed to internationalise the Kashmir issue. He said the issue concerning the world community was terrorism, where Pakistan was in the dock and India was trying to rally international opinion on the subject.

The Prime Minister said that even during the Kargil conflict, international pressure was exerted to stop the combat midway. India did not submit until every inch (of territory) was retrieved as it was determined to defeat Pakistan's designs to redefine the Line of Control. "Similarly, no international pressure can force us to take any decision in the future as well," he said adding, "we shall

the basis of the State being a Mus-

War of words

The Prime Minister, Mr A B Vajpayee, would be better advised not to react in kind to General Parvez Musharraf's threats of a nuclear war in the sub-continent. There is no doubt that General Musharraf has been, on more than one occasion, guilty of resorting to drum-beating of the worst kind. We have in the past commented on the Pakistani military dictator's penchant for touting his country's nuclear arsenal with the abandon of a child wielding a toy gun. What Mr Vajpayee must realise, however, is that General Musharraf, whatever his current status remains in essence a military man and hence is more likely than most to be given to war mongering histrionics. The Indian prime minister, in contrast, has to establish a reputation not just as a sober political leader but as a statesman. He has indeed achieved this in large measure in his long and undoubtedly illustrious political career, but knee-jerk reactions to provocative statements from across the border do little to help consolidate a reputation for statesmanship.

Mr Vajpayee must also realise that his ability to cultivate such an image is not just a matter of personal choice or benefit. It would represent another diplomatic victory for India at a time when it is best placed to score such victories, thanks to Kargil and the hijacking of the Indian Airlines aircraft among other things. The more the Pakistani regime indulges in irresponsible rhetoric on the nuclear issue, the more necessary it becomes for India to underscore that it is conscious of the immense responsibility that comes with possessing weapons of mass destruction. This is not to suggest that Pakistan's aggression is to be met with passive submission. Firmness in deed and sobriety in statements though would be a better response. Lest it seem that all that is being suggested is tactical posturing, it would be best to clarify that India must not only be seen as desiring peace, but actually desire it and work towards it, even if the prospects for peace and good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan today seem extremely gloomy.

The Economic Times

- 8 FEB 2000

HD-17
9/2

Pak. planned Kargil-like operation in '96: Benazir

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By Thomas Abraham

LONDON, FEB. 8. A Kargil-like operation was proposed by the Pakistani army as early as 1996, the former Pakistan Prime Minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto has revealed. In an interview to BBC World Service radio, she said that in the beginning of 1996 she had been given a briefing by senior army commanders on such an operation, but that she had vetoed it. "I was invited to a briefing at General Headquarters. And in front of about fifty or sixty officers, I was given a briefing with maps, screens, slides. And at the end of the briefing I vetoed it."

Ms. Bhutto, who was interviewed in London by the BBC's Andrew Whitehead as part of a World Service radio series "India: a people partitioned", also repeated her recent calls to open the borders between Indian and Pakistani Kashmir, and said that she was prepared to accept the de facto partition of the State in the short term. "We think the time has come to open the border, open exchanges to free our people. Maybe if we free our people, something better can be achieved than all the governments of the past."

Ms. Bhutto said she was willing to travel to Srinagar as part of an effort to unblock relations between India and Pakistan. "Yes, I would like to go to Kashmir," she said. "I don't like the fact that it's ruled by Delhi. I know the people of Kashmir are unhappy and have given untold sacrifices. But I would like to

go tomorrow if I could." The former Prime Minister has been spending her time in self-imposed exile in London calling for a radical change in Pakistan's policy towards Kashmir and has on several occasions suggested that both countries put aside the Kashmir question for the time being and concentrate on improving their economic relations. In her interview to the BBC, she suggested that both governments open their borders, allow the State Assemblies in both Indian and Pakistani Kashmir to continue functioning, and leave it to the people of Kashmir to decide their future. "In the short term the de-facto situation will remain, but as the people-to-people contacts grow, as we begin to move freely, to travel freely, then I believe a change will come. Now, whether that change means that an Indian flag will be there, or a Pakistani, or a Kashmiri flag, I can't say."

She would like to see "India and Pakistan open their borders between Kashmir, while the Indians have their assembly there, and we have our assembly, without prejudice to our positions on the Security Council resolutions."

Ms. Bhutto suggested that the two assemblies could meet among themselves "to monitor the line and to prevent militancy and so on, and ultimately they could decide whether they want to be two assemblies with a supra-assembly or whether they want to come together in one assembly."

MEA cool to Musharraf offer

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, February 8

CHIEF EXECUTIVE of Pakistan Gen. Pervez Musharraf's offer of direct talks with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, made during an interview to Doordarshan telecast last evening, failed to enthruse the External Affairs Ministry today.

"Our position on the question of resuming the dialogue with Pakistan is well-known," said the official spokesman of the Ministry. Despite promptings from correspondents, he would not venture into elaborating his answer.

He also questioned the assumption that the offer for direct talks had been made by Gen. Musharraf for the first time. "I am not sure if this is the first time (that he has made such an offer)," he said. "But, on the larger issue of the resumption of the dialogue, our position remains unchanged."

Since the Kargil conflict, India has been insisting that the dialogue cannot be resumed until Pakistan stops patronising cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in the country. In the

"On the larger issue of the resumption of the dialogue, our position remains unchanged," said MEA spokesman

interview, Gen. Musharraf flatly denied any Pakistan Government involvement in promoting what he described as the "freedom struggle" in the Indian State.

The spokesman was, however, relatively expansive on the question of the tapes of the conversation between Gen. Musharraf and his Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen.

Mohammad Aziz, outlining what India later called Pakistan's Kargil "misadventure", which were played out by the Ministry in New Delhi in June last year on the eve of then Pakistan Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz's visit.

When his comment was invited on Gen. Musharraf's allegation that the tapes were doctored in New Delhi, the spokesman asserted that they were authentic and were played out in the presence of External affairs Minister Jaswant Singh. On all other points raised in the interview, he maintained that the Indian position had been reiterated time and again and were well-known.

As for Gen. Musharraf's comment that Pakistan would use its nuclear arsenal when its integrity was threatened, the spokesman pointed out that while India had opted for the no-first-use principle, "Pakistan has no such doctrine."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 9 FEB 2000

Pak blows hot and cold to convince US

Pervez springs talks on Atal

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Feb. 7: Scaling down his aggressive postures, Pakistan's military ruler Pervez Musharraf today offered to meet and hold direct talks with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to thrash out all disputes, including Kashmir.

"We should meet.... I would certainly like to meet him (Vajpayee)," Musharraf said in an interview to Doordarshan at the Army House in Rawalpindi. But he kept his country's nuclear options open to safeguard "national integrity".

Musharraf's blow-hot-blow-cold interview came on a day when Pakistan testfired the *Hatf-1* surface-to-surface ballistic missile with a range of 100 km. It was not known if the missile could carry nuclear warheads.

Kargil-bitten India appeared sceptical about the general's overtures and decided to analyse the tenor of his speech before offering a reaction. Indications are that Delhi will insist on Islamabad creating the "right atmosphere" by stopping terror export to Kashmir before it agrees to sit across the negotiation table.

Offering to resume the dialogue stalled since the Kargil in-

trusions, Musharraf said: "We ought to break the logjam, reduce tension which can be done only through a discussion, cut hysterics against each other and address issues of major concern."

Slipping on the velvet gloves over his iron fists, the general said both sides should "take steps together" to de-escalate tension in the subcontinent, which President Clinton has described as the "most dangerous place in the world" because of Kashmir.

Asked why then was Pakistan not accepting India's offer of a pact on no first use of nuclear weapons, Musharraf added: "I have said very clearly that nuclear power should not be used." At the same time, he clarified, Islamabad will keep its nuclear options open. "When our national integrity is threatened, then we will take a decision at that time."

Desperate for international recognition since overthrowing the civilian government, the military regime is in a hurry to earn diplomatic points, especially to convince Clinton to visit Islamabad next month. But by keeping alive the spectre of a nuclear flashpoint, Musharraf is trying to send a signal to the global powers that they should prod India into reviving the talks.

Musharraf's climbdown comes two days after he said Kashmir was the "only dispute" and urged the international community to distinguish between "terrorism and freedom struggle".

Vajpayee had returned the fire yesterday, saying India reserved the right to use nuclear weapons if provoked.

Amid the verbal volleys, the government's decision to telecast the interview on its national channel has triggered speculation on the reasons behind the move. Some feel it is Delhi's way of saying it is no less reasonable than the Pakistan ruler, while others believe that the government is trying to prepare the domestic audience for resuming talks with Pakistan.

Musharraf admitted that Pakistanis were crossing into Jammu and Kashmir but denied his regime's hand. "There are people who are joining the freedom struggle there, going through the LoC which is very porous but the government is not involved," he said.

Trying to come across as a reasonable person, Musharraf told Doordarshan that there were "no chances" of a war. But, he cautioned, "there can be chances" if India continued to escalate tension along the LoC.

THE TELEGRAPH

- 8 FEB 2000

Musharraf offers to meet Vajpayee

NEW DELHI, FEB. 7. Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has made a direct offer to meet the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, but maintained that the two sides could break the "logjam" and reduce tension only by addressing the Kashmir issue.

"We should meet ... I would certainly like to meet him (Mr. Vajpayee)," Gen. Musharraf said in an interview to Mr. Karan Thapar at the Army House in Rawalpindi, which was telecast by Doordarshan tonight.

"We ought to break the logjam and reduce tension, which can be done only through a discussion," he said. Asked whether he would hold elections next year, Gen. Musharraf said, "I cannot say that." He said he was involved in bringing about structural and strategic changes in Pakistan. "These are real changes which are everlasting and futuristic and they will take a little time."

Gen. Musharraf sought to counter New Delhi's accusation that Pakistan was indulging in sustained anti-India propaganda by stating that Mr. Vajpayee, the

Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, and the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, had made a "number of threats" against Pakistan. "It needed a lot of restraint from my side not to respond."

Virtually declining to make any commitment on no-first use of nuclear weapons against India, he kept the nuclear option open, saying, "We will take a decision when the occasion arises."

On the possibility of a nuclear flare-up, he said, "I wouldn't say there are chances. If at all India escalates on the LoC in Kashmir, there can be chances."

Gen. Musharraf also admitted to the authenticity of the audio tapes made public by India, containing his conversation as Army chief with his Chief of General Staff on the Kargil intrusions but sought to contest New Delhi's assertion that it proved the Pakistani Army's involvement in the incursions. New Delhi had presented the controversial tapes in which Gen. Musharraf, on a visit to Beijing, had spoken to Gen. Mohd. Aziz in Islamabad. — PTI

THE HINDU

- 8 FEB 2000

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NO TIME FOR OUTBURSTS

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AS INDIA AND Pakistan seek to position themselves for the late-March visit to the subcontinent by the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, there is a disturbing increase in hostile rhetoric on both sides. A series of statements and counter-statements have kept the bilateral tensions high. It is against some provocative statements coming from across the border that one must see Sunday's strong remarks by the Prime Minister, Mr. Vajpayee, in the town of Jalandhar that lies within hailing distance of Pakistan. But a democratic government's distinct advantage lies in its in-built capacity not to be provoked and in the underlying soundness and abundant caution of its actions and reactions. Mr. Vajpayee's strident remarks on Sunday are out of character with the confidence and strength that have marked New Delhi's responses so far. His declaration that this country is ready to "face the nuclear threat" and his theatrical but pointless demand for the return of occupied areas of Kashmir betrayed an inclination to oratory at the cost of moderation and statesmanship. Such hardline public poses serve little purpose and only raise the stakes at a crucial juncture in its diplomacy when New Delhi must exercise the maximum caution in the realisation that it has more than once proved itself as a responsible nuclear nation. Hardly 24 hours earlier, India had reacted correctly to Islamabad's suggestion for resumption of the stalled discussions by reiterating that Pakistan must first end hostile propaganda and support to cross-border terrorism. Mr. Vajpayee's outburst, for all the understandable provocation, came as a contrast and can only raise the stakes.

Bilateral relations, already at the lowest ebb, can do without such rhetoric. Particularly worrisome will be Mr. Vajpayee's comments on the nuclear issue. It is no secret that Pakistan

grabbed the opportunity provided by India to explode the bomb and instantly — and for ever — neutralised the conventional arms superiority enjoyed by this country. Considering that no government in Pakistan will surrender this advantage by accepting the no-first-use offer, it was strange for the Prime Minister to talk of a fitting reply, et al, to a nuclear attack. This was platform oratory that might have sounded exciting to the immediate audience but can bring the country no credit.

The spurt in bilateral rhetoric is perhaps a measure of the intense international pressure, led by the U.S., being brought to bear on both countries for some movement forward on the Kashmir issue. Tension between the two has, in fact, been rising ever since an extended Clinton visit to India was announced without a matching trip to Pakistan. A non-official campaign to prevent a Pakistani stopover vitiated the atmosphere further, forcing the military government in Islamabad to strike extreme postures. Caught between the powerful lobby of Islamic militants and their supporters in the military and unconcealed Western displeasure over his failure to announce a timetable for a return to democracy, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, the Pakistani strongman, has been blowing hot and cold. A genuine offer to resume bilateral discussions was followed by a declaration that Pakistan would peg it exclusively to Kashmir and continue to provide all assistance — funds and training — to Islamic militants fighting in Kashmir. This is perhaps more a reflection of the contradictory forces at play than a disinclination to resile from a hardline stance. New Delhi must construct its responses in the coming weeks by recognising this reality, safely leaving the sabre-rattling to regimes fighting for their legitimacy on sticky domestic ground. /

THE HINDU

- 8 FEB 2000

Come, let us meet, Musharraf tells Atal 'Pakistan Govt not involved in Kashmir'

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, February 7

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY ruler General Pervez Musharraf has made a direct offer to meet Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee but maintained that the two sides "could break the logjam" and reduce tension only by addressing the Kashmir issue.

"We should meet. I would certainly like to meet him (Vajpayee)," Gen. Musharraf said in a wide-ranging interview Doordarshan at the Army house in Rawalpindi. "We ought to break the logjam, reduce tension (and this) can be done only through a discussion, cutting hysterics against each other and address issues of major concern," he said. He wanted both sides to simultaneously take measures to de-escalate tension. "Let us take steps together," he said.

The interview on Government-owned Doordarshan could spark off a debate whether legitimacy has been conferred on Gen Pervez Musharraf and his regime.

The Ministry of External Affairs was not ready with its considered comment. And the Prime Minister's Office, in a neat evasive action, deflected the issue to the "totally autonomous" Prasar Bharati.

Doordarshan sources, however, tom-tommed the interview as a veritable coup. "It is not as though we are conferring legitimacy upon the military ruler. He is there; he is the Chief Executive of Pakistan. We have simply brought him out in the open to answer our pointed questions...."

BJP vice-president J.P.Mathur saw one positive aspect in the venture. It has afforded Indians an opportunity to assess Gen Musharraf and see how he is disposed to Indo-Pak ties.

Congress leader K.Natwar Singh felt the transparency was welcome. It is wrong to say that India does not recognise the Musharraf regime. "We have not withdrawn our High Commissioner from Islamabad. Nor has Pakistan withdrawn its from New Delhi," he said and quipped: "I only hope Mr Vajpayee will now give a similar interview to Pakistan TV."

The interview, telecast this evening, has been welcomed by foreign and strategic affairs analysts as it provided a rare opportunity to the Indian people to listen directly to the Pakistani leader.

"The DD telecast shows the transparency and democracy innate in the Indian polity," said former Foreign Secretary and High Commissioner to Pakistan S.K.Singh.

Director of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses Jasjit Singh said, "It was only this man, a military chief, who could have turned the corner and, instead of repeating what the political leadership of Pakistan had always maintained, could have offered talks at a reasonable level."

Instead, he sounded completely adamant and unreasonable in his interview, he said.

Mr S.K.Singh said that while the DD telecast established once again the innate Indian transparency and democracy by facilitating the Pakistani ruler to talk directly to the Indian people, the latter only proved to be a typical product of the Pakistani ethos of conducting foreign affairs through subterfuges and bla-

Thus spake Pakistan's CEO

- **On no-first-use of N-weapons against India:** I have said very clearly that nuclear power should not be used. However, when our national integrity is threatened, then we will take a decision (on exercising nuclear option) at that time. We will take a decision when the occasion arises.

- **On the sustained anti-India propaganda:** Mr Vajpayee, Mr L.K. Advani and Mr George Fernandes have made a number of threats against Pakistan. It needed a lot of restraint from my side not to respond.

- **On Pakistanis crossing into J&K:** There are people who are joining the freedom struggle there, but the Pakistan Government is not involved.

- **On Pakistan's involvement in the hijacking of IC 814:** Let India give us the proof... If the hijackers are here, we will try them.

- **On a time frame for the country's return to democracy:** I cannot provide (a deadline) for it. Pakistan currently has a civilian regime with a military head and it is being monitored by the military.

- **On rumblings in the judiciary:** It (the fresh oath of allegiance) was necessitated by internal compulsions. Eighty-seven per cent of the judges abided by it. There is no division in the judiciary.

- **On divisions within the Armed Forces:** That is part of a disinformation campaign. The military is totally united and I am in charge.



tant lies. "Gen Musharraf comes out wily in the interview when he repeated all those lies about Kargil and Kashmir," said Mr S.K.Singh.

IDSA Director Jasjit Singh said, "Should we not ask ourselves what role Pakistan has to play in Kashmir? It is only the second time in the last ten years that an Indian Prime Minister has talked about recovering the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Mr P.V.Narasimha Rao had only midly mentioned that India had the unfinished task of recovering the PoK. But that sent shock waves in Pakistan. The latter has always been bold in saying that Kashmir has to be made independent of India. Why can we not be equally bold?"

Pakistan deploys more troops on Line of Control

Shishir Gupta
New Delhi, February 9

IN A move fraught with serious security ramifications, Pakistan is understood to have beefed up its force levels this month by inducting more troops along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir.

Highly-placed Government sources said that Pakistan has redeployed more than a brigade strength of troops from the international border to this perpetually active 540 kilometre line. Intelligence inputs indicate that two battalions of the Lahore-based IV Corps and two battalions of the Sialkot-based 10 division have been moved to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). Each battalion has around 800 men.

It is believed that these Pakistani troops have been deployed near Muzaffarabad, facing Tangdhar ranges on the Indian side and at Jharikhas on the Pir Panjal Ranges, opposite Uri sector. The Pakistan army had inducted additional 120-mm mortars towards the end of last month in the area that faces Nangi Tekri area in the Rajouri sector.

These moves have led to serious concern being expressed about national security within the Indian defence establishment. Chief of Army Staff General V.P. Malik has made a whistle-stop tour to the area under the Nagrota-based 16 Corps and Srinagar-based 15 Corps in the past 24 hours. Gen Malik flew to Kashmir on Tuesday and returned this afternoon. He is understood to have reviewed the situation along the LoC with the area commanders and visited Palanwala in Akhnoor sector, Batot and Tangdhar areas.

Palanwala and Tangdhar have come under Pakistani mortar and artillery shelling since January this year. There have been sporadic small arms exchanges along the

LoC during this period. There are reports of stepped up Pakistani firing along the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) in Siachen, during which at least two Indian soldiers of the Assam Regiment reportedly lost their lives on February 6.

The assessment is that this troop redeployment could be part of a Pakistani plan to escalate tension along the LoC just before US President Bill Clinton's visit to the sub-continent beginning March 20. "The Army does not expect any Pakistani misadventure this month as the entire area along the LoC is under heavy snow. As of now, these troops are in defensive deployment, but nothing can be ruled out once the snow starts melting in March," said an official. Military experts feel that



Pakistan could indulge in some adventurism on the LoC as this would fit into its plan of showing Kashmir as a flashpoint to the world.

At the same time, this would also boost Pakistani plans of trying to secure a third party mediation on Kashmir.

India, on its part, has strengthened its resolve to tackle all eventualities in Kashmir. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's statement of wresting PoK from Pakistan in this context is not mere rhetoric but contains a message to Islamabad that it should drop its grandiose plans on Kashmir.

The Indian Army, on its part, has steeled itself in Jammu and Kashmir and has orders to effectively retaliate and repulse any Pakistani gameplan.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

10 FEB 2000

Clinton voices concern over discord between India, Pak

Washington, February 9

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton said today he was "profoundly concerned" about the discord between nuclear rivals India and Pakistan and said he wants to do something to ease it before leaving office, report agencies.

Mr Clinton, describing South Asia as "that troubled part of the world", suggested that the potential for conflict between the two countries was far greater than is commonly understood.

"It has enormous implications for people in the United States and throughout the world - more I suspect than most people know", Mr Clinton told reporters during an unrelated White House event.

Mr Clinton is due to travel to India and Bangladesh from March 20. Today, he gave no hint as to whether he would go to Pakistan.

"We haven't made a decision on the final itinerary yet", he told reporters. "I want to make a trip which maximises the possibilities not only for constructive partner-

ship for the United States in the years ahead but even more urgently for peace in that troubled part of the world".

Cohen's report: The US has asserted that as the lone superpower, it must get involved into Indo-Pak

'We won't start it'

INDIA WILL not provoke a conflict with Pakistan despite very tense relations between both countries, National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra told reporters on Tuesday following a meeting with French President Jacques Chirac and Defence Minister Alain Richard.

Detailed report on page 12

and other international disputes to "advance the cause of peace" though it "cannot impose solutions".

US Defence Secretary William Cohen, in his annual report to Congress, said, "while the US can-

not impose solutions on regional disputes (like the conflict between India and Pakistan), its unique military and political position demands that it play an active role in promoting regional stability and advancing the cause of peace".

Mr Cohen's remarks came close on the heels of US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's comment at the senate foreign relations committee where she described the Kashmir issue as a "fuse" and offered Washington's assistance for an Indo-Pak dialogue on the contentious problem.

She had said the other day that President Clinton's visit to India should not be taken as an endorsement of New Delhi's policies.

Testifying before the foreign relations committee, here yesterday, Albright termed South Asia as a "tinderbox" and "a most dangerous place" due to the Kashmir problem and said that the US would continue its efforts to ease tensions in the region.

Indo-US group vows to nab hijackers — Page 22

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

10 FEB 2000

Pak provoking India: Pallone

N. C. Menon
Washington, February 9

10/2 HF-14

CONGRESSMAN FRANK Pallone, Jr., New Jersey Democrat, and founder of the Congressional India Caucus, yesterday made a statement in the House

of Representatives condemning an "ongoing pattern by the military regime in Pakistan to provoke a crisis in Kashmir, essentially to pick up a fight with India with results that could be destabilising and devastating to the entire region and the entire world."

Maintaining that the US had not done enough to show its opposition to the military take-over in Pakistan, Pallone urged the Clinton Administration to send an unequivocal message that the continued provocation in Kashmir was not acceptable. "At a minimum, the President should not visit Pakistan during his trip to South Asia," Pallone said.

"The State Department should declare Pakistan a terrorist state and make it clear there

will be no further contact with the Pakistani government until it stops its provocative actions in Kashmir, and takes steps to restore democracy in Pakistan."

Pallone pointed out that the military junta in Pakistan had declared February 5 as 'Kashmir

Telwani village and opened fire on two Hindu families, killing three Pandits, including a 9-year-old girl.

"This is the true face of the so-called 'liberation' campaign being waged by so-called 'freedom fighters' for years in Kashmir," Pallone declared. "It is a violent terrorist campaign, pure and simple. And now, Pakistan's support for this violent campaign has been laid bare for all the world to see."

Pallone noted that the military government in Pakistan had no legitimacy and could only stay in power as long as it whipped up hatred against India by citing Kashmir. That was why the generals had started the Kargil war and encouraged the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane in December.

"The end result of the generals' provocations will be another war with India over Kashmir," Pallone warned. "And the problem is that the generals now control nuclear weapons they could unleash in such a war."

'US has not done enough'

Pallone urged the Clinton Administration to send an unequivocal message to the Pak strongman Gen Pervez Musharraf that the continued provocation in Kashmir was not acceptable.

Solidarity Day'. Pak military strongman Gen Pervez Musharraf visited the Pakistani administered part of Kashmir and "encouraged the terrorist forces there to continue their jihad in Jammu and Kashmir."

That same evening, a band of gun-wielding terrorists sought out Kashmiri Pandits in

Govt allowed interview on DD to 'expose' Musharraf

Apratim Mukarji
New Delhi, February 9

THE VAJPAYEE Government had decided to allow the February 7 evening DD telecast of the interview of Pakistan's Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf, mainly to "expose" his "unreasonableness" and "inability to compromise in order to facilitate a resumption of the composite dialogue process," informed sources said here today.

They said the Government obviously expected that the interview would strengthen its hands in resisting the growing US pressure to resume talks with Pakistan. As recently as yesterday, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright issued what was described as an urgent call for an Indo-Pak dialogue on the Kashmir issue "with whatever assistance we can give." More such calls are expected as the first US Presidential visit in 21 years, beginning on March 20, approaches.

In New Delhi's perception, handling the US administration may well get more complicated with the change of guard at the White House next year.

The likely Republican Presidential nominee George Bush



Jr. is already on record saying that his Presidency would restore the equal-treatment policy for India and Pakistan as practised during his father's tenure, which would presumably negate the advantages accrued during the current dialogue. Similarly, in New Delhi's perception, the presence of former US Ambassador to Pakistan Robert Oakley, considered to be unduly pro-Islamabad, in the team of the likeliest Democrat nominee Vice-President Al Gore, indicates a less favourable environment for India than prevailing at present.

As far as the Clinton administra-

tion is concerned, both its suggestion for a dialogue on the Kashmir issue and offer of talks facilitation are an anathema to the Vajpayee Government which is under strong domestic compulsions (likely to grow stronger with Assembly elections approaching in four States) not to appear susceptible to American pressure.

Significantly, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's hard-hitting warning to Pakistan, delivered during a public address at Jalandhar on February 6, saying that the only issue to be discussed with Pakistan was the restoration of the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), occurred with the full knowledge of the contents of the Musharraf interview.

While the Government is now reconciled to an eventual Clinton visit to Pakistan, irrespective of the form it finally takes, it is gearing itself to resist and defeat the US pressure for a resumption of the Indo-Pak dialogue. It has decided to exploit every scope that comes its way to achieve this objective.

Observers, however, feel that the Government's decision to allow the telecast was born more of naivete than far-sight.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

10 FEB 2000

Cohen seeks an active role for United States in Indo-Pak row

WASHINGTON: The United States has asserted that as the lone superpower, it must get involved in Indo-Pak and other international disputes to "advance the cause of peace," though it "cannot impose solutions".

U.S. defence secretary William Cohen, in his annual report to Congress, said: "While the U.S. cannot impose solutions on regional disputes (like the conflict between India and Pakistan), its unique military and political position demands that it play an active role in promoting regional stability and advancing the cause of peace."

"Stability in South Asia depends on improved relations between India and Pakistan and a commitment from both countries to exercise restraint in their nuclear, missile and chemical and biological weapons policies and practices," Mr Cohen said in the report. Listing the Middle-East as the other area of priority for the U.S., he said that the region cannot be stable until there is a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between Arabs and Israelis."

To achieve its purpose, Mr Cohen said: "...In conjunction with diplomatic efforts, the U.S. military will continue to use military-to-military contacts as a means of promoting transparency, enhancing the professionalism of regional armed forces, and

demonstrating the value of support for human rights and democratic values."

Meanwhile, U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright described the Kashmir issue as a "fuse" and offered Washington's assistance for an Indo-Pak dialogue on the contentious problem.

Testifying before the Senate foreign relations committee here Tuesday, Ms Albright termed South Asia as a "tinderbox" and "a most dangerous place" due to the Kashmir problem. She said that the US would continue its

efforts to ease tensions in the region.

Underscoring the need for urgent dialogue between India and Pakistan, she said:

"Kashmir is obviously the fuse that is always there and what makes the situation very dangerous, and it is our hope that they can in fact begin to talk about it with whatever assistance we can."

Stating that "longstanding tensions" between India and Pakistan have "heightened" as a result of the recent IA plane hijacking and the aftermath of Kargil crisis, Ms Albright said, "Our policy is to encourage dialogue aimed at narrowing differences and preventing violence, and we intend to remain actively engaged with both the countries toward this end." (Agencies)

Masood held: Pak paper
KARACHI: Pakistani authorities have detained Kashmiri militant Masood Azhar, one of three freed from an Indian jail in December to end an eight-day hijack drama, a newspaper said on Wednesday. (Reuters)

Where next with Pakistan?

TWO STATEMENTS, made within 36 hours of each other, reveal starkly, just how close India and Pakistan are to a war.

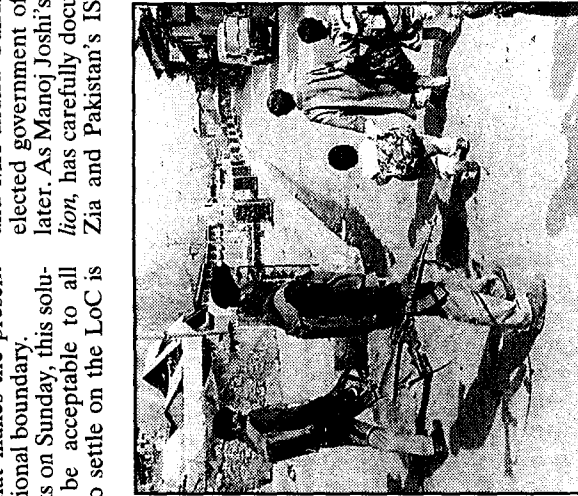
On Sunday, Prime Minister Vajpayee issued the most unambiguous warning that any Indian leader has given to Pakistan on the likely consequences of its unrelenting adventurism in Kashmir. The only solution that India was prepared to talk about, he said, was the return of Pakistani Occupied Kashmir to India. He dismissed Pakistan's claim to Kashmir on religious grounds, and reminded it that there were more Muslims in India than in Pakistan. He told Pakistan to observe the UN resolutions and vacate PoK if it wanted a plebiscite to be held there. Most significant of all, in the face of Pakistan's repeated threats against India, he resiled from India's commitment not to use nuclear weapons pre-emptively against Pakistan. "We are being threatened with nuclear attack. Do they understand what it means? If they think that we will wait for them to drop a bomb and face destruction, they are mistaken".

By contrast on Monday, in an interview to Doordarshan, General Pervez Musharraf adopted what seemed at first blush to be an eminently reasonable stance. He urged Vajpayee and the Indian government to enter into talks with him over Kashmir and to give it primacy over other issues. He pointed out, again very reasonably, that Kashmir was the only conflict between India and Pakistan. All other disputes were merely irritants. The sting in his remarks was hidden in their tail. Musharraf again rejected India's equally reasonable demand that Pakistan cease to allow Islamic militants to cross the border to wage a proxy war in Kashmir before resuming talks. On the contrary, he asserted that Pakistan would continue to help the 'freedom fighters' in Kashmir. It, and indeed all Muslims, had a 'moral' obligation to do so. He also reiterated that if India responded to the proxy war by attacking Pakistan, it would use nuclear weapons if it felt this was necessary to safeguard its 'national integrity'.

There is no meeting ground between these positions. India wants a return to the Simla spirit before holding talks. Musharraf continues to ask for talks, but insists that these be held while he holds the gun of *jehad* to India's head. But it is the

hardness of these two positions that defines the only remaining road to peace in the subcontinent. This is to find a solution that makes the present Line of Control the international boundary.

Despite Vajpayee's remarks on Sunday, this solution will almost certainly be acceptable to all Indians. For a willingness to settle on the LoC is implicit in the Simla agreement. Indeed had India not been prepared to make the Uri gorge the dividing line between Pakistan and India, it would never have agreed to the ceasefire proposed by the UN on January 1, 1949. But for reasons given below, this solution will not be attainable without sustained pressure on Pakistan from the international community. Pakistan has so far refused, point blank, to consider such a settlement. The reasons it has given have changed over time. In 1990, and for several years thereafter, it claimed that it had been dragged into the Kashmir dispute by the spillover of the Kashmiri liberation struggle into PoK. But as the militancy in Kashmir died down, election followed election, and life gradually returned to normal, its tune changed. Musharraf has repeatedly said that Pakistan supports the liberation of Kashmir by Islamic holy warriors simply because the majority of its people are Muslims.



These are all fig leaves for a naked hunger to swallow a prime piece of real estate that has few parallels in history. For the nationalist establishment in Pakistan, Kashmir has always been a part of the unfinished agenda of partition. Pakistan has, in fact, remained incomplete without Kashmir. Its single unswerving goal over 51 years has been not the liberation but the annexation of Kashmir. It tried to achieve this in 1947 and failed. It tried in

1965 and again failed. It got its third chance after Indian troops stormed the Golden Temple in 1984 and Mrs Indira Gandhi pulled down the lawfully elected government of Farouq Abdullah a month later. As Manoj Joshi's recent book, *The Lost rebellion*, has carefully documented, this was when Gen Zia and Pakistan's ISI concocted the scheme of recruiting local disaffected Kashmiris, and arming and training them to become insurgents. Till 1987, Pakistan received only a trickle of recruits, but that turned into a flood after Rajiv Gandhi forced the National Conference into a shotgun marriage with the Congress in 1987 and Farouq Abdullah allegedly rigged elections in the valley to ensure his return to power. What followed was a genuine insurgency. But this died down after four years

when it became clear to the Kashmiris that Islamabad was only prepared to help those insurgents who wished to take Kashmir into Pakistan. In retrospect, it surely cannot have escaped the policy makers in other capitals that except for the very first in 1947, each and every subsequent attempt by Pakistan to seize Kashmir has been initiated by a military regime that sensed that it had outlived its popularity. In 1964 it was General Ayub. In 1985-87 it was General Zia-ul-Haq. Both had been in power for eight years and were facing growing pressure to democratise the polity when they launched their Kashmir ventures. Today Gen Musharraf is similarly hardening his tone day by day as the economic and fiscal reforms he is trying to impose on Pakistan create their backlash of unrest.

The conclusion is therefore inescapable: Annexing Kashmir is part of the nationalist agenda in Pakistan. The keepers of this agenda are the

armed forces. A military government is therefore the very last one that can be expected to give it up. Indeed it is an article of faith in the Pakistan armed forces that without the goal of annexing Kashmir, Pakistan could fall apart.

The nationalists' obsession with Kashmir has led to the classic error of strategic overreach. For forty years Pakistan has spent money on the armed forces that it could not afford in an attempt to match India's military strength. Today it is bankrupt. Seventy-one per cent of its federal budget in 1997 was earmarked for paying interest on its national debt. The cost of administration swallowed the rest. Thus the whole of its defence and its virtually non-existent economic and social spending was financed by borrowing and adding still more to the national debt. When the US imposed sanctions on Pakistan and India after their nuclear bomb tests in 1998, Pakistan had less than a billion dollars of reserves and seven billion dollars of debt servicing charges coming due in the next 12 months. Since then it has been living a debt rescheduling regime fashioned by the US, the EU and Japan.

This is the lever that the West and Japan can use to make Pakistan stop trying to grab Kashmir, but so far it is the one lever that these countries have deliberately refrained from using. Despite their avowed dislike for the military coup that brought Musharraf to power, they have continued to reschedule Pakistan's debts. They have coupled these with admonitions and demarches to curb terrorism and restore democracy. But they have deliberately turned a blind eye to the internal logic of military dictatorship, which cannot but force Musharraf further and further away from democracy, and its intimate relationship with heightened aggression in Kashmir. Musharraf has therefore responded to these homilies with the contempt they deserve: he has destroyed the independence of the judiciary, and redefined terrorism to exclude *jehad* in Kashmir.

Ever since the Pokhran and Chagai nuclear tests, the West has been crying itself hoarse about the danger to the whole world from a nuclear war on the subcontinent. Now that such a war is a distinct possibility, it is this same West that is, through its inaction, pushing the two countries closer and closer to that war.

Stop cross-border terrorism for talks, PM tells Pak

Our Correspondent
BHUBANESHWAR 10 FEBRUARY

THE PRIME Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, on Thursday ruled out any dialogue with Pakistan till it stopped cross-border terrorism and won back this country's trust and confidence.

"You are sending terrorists to India and at the same time want talks with us. Both things obviously cannot go together," the Prime Minister said, adding that both sides should take the initiative so that India and Pakistan can live in peace and harmony.

Addressing an election rally at Sambalpur on Thursday, Mr Vajpayee said India had all along sought peace and cooperation with Pakistan. In this context, he reminded the audience of his bus trip to Lahore. But instead of reciprocating his gesture of friend-

ship, Pakistan began the Kargil intrusion.

Dwelling at length on defence-related issues, Mr Vajpayee criticised previous governments for "succumbing to international pressures on the issue of

nuclearisation of the country."

"But we cannot compromise. Like development, national security is equally important. Under no circumstances will India bow down to any outside power on security matters," he asserted.

Referring to the imposition of economic sanctions against India after the nuclear blasts in 1998, the Prime Minister clarified that some countries accepted India's compulsion to go nuclear to ensure its security. Moreover, he added that the sanctions hardly had any impact on the country's economy.

He exuded confidence that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Biju Janata Dal (BJD) combine will win the Orissa assembly polls and form the government.

"Our priority will be to ensure that no one in Orissa dies of hunger," he said, coming down heavily on the ruling Congress for its "utter failure to give people a responsible and responsive government."

Mr Vajpayee said people will discard the Congress in the Assembly elections just as they did

during the Lok Sabha elections. "Apne kurta utar diya tha. Abhi pajama badal daliye (You had stripped the shirt. Now change the trouser)," he remarked.

Reacting to the Congress allegation that the Centre did not come to Orissa's rescue, the Prime Minister said his government had bailed the state out of a financial crisis but the Congress government could not utilise the funds properly.

The Centre has deferred loan repayments of Rs 700 crore besides sanctioning Rs 554 crore from the National Relief Calamity Fund (NRCF). Further, it has provided Rs 240 crore as ways and means advances and Rs 50 crore as ex-gratia relief in view of two killer cyclone last October.

The Union government has also sanctioned 2.5 lakh houses for cyclone victims, he added.

PM sings to his audience

Our Correspondent
BHUBANESHWAR 10 FEBRUARY



THE PRIME Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, had just wound up his speech and was getting ready to leave the dias when the crowd insisted that he sing them a song.

The Prime Minister obliged. He sang a few lines from Geet naya gaya hum, his own poem.

Mr Vajpayee, who came on a day's visit, earlier addressed another rally at Kourkela.

The BJP president, Mr Naveen Patnaik, and the Union minister, Mr Juel Oram, also addressed the meetings.

Pak. troop build-up being studied: Air Chief

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, FEB. 11. The Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal A. Y. Tipnis, today said that the security agencies were determining the exact intent behind the Pakistani build-up across the Line of Control, but pointed out that there was no cause for any "undue anxiety".

Confirming a higher Pakistani troop profile across the LoC at a press-conference today, the Air Chief said he did not have authentic information on whether it was "part of an exercise or it is part of their game-plan".

He pointed out that an "intelligence assessment is being done by us. I don't know what is their strength as formally assessed by our intelligence." The tri-service Chiefs of Staff Committee met during the day to take stock of the situation. Pointing out that there was no slackening in preparedness, the Air Chief said, "there is nothing we are going to be taken unawares of. We are always on guard and whatever action is required to be taken will be taken. I don't think there is undue anxiety by us at this stage."

According to the Air Chief, the Indian Air Force would undertake "Vijay Chakra", a major joint exercise with the Army, from tonight. The IAF would induct airborne troops in these manoeuvres in the Punjab and Haryana area. The IAF was re-evaluating its concepts on maritime strikes during the on-going joint exercises with the Navy. Code-named Springex-2000, these manoeuvres

with the Navy would see the IAF reviewing its tactical doctrine on neutralising maritime strike aircraft. It would also carry out air patrols so that an adequate defence umbrella to Indian warships could be provided.

The reassessment of the doctrine to neutralise maritime strike planes had assumed additional importance in the light of Pakistan acquiring highly capable P3C Orion planes from the U.S. During the exercise, the IAF would also test its capability to carry out surveillance sorties at night. Besides, its ability to jam communication of hostile planes and shipping would be put on trial.

Referring to the lessons learnt from the Kargil conflict, the Air Chief said an in-house study had recommended that the IAF should go in for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and sophisticated equipment for high-altitude warfare. The Air Chief, who has just returned from Bangladesh, said New Delhi and Dhaka should increase inter-services cooperation and linkages.

Bangladesh, he said, had recently acquired MiG-29 aircraft and had indicated a tie-up with India in maintaining these planes, besides the Mi-17 helicopters which were also of Russian origin. Bangladeshi authorities were also seeking Indian help for training instructors. During his visit, the Air Chief Marshal presented to his Bangladeshi counterpart, Air Vice Marshal Jamaluddin Ahmed, three Indian fighter aircraft which had taken part in Bangladesh's 'liberation war' of 1971.

THE HINDU
12 FEB 2000

INDO-PAK IMPASSE

Misread Lessons Of Kargil

By AG NOORANI

IT is hardly surprising that this week both the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, and the defence secretary, William Cohen, expressed alarm at the situation in Kashmir and hinted at a role for the United States in resolving it. After Kargil, Pakistan had upped the ante on the ground and India bolted the door of diplomacy.

Only a policy which weans the people away from militancy by responding to their aspirations and needs can bring success to India's use of force against the outsiders. It has, instead, riveted the bonds between them.

The Governor of Kashmir, Girish Saxena, acknowledged recently (23 January) that during his first tenure (1990-93) "it was more in the nature of an indigenous insurgency and the number of foreign militants was negligible". This is the first time any one of high rank has admitted the truth. But, whatever drove the Kashmiri, whom Nehru characterised in 1952 as "soft and addicted to easy living", to take to arms?

Internally, India's policy rests on the support of one man, Farooq Abdullah, who says, "If Jammu & Kashmir are to remain a part of India, autonomy has to be given." An identical formulation was used on 30 June 1996 by home minister Indrajit Gupta and by former prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao on 12 June 1996.

There is thus, incontestably, some political work to be done to put our own house in order. There is, alas, no sign of any such effort domestically nor of realistic diplomacy.

SHIFT IN STANCE

Soon after Kargil, in an abrupt reversal of policy, the government abandoned the diplomatic approach vis-a-vis Pakistan, imposing new conditions for a dialogue no country would accept, and put its eggs in America's basket for it to hatch them for us. On 13 June 1999, Vajpayee said at Srinagar: "India is for the continuation of the Lahore process which includes a commitment to the Simla Agreement; but, for that process, it is absolutely necessary for the *status quo ante* to be restored on the LoC." This was perfectly justified as the intruders were yet to be evicted. At Udhampur the next day he reiterated this stand: "You withdraw your troops and then we are prepared for talks." India was for continuation of the Lahore process.

The first sign of a shift came on 12 July, a day after it was officially announced that Pakistan had begun to withdraw from Kargil. The MEA's spokesman said: "We have stated the irreducible minimum of our demands: withdraw, reaffirm the sanctity and inviolability of the LoC and show action on the ground that cross-border terrorism will cease." The last was a new condition. True to form, foreign minister Jaswant Singh quib-

The author is a lawyer and commentator on current affairs.

bled (20 July) that it was not a "pre-condition" but a "pre-requisite" for talks. No other state endorsed this stand.

Jaswant Singh's own "route chart" of 27 June contained no more than this — "restore the *status quo ante* of the LoC, permit de-escalation to take place by going back, and we can then resume the composite dialogue process". The change was inspired by a misreading of "international understanding, support and vindication that it (India) hasn't had in the last 50 years". Ergo, capitalise on it, cosy up to the Americans in the name of a fight against international terrorism and isolate Pakistan internationally.

A Pakistan which mounted that operation in 1989 cannot possibly accept this demand except as part of an accord. A government that does so will not survive in office. And, the Americans do not owe us a living. Are we prepared to pay the price for US support? To abandon bilateralism thus is to invite US mediation. It has been an unacknowledged facilitator for long, any way.

In 1967, despite Pakistan's breach of faith and its aggression, India offered a draft declaration which is relevant today: "Talks would be earnest and meaningful and on a confidential and continuing basis. A sincere effort would be made by both sides in a friendly spirit and in conformity with the Tashkent Declaration to seek solutions of various problems existing between the two countries including Jammu and Kashmir which Pakistan regards as a basic dispute between the two countries." Pakistan rejected it, objecting to the italicised words.

FINAL SOLUTION

How little has changed in these three decades. Pervez Musharraf quibbles over the Lahore Declaration and wants talks on Kashmir here and now. Its pre-condition is as untenable as India's. The first task is to defuse the charged atmosphere by a clear commitment to the Lahore Declaration. It is now accepted that there was indeed a tacit understanding and a back-channel for pursuing it. Both would stop reiterating extreme posi-

tions — the UN resolutions and Kashmir as an integral part of India — explore the ground in between which they could accept and sell to their respective positions.

Niaz A Naik's fantasia about the cease-fire accord on 27 June and a romantic cruise along the Chenab has obscured the exploratory, secret ex-

changes in New Delhi from 2 March to 1 April 1999. They were fairly significant. There was general understanding, source said, on the basic criteria — the need to go beyond "stated positions", in a spirit of give and take, reckoning with the interests of India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir, in order to devise just, equitable, feasible and implementable solution. Vajpayee was insistent that it be a final solution, not a interim one.

Various options were explored — the LoC; the Dixon plan; etc. Independence of Kashmir was rejected. China is also opposed to it, incidentally. India was opposed to any communal criteria or basis. It mooted, not surprisingly, the LoC as the basis

as Nehru has since 1948. Vis-a-vis the Kashmiri it was prepared to restore and even add to Article 370. On 31 March Vajpayee asked for a new formula designated as he apparently was a the regurgitation of old ones. But Niaz Naik's fantasies possessed him fiercely. On 31 March he took a tourist map of Kashmir from a shop at the Imperial Hotel to educate RK Mishra on the course of the Chenab. On 1 April he met Vaj-

payee on the latter's request. The PM had a message for Nawaz Sharif — let there be no shelling or infiltration while these talks were on. The message was well received by Sharif on 3 April. India complained of infiltration on 11 April and was assured of appropriate steps on 7 May. By then Kargil had erupted in all its fury.

BEGIN DIALOGUE

India's resentment at a gross breach of faith is justified. But it was no worse than the war in 1965. Suspension of a dialogue is unjustified. An Indian correspondent based in Islamabad reported (19 October) that "a highly placed source" informed him that Musharraf had assured the US Ambassador, William B Milam, on 15 October that he was prepared to go beyond "stated positions" on key disputes with India. His sincerity can be tested only through diplomatic exchanges and it is time they are begun and in earnest in order to pave the way for a meeting of the kind that defused the Exercise Brasstacks tensions in 1987.

There is an apparent contradiction between Farooq Abdullah's plea, on 28 January, that India should muster "enough of courage to have a war with Pakistan" and one on 2 February that "somehow a settlement should take place with our neighbour so that once and for all this dispute is sorted out and we can get on with our lives". The contradiction, however, is more apparent than real. For, the plea for war was born out of the very desperation that drives the Hurriyat to urge a settlement." Abdullah had said, "Ab aar ya paar ho jaana chahiye" (we must finally move to this side or that). If such is his despair, one can well gauge the depths of Kashmiri feelings.



THE STATESMAN

12 FEB 2000

Clinton visit spurs LoC breach fears

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb. 11. — Even though the Indian government claims there is no reason for alarm over the reported induction of more Pakistani troops across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and militants gathering in large numbers, it is preparing itself to face heightened activity as the visit of the American President, Mr Bill Clinton, draws near.

The Cabinet committee on security reviewed the developments today, along with the chiefs of staff of defence services.

Earlier the chiefs met during a meeting with the defence minister. Official sources said they were taking stock of the situation and nothing beyond that.

While officially there may be no reason for alarm, it appears that the government is con-



Mr Bill Clinton

cerned over the possibility of both the Pakistan military and militants backed by that country, raising tension levels in Kashmir in the weeks ahead.

A prime reason for such activity was to add fuel to the USA's contention that Kashmir was a potential flashpoint. While India sees no role for a third party, Pakistan has consistently tried to "internationalise" the issue.

Causing India much embar-

rassment by creating violent conditions in Jammu and Kashmir before and during Mr Clinton's trip here, could be another possible reason.

Though senior officials say they are prepared, the Home ministry is particularly concerned about reports train militants operating across the Jammu and Kashmir border, under the directions of the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba.

While intelligence reports suggest the activity is a turf war between the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, aimed at assuming the dominant position within the Pakistani political equation, the ministry feels the timing is significant.

The Army, however, feels it is more than capable of dealing with the situation. Even if two more brigades were inducted by Pakistan, the Indian force would remain superior.

THE STATESMAN

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A GIFT FOR MR CLINTON

DESPITE ALL THE HOT WORDS, INDIA AND PAKISTAN ARE GETTING READY TO TALK ABOUT TALKS, REPORTS RAJESH RAMACHANDRAN

DEJA VU, you could exclaim. On February 20 last year, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee drove across the Wagah border in a bus, hoping to herald a new era in Indo-Pak relations. He had responded to an invitation from his then counterpart, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif — made through a newspaper interview.

Cut to February 2000. In an interview to Doordarshan, Pakistan's current Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, declared: "We should meet. I would certainly like to meet Vajpayee."

The question is, why did India's state-run network decide to lend itself to the Pakistani chief? After all, much water has flowed down the Jhelum since the last summit, and Indo-Pak relations are now in a very bad way: Kargil, the Musharraf coup, and Kandahar (which culminated in the released Pakistani militants publicly railing against India) have led to a high pitch of hostility.

Sources say Sharif's newspaper interview was a tool to facilitate backroom negotiations between foreign minister Jaswant Singh and US deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott over defusing tension between the two newly-declared nuclear states. Similarly, Musharraf's DD interview was an attempt to break the deadlock between the two countries before US President Bill Clinton's March visit to the subcontinent.

In fact, BJP sources reveal that plans are afoot to hold official "talks about talks" between the two countries to "formalise the need for talks." The reason: Nuclear proliferation is the US' prime interest in South Asia, and the absence of

any forward movement in Indo-Pak relations renders Clinton's visit futile.

Interestingly, the Doordarshan interview was telecast within 24 hours of Vajpayee demanding the return of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). Such contradictory signals, security analysts say, are aimed at playing to the hardline domestic gallery even while undertaking quiet peace initiatives to mollify the US.

A BJP leader says both domestic industry and the pro-US lobby in the government are keen that Clinton's visit is a success. He explains: "Since only the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) can put a halt to Vajpayee's pro-US economic agenda — and domestic industry is quite enthused about it — the Prime Minister wants to keep RSS cadres in good humour. That's why this talk about POK, and endorsement of the Gujarat government's decision to allow its officials to join the RSS. Tomorrow, don't be surprised if he even criticises the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)."

Sources say the government has virtually decided, because of RSS pressure, not to sign the CTBT. Thus, the only gift it can offer Clinton is some progress on Indo-Pak relations. Diplomatic sources add that Vajpayee's hot words hardly match his deeds, and every action of his is actually geared to the US objective.

Points out a source, "Kandahar severely damaged Vajpayee's image, hence the rhetoric on POK. But Pakistan still retains most favoured nation status for trade; India has hardly cracked down on Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) or reduced the size of the Pakistan High Commission here to the level of India's mission in Islamabad. When even such

small measures have not been taken, clearly the government does not intend to act tough with Pakistan."

The US, meanwhile, has been active. What diplomats term "proximity talks" are effectively on — that is, the US talks to India about Pakistan, and then to Pakistan about India. Specific issues such as a regional fissile material moratorium, bilateral nuclear inspection, and separation of warheads and delivery vehicles have been discussed, it is learnt.

The US has also been pushing "back channel" diplomacy. The first post-Kargil Track II, or non-official, talks were initiated in Colombo recently.

Former Prime Minister IK Gujral, who participated in one of the two Colombo meetings, feels relations can be improved only if the Shimla Pact and Lahore Declaration are made the basis of future talks.

"The process of talks has been sabotaged by Kargil, the coup, the hijack, and Pakistan stepping up terrorist activities in Kashmir," says Gujral. "Pakistan has to show its keenness for talks through some signal on the ground."

(Agrees former Director-General of Military Operations Lt-Gen. (Retd) VR Raghavan, who met Pakistani security analysts in Track II talks: "Without Pakistan scaling down its support to Kashmiri terrorists, and recommitting itself to the Lahore Declaration, it will be difficult for India to agree for talks.")

But underlying the Pakistani approach, sources say, is the belief that India will be pressured into talks irrespective of any positive signals from across the border. Islamabad is reluctant to lower the temperature in Kashmir, fearing Delhi will

then argue that Kashmir is no longer a flashpoint. Also, Pakistan justifies its post-Lahore Declaration intrusion in Kargil as a reply to India's occupation of Siachin after the Shimla Pact.

US pressure is acute. In the past week, key members of the administration have indicated an intention to intervene more boldly. Clinton said: "I hope in the time that I have here (South Asia), we can make some progress because it is something I remain profoundly concerned about."

Defence Secretary William Cohen was more explicit: "While the US cannot impose solutions on regional disputes, its unique military and political position demands that it play an active role in promoting regional stability and advancing the cause of peace."

And Secretary of State Madeline Albright concealed little: "Kashmir is obviously the fuse that... makes the situation very dangerous, and it is our hope that they can begin to talk about it with whatever assistance we can... Our policy is to encourage dialogue, and we intend to remain actively engaged with both countries."

All this has convinced New Delhi's security establishment that talks with Pakistan will only strengthen the US role in the region — and pave the way for Clinton to visit Pakistan.

For, despite the rhetoric on terrorism and the seeming cosy-ing-up between India and the US, the reality is that Pakistan remains more important to the US — both as a lever to regulate Islamic fundamentalism, and to assist American companies exploit Central Asian oil and gas reserves.

Vajpayee says don't meddle, but US might call summit

HT Correspondent/PTI

New Delhi/Islamabad, February 12

EVEN AS Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee warned today that India would not allow others to "meddle" in its bilateral problems, Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar has claimed US President Bill Clinton might call a summit between India and Pakistan.

Mr Clinton may convey the proposal to the Indian leadership during his visit to New Delhi next month, Mr Sattar told the Jung daily yesterday. "Pakistan will accept the proposal if the US agrees to host it," he was quoted as saying.

But Mr Vajpayee told a gathering of Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), "While we will not brook any interference in our internal affairs or allow others to meddle in our bilateral relations or problems, we are ready to engage with any country in a cooperative framework."

The remarks appeared to be aimed at the US Administration. New Delhi is convinced Washington is trying to use Mr Clinton's visit to create grounds for third party mediation in Kashmir.

The recent, continuous linking of the Kashmir issue with India and Pakistan's nuclear status indicates an attempt to revive the arguments of Western Governments after the nuclear tests of May 1998, New Delhi believes.

The shift in Western attitude was first detected last month, when Gen. Sir Charles Guthrie, Chief of the British Defence Staff, visited Islamabad in the face of stiff Indian opposition, and said: "I am deeply worried over the situation in Kashmir."

"The situation, we think, became more dangerous following the nuclear tests in 1998."

In recent weeks, the Vajpayee Government has been surprised at the extent to which the Clinton Administration is going to encourage international intervention in Kashmir.

In Moscow on February 2, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright urged Russia to work with the US in bringing India and Pakistan "back from the nuclear precipice."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

13 FEB 2000

Pak vessels nabbed near Lakshadweep

J DEY
MUMBAI, FEB 14

IN a major breakthrough, the Coast Guard apprehended four Pakistani vessels with 49 crew members after a hot chase near Chheetlal Island, off the sensitive Lakshadweep Coast on Sunday. The masters of the four vessels are suspected to be ISI agents. The vessels are being brought to Mumbai and are expected to reach the city by Tuesday evening.

The seizure has thrown fresh light on the activities of the Pakistani intelligence agency along the West Coast of the country. According to sources, the four vessels were intercepted by Coast Guard's *Vigraha* at 1139 North and 7105 East latitude off the Chheetlal Island around 2 pm on Sunday.

The vessels have been identified as *Awari*, *Al Saiyad*, *Al Abid* and *Al Fida* and the names of the masters of the vessels have been given as Yusuf, Isha, Imam Bakshi and Wahid.

Preliminary investigations have revealed that the four vessels sailed out of Karachi harbour in the last week of January and sailed more than 1300 nautical miles to reach Lakshadweep Island on February 12.

The Pakistani ships were intercepted when they turned

around with large stocks of food and bunker fuel.

Sources in the intelligence agencies fear that fuel and other provisions for the return journey were provided by ISI operatives based at Lakshadweep.

In the absence of state and central government surveillance in the area, the sensitive islands have become an haven for ISI men who mingle with the local population.

"The four vessels may have steered clear off Indian waters due to strong presence of the Coast Guard and the Navy in the area and could have slipped close to Lakshadweep Island after taking a detour through International Waters," a senior defence officer explained.

Aerial surveillance and vigil along the coastline — particularly in Maharashtra and Gujarat — has been stepped up as part of emergency measures. The task area in Lakshadweep covers scores of sleepy fishing villages dotting the porous coastline.

The villages are a few hundred kilometers apart and are considered vulnerable to transshipment of contraband, arms and ammunition, sources pointed out. Coast Guard officials were tight-lipped about the whole operation and the kind of contraband the vessels were carrying.

INDIAN EXPRESS

16 FEB 2000

Lahore in retrospect

By C. Raja Mohan

Anger is no strategy. Calling for retribution and preparing to show Islamabad that New Delhi can hit back vigorously will undermine India's own long-term strategic interests.

ONE YEAR ago this week, the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, took the initiative to go to Lahore. His meetings with the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, dramatically raised the hopes for peace on the sub-continent. A lot has happened since then between India and Pakistan shattering those expectations and driving the ties between the two countries to their lowest point in recent years.

First there was the war in Kargil even before the ink on the Lahore Declaration signed by the two Prime Ministers had dried. Then came the military coup by Gen. Pervez Musharraf ending one more experiment with democracy in Pakistan. And capping it all was the hijacking of IC-814 from Kathmandu to Kandahar. Together the episodes of Kargil, the coup and Kandahar have in the space of one year crushed the spirit of an Indo-Pakistani rapprochement kindled at Lahore. The talk of peace and cooperation has been replaced by preparations for war and retribution. The international community that so warmly endorsed the Lahore summit is now very concerned, again, about a nuclear flashpoint on the subcontinent.

The whole world wants India and Pakistan to revive the Lahore process. But India has rejected all proposals for engaging Pakistan, unless Islamabad puts an end to cross-border terrorism. Anger and frustration are the dominant sentiments today in New Delhi when it refuses to deal with Pakistan. India wants the international community to take note of the profound negative trends in Pakistan, in particular the nexus between religious fundamentalism, international terrorism and the deeply-entrenched militarism that threatens not just India but the whole region. New Delhi wants the world to confront the sources of international terrorism in Pakistan, isolate its military rulers and exert pressure on Islamabad to reorient its policies.

India's campaign against Pakistan has had mixed results. There is much greater international awareness today of the dangers from the deadly cocktail that the Pa-

kistani military has brewed over the last two decades. More than ever before, the United States and the West are exerting considerable pressure on Pakistan today to curb destabilising forces at home and modify its policies in Afghanistan. Meanwhile the U.S. and other great powers are expanding and institutionalising cooperation with India in combating international terrorism emanating from Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The world agrees with much of India's diagnosis of the political malaise in Pakistan. While India seems to believe that Pakistan's crisis is a terminal one, many in the world believe there may be some chance of a revival.

WORLD VIEW

Few in the world seem to agree with India's prescription that Islamabad should be quarantined. It is not just the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, who believes Pakistan must be engaged if only to prevent its sickness from getting worse. Major nations in Europe and Asia are not willing to buy the proposition that the time has come to abandon Pakistan.

New Delhi may have good reasons to call for pushing Pakistan into a corner; but it should factor in the reality that no country, however small (let alone a country of Pakistan's size and geopolitical importance) can be totally isolated. For all the power at its command, the U.S. has not been able to cut Cuba off from the rest of the world. Nor has it been able to prevent countries from engaging Iraq despite the massive use of the United Nations to constrict Baghdad.

It is not difficult to quibble with the American thesis that Pakistan must be saved from itself. There are serious reasons to argue that such a policy will only appease the negative elements in Islamabad. It is also easy to challenge the American strategy of "engaging the spoiler beards" in Pakistan for the fear of isolat-

tions with Pakistan, India needs to look beyond the simple choice between making love and waging war. There are a whole lot of options in between that India must look at.

Mr. Vajpayee was right in going to Lahore last year. He was wise in visiting "Minar-e-Pakistan" and proclaiming India's interest in a "stable and prosperous Pakistan". While signalling India's peaceful intentions and desire for cooperative relations with Pakistan, Mr. Vajpayee also hammered out a framework with Mr. Nawaz Sharif for resolving the current problems between the two nations. An agreement to intensify the efforts to resolve the Kashmir dispute, greater focus on trans-border terrorism, the avoidance of a nuclear war, and confidence-building measures to reduce military tensions were all necessary steps in the right direction. India's mistake was not in going to Lahore; but in underestimating the impact of the Indian peace initiative on the internal political dynamics of Pakistan. Many ideological and militarist elements in the Pakistani establishment are frightened by the thought of peace with India and what it could do to their dominance of politics and society in that nation. Their unease was very visible during Mr. Vajpayee's visit to Lahore and they struck back in no time to produce the Kargil confrontation.

By refusing to engage Pakistan now, India might end up strengthening these very elements. India's attempts to isolate Pakistan could only boost the power of those seeking a permanent war with India. India looms large over Pakistan and may have more power than it believes it has in shaping the evolution of its neighbour. In addition, the objectives that India has set for itself at Lahore have not lost their relevance because of Kargil, the coup and Kandahar. They have become much more important. New Delhi must now find a way to pursue those aims, with the benefit of lessons learnt over the last one year. India must return to Lahore — this time without any emotion, but armed with a strategy to realise its own long-term interests and responsibilities as a nuclear weapon power.

Pak. troops open fire in Poonch sector

By Our Special Correspondent

JAMMU, FEB. 16. At least three Indian soldiers and five Pakistanis were killed in the Poonch sector of Jammu on Tuesday night when Pakistani troops attacked an Indian post. One soldier is reported to be missing. *Ind. file*

A defence spokesman said here today that the Pakistani troops attacked the Indian position in the Mendhar area of Poonch sector on the Line of Control. The attack was repulsed causing damage to other side. "We lost three of our soldiers who were on patrol and one is still missing," the spokesman said. *AD*

In a retaliatory action which was carried with the same intensity, five Pakistanis were killed and many injured. Intermittent exchange of fire was going on.

This is the second time in two months that Pakistan has resorted to attacks on the Indian side in Jammu region. In last month's attack, 17 Pakistani soldiers were killed in the Pallanwalla sector and the bodies of seven of them were later handed over to Pakistan.

THE HINDU
17 FEB 2000

TOP BILLING: VIP VISITOR READY TO PLAY BIG BROTHER

Kashmir mediation only if both India, Pak insist: Clinton

Aziz Haniffa

WASHINGTON 17 FEBRUARY

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton has stated categorically that the United States would mediate between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir dispute only if asked by both parties.

He said it is imperative that "the United States should be more involved" in South Asia. But he asserted: "I think they'll have to work out this business of Kashmir between themselves; unless we are asked by both parties to help, we can't get involved."

Clinton noted that "in every other case, we're involved because both parties have asked us to be involved. But I will make a decision about where to go and what to do based on what I think will further our long-term goals. And I have not reached that final decision."

Separately, in a letter to Gary Ackerman, chairman of the US Congressional Caucus on India, Clinton said: "I agree that a bilateral dialogue is the most productive approach to a (Kashmir) solution, and that a US special envoy would not contribute to a resolution of the problem."



Clinton: On his mark

Ackerman, a ranking member of the House international relations panel, had urged Clinton not to appoint a special envoy for Kashmir as the pro-Pakistan lobby had been demanding.

Asked at the press conference whether the US would mediate on Kashmir if

To visit or drop Pak... Bill still doesn't know

Washington

17 FEBRUARY

US PRESIDENT Bill Clinton said on Wednesday night he might still visit Pakistan next month as part of a planned South Asian tour but only if he felt it would further US interests.

"I haven't decided whether I'm going to Pakistan or not...I will make a decision based on what I think will best serve our long-term interests," Clinton told a news conference. He defined those interests as the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, preventing an arms race and resolving ongoing disputes between India and Pakistan particularly over Kashmir. — AFP

both New Delhi and Islamabad asked for it, Clinton replied: "Absolutely. I would. Why? For the same reason we have been involved in Northern Ireland. Because number one, and most importantly, it is a hugely important area of the world."

He argued that "if the tensions between India and Pakistan on the Indian subcontinent could be resolved, it is my opinion that the Indian subcontinent might very well be the great success story of the next 50 years." — IANS

The Economic Times

18 FEB 2000

Pak envoy praises Indian diplomacy

Vijay Dutt
London, February 19

THE PAKISTAN High Commissioner in London, Dr Akbar Ahmed, has paid a fulsome compliment to Indian diplomacy and lamented the image of his country while comparing with India's, all this albeit unwittingly.

Dr Ahmed, says in his letter to the *Guardian*: "The Indian propaganda is working. Pak is often seen as a trouble-maker, fomenting violence in Kashmir and harbouring designs on India." Yet, if you ask an American or European to associate images with India, these would be of Gandhi, yoga, Ayurveda and the Maharishi."

Apparently, his effort to counter the Attenborough's film *Gandhi* and correctly portray Jinnah and Pakistan through his film on Jinnah, has had, so far, no impact. These images have become so strong that while people talk of an Islamic bomb, no one mentions a Hindu bomb. He then goes back

to his usual charges against India. He says "India has a population of one billion, an aggressive N-programme and the fourth largest army, which it has used ruthlessly, both internally-- against Sikhs and Kashmiris and externally."

It is questionable whether as a diplomat he should be making such charges in writing and publically, but as one former British diplomat, commented Dr Ahmed is possibly stressed because of the unsavoury report printed about him in the *Guardian* two days ago.

Strangely, Dr Ahmed has not written to the paper refuting the allegations in the published report. Instead, it has been done by one writer from Cambridge, where at Selwyn College Dr Ahmed occupies a chair for research on Islam.

According to the report Jamil Dehlavi, the co-script writer of the film *Jinnah*, which Dr Ahmed sponsored, has alleged that Dr Ahmed wrongly claimed the credit for writing the film's script and misused the funds for it.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
20 FEB 2000

LAHORE DECLARATION ANNIVERSARY

Pak. wants revival of peace process

FD-1
20/3
ISLAMABAD, FEB. 19. Pakistan today proposed to India a relaunch of the derailed peace process and urged New Delhi to implement commitments Islamabad says it made a year ago. The Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, in an interview with Reuters television on the eve of the first anniversary of the Lahore summit, said the Pakistani military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf's Government would join the process "honestly and sincerely". "On the first anniversary we can look back upon the last year as a lost opportunity, as an opportunity that has been missed, perhaps wilfully," he said. *Indo Pak*

The historic bus trip to Lahore by the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, on February 20 last year set in motion a dialogue that was ended by the fighting in May in Kargil. In the Lahore Declaration, Mr. Vajpayee and then Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, had pledged to intensify efforts to settle Kashmir and other disputes and take immediate steps to avoid an accidental nuclear clash.

Mr. Sattar said the Lahore trip by Mr. Vajpayee, who has refused to talk with the military Government which overthrew Mr. Sharif last October, had turned out to be a "will-o'-the-wisp... because statements were not followed by actions and he (Mr. Vajpayee) later interpreted the agreements contrary to Pakistan's understanding.

"Recent statements of the Indian Prime Minister are full of threats and bluster. He has spoken of India's readiness for war, he has even threatened that India might use nuclear weapons. We consider all that very regrettable." The Lahore Declaration anniversary would have meaning only if there is a renewal of will to fulfil the pledge that was made; otherwise it will be just another day, adding to the waste of days and months and years over a long time, he said.

"From this day, let us remind the Prime Minister of India, please begin the process of implementing

your word. We assure him that the Government of Pervez Musharraf will join that process honestly and sincerely in order to find a solution that is acceptable to the people of the state of Kashmir."

Mr. Sattar said India had taken a rigid stand against third-party mediation in the Kashmir dispute although the two countries could never settle any significant dispute through bilateral dialogue. Mr. Sattar said the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, could break the Kashmir stalemate when he visits South Asia in March.

Mr. Clinton is scheduled to visit India and Bangladesh but has not said whether he will go to Pakistan. India rejects the idea of foreign mediation in the Kashmir conflict and has warned Mr. Clinton against visiting Pakistan. "What he (Clinton) has in mind as a means of propelling this stalemate into a forward gear — of course, we hope — we will hear from him should he come to Pakistan," Mr Sattar said.

No talks until return of PoK: PM

DARBHANGA (Bihar), FEB. 19. The Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, today reiterated that India would not hold any dialogue with Pakistan "until and unless" the latter vacated Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

"We have categorically said no to a dialogue till Pakistan returns the land it occupies in Kashmir... We want to tell the world that New Delhi will not hold any dialogue with Islamabad till this condition is fulfilled," Mr. Vajpayee told an election rally here.

He said he had gone to Lahore on a "goodwill mission" to strengthen bilateral ties, but Pakistan betrayed it and thrust upon India the Kargil conflict. The Indian victory in Kargil had antagonised Pakistan, which is "now showing its anger". — PTI

THE HINDU

20 FEB 2000

'Pak. must reveal its true intentions'

By Our Special Correspondent

HO 2/1/20
NEW DELHI, FEB. 20. India has no intention of resuming dialogue with Pakistan as long as subversive activities from across the border continue with the covert and overt support of the military regime continue.

Sources in the Foreign Office said that a meaningful exercise for resumption of the peace process, derailed after the Kargil misadventure, was possible only if Pakistan was prepared to demonstrate its true intentions.

The Foreign Office was responding to the observations of the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, on Saturday during an interview to an international news agency. Mr. Sattar was quoted as saying that Pakistan was willing to "relaunch the derailed the peace process" ahead of the first anniversary of the Lahore Declaration.

Pointing to the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's remarks at an election rally in Haryana on Sunday that India would talk to Islamabad only if the latter vacated Pakistan occupied Kashmir, the Foreign Office said, "the remarks of the Prime Minister eloquently state the Indian position".

Sources were at pains to emphasise that remarks made by Mr. Sattar had to be taken "with a pinch of salt". In the perception

of the Foreign Office, the offer of resumption of talks was aimed at Washington rather than New Delhi. "Pakistan is desperate to ensure that the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, does include Pakistan in his South Asia tour beginning on March 20. The latest statement of the Foreign Minister of Pakistan is yet another attempt by the country to get back into the good books of Washington", the Foreign Office said.

THE HINDU
21 FEB 2000

Revisiting Lahore

By K. K. Katyal

New Delhi, with the passage of time, appears to have modified its earlier stand of not doing business with Pakistan's military ruler... This stand needs to be made explicit in the same way as the insistence on ending trans-border terrorism.

THIS DAY last year, India and Pakistan signed the Lahore Declaration in a climax to a bold new move, the bus diplomacy, which promised to reverse adversarial trends in bilateral dealings. What an anniversary! There are few instances in recent history where the gains of a major agreement were washed away in a matter of months. The two countries now find themselves transported into a different era as it were. What went wrong and why? And what lies ahead?

First the scene last year. This is what I reported from the Pakistani side of the border on February 20, 1999, a day before the two sides committed themselves to the Declaration and the memorandum of understanding on confidence-building measures: "The giant gates at the Wagah border checkpoint fling open... a sleek golden coloured bus glides in and comes to a stop within a few yards. The Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, is seen waving from behind a glass window: moments later, he emerges from the bus, steps onto the Pakistan territory — and into history. His counterpart, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, receives him with a brisk hand-shake. There is a quick hug but they stop short of a tight embrace. Guns boom the formal salute."

What happened behind the scenes was no less significant. The three services chiefs, including General Pervez Musharraf, were not there at the venue of the reception. This, a local daily, *News*, told its readers, was because of differences between Mr. Sharif and the military leaders over the visit. The three chiefs were, however, present at the helipad in the Governor's House in Lahore, where they saluted Mr. Vajpayee as he alighted after a short hop from the border. They went through the protocol formality, away from the public gaze. Earlier in the day, the Jamat-e-Tulba, youth wing of the Jamat-e-Islami, organised a hartal in protest against the visit and later its "sainaks" rained lathis on the cars of foreign diplomats and other guests.

It was a day of contrasting pictures and the one that had a lower visibility — of screaming protesters and hesitant services chiefs — was ignored. Months later, it turned out to be the truer picture, the real

image. It manifested itself in diverse ways — Kargil, coup, hijacking and spurt in militancy. With hindsight, it is easy to blame all those who went by the main image. Those who hailed the bus diplomacy vastly outnumbered the sceptics. The notes emanating from the Government and the ruling alliance were the loudest in the welcome chorus. That was understandable — though, somewhat inappropriately, they sought to make a partisan use of the initiative. The media too lauded the gestures and symbolism, finding promise of substantive advance.

Why did the Lahore initiative collapse? Because of the internal dynamics of Pakistan. The civilian Government of Mr. Sharif was its main architect but neither the armed forces nor religious fundamentalists were for it. The uncertainties of the uneasy equation took a heavy toll inside Pakistan — and also wreaked havoc on India-Pakistan dealings. Opinions differ on whether Mr. Sharif was fully in the picture when the Generals planned the Kargil misadventure but there is unanimity that the armed forces were not for the bus diplomacy and all that flowed from it.

Ironic, indeed, is the contrast between the impact of the Lahore Declaration and the earlier substantive move, Shimla Agreement. The Shimla document was finalised by two unequal parties, the victor and the vanquished. There was wrangling as its text was being finalised — so much so that the talks, at one stage, appeared to break down. Yet it was effective for over 15 years. True, it did not achieve the intended objective — to start an era of peace and stability — but it did help to prevent a full-scale war and, for a long time, keep the low-intensity conflict within manageable limits. As against that, the Lahore Declaration was negotiated by two equals and without much hassle. And yet it collapsed within a few months. This was due to the deadly mix of religious

fundamentalism and military adventurism which distorted the polity. That was not the case in 1972.

Pakistan analysts, reflecting the official viewpoint, give a different reason for the failure of the Lahore process — lack of preparations. It is not fully explained. If it means there were no sufficient consultations among those representing the different power centres in Pakistan, the point is well taken. But any suggestion that the representatives of the two governments did not do their home work is factually incorrect. The Lahore Declaration, in a way, was the culmination of the contacts begun in the first half of 1997, with the then Prime Minister, Mr. I. K. Gujral's meeting with Mr. Sharif in Male — and it acquired a new dimension after the two sides became nuclear. The earlier momentum helped Mr. Sharif establish a rapport with Mr. Vajpayee (after the change of government in India). The senior bureaucracy in Pakistan was far from enthusiastic about the new beginning. This was evident from the course of discussions in Lahore after the arrival of Mr. Vajpayee and the Indian Government's representatives. The officials of the two sides could not agree on the draft despite protracted discussions because of the intransigence of the Pakistani side. It was only when the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary, Mr. Brajesh Mishra, during an informal conversation at the banquet, drew Mr. Sharif's attention to the deadlock that there was a forward movement. Mandated by their Prime Minister, Pakistani officials were flexible and the draft was finalised without much ado. Is it the view of the military establishment that the former Prime Minister forced the pace of discussions?

At present, there is only one power centre — the military ruler — and it should be easier for it to decide its India policy. Does Gen. Musharraf intend continuing

the present state of confrontation, what with the "jehadi" outfits threatening a crusade against India and the intelligence agencies stoking the fires of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir?

The present regime says it is keen on engaging India but is it realised that this will not be possible so long as the insurgency operations continue? There is very little difference between Gen. Musharraf's revised formulation — discussions on Kashmir, along with other issues — and steps to intensify efforts to resolve all issues including Jammu and Kashmir, in terms of the Lahore Declaration. However, engagement and insurgency could not co-exist.

On its part, New Delhi, with the passage of time, appears to have modified the earlier stand of not doing business with the military ruler. India worked for the postponement of the SAARC summit because it did not want that platform used by the coup leader to get respectability. It, along with some African countries, spearheaded the move for Pakistan's suspension from the Commonwealth. Now New Delhi may not let legitimacy considerations come in the way of substantive contacts with Pakistan provided the atmosphere is conducive. This stand needs to be made explicit in the same way as the insistence on ending trans-border terrorism.

A clearer definition of India's stand would help to remove misunderstandings abroad. While the world community appreciates India's concerns over terrorism, the Kashmir policy is not understood. In the run-up to the visit of the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, and during his talks here, there may be no escape from a close focus on Indo-Pakistan problems, notably Kashmir.

The Prime Minister, the other day, reiterated India's opposition to third-party intervention. That message went home — as was evident from Mr. Clinton's remark that a mediatory role would not be intended unless it was acceptable to the two sides. But it did not mean that the situation on the subcontinent would not be on Mr. Clinton's agenda. New Delhi could pre-empt it by spelling out its stand on the resumption of dialogue. The sooner it is done the better.

3 Indian mission staff expelled

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 20 On the first anniversary of the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's "historic visit" to Lahore, Pakistan today expelled three staffers of the Indian High Commission here for activities "incompatible with their official status".

In a retaliatory move for the expulsion of three staffers of the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi, Islamabad today asked Mr. Gopal Chandra Roy, Mr. Asit Bran Das and Mr. R. Sankaranarayan to leave the country by February 27.

A statement said that the Indian Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Sudhir Vyas, was "summoned" to the Foreign Office and informed of this decision. "A strong protest was lodged about the undesirable conduct and activities of these officials," it said.

Rejecting the allegations, Mr. Vyas said the Indian personnel had not violated the sanctity of their official status.

The individuals had not indulged in any objectionable activities, Mr. Vyas informed Pakistani officials.

Bus ride to Pak not smooth, but should continue: Gujral

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, FEB 21

DIGNITARIES who had accompanied Prime Minister Vajpayee in the inaugural run of the bus to Lahore in 1999, remember the day with fondness. They feel that the potential the historic event offered to alter the course of history was wasted by subsequent developments. However, most of the dignitaries *The Indian Express* spoke to, wanted the bus service to continue.

I K Gujral, former prime minister, when contacted, lauded the initiative taken by Vajpayee. "It was aimed at extending the hand of friendship to Pakistan but the gesture was not reciprocated by the other side," he said but did not say if the bus should be stopped. Lt Gen B K N Chhibber (Retd), who, as Punjab Governor, had accompanied the PM upto Lahore in the bus, said it was a gesture studded with good intentions. "Considering the changed circumstances, a tough stand against Pakistan is required but the bus should continue for some time. Stopping the service abruptly will only close another option for promoting relations between the peoples of the two nations", Chhibber said. It was unfortunate that the military regime in Pakistan had not liked the gesture and was using it for other means, like send-

ing in fake currency, the former Governor lamented.

Pargat Singh, former Indian hockey captain and presently Assistant Commandant in PAP, Jalandhar, said travelling in the inaugural run of the bus gave him a wonderful feeling. "I was happy that a new era in Indo-Pak relations had started. In fact, everyone expected a lot from both governments in the direction of promoting cordial relations. But all that went wrong", he regretted. "After that long battle in Kargil and in other parts of Jammu and Kashmir, I don't think that continuation of the bus service will yield any good results. Our PM is still trying his best to improve relations, but Pakistan is not responding", he observed.

Artist Mallika Sarabhai, termed it as a "goodwill gesture on our part" despite the fact that Pakistan was planning its intrusion in Kargil. "I believe that the bus service should be continued because the bus or the train are not the only conduits being used for smuggling in fake currency or drugs from across the border", she said. "Our borders along Rajasthan and Gujarat are porous and these are also being used. "If the bus or train service is discontinued, it would amount to throwing the baby with the water in the tub." she said arguing for continuation of the service as a proof of India's policy of having peaceful relations with neighbours.

INDIAN EXPRESS

22 FEB 2000

Pak. awaits Vajpayee's response

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 21. Pakistan has said that if there was a "positive response informally expressed" by the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, to a meeting offered by the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, then "we can move one step forward and take it to that formal stage which will facilitate this meeting".

Talking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Javed Jabbar, the Chief Executive's Adviser on National Affairs and Information, when asked what could be the first step to break the logjam in India-Pakistan relations, said: "The first step should be, irrespective of whether we said it first or the Indians said it first, you have a situation where the Head of Government, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has more than once said that he is willing to meet the Indian Prime Minister... so, the first response one expects is, if there is an offer for dialogue, then there has to be a reciprocity from the Indian Head of Government, a willingness to talk. Both sides recognise that there is this core issue. We don't need to restate that point. It is self-evident and let us begin by speaking with each other."

Asked if this amounted to a formal offer of meeting, Mr. Jabbar said: "Well, I would say it is an offer expressed in the process of interviews conducted by two leading Indian media organisations (*The Hindu* and the *Door-darshan*). Now, to give it the title of a formal offer, you need to process that through different stages. If there is a positive re-

sponse informally expressed by the Head of the Indian Government, then we know we can move one step forward and take it to that formal stage which then will facilitate this meeting."

On the way forward in India-Pakistan relations, Mr. Jabbar, who has been part of the Track-II dialogue process, said: "I believe that a sustained, uninterrupted,

Pak. war games

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 21. Pakistan's military regime is likely to advance its war games, a top official has "hinted", according to media reports today. Pakistan's armed forces hold war games every year between October and December, "but if the need arose, they could be held ahead of schedule," the *Pakistan Observer* quoted the Press Secretary to the Chief Executive, Maj. Gen. Rashid Qureshi, as saying in an interview to *Online*.

determined dialogue — irrespective of mutual perceptions about each other's acts of omission or commission — is the only way forward."

He referred to the need "to engage in listening to each other, in speaking to each other and beginning to build this very, very difficult and challenging basis of trust and mutual respect that has to be the foundation for any reconcil-

iation... And, when you look at the history of conflict-resolution, there are often examples when the situation on the ground continues, yet two parties agree to start listening to each other. That has to be the basis."

Asked if the Indian policy of non-engagement with Pakistan was leading to an increase in tensions, Gen. Musharraf's Adviser said: "Absolutely. It is a self-defeating policy because it draws a curtain of verbiage and hostility. It strengthens the forces of extremism on both sides of the border — in India I fear more than in Pakistan; and, thirdly, it sends an extremely destructive signal from the region to the rest of the world. Because it perpetuates the myth that people in South Asia are incapable of resolving both internal conflicts and bilateral conflicts. I am particularly concerned at the escalation of the rhetoric in the last several days and one would urge restraint and moderation."

To a question if Pakistan was ready to address Indian concerns about "jehadi groups" operating from Pakistan, Mr. Jabbar replied: "Equally, our concern is the overwhelming presence of Indian troops in Indian-held Kashmir. So, there again we are back to the position whether there should be an act or a gesture before the talks. In a situation like this... the only way forward is to meet face to face. Now, that meeting does not necessarily have to be at the level of Heads of Government. It must, it could start at a lower level..."

THE HINDU

22 FEB 2000

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2000

put down
AN UNREALISTIC APPROACH *HO-10*

THE VAJPAYEE GOVERNMENT'S decision to reject the Pakistani offer to return to the bilateral process is a negation of the spirit of enlightened bilateralism that marked the Lahore Declaration signed a year and two days ago. The Pakistani Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar's proposal that the two countries resume the derailed process — accompanied by a bold declaration in public that his country's Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, would join the effort "honestly and sincerely" — deserves serious consideration as a real opportunity to uplift the relationship from the acrimonious and unproductive phase that it is now in. The External Affairs Ministry, instead of dismissing it in a routine fashion, should give the initiative a chance and send a credible, clear signal that New Delhi is ready to reciprocate and seeks a de-escalation of the tensions. If it is agreed that national policies are not set in the streets and that policy makers have the vision to see beyond the immediate benefits of partisan politics, the Vajpayee Government must respond positively to the offer to resume the bilateral peace process.

By its self-defeating pursuit of a hardline approach, the Government is playing a dangerous game that will have long term repercussions for the whole region. The Prime Minister's comments in the past week on relations with Pakistan, going far beyond the permissible hyperbole of campaigning rhetoric, betray an inclination to inject partisan rhetoric into a national policy that had bipartisan support, based on a political consensus that was not diluted during the crises of the past year. Mr. Vajpayee's inexplicable persistence with the demand that Pakistan vacate occupied territory — campaign fodder that must have been con-

sumed with relish by his hungry audience — and the Government's ill-concealed campaign against a possible Pakistan stopover by the American President can only emanate from a negative mindset and is not at all of a piece with the mature responses during the Kargil crisis last summer. It is not the nation's concern that Mr. Vajpayee's pronouncement earlier this month in Jalandhar that India was ready for war and his current combative posturing can be ascribed to intra-party power play but that this is reflected as Government policy, is alarming. To declare that India will not resume the dialogue till the occupied territory is handed back is to make a farce of the bus diplomacy of twelve months ago, the highpoint of which was the Lahore Declaration under which Mr. Vajpayee pledged to discuss all issues, including Kashmir, with Pakistan.

m/2
The continuing refusal to resume the bilateral track and to engage the Musharraf Government can prove counter-productive. Islamabad's crackdown on sections of religious fundamentalists, the ban on display of weapons, the arrest of Masood Azhar, one of the militants swapped for the hostages of the hijacked Indian Airlines flight at Kandahar, and the offer to resume the interrupted dialogue cannot all be dismissed as actions aimed at getting Mr. Bill Clinton to stop over in Pakistan during his South Asia visit next month. Besides, the Vajpayee Government which at every opportunity proclaims its opposition to third party intervention must realise that its obduracy, apart from isolating this country, will only facilitate precisely the same outcome. New Delhi can spurn the present opportunity for reinstating bilateralism only at a high national cost.

THE HINDU
22 FEB 2000

HD-17
25/2

Pak. concerned over n-deterrence credibility

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 24. "Nuclearisation has cost India the edge it once held over Pakistan," Mr. Shahbaz, Director-General (Disarmament), in the Pakistani Foreign Ministry, said in a paper on 'Strategic Stability and Issue of Non-proliferation in South Asia' presented at a seminar organised by *The News* on Wednesday.

Ruling out the possibility of Pakistan giving a no-first use commitment on the employment of nuclear weapons, Mr. Shahbaz said: "India knows well that, in view of its clear edge in conventional forces vis-a-vis Pakistan, the latter can never accept a proposal that seeks to compromise its nuclear deterrent."

The Foreign Ministry official stated: "The formal crossing of the nuclear threshold by Pakistan and India supported by the enunciation of their respective nuclear postures is expected to enhance stability, provided the other essential elements of deterrence are fulfilled. These include early warning systems, C3I networks, second strike capabilities and credible delivery systems."

"The non-weaponised deterrence regime between India and Pakistan has been permanently transformed after the nuclear tests. Both Pakistan and India are de facto nuclear powers. The tests cannot be untested and even if the P-5 do not recognise their nu-

clear capabilities, the ground reality is that both of them are nuclear powers," Mr. Shahbaz argued.

He said that in view of India's "increasing preponderance" in conventional weaponry, Pakistan's dependence on its nuclear capability for its defence is absolute. "Its nuclear deterrent now forms an indispensable part of its security doctrine. Thus Pakistan cannot afford to acquiesce in any suggestion that seeks to neutralise its nuclear deterrent. Nuclear disarmament cannot and should not be pursued in a vacuum. Only when a conducive atmosphere of trust and confidence has taken root in the region, will South Asia be able to forsake nuclear weapons. And as long as the Kashmir dispute remains unresolved, attaining a conducive atmosphere will remain, at best, a quixotic proposition."

The Foreign Ministry official stated that Pakistan's "only concern" was to sustain the credibility of the country's nuclear deterrence. "While remaining open and amenable to genuine suggestions at preventing an arms race in South Asia, Pakistan will continue to take any step necessary for its security against India's relentless arms build-up. Pakistan will never allow its nuclear deterrent to be impaired."

Mr. Shahbaz stated categorically that Pakistan "should not be expected" to adhere to the NPT as

a non-nuclear weapon State. "However, with the nuclearisation of South Asia, the NPT has been rendered irrelevant in the case of both India and Pakistan."

Rejecting any suggestion for a moratorium on the production of fissile material pending the conclusion of an FMCT, the official said the issue of existing stockpiles was crucial for Pakistan.

"It (Pakistan) cannot, therefore, acquiesce in a treaty that only halts the future production of weapons-grade material but does not adequately address the vast differences in the existing stocks at the global, regional and sub-regional levels and fails to set out a modus operandi for their equalisation at the lowest possible level," the paper stated.

Mr. Shahbaz claimed that India's "proposal" to develop a triad of nuclear forces in the years ahead was designed to fulfill its ambition of being treated as a "great military power".

"The size of India's nuclear arsenal, and its operational deployment, would transform it into a threatening first strike force against Pakistan and other neighbouring countries. Such massive deployment cannot conceivably be designed purely for deterrence. India's profession of no-first-use of nuclear weapons is a facade to justify a second strike capability and large scale acquisition and deployment of nuclear weapons," the paper added.

THE HINDU
25 FEB 2000

96-8
29/2

The road to Lahore

How we've missed the bus

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton may not know that the famous bus journey to Lahore actually did not take place. I should know because I was on the bus with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee - the one which was supposed to drive to Lahore.

First, the facts. An idea had been in the air that bus travel between New Delhi and Lahore would not only facilitate travel between the two countries but also be a visible symbol of improving ties. This improvement in ties, it was suggested, should be further dramatised by Vajpayee inaugurating the route. During one of the Jaswant Singh-Strobe Talbott meetings in New Delhi, the idea of the bus journey was formalised.

After his speech at the UN General Assembly and his meeting with Nawaz Sharif, a very lively and bright-looking Vajpayee (he has never looked so bright since), totally against the advice of his officials, announced to the press a series of confidence-building steps, including the bus journey to Lahore.

According to Western analysts, including some of the intelligence community, it was about this time, when Indo-Pak rapprochement seemed more promising, that plans to subvert the process were accelerated in Islamabad. Kargil was the consequence.

But let me revert to the bus journey. Since the Prime Minister could not possibly have had the time to travel all the way from Delhi by bus, an abridged, symbolic journey from Amritsar to Lahore was envisaged.

The Indian media was advised to fly to Lahore. They would then drive the 37 kilometres from Lahore to the Wagah border, be given positions in an enclosure in the no-man's-land from where they will film or observe the two prime ministers in a historic embrace.

Why could the Indian media not have driven to Lahore? Agreed, there would not have been enough room in a bus to accommodate so many jour-

nalists and camera crew, but surely other buses could have been commandeered to give Indian journalists the simple flavour of crossing over from India to Pakistan by road.

Not just the journalists. Even Vajpayee was not accorded the pleasure of crossing over by road. He was received in no-man's-land by Nawaz Sharif and swiftly whisked into a helicopter to Lahore. The bus journey lasted from Amritsar to Wagah. There was no "bus journey" from Wagah to Lahore. There could not have been one from Amritsar to Lahore, therefore.

Journalists hate to be thwarted. It would have been boring (and self-effacing) to reveal to their readers and

ment. Newspapers were giving considerable space to a Chinese defence delegation exactly on the day that Indian press was dominated by Vajpayee's peace journey.

For anyone who understands the Indo-Pak context, Vajpayee's visit to Minar-e-Pakistan would have registered as an epoch-making event as, indeed, would the Lahore declaration, had the Lahore rioters not exposed the frayed backdrop against which these events took place. It is this backdrop which determined the course of events up to Kargil, the coup and beyond.

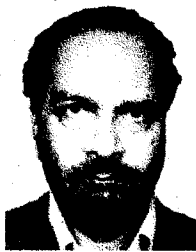
Let me continue with the metaphor of the bus journey. When Vajpayee drove from Amritsar to Wagah, the ro-

all along the way. The nation would be electrified.

This huge difference in atmospherics on the issue of peace on both sides of the border is, in my view, quite independent of the Kashmir issue.

Of course, Kashmir is a problem that the two countries must resolve. No one denies the fact that it is a serious issue between the two countries. The difficulty arises when those in search of solutions, study groups in India and abroad, second-track diplomatists, all begin to spell out geographical and territorial adjustments, constitutional inventions, altering the line of control, autonomous, even independent entities without international recognition and so on. The President of France happens to be a co-prince of Andorra of which the other co-prince happens to be a bishop of a parish in Spain. All of this is engaging but pointless. Formulae for the eventual settlement of Kashmir are, as the Americans say, a dime a dozen. The real work to be done is to create public opinion in Pakistan, which is hospitable to the ideas of peace with India. In other words, the army and the extremist clergy have to be reined in.

Remember, Kashmir is part of the internal politics of India and more so in Pakistan. The only circumstance in which the issue can be addressed seriously is one of the relative absence of tension between the two countries. This can be brought about by taking up all the eight issues in the composite dialogue. Let progress be made in areas like trade and people-to-people contact, cultural exchanges. These steps will bring down the temperature. The atmosphere will then be conducive to prime ministerial bus journeys between Lahore and Delhi. When Vajpayee can actually drive from Wagah to Lahore, we shall be ready to address the Kashmir issue with sympathy and compassion for the people in that unfortunate state.



SAEED NAQVI

This huge difference in atmospherics on the issue of peace on both sides of the border is, in my view, quite independent of the Kashmir issue

viewers that actually they were flown to Lahore and then carted to the border from the Pakistani end. So, the headlines were about the Prime Minister's historic bus journey to Lahore. It was a bit of make-believe.

The reasons why the bus could not proceed from India to Pakistan, Amritsar to Lahore are at the very heart of Pakistani hesitations to extend a hand of friendship with India. The barriers are not at Wagah but in the minds of the authors of the Pakistani state. Not necessarily in the minds of the Pakistani people, mind you.

When Nawaz Sharif invited Vajpayee into his helicopter at Wagah, terminating the bus journey, he was giving out several signals. Public opinion in Pakistan was not yet prepared to accept the Indo-Pak bhai-bhai mode. There was resistance to the idea from the Pakistani establish-

ment. Newspapers were giving considerable space to a Chinese defence delegation exactly on the day that Indian press was dominated by Vajpayee's peace journey.

For anyone who understands the Indo-Pak context, Vajpayee's visit to Minar-e-Pakistan would have registered as an epoch-making event as, indeed, would the Lahore declaration, had the Lahore rioters not exposed the frayed backdrop against which these events took place. It is this backdrop which determined the course of events up to Kargil, the coup and beyond.

INDIAN EXPRESS

25 FEB 2000

Panel on Kargil finds gross deficiencies in security system

Govt accepts recommendations, to order 'thorough' probe ● RAW held responsible for 'information gap'

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, February 24

THE SUBRAHMANYAM Committee on Kargil intrusions has found grave deficiencies in India's security management system and has proposed its thorough review by an independent body of credible experts.

The committee's report, tabled in the Lok Sabha today, speaks of "complete and total surprise" that caught the governments both at the Centre and in Jammu & Kashmir, the Army and the intelligence agencies.

Dwelling on the "gross inadequacies" in India's surveillance capabilities, it lists 25 glaring deficiencies in the present security set-up. The report, however, does not blame any individual as such for the Pakistani intrusions.

The Government, according to the Action Taken Report (ATR), has accepted the recommendations and is ordering a thorough review of the security system through "an appropriate body".

The report and ATR, tabled by Defence Minister George Fernandes, reveal that other than the limited possibility of infiltration and enhanced artillery exchange, none on the Indian side was able to assess the likelihood of the large-scale military intrusion into Kargil. A number of Army Chiefs and Directors-General of

Military Operations were unanimous that an intrusion of this magnitude was "totally unsustainable and militarily irrational". The Committee did not come across any assessment at opera-

through some others saw serious pitfalls in the Lahore process.

Raising the issue whether Kargil was avoidable, the report says it could perhaps have been avoided if the Army had followed a policy

avalanche casualties which would have had to be accepted.

Such a dispersal of forces to hold uninhabited territory of no strategic value would have dissipated considerable military strength and effort and would not have been at all cost-effective. If, however, it has had to be done now, such a policy can only be regarded as no more than a temporary expedient.

The alternative should be a credible declaratory policy of swiftly punishing wanton and willful violations of the sanctity of the LoC. This should be supplemented by a comprehensive space and aerial based surveillance system.

Attempting a reconstruction of Pakistani intrusion from diaries recovered from Pakistani personnel as well as intercepts, the committee said it appeared the reconnaissance parties started crossing the LoC in late January/early February, 1999. They established a first line of administrative bases within a limited distance across the LoC in February.

March saw heavy snowfall and so they could move further forward only in April. At that stage, more men joined them and perhaps the bulk of intruders entered India in late April. This sequence of events, the report says, appears logical as the earlier induction of larger numbers would have added to logistic problems and increased risk of detection.

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, February 24

The Kargil Review Committee has blamed RAW, the country's external intelligence agency, more than anybody else for the intelligence failure that kept the country in the dark about the Pakistani intrusions in the Kargil Heights.

The report says the "information gap" was contributed mainly by the RAW's inability to accurately monitor and report changes in the Pakistani activity in the Force Commander Northern Area (FCNA) region during 1998 and early 1999.

The committee found that "to a lesser extent", the blame could be put on the Director-General Military Intelligence (DGMI), the Brigade Intelligence Team (BIT) and the Intelligence and Field Surveillance Unit (IFSU) for their failure to notice the additional forward deployment of troops in the vicinity of the Line of Control (LoC).

The committee stated unlike other countries, India did not have a separate Defence Intelligence Agency and therefore the responsibility primarily lay on the RAW to supply intelligence about a likely attack, whether across a broad or narrow front. Unfortunately, the report says, the RAW facility in the Kargil area did not receive adequate attention in terms of staff or technological capability.

Citing an instance of lack of coordination among various intelligence agencies, the report says that the Intelligence Bureau (IB) got certain inputs on the FCNA region and they were communicated to the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the Cabinet Secretary, the Home Secretary and the DG, Military Operations.

The communication was not addressed to the three officials most concerned with the information, namely, the Secretary, RAW, who was to follow up the information; the Chairman, Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) and the Director-General, Military

Intelligence. The IB Director stated he expected the information to filter down to the three officials through the official hierarchy. This did not happen in the case of the RAW. Secretary who was also holding the charge of the JIC Chairman.

There were many bits and pieces of information about activities within the FCNA region. Most of them indicated that Kargil was becoming a growing focus of Pakistani attention, which had been clearly demonstrated by the marked increase in cross-LoC shelling in 1998.

The enhanced threat perception of Commander 121 Infantry Brigade, Brigadier Surinder Singh also related to increased infiltration.

RAW assessed the possibility of a "limited swift offensive threat with possible support of alliance partners" in its half-yearly assessment ending September 1998 but no indicators substantiating this assessment were provided. Moreover, in the subsequent six-monthly report of March 1999 this assessment was dropped.

The report says: "The Indian intelligence structure is flawed since there is little back up or redundancy to rectify failures and shortcomings in intelligence collection and reporting that goes to build up the external threat perception by the one agency, the RAW, which has a virtual monopoly in this regard."

It is neither healthy nor prudent to endow that one agency alone with multifarious capabilities for human, communication, imagery and electronic intelligence."

The committee found that there was no institutionalised process where RAW, IB, BSF and Army intelligence officials interact periodically at levels below the JIC.

The Army never shared its intelligence with the other agencies or with the JIC. The country did not have a system of regular, periodic and comprehensive intelligence briefings at the political level and to the Committee of Secretaries.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Thorough review of national security system by an independent body of credible experts
- Set up international-standard intelligence and surveillance capability, particularly satellite imagery
- Increase defence budget for modernisation of armed forces
- Reorganise national security management and apex decision-making structure
- Armed Forces Headquarters must be located within government structure
- Appoint full-time National Security Adviser
- Reduce the colour service term of army personnel from 17 years to seven to ten years and release them to paramilitary forces
- Improve border patrolling and surveillance
- Issue White Paper on Indian-rear weapons programme
- Train army for effective media relations

tional levels to warrant the conclusion that the Lahore summit had caused the Indian decision-makers to lower their guard. This, the committee says, was confirmed during discussions with a number of concerned officials. Nonetheless, there was euphoria in some political quarters, among leaders in and out of office,

Sharif was aware of Kargil plan: panel

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, FEB. 25. The visit by then Pakistan Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, to the frontline in Kargil in February last, the taped conversation between the Pakistani military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, and his former Chief of Staff, and credible Pakistani media reports have led the Subrahmanyam committee to infer that Mr. Sharif was well aware of the Kargil intrusion plan when he received the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, at Lahore.

At a press conference today, the Chairman of the Kargil Review Committee, Mr. K. Subrahmanyam, said the former Pakistani Army Chief, Gen. Aslam Beg, had published an article in July last, where he claimed that Mr. Sharif had been extensively briefed in the Pakistani General Headquarters in January. The timing of these events was significant as it coincides with the intrusion in Kargil in late January/early February last as concluded by the panel. Gen. Musharraf had also repeatedly stated that Mr. Sharif was on board the Kargil plan, Mr. Subrahmanyam observed.

India detected the intrusion only on May 3, but the Subrahmanyam panel had pinned most of the blame for the collective intelligence failure on the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)... Specifically, the RAW, the premier agency responsible for gathering and evaluating external intelligence, had been held responsible for its failure to detect the movement of two battalions of Pakistan's Force Commander Northern Areas (FCNA) formation in the Gultari and Hamzigund area, across the Kargil zone. Instead of 15 battalions, the RAW had assessed the presence of only 13 Pakistani battalions, Mr. Subrahmanyam observed. This detection could have been critical in revealing the overall Pakistani game-plan in Kargil.

The Army's military intelligence at the level of Army headquarters, Brigade and below should be blamed "to a lesser extent" for the failure to detect the FCNA's Order of Battle (ORBAT),

the committee concludes

The panel also absolved the Army for failing to spot the intrusion by its air surveillance patrols. The report said the Army helicopters which carry out Winter Air Surveillance Operations (WASO) were obsolete. According to Lt. Gen. K. K. Hazari, a member of the Kargil committee, who also briefed the media, the WASO helicopter team spotted the intrusion only when it was fired upon from the ground in May. The heavy noise and vibrations of these machines, their deployment over the valleys alone and their high peace time height ceiling made these patrols unproductive.

Besides, the committee praised the Army, including its top brass, for its conduct in the Kargil war.

For instance, Mr. Subrahmanyam said the Army had moved with exemplary swiftness after the intrusion was detected. Within eight days of the confirmation of the intrusion on May 7, enough deployments had been made to contain it. By May 8, the Northern Command had requested helicopter gunships. A day later, two well acclimatised battalions returning from Siachen were inducted into the Batalik area. By May 12, the entire Jammu and Kashmir area was put on alert.

The panel also defended the decision of the Chief of the Army Staff, Gen. V. P. Malik, to visit Poland in early May. "There was no need to cancel the Army Chief's visit which had been long planned and was of some significance," the report said.

Praising the Corps Commander, the report said "the 15 Corps Commander carried out his deployment with commendable expedition and competence providing adequate margins for all possible contingencies".

The report also rebutted press reports that the Army had failed to detect the transfer of cement from Dras/Kargil for the construction of bunkers by the intruders. Reports that the enemy had constructed three-storeyed bunkers equipped with television sets were based on "inaccurate information", the panel observed.

THE HINDU
26 FEB 2000

'India has the right to retaliate if Pak crosses the LoC'

By Mahendra Ved
The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: India should reserve the right to retaliate if Pakistan violates the Line of Control (LoC), and this should be India's official stance, Kargil Review Committee chairman K. Subrahmanyam said on Friday.

Interacting with the media a day after the report was tabled in Parliament, he said, "If Pakistan violates the LoC, we reserve the right to retaliate on our choosing and this is what the official stance should be."

Committee member B.G. Verghese said that whenever there was any violation by Pakistan from across the border, the Indian response had been "reactive". "Such repeated occurrences are unacceptable and any state had the right to defend its sovereignty. Placing the victim and the aggressor on par by the world community has been going on for too long and this is unacceptable," Mr Verghese said.

Mr Subrahmanyam disclosed that although the committee had wanted the report to be made public, minus the annexures, the government made 18 'security deletions', including three paragraphs which went into the details of the army's request for air force support, during the Pakistani intrusions last May. "I can assure you none of the deletions affect the essential part of the report," he said. The deleted parts were clearly marked out, hence it would be easy for anyone to understand in what context the matter was deliberately left out. The total length of the deletions by the government would not exceed more than two pages, he added.

There was much misunderstanding on the 'security deletion' issue. This happened because it was for the first time that an exercise of this nature had been carried out in India. Security deletions by the government were a common practice in countries like the U.S.

He disclosed that the committee's recommendation for undertaking satellite imagery of Jammu and Kashmir had already been put into action. The Indian Army had at no time sought to cross the LoC. In the representations made by the army, there was no indication of its desire to cross the LoC, nor were differences with the government on the issue in evidence. Denying that there was any delay in air strikes against Pakistani intruders on the Kargil heights, he said that it required preparation for an escalation.

Mr Subrahmanyam said that the army had sought IAF's help on May 8 and transport aircraft began operations immediately for carrying men and material. "There was a debate on operating helicopters at that point of time... For operating fixed wing aircraft we needed to be prepared for escalation," he explained. The western air command and the south-western air command were placed on "full alert" before the "go ahead" was given by the government for air strikes on the occupied heights, he said. The cabinet committee on security (CCS) authorised use of air power on May 25.

Three relevant paragraphs on the issue have been deleted from the report. The paragraphs said that the air chief had maintained that if air power were to be used, the country would have to be prepared for a Pakistani response.

THE TIMES OF INDIA
27 FEB 2000

Eight Indian soldiers killed in Pak attack

□ 2 BSF jawans killed, 3 others hurt in Kashmir land-mine blast

NEW DELHI: At least eight Indian soldiers were killed when Pakistani troops attacked an early warning post in the Naushera sector of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday.

The post, surrounded on three sides by Pakistani army positions across the Line of Control (LoC), was raided by enemy forces early on Sunday morning.

Defence sources said here that while six Indian soldiers were killed in the raid, one junior commissioned officer (JCO) and one other soldier were missing, along with their weapons.

"The bodies of the two missing Indian soldiers have probably been dragged by the invading Pakistani troops to their side of the LoC," the sources said.

The post is used to monitor movement of Pakistani troops and militants.

The losses on the Pakistani side could not be immediately ascertained, the sources said.

This is the third major flare-up in the area in recent weeks. Last month 18 Pakistani soldiers were killed when they tried to capture an Indian border post in Palanwala in Akhnoor sector which is adjacent to Naushera.

Earlier this month, five Pakistani soldiers and four Indian army jawans were killed when the troops foiled another enemy bid to capture a border post in the Akhnoor sector.

In a related incident, in Srinagar, two BSF personnel were killed and three others seriously injured in a land-mine explosion in Baramulla district of north Kashmir, a border security force spokesperson said here on Sunday.

The land-mine, planted by militants on the main road near Khanipath, went off when a BSF vehicle carrying the five jawans ran over it on Saturday evening, the spokesperson said.

While head constable Raja Ram and constable B.K. Gosh were

killed in the incident, constable Raj Kumar, lansnaik Ram Avtar and constable Sunil Kumar were injured in the explosion and were shifted to hospital.

The BSF vehicle was on way to Harnoor village.

This was the second land-mine explosion triggered by militants in the valley since Saturday evening. An army jawan was killed and three others were injured when militants blew up their vehicle at Kokernag in Anantnag district of south Kashmir on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Dr Farooq Abdullah has ruled out the use of "brute force" to pass a greater autonomy bill in the state assembly, but claimed, "If I desire, I can pass the autonomy bill in this hall as I have the majority."

"But I do not want to resort to brute force," he said, adding that the autonomy report, sent recently to the Centre, was open for discussion at every level.

"The state government does not want to thrust it on the people of any part of the state. Every clause will be discussed at different levels and fora before a final decision," he said.

Lambasting Panun Kashmir, a body of the Kashmiri Pandit community, for its demand for a 'homeland', he asked, "How many homelands are to be created in the country?"

Pakistan, he said, was the first such territory to be carved out of the country.

In the meantime, in Washington, Kashmiri militant groups have launched a "cyber war" against India, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has warned.

The separatists have hacked official government web pages and posted anti-government propaganda and pictures, John A Serabian, information operations issue manager, CIA, told the joint economic committee of Congress this week. However, he did not give details. (Agencies)

Pak. escalating tensions in J&K

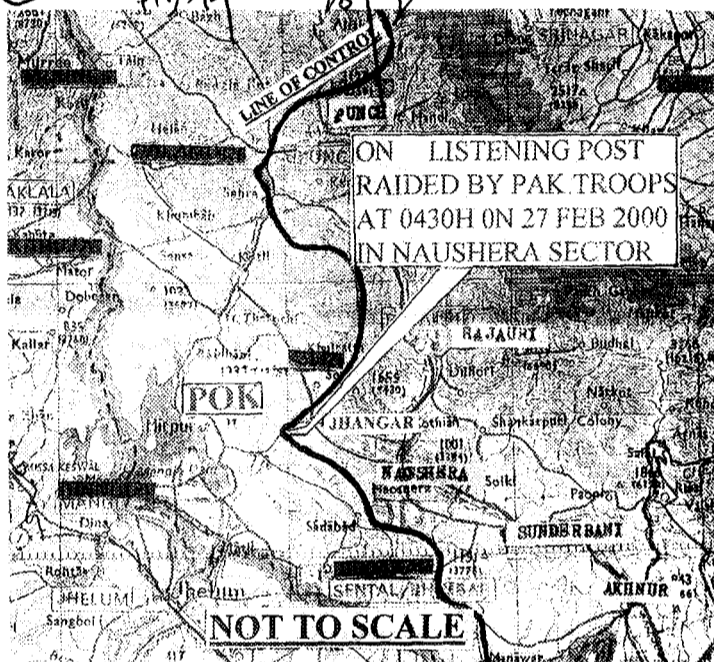
By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, FEB. 27. The attack by Pakistani troops on an Indian Army post in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir early today appears to signal a much-expected spurt in violence close to the Line of Control during the run-up to the visit to India by the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton. Sunday morning's attack is the third in a series of recent clashes between India and Pakistan near the LoC. Eighteen Pakistani soldiers were killed when they tried to overrun an Indian post in January in the Akhnour area, which is also located south of the Pir Panjal range. Passes along the Pir Panjal are the gateway to the Kashmir valley. Pakistani troops also raided an Indian post in the Mendher sector in the same area, losing five men and killing four Indian soldiers.

India has dismissed Pakistan's allegations that its soldiers massacred 14 villagers in the Kotli area of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir earlier this week.

The Pakistani Foreign Office, on its part, however, said that the alleged attack "would contribute further to the vitiation of the tense security situation in the region. "Militant organisations including the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and the Lashkar-e-Taiba have threatened retaliation."

Analysts here point out that these clashes were likely to be part of Pakistan's bid to escalate tensions across the LoC, close to next month's visit to the sub-continent by the U.S. President. Not



Map showing the place where Pakistani troops attacked an Indian post in Naushera sector of Jammu & Kashmir on Sunday — PTI

surprisingly, the Lashkar-e-Taiba has reportedly urged Mr. Clinton to cancel his visit citing the Kotli incident. Government sources say Pakistan could open multiple points of engagement in the Rajouri, Nangi Tekri and Sunderbani areas of Jammu and Kashmir, south of the Pir Panjal range.

Pakistan has already beefed up forces in the LoC area. The Chief of the Army staff, General V.P Malik, alluding to a Pakistani build-up along the LoC recently acknowledged that there was a

"floating" movement of Pakistani troops in this zone. The sources said, two battalions from the Lahore-based Four Corps and another two from the 10th division, based in Sialkot, have been positioned around Muzaffarabad across Tangdahar and the Uri sectors.

Though currently "dormant" and occupying defensive positions, these forces could get activated once the snow clogging the passes in the area now begins to melt in the next few days.

THE HINDU
28 FEB 2000

Taliban, Pakistan backed IA hijackers, reveals Jaswant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, FEB 28

INDIA today said there was a "triangular coordination" between the hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane, the Taliban, the Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen (HUM) and Pakistan's Inter-services Intelligence and the termination of the incident achieved was the "best possible" in a basket of worst alternatives.

Disclosing for the first time Taliban's complicity in the hijacking episode, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh told the Rajya

Sabha that Kandahar was possibly "the most adverse location for us" to address the situation.

In the statement tabled in the House — the first official comment on the incident by the government — Singh said his carrying the three terrorists in exchange for the hostages was "entirely on account of logistical compulsions".

He said the Taliban authorities "consistently and clearly had their sympathies with the hijackers and their other supporters and acted accordingly" even while adopting the attitude of "correct facilita-

tors". The minister said the decision taken by the Taliban to allow the hijackers and the released terrorists ten hours to leave Afghanistan was its own, even after it had been explicitly conveyed to them that "India expected that both the hijackers and the released terrorists would be treated as criminals in conformity with law". He said Taliban turned a deaf ear to India's plea that a demand for release of terrorists asked by the hijackers was also "un-Islamic" and the Taliban did not press on this while dealing with the hijackers.

INDIAN EXPRESS

29 FEB 2000

Pak doublespeak on hijackers surfaces

We'll try them: Pak Govt ■ PoK says they'll be allowed in

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, JAN 2

PAKISTAN has denied that hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane are Pakistani nationals and accused New Delhi of levelling "baseless and false" allegations against Islamabad.

Pakistan has also said it will not allow the hijackers to enter the country and that they would be nabbed and tried as per international laws as soon as they cross into its territory. However, Prime Minister of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) Sultan Mahmood Choudhury said he would consider any request from the hijackers to enter.

"Levelling of baseless and false accusations against Pakistan is part and peculiar element of Indian tac-

tics," Pakistani Foreign Office spokesman Tariq Altaf alleged in a statement on Saturday, reacting to External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh's remarks.

Singh had told reporters in New Delhi on Saturday that all hijackers were Pakistani nationals and pointed an accusatory finger at Pakistan for its role in the hijacking.

Altaf said Pakistan had made all possible efforts for the safety and welfare of hostages aboard the hijacked plane and claimed that India's allegation that some Pakistani nationals were on board the plane had been proved wrong.

"Initially, India alleged that four Pakistani nationals were on board the hijacked plane but finally this allegation proved wrong," he said, adding there was

no transit passenger on the Kathmandu-bound PIA flight from Karachi for the Indian plane.

Regarding the allegation of presence of arms on the plane, he said the "flight had originated from New Delhi and also stopped at Amritsar. The arms could be delivered at these spots."

"India should refrain from levelling such allegations which is being done out of its petty interest (sic) to hide its shortcomings," the spokesman alleged.

Amid reports that the hijackers and the three militants swapped for 155 hostages on the plane were headed for the Pakistani city of Quetta, Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider told the official APP news agency yesterday, "Under no circumstances, would these

from the front page

Pak doublespeak

persons be allowed to enter Pakistan." "Pakistan is on high alert, and in case they enter Pakistani territory, they will be apprehended and tried as per established international rules and conventions," he said.

Jaswant Singh had told reporters in New Delhi quoting the Afghan Information Minister that all the eight, who were Pakistani nationals, had left for Quetta after attending an iftaar at Kandahar.

Haider said he has issued clear orders to officials and agencies of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan to arrest the hijackers. "In case they sneak into NWFP or Baluchistan, they will be detained and tried according to law and rules," he said. "Hijacking and terrorism are not acceptable and condonable, in any form. This is a highly 'abhorable' crime condemned by the entire

civilised world." However, Choudhury said his government will consider the request of hijackers if they want to enter PoK.

"We will consider a request if the hijackers want to come to the state. But first we should ascertain who they are," Choudhury said the "hijackers have not reached PoK till now. Let the request come first from the hijackers' side".

He said Maulana Masood Azhar, one of the three militants, is a Pakistani national and "he will come to his home town". Azhar hails from Bhawalpur in Pakistan's Punjab province.

Meanwhile, reports from the Pakistan-Afghan border said Pakistani authorities are on high alert. "We are cautiously alert. We will not allow them entry", Major Rana Aftab, incharge of security at the Khyber pass, was quoted as saying by *The News*.

INDIAN EXPRESS

3 JAN 2000

Pakistan plays down hijacking to avoid finger of suspicion

HT. 3/1

Islamabad, January 2

PAKISTAN IS apparently playing down the Indian Airlines plane hijacking drama in a bid to avoid the finger of suspicion pointing towards it in view of its suspected complicity in the incident that came to an end at the Kandahar airport on Friday evening.

Islamabad, which went hoarse from the day one of the hijacking that it had been stage-managed by the Indian intelligence agency raw, went into an embarrassed silence on Friday after the five hijackers emerged from the aircraft and disappeared with a Taliban "hostage" declaring they were heading towards the Pakistani city of Quetta.

The state-controlled media mainly concentrated on the aspect that the Taliban government handled the hijacking in an appreciable manner even as senior UN official Eric de Mul, who played a crucial role in the whole episode, was completely ignored when he returned here yesterday.

There were only two Pakistan-based Indian journalists waiting for him at the Islamabad airport.

Incidentally, the same De Mul had been swamped by the Pakistani media when he had returned here midway through the crisis on December 28, and the

authorities had made it a point to inform all the journalists about his arrival.

With the nationality of the hijackers now clearly established after they took away with them two Pakistani militants released by New Delhi in exchange for the hostages along with the third—a Pakistan-born British national—the foreign office here came up with a timid reaction while reiterating its condemnation of the hijacking.

Foreign office spokesman Tariq Altaf, however, said Pakistan condemned the act even if the hijackers were Pakistani nationals. "We have no sympathy for such desperate acts without regard to the nationality of the perpetrators", he said.

Interestingly, Altaf had come up with the stunning claim last Monday, the fourth day of hijacking drama, that a RAW agent was also on board the hijacked plane, in a bid to back up the claim of Pakistani Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar's allegation that the whole crisis had been "manufactured" by India to malign Pakistan before the international community.

Military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf had also outrightly rejected during an interview with CNN the possibility that the hijackers might be Pakistani nationals. (PTI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 3 JAN 2000

Pak role in hijack clear, says Mishra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, Jan. 2. — The National Security Adviser, Mr Brajesh Mishra, today said there was "enough and clear" evidence to suggest that Pakistan was involved in the hijacking of the Indian Airlines aircraft and ruled out the possibility of Taliban having provided arms to the hijackers in Kandahar.

The behaviour of Pakistan from the first day when it said that India had stage-managed the hijacking and that an Indian Intelligence agent with a particular seat number was travelling in the aircraft showed Pakistan's intentions, he said participating in a programme on *Star News*.

He denied a charge that India had indulged in diversionary tactics by accusing Pakistan of involvement.

Mr Mishra, who is also principal secretary to the Prime Minister, said there was clear evidence that Pakistan was involved in the hijacking.

"We have the names of all the hijackers who are Pakistani nationals and the list of militants they wanted to be released contained majority of Pakistani nationals," he said.

Asked if there was any direct linkage between Pakistan and the hijacking, he said "Pakistani establishment is definitely responsible for it.

"All evidence and intercepts we have suggest this. One such intercept showed that one militant outfit in J&K asked another in the state why it condemned the hijacking. The other replied that we got instructions from Pakistan."

Mr Mishra quoted the Taliban information minister's statement that the hijackers had crossed over to Quetta in Pakistan though Islamabad had denied that they were there. Where are the three militants released by India in exchange for the hostages, he asked.

Asked about reports that the hijackers got more arms in Kandahar and whether they got them from Taliban, he said "that possibility is ruled out. After the aircraft landed in Kandahar, the flight engineer was asked to go down and bring one bag from the hold (cargo) and when it was brought out, there were more arms."

To a question whether the government had absolute faith in the Taliban for negotiations, Mr Mishra said "when we start negotiations with another authority it starts on certain presumptions."

He said the Taliban representative in New York and in Islamabad made it clear that they were against hijacking and the subsequent statements that they would storm the aircraft if any of the passengers were killed gave a certain kind of confidence.

Asked if Taliban statement that the aircraft would be asked to leave Kandahar if no settlement was reached, he said that was intended to put pressure on hijackers and Indian government.

Asked if there was any communication gap at the time of devising a strategy before the hijacked aircraft left Amritsar and in ordering an operation by National Security Guard commandos, he said there was no communication gap between Amritsar and Delhi.

Centre directs states to deport illegal Pakistani nationals

HYDERABAD: The Union government has decided to publish a White Paper on ISI agents and their activities, and directed all state governments to arrest and deport the 11,000 Pakistani nationals, overstaying in various parts of the country, Union minister of state for home Ch. Vidyasagar Rao said on Monday.

Mr Rao referred to the recent hijacking of the Indian Airlines airbus and stressed the need to prevent the re-occurrence of such incidents by taking necessary precautions.

All the state governments have been asked to be alert as any laxity could provide scope for "hijack of trains, buses and autos", he added.

As per the seventh schedule of the Constitution, it was the state governments' responsibility to take appropriate action to apprehend and deport them, Mr Rao said. Asking the states to give top priority in tackling this problem, he warned that such incidents could occur again if this was not carried out.

As part of tightening security, the government had already embarked on fencing India's borders with Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal as infiltrators entering through Indo-Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan borders were trying to destabilise the country.

But "we are not in a position to count the number of infiltrators," he added. Despite the security agencies being alert about ISI infiltration and narcotics smuggling in

Nepal, the latest incident had occurred.

The Union minister added that efforts were also on to beef up the intelligence wing.

He said as many as 2000 of the 11,000 Pakistani nationals overstaying in the country, had gone underground.

Efforts were on to trace and deport them. On Sunday, 11 such Pakistani nationals were arrested in the Nizamabad district of Andhra Pradesh and the state government had been asked to take steps immediately for their deportation.

Mr Vidyasagara Rao said the highest number of such Pakistani nationals might be in Uttar Pradesh and 19 in Andhra Pradesh.

He denied differences of opinion in the Union cabinet on the release of the three militants from jails in exchange for the freedom of the hostages in the Indian Airlines airbus.

He stated that the Union home minister L.K. Advani had no difference of opinion regarding the release of terrorists in exchange of hostages. "The decision taken was collective one and there was absolutely no difference in the government over it," he said, adding it also received support from all parties. Referring to the handling of the hijack crisis by the government, he said though there was some "dissatisfaction" among some quarters in the country, the international community appreciated the government for its proper handling of the situation. (Agencies)

Pak official held for peddling fake Indian notes

Kathmandu, January 3

THE NEPAL police today arrested a Pakistani embassy official here for passing on counterfeit Indian currency notes to an undercover agent of the Nepali police, report agencies.

Following a more than a fortnight-long sting operation, the police uncovered early yesterday Aslam Saboor — an assistant secretary in the visa section of the Pakistan embassy here — passing on counterfeit Indian currency notes of Rs 500 denomination.

HTC adds in New Delhi: The External Affairs Ministry said it had been confirmed independently that the Pakistani ambassador and other officials of the mission tried to prevent Saboor's arrest on grounds of diplomatic immunity.

It expressed its hope that Nepal would take appropriate action against Saboor.

Sources said that Saboor was among the members of the Pakistani embassy in Kathmandu who were in contact with the terrorist Lakhbir Singh who was arrested by the Nepal police in November 1998.

Action against Nepal unlikely: P 10

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 4 JAN 2000

Declaring Pakistan a rogue state needs US support

Apratim Mukarji 9/20
New Delhi, January 3 9/20 10

PRIME MINISTER Atal Behari Vajpayee's call to major nations to declare Pakistan a terrorist state may not be founded on as rickety a wicket as would seem initially.

The US has so far declared, for all practical purposes, as many as seven governments (not states) as terrorist ones for funding, aiding and abetting international terrorism. They are Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria.

When Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee urged major nations to declare Pakistan a terrorist state, he was obviously referring to the potential US role in such a scenario. He, in fact, responded to a specific question by saying, "It is expected of America to agree (to declare Pakistan a terrorist state) in the larger interests and we will try our best to convince America."

The most potent obstacle to get Pakistan

declared a terrorist state is the absence of an international mechanism to declare a government or country a terrorist one even if one is perceived to be engaged in actively promoting international terrorism.

The US is the only country which has evolved its own mechanism to do so principally to protect its global interests and fight those governments or states which obstruct or endanger in one way or the other the pursuance of its self-interests.

Any question of declaring Pakistan a terrorist state would therefore necessarily involve the role of the US. India clearly derives hope from one significant step that the Clinton administration took in October 1997 by declaring Harkat-ul-Ansar (HUA), a "Pakistan-based organisation which seeks to enable Pakistan to annex Kashmir", a terrorist organisation under the "Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act 1996".

The relevant provision of the Act reads: "Any contribution to a foreign terrorist organisation, regardless of the intended purpose, is prohibited by the statute, unless the contribution is limited to medicine or religious materials."

At the time the HUA was declared a terrorist organisation (which, as Washington noted in its document, operates from within Pakistan), State Department spokesman James

Rubin said that another Pakistan-based organisation, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) continued to be under watch for the purpose of being similarly declared a terrorist outfit. "Because you are not on the list...Doesn't mean you have been given a clean bill of health. You are on the list. We have put together the administrative record necessary to withstand a court challenge," he said. The record, he said, showed that the

JKLF was involved in bombings and killings in Delhi and Kashmir.

The State Department publication on global terrorism 1996 (published in April 1997 and the actions taken announced in October 1997) said there were reports that Pakistani support to militants fighting in Kashmir, including the HUA (rechristened shortly thereafter as Harkat-ul-Mujahideen), continued well into 1996 (the year under review). It contained detailed information on the HUA's activities.

The report also noted that while Pakistan denied aid to terrorists, "reports continued in 1996 however of official Pakistani support to militants fighting in Kashmir. One Pakistan-backed group, JKLF, claimed responsibility for three bombings in and near New Delhi in early 1996 that killed at least 40 persons." Since then, as the MEA points out, evidence has continued to pile up on Pak's involvement with terrorist organisations operating against the Indian state.

News Analysis

APC-11 Bad to worse

SINCE INDIA-PAKISTAN relations have rarely seen a happy phase, the latest downturn is not unusual. However, several factors make the current seemingly lowest point in mutual ties in a time of peace more than a little disturbing. For a start, Pakistan's intent has not often been as hostile as to leave little scope for a meeting point, as at present. Earlier, even as Islamabad waged its proxy war in Kashmir along with the ISI-sponsored acts of terrorism elsewhere, it was possible for occasional marginal improvements in relations as evident from even the infructuous foreign secretary-level meetings and the Lahore initiative which was preceded by Mr Nawaz Sharif's interview calling for burying the past. But if the present outlook is so dismal, it is because Pakistan is led by a chief executive who appears determined to undo the grievous blow to his plans and prestige inflicted by his Kargil misadventure. Having first toppled his own prime minister, General Musharraf then moved to step up the proxy war in Kashmir by encouraging the terrorists specifically to target the Indian defence establishments, perhaps to provoke the security forces to react with harsh measures, thereby alienating the local people in the valley. Then came the hijacking incident with its traumatic impact on the entire Indian nation. For all its public protestations, it is unlikely that Islamabad will treat the hijackers, who have now "vanished" in Pakistan, and the three released militants as anything other than heroes.

In addition to its obsession with Kashmir, Pakistan's latest hostile acts are probably motivated by its international isolation as a result of the coup, a floundering economy and General Musharraf's failure to tackle either the pressing problems of corruption and feudal high-handedness or acquire any legitimacy for his own government. At such times of domestic uncertainty, when he is apparently clueless about how long he will hold on to power and to whom he will hand over the reins, targeting India is an obvious way out. It is a ploy which his civilian and military predecessors have used in the past. The General's hope evidently is that a steady deterioration in the situation will once again bring Kashmir into the limelight and persuade the US and the Western powers to intervene. However, his real problem may well be that the growing acts of terrorism, of which the hijacking was only the latest, will not endear him to the outside world which may even think that Afghanistan's behaviour has been more responsible. In this context, New Delhi's refusal to talk to Pakistan unless it stops its acts of terror directed against India will now seem even more justified.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 4 JAN 2000

India wants Pak. declared a terrorist state: PM

By P. Sunderarajan

PUNE, JAN. 3. The Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, today openly accused Pakistan of having been behind the recent hijack of the Indian Airlines aircraft and said the Government would work systematically to ensure that major nations of the world declared Pakistan a terrorist state. India expected the U.S. to take the initiative in this direction.

At his first press conference after the resolution of the weeklong hijack, Mr. Vajpayee said all the information with the Government about the hijack and the subsequent developments made it clear that it was an integral part of the Pakistan-backed campaign of terrorism. Apart from their stated demands, the hijackers and their mentors had planned to internationalise the Kashmir issue and isolate India diplomatically.

They, however, failed miserably in their "diabolical design", he said, and if anything got internationalised during the crisis, it was not the Kashmir issue, but the brazen resort to terrorism by those seeking to break India's unity and integrity.

The Prime Minister, who was here to inaugurate the 87th Indian Science Congress, said the hijack had been universally condemned. Thus, rather than India, it was the anti-India forces behind the terrorist act, which had got isolated in the eyes of the world.

The development had vastly furthered India's long-term interest. It had strengthened the legitimacy of India's traditional stand on Kashmir and simultaneously shown the world

that Pakistan's Kashmir agenda was not only baseless, but was being pursued by recourse to terrorism, which constituted a patent threat to global security. The involvement of Pakistan's ISI was all the more confirmed by the incident in Nepal last evening, he added. (A Pakistani diplomat has reportedly been arrested for possessing fake Indian currency).

Mr. Vajpayee, however, parried a question on reports that Britain would allow entry to Ahmad Omar Sayed Sheikh, who was among the three militants released by India in exchange for the freedom of the hostages, and who happens to be a British national of Pakistani origin. "No comments," he said, when asked about these London-based reports.

On the Taliban, the Prime Minister, said its role in the episode was yet to be assessed fully. At Kandahar, its attitude was helpful towards hijackers. But, they were also sympathetic to the hijackers. We are awaiting more information, he said.

Asked specifically whether the Taliban had supplied arms to the hijackers, Mr. Vajpayee confirmed that it was true that the hijackers had a fresh set of weapons. But, it was possible that they had been hidden in the aircraft earlier and it was also possible that they had got it from "outside".

The Prime Minister refuted criticism that the Government had bowed before the hijackers and had compromised on national security and said the release of militants for the hostages in the present case was far different from what happened during the V. P. Singh

Government, when five militants were released in exchange for the daughter of the then Home Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed.

At the time, there was only one hostage. But, now, the number of the hostages was quite large. The presence of children and women among them also made the task difficult, he said, and reiterated that though the demand was for the release of 36 militants the Government accepted to release only three of them. We had no other option, he said. Moreover, none of the hostages was related to any Minister, he said.

Mr. Vajpayee also refuted allegations that there were differences within the Cabinet over the manner in which the incident was handled. There was absolutely no dissent.

There was a unanimity of views, he said, and added that the Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, was fully involved in all the discussions and also attended the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security, where the decision to exchange the militants for the hostages was taken. Reports of resignation, or for that matter any other letter, were totally baseless, he said.

Mr. Vajpayee agreed that the security at the Kathmandu airport had been lax. "It made our task difficult. Nepal must tighten its security arrangements," he said and added that the Government was seriously considering a proposal to post commandos on planes.

Govt. under fire: Page 11

Pak must try hijackers: India

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Jan. 4. — India today asserted that Pakistan was obligated to act to arrest and try the five hijackers of the Indian Airlines aircraft even if they made their way to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

A spokesman of the ministry of external affairs said today that "Pakistan is obligated to act in respect to what happens on its soil or territory controlled by it even though illegally."

The spokesman said Indian authorities were trying to ascertain from various sources the whereabouts of the five hijackers, who had reportedly been given 10 hours by Taliban authorities to leave the territory held by it, adds PTI.

The Taliban information minister, Mr Abdul Hai, had said recently: "We have been informed that the hijackers and the released militants are now in Quetta."

Meanwhile, sources here described as "red herring" claims by the Pakistani Intelligence agencies that the hijackers and the three released militants including two Pakistani mercenaries had split up. The sources said the claims that released militants were trying to sneak into PoK and the five hijackers were making their

DAMAGE TO BJP: ADVANI

NEW DELHI, Jan. 4. — Mr LK Advani today said the swapping of three militants for hijacked passengers caused "some damage" to the Bharatiya Janata Party and not to the nation. This was the "best option" available to the government under trying circumstances, the Union home minister told reporters. He said the safety and security of the passengers was uppermost in the tortuous course of negotiations held in Kandahar where the aircraft remained grounded for a week. He also denied that he wanted to quit the ministry over the incident. — UNI

Editorial: Advani's role, page 6 More reports on page 8

way to Iran via Herat where a ploy to divert international pressure, anger and dismay over the hijacking.

However, a Lahore-based daily, The Nation, quoting "a top secret report prepared by RAW in New Delhi" said the three militants might seek temporary refuge in Sudan, Nigeria or Saudi Arabia before ultimately returning to Kashmir, a Lahore daily reported, reports

UNI.

The NCP president, Mr Sharad Pawar, meanwhile supported the call given by the Prime Minister to major powers in the world to declare Pakistan a "terrorist state" but said the nation "has lost its prestige in the hijack episode".

Taking exception to the Vajpayee government's release of three hardcore militants in exchange for safety and security of passengers, Mr Pawar said: "Whatever we gained in Kargil has been lost in the hijack drama".

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister has said that mounting evidence about Pakistan's role in the hijacking of IC 814 Airbus would be put before the world by India when the time comes, adds SNS.

Asked as to what evidence the government could collect regarding Pakistan's role in the hijacking, Mr Vajpayee remarked "we have enough evidence and this would be presented before the world at the right time."

With regard to the arrest of a clerk of Pakistani embassy in Kathmandu yesterday by the Nepalese Police, Mr Vajpayee said his government would get in touch with Nepal in the wake of reports that the clerk was caught while exchanging Indian currency notes.

THE STATESMAN

5 JAN 2000

✓ CIL-10

Hostile Notes

5/1

The arrest of a Pakistani diplomat in Kathmandu for attempting to pass on fake Indian currency makes it clear that this country is being subjected to total war of a new kind. Other aspects of this war are the promotion of tension in Kashmir and elsewhere, the abuse of religion for terroristic purposes, narcoterrorism, and the use of organised crime with its politician-bureaucratic nexus. Counterfeit currency as an instrument to wreck a country's economy was a Nazi invention during the last days of World War II. The Hitlerites printed vast quantities of British currency notes and planned to release them after the war in sabotage operations by fanatical Nazi terrorists. Fortunately for Britain, the counterfeit notes were discovered by the advancing Allied forces and destroyed in time. Pakistan has been printing and attempting to use fake Indian currency notes for some time, especially in the Kashmir valley and in areas where they have narcotics conduits into India. Since Indian currency is valid in Nepal, it is logical for Pakistan to try and flood Nepal with counterfeit Indian currency. As Pakistan has made Nepal its most prominent foreign base for ISI operations, the introduction of fake Indian currency there gives them a low cost option to finance their terroristic activities in India.

Faced with the threat of the worldwide use of fake dollar notes printed by organisations in West Asia, the US changed the design of its high denomination currency and incorporated certain additional safety features. All currency dealers in the US and elsewhere have intensified their scrutiny of higher denomination dollar notes in order to detect counterfeits. The US has certain natural defences. Within the country, most transactions are done through credit cards, while transactions outside the US are scrutinised by professional currency dealers. In the case of India, the denominations targeted are Rs 500 and Rs 100. The purchasing power of these is not high and, therefore, they have to be handled in vast quantities. Hence, the problem of transporting and circulating the counterfeit currency is very much more difficult. It is also possible that these fake Indian notes may be exchanged for foreign currencies by Pakistan in West and South East Asia, where such transactions take place on a large scale, and then brought in to India by hawala dealers. As India begins to embark on a high trajectory growth path, Islamabad is likely to develop a mindset like Nazi Germany did in its last days and attempt to damage the Indian economy even as its own economy is going down. If we are to combat this danger, there has to be a change in the Indian mindset which, in spite of all indicators, still refuses to accept that Pakistan has been waging a total war of a new kind against this country. Since this *sub rosa* war is being waged on all fronts, it is far more difficult to counter than conventional hostilities. Let us first recognise the fact of this war. Unfortunately, wars have to be fought by anticipating the enemy's moves and not on the basis of evidence proved in courts of law.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

5 JAN 2000

Enough evidence to damn Pak: Vajpayee

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, JAN. 4. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today said that India had enough damning evidence to establish Pakistan's involvement in the recent hijacking of an Indian Airlines aircraft.

But the Prime Minister, who was speaking to newsmen at an iftaar party hosted by him, added, "we will disclose it at an appropriate time."

Mr. Vajpayee also insisted that India would try to get the hijackers back in order to make them stand trial here. In addition, India was in touch with Nepal about the possible security lapses at the Kathmandu airport.

That was all the newsmen could get out of Mr. Vajpayee before the SPG personnel moved in.

The palatial Hyderabad House provides the perfect setting for a Prime Minister to host an "iftaar" party. On this chilly wintry evening Mr. Vajpayee's caterers had very thoughtfully provided protection against the elements. And besides kebabs and biryani, explanations and denials were aplenty.

The action then shifted to Mr. L. K. Advani's corner, and the Union Home Minister had a lot to deny and quite a bit of information to provide.

To begin with, Mr. Advani denied reports in a section of the media that he was furious with the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, and the National Security Adviser, Mr. Brajesh Mishra, for agreeing to release three

functionaries of the Prime Minister's Office, the mood was not exactly chirpy. The false note in the exaggerated effusive New Year greetings was easily discernible.

Besides Mr. Advani, quite a few of Mr. Vajpayee's colleagues put in an appearance. Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi was there, as was Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan. The Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Prabhat Kumar, was around as was Mr. Brajesh Mishra. The Chief Election Commissioner, Dr. M. S. Gill, came late, but the Attorney-General, Mr. Soli Sorabjee, was in time to do full justice to the excellent delicacies. There were familiar BJP faces such as Mr. K. R. Malkani and Mr. Madan Lal Khuranna.

And, Mr. Narendrabhai Modi was also there, looking mighty pleased that he fortuitously got a chance to move the main political resolution (which was to be moved by Mr. Advani but who got held up in New Delhi because of the hijack drama) at the BJP's National Council meeting last week in Chennai.

And, not to be overlooked, the Leader of the Opposition, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, too had responded to the Prime Minister's invitation. She went around, with hordes of cameramen in tow, greeting guests as if she was the host.

Oh, yes, in case you got the wrong idea, there was indeed a representative sprinkling of the members from the minority community. Rites of secularism remain unchanged, even if the colours of regimes change.

Opposition poster: Page 13



The Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, with guests at the iftaar party hosted by him at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Tuesday. — Photo: V. Sudershan

militants in exchange for the Indian Airlines passengers and crew. He had checked with Mr. Mishra about the veracity of the reports. He also explained that he had "disappeared" for two days because that was what he did at the beginning of every new year and not because he was "sulking".

Mr. Advani said that along with the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, he was invited by the Prime Minister this morning to join him in getting a detailed briefing on the negotiations with the hijackers. The briefing by Mr. Jaswant Singh and other officials lasted for over two hours.

Mr. Advani said this was the first time the Prime Minister was given full details of the negotia-

tions. The Home Minister also pooh-poohed all talk of any deliberate design to keep Mr. Fernandes out of the crisis management process. Nothing should be read in Mr. Fernandes' decision to return to the capital from the north-east three days after the hijacking crisis erupted.

Then, Mr. Advani allowed himself to be provoked into saying that the so-called NSG option at Amritsar was no option. The final deal was the best deal under the circumstances. All that he would concede was that whereas the country's interests did not suffer, the BJP's political image indeed got dented in the manner in which the hijack was handled.

From Mr. Advani down to the

Masood seen in Karachi

REUTERS

NEW DELHI, Jan. 5. — Masood Azhar and Mustaq Ahmed Zargar, two of the three militants freed by India, were seen in Pakistan, witnesses said today. Azhar was briefly in Karachi, confirmed a Harkat-ul-Mujahideen spokesman, while Zargar came home to a hero's welcome in Muzaffarabad, PoK, last night.

The external affairs ministry has ruled out any review of its position on Taliban, saying India would continue to recognise the Rabbani government as the legitimate Afghan government, adds SNS.

J&K high alert: Police and security forces have been put on "maximum alert" following the seizure of nine sophisticated artillery rockets meant to disrupt Republic Day celebrations in the city, add PTI and UNI. A National Conference leader, four militants and a BSF jawan were among the eight killed in the valley since last evening.

THE STATESMAN

- 6 JAN 2000

Pak N-threat cannot deter conventional war, says Fernandes

Defence minister slams Pak 'error of judgment'

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Defence minister George Fernandes on Wednesday accused Pakistan of holding out the nuclear threat to India in the belief that it could wrest Kashmir without facing any challenges.

Reacting to a statement by Pakistan's chief executive, General Pervez Musharraf, Mr Fernandes said, "They (Pakistan) held out a nuclear threat to us on May 31, 1999, and did it again yesterday without absorbing the real meaning of nuclearisation—that it can deter only the use of nuclear weapons but not a conventional war."

Speaking to the media after inaugurating a national seminar on 'The Challenges of Limited War: Parameters and Options', organised by the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), Mr Fernandes criticised the United States for "overlooking" Pakistan's support to terrorism and said India would mobilise world opinion to declare Pakistan a "terrorist state".

"When it comes to (Osama) Bin Laden, the U.S. fires not one but scores of high-tech missiles it possesses. What the U.S. and the world need to realise is that terrorism understands no borders. Therefore, to take aim at Bin Laden and overlook what is happening across the border in India at the hands of Pakistan is not addressing the question," he added.

Referring to Gen. Musharraf's comment that Pakistan would use nuclear weapons if it was threatened, Mr Fernandes said, "Musharraf's intentions have not percolated even to the people of Pakistan."

The defence minister observed that after the nuclear tests in May 1998, the Pakistani elite had started believing that India would be deterred from fighting back in any war. There was a perception in Pakistan that it could continue with its covert war and carry out aggression across the LoC (Line of Control) since India would be deterred by the nuclear factor, he said.

Terming it Pakistan's worst error of judgment, Mr Fernandes pointed to similar follies committed by Russia and China—both nuclear-weapon states—during the 1969 Ussuri river border clashes.

Earlier, speaking at the seminar, Mr Fernandes emphasised the need for long-term planning in defence matters. He said the type of defence India needed during the new century depended on the nature of the challenges and threats as well as "our own thinking and planning about how we intend to fight and win those wars. Military strategy, doctrine and training need to be forward-looking."

Easing Indo-Pak tension is top priority: Clinton

WASHINGTON: U.S. President Bill Clinton has said "easing tensions" in Indo-Pakistani relations and fighting terrorism are among his top priorities for the year 2000. Mr Clinton's statement appears in the 1999 National Security Strategy report which was sent to the U.S. Congress on Tuesday. In it, he has outlined his vision for the role of the U.S. as well as its priorities in international affairs. "Easing tension between India and Pakistan and fighting weapons proliferation, terrorism and the nexus between them are among the priorities for this year," the U.S. President said.

Another significant aspect of the report is Mr Clinton's proposal for a \$112 billion increase in defence spending in 2000-2005, the first such for long-term defence spending in over ten years.

Meanwhile, Democrat Congressman Frank Pallone said he might draft legislation calling on the State Department to declare Pakistan a terrorist state if the department failed to do so on its own.

Mr Pallone, known for his strong anti-terrorism stand, on Tuesday said, "Now is the time for the U.S. and other major nations to declare Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism." In his statement, he added that he would formalise his request to cite Pakistan a terrorist state through a letter to secretary of state Madeleine Albright. Pending a response from the State Department, he said he might draft legislation to enforce his decision.

Citing Mr Vajpayee's national security adviser Brajesh Mishra, the U.S. Congressman said that among the pointers to Pakistan's clear association with terrorist activities were the radio conversations of the militant groups in Kashmir with links to the hijackers that were intercepted by Indian intelligence.

He said Indian officials had quoted reports indicating the presence of hijackers somewhere in Pakistan, despite denials by Islamabad's military dictatorship. "Pakistan actually protested the U.S. military action against terrorist training camps in Afghanistan," he observed, reiterating his call for closer cooperation between the U.S. and India to tackle terrorism at the international level.

Britain on Wednesday followed the U.S. in refusing to declare Pakistan a terrorist state for its alleged role in the hijacking of the IA flight.

"It is not the U.K. government's practice to designate states in that way," British high commissioner to India Rob Young told newsmen here on Wednesday.

It's been a long, rough road for Indo-Pak ties since the bus ride

By Ajay Bharadwaj

The Times of India News Service

AMRITSAR: From the Amritsar-Lahore bus ride undertaken by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to the Indian Airlines plane's hijacking, it has been a tumultuous journey of ups and downs of Indo-Pakistan relations that the city has been witness to in the past year.



A.B. Vajpayee

If the year started with Indo-Pakistan bonhomie after the bus ride to Lahore, it more or less ended with the PM asking the world community to declare Pakistan a terrorist state after the plane was hijacked to Lahore and then to Kandahar.

A positive and optimistic note was struck as soon as the PM undertook the historic bus journey to Lahore along with a host of prominent personalities to start a new phase of ties between the two countries and open new vistas. The historic bus ride was followed by a number of occasions when India threw open its gates at Wagah to Pakistani visitors, who came in

hordes to watch cricket matches or to participate in cultural programmes.

The PM had termed his bus ride as a momentous occasion which had opened a new chapter in Indo-Pakistan friendship. Businessmen, too, were optimistic that there would be more transactions between the two countries.

As things started looking up, the

'Mr Vajpayee failed to realise that Pakistan's friendly gestures were merely a cover to hide its evil designs'

Kargil crisis broke out and the city witnessed its poignant moments when FI Lt Nachiketa walked pass the Wagah border after being held captive by Pakistan for about a fortnight. In the wake of the Kargil crisis, the Army build-up on either side of the border further strained the relations, putting the clock back to square one.

Pakistan compounded things by dipping a hand on the head and picking up a few Indians from close

to the zero line. The relations came to a head when four Pakistanis grounded the hijacked Indian Airlines plane here temporarily before taking it off to Lahore and finally to Kandahar.

"The Indo-Pakistan relationship cycle has come a full circle leaving us once again despondent about the entire matter," said Guru Nanak Dev University professor S.P. Singh. Yet, he said regardless of the bitterness created by the rulers of the two countries, people on either side of the border still wanted peace and amity.

Veteran CPI leader S.P. Dang said it was not improper on the part of Mr Vajpayee to have undertaken the bus ride to Lahore. "But the Indian government blundered when it came to understanding Pakistan's gameplan in the right perspective."

Mr Dang felt that the government should have been smart enough to see through Pakistan's duplicity for if the latter was hailing the bus ride as a welcome step, it was at the same time preparing itself for a confrontation in the Kargil sector. "Mr Vajpayee failed to realise that Pakistan's gesture of friendship was merely a cover to hide its evil designs," he said.

State of Terror

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's call for the US to declare Pakistan a terrorist state will be received with mixed feelings in this country. There is not much disagreement in India on the characterisation of Pakistan as a terrorist state. If India were to mobilise international public opinion in favour of the view that the Pakistani state is a terrorist one, there is hardly likely to be any objection either. The reservation is about entreating the US on this account, as Mr Vajpayee's appeal implies a certain willingness to accept Washington's right unilaterally to issue such fatwas. In fact, appealing to the US in this manner is neither necessary nor prudent. In 1993, the US had threatened to include Pakistan in its list of states sponsoring terrorism following the shooting of CIA operatives outside the gates of the agency's Langley headquarters, the bombing of the World Trade Centre and the killing of CIA personnel in Pakistan. When Benazir Bhutto returned to power, the Clinton administration not only gave up the idea but even tilted towards Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. Subsequently, the abduction and killing of five foreign tourists in Kashmir by Al Faran, a front organisation of the Harkat-ul-Ansar, did not produce any perceptible change in US policy. Though the State Department declared the Harkat-ul-Ansar a terrorist organisation in its annual report "Patterns of Global Terrorism", the US did not logically follow this up by warning Islamabad that permitting the operations of the group on its soil would lead to Pakistan being declared a terrorist state.

The activities of Saudi financier Osama bin Laden no doubt raised US concerns about terrorism being directed from the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, especially after the bombing of its embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam. Even after the missile attacks on Mr bin Laden's headquarters — in which a number of Pakistanis undergoing terrorist training were killed — and after four more US citizens were killed in Karachi following the death sentence given to the Langley CIA killer, Mir Aimal Kansi, the Clinton administration still looked away from the terrorist activities of Pakistan. Therefore, it should be obvious that if the US is still not able to determine whether Pakistan is a terrorist state, this is not for want of evidence. Washington's indecisiveness is analogous to its inability to reach a finding on the Chinese transfer of M-11 missiles to Pakistan in 1993, a transfer which both Islamabad and Beijing have accepted. The rapidity of the U-turn in US policy towards General Pervez Musharraf after having publicly warned him against attempting a coup would tend to show that the Pakistan army's hold on US decision-makers is quite strong. This is further borne out by the comments of the US spokesman in response to Indian allegations of Pakistani involvement in the hijacking of IC 814. In spite of this country having been subjected to a proxy war over 10 years, successive Indian governments have tried to play down Pakistan's role as a terrorist state and have failed to evolve a comprehensive strategy to deal with the threat from across the border. Let not Mr Vajpayee's plea to the US to declare Pakistan a terrorist state become an alibi for the Indian government's failure to come out with all its evidence on Islamabad's terrorist activities.

Musharraf calls for restraint

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 5. Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has advised the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, to "exercise restraint" in his statements for any improvement in relations between the two countries. He said it was up to India to create a conducive atmosphere for talks, but Pakistan would not "beg" India to resume the stalled dialogue. *Indo Pak*

The General, talking to Pakistani reporters on Tuesday night, was quoted as saying: "I never imagined that Mr. Vajpayee would go to the extent of openly maligning Pakistan and accusing us of hijacking (the Indian Airlines plane) which is totally false and baseless." Mr. Vajpayee, he said, should "play cool" and not try to create new problems between the two countries.

(Separately, the General was quoted as telling CNN in the Pakistani press that Pakistan would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons if its security was threatened. "If the security of Pakistan is threatened, surely we would not allow Pakistan to die. That will not be allowed," he said when asked under what conditions Pakistan might use nuclear weapons).

Gen. Musharraf told reporters on Tuesday that the hijacking was an Indian conspiracy. "Now I am

convinced that India had hatched a conspiracy against Pakistan. This was their game, but it is good that the international community does not believe what they (the Indians) are saying."

"Initially, it was my suspicion that India had a certain political agenda, but now the way Mr. Vajpayee is continuously trying to involve Pakistan in the hijacking, I have no doubt it was all pre-planned to declare Pakistan a terrorist state," he alleged.

He said India did not appreciate Pakistan's "sincere efforts" to resolve the hijacking crisis on humanitarian grounds. "They are doing so (blaming Pakistan) because of their inept and ineffective handling of the hijacking drama for which they are being severely criticised by their own people."

India a 'terrorist state'

"Whenever there is an internal failure, the Indian leaders start targeting Pakistan and this time they had tried to put the blame of the hijacking on Pakistan," the General maintained. He agreed with a reporter that it was India which should be declared a "terrorist state" for sponsoring state terrorism in Kashmir. "I had no intention to get myself involved in this controversy but the way events are unfolding one could say it is India which should be declared a terrorist state."

THE HINDU

6 JAN 2000

India not deterred by Pak's n-factor: Fernandes

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JAN. 5. The possession of nuclear weapons by Pakistan does not rule out the possibility of a limited conventional war, the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, has said.

Referring to the recent comments by the Pakistani military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, he said "they (Pakistan) held out a nuclear threat to us on May 31, 1999, and did it again yesterday without absorbing the real meaning of nuclearisation, that it can deter only the use of nuclear weapons, but not conventional war."

Mr. Fernandes made these observations after inaugurating a seminar on 'Challenges of limited war' organised by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) this morning. He pointed out that the nuclear tests by Pakistan had created an impression among its elite that India will refrain from fighting any kind of war. "There was a perception in Pakistan that the nuclear status had ensured it that a covert war would continue and aggression across the Line of Control (LoC) would be carried out and India would be deterred by the nuclear factor."

He characterised this as the worst error of judgment by Islamabad and alluded to the bitter and prolonged conventional clashes between the former Soviet Union and China in 1969 across the Ussuri river. "The issue is not that the war has been made obsolete by nuclear weapons, and that covert war by proxy is the only option, but that conventional war remained feasible, but with definite limitations if escalation across the nuclear threshold is to be avoided," he said.

The nuclearisation of the South Asian environment, nevertheless, imposed upon India the need to keep any future conflict below the nuclear threshold. "We need therefore to ensure that a conventional war, if imposed upon us in the future, is kept below the nuclear threshold. This will require a close examination of our doctrine, defence strategy and force structure."

India's deterrence strategy will have to address the nuclear and conventional arenas and continuous attention to this will be paid.

Unlike the "total wars" of the past, future conflicts will be of a limited nature. In fact, countries like China had internalised in their military doctrine that future wars will be "limited border wars".

In an obvious reference to the Kargil conflict, Mr. Fernandes said that the Indian defence forces had demonstrated their ability to fight and win such a war even when fighting from a situation of tactical disadvantage. "If India can beat a professional military force equipped with modern firepower at the ground, and at a time of Pakistan's choice, with the initiative also in their hands, India can beat Pakistan anytime, anywhere," he asserted.

Pakistan's continuing role in breeding terrorism was bringing it close to being declared a "rogue state," Mr. Fernandes, however, expressed disappointment at the reluctance being shown by the U.S. in frontally addressing the issue. "The U.S. has to be made to realise that terrorism knows no borders. They (U.S.) aim at Osama bin Laden but overlook what is being done in India by Pakistan."

Presiding over the inaugural session of the seminar, Mr. K. Subrahmanyam, noted defence analyst, asserted that India had to recognise that it was engaged in an uninterrupted war with Pakistan since 1947. "Incidents like Kargil, the recent hijacking, the continuation of terrorism in Kashmir and Punjab are all part of this long war", he observed.

Pak complicity clear: Advani

Hijackers identified • Four associates arrested in Mumbai

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, January 6

IN A major breakthrough in the Indian Airlines hijacking case, the investigative agencies have arrested four key accomplices in Mumbai, established the identity of the five Pakistani hijackers and come up with a lot of evidence on Islamabad's "neck deep involvement" in the whole episode.

Giving the details at a hurriedly convened Press conference, Home Minister L.K. Advani said two of the arrested persons, Mohammad Rehan and Mohammad Iqbal, are Pakistani nationals. The other two are Yusuf Nepali of Nepal and Abdul Latif, an Indian. All the four are ISI operatives.

Their interrogation led to the identification of the five hijackers: Ibrahim Akhtar (from Bahawalpur), Shahid Akhtar Sayed (Gulshan Iqbal, Karachi), Sunny Ahmed Qazi (Defence Area, Karachi), Mistri Zahoor Ibrahim (Akhtar Colony, Karachi) and Shakir (Sukkur City). All the five hijackers are Pakistani nationals, Mr. Advani said.

To the hostages, they came to be known as Chief, Doctor, Burger, Bholu and Shankar respectively during their week-long ordeal.

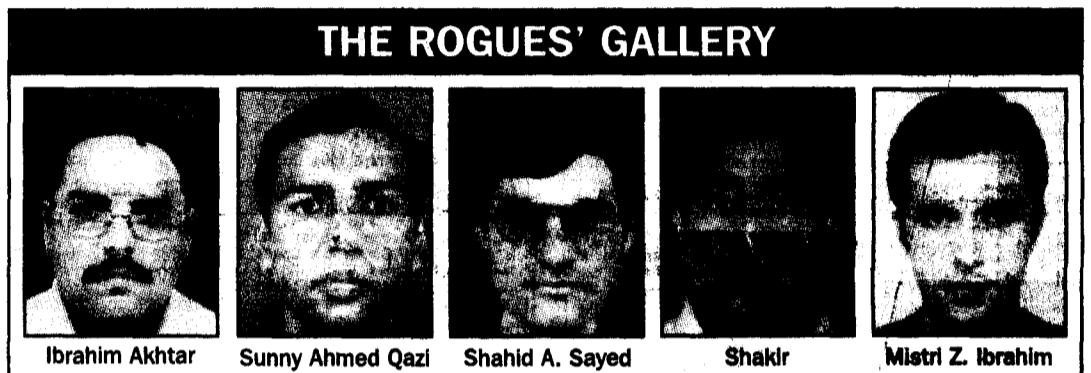
The Govt, according to the Home Minister, is now in possession of irrefutable evidence on Pakistan's complicity in the hijacking episode.

Central intelligence agencies had, in fact, achieved the breakthrough on December 29, the sixth day of the hijacking drama. On that day, the agencies had intercepted a message from an associate, based in Pakistan, to Abdul Latif in Mumbai.

The message, meant to be passed on to a television correspondent in London, said that if the demands were not met, the IA plane would be blown up.

The investigating agencies have re-confirmed the identity of the hijackers from the coloured photographs, secured from the four arrested persons.

The photographs were shown to



the pilot and the other crew of the hijacked aircraft.

All the four accomplices of the hijackers are said to be activists of the Harkat-ul-Ansar, the Rawalpindi-based terrorist outfit now rechristened as Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen. They provided the ground support to the hijackers in "planning and executing their diabolic mission".

According to the Home Minister, preparations for the hijack operations were spread over nearly two months. The hijackers along with Latif, made several trips to Kathmandu during this period.

On Nov 1, 1999, leader hijacker Akhtar along with Latif left Mumbai for Calcutta by air. The twosome are alleged to have taken a train to New Jalpaiguri followed by a bus-ride for their final desti-

nation at Kathmandu. Latif is reported to have returned to Mumbai subsequently while leaving behind Akhtar in the Himalayan kingdom.

On Dec 1, 1999, Latif again made a trip to Kathmandu but with another member of the hijack-team--Shakir. The duo took a different route this time, first travelling to Gorakhpur by train and from there to Kathmandu by bus. On Dec 17, Latif took an AI flight to Delhi and returned to Mumbai.

Mr Advani who gave a blow-by-blow account of the hijacking episode, said the CBI would investigate the incident. He said the hijackers could face death penalty for their crimes, including the murder of passenger Rupen Katyul.

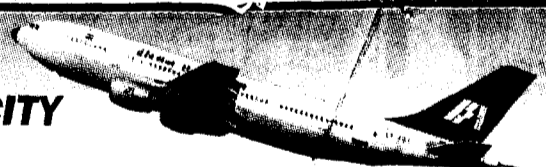
Mr Advani remarked during the course of his Press meet that the

war against terrorism had been a protracted one, always and everywhere, all over the world. "No country that has got the better of this menace has had the luxury of following a smooth, linear path."

Elaborating further over the hijack crisis, Mr Advani said that Pakistan's well-established nexus with the continuing proxy war against India, had sharply highlighted the inseparable link between the country's internal security, the security of our borders and also the protection of our unity and integrity.

"The Government is determined to make J&K and other parts of the country free from the menace of terrorism consequent to our success in tackling this problem in Punjab," the Home Minister asserted.

SIX DEAD GIVE-AWAYS OF PAKISTAN'S COMPLICITY



1. Shortly before IC 814 left Kathmandu, a Pakistan Embassy car (42 CD14) with three officials reached the airport. One Pak official went towards the departure lounge. He is believed to be the same person who supplied RDX to a Punjab militant in Kathmandu some years ago.
2. Soon after the hijackers took control of the plane, they directed the pilot to proceed to Lahore.
3. ATC Lahore refused permission when the pilot made the request. But when the 'chief' hijacker sought permission after taking off from Amritsar dramatically, it was granted immediately.
4. Thirty-three of the 36 militant-prisoners whose release was (initially) sought by the hijackers are Pakistanis.
5. Pak Govt had officially made two attempts earlier for Masood Azhar's release. Interior Minister Nasirullah Khan Babar requested, in writing to India's High Commissioner in Islamabad in June 1996, that Azhar be released "on humanitarian grounds". The request was followed up by Pak High Commission in New Delhi in Dec 1997.
6. And of course, the news from Pakistan that the released militants had surfaced in that country.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

7 JAN 2000

FOUR ACCOMPLICES HELD IN MUMBAI

Hijackers identified, ISI hand revealed: Advani

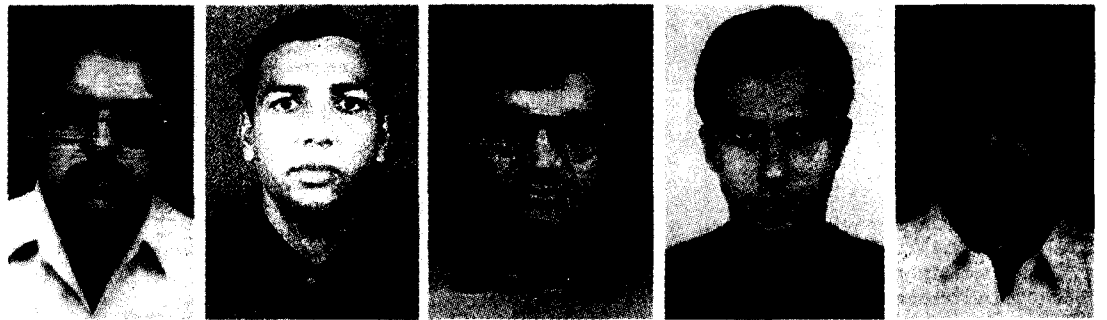
By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JAN. 6. Four key accomplices of the Pakistani hijackers involved in the hijack of the Indian Airlines Flight IC-814 have been arrested in Mumbai, the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani said here today.

Announcing the arrest of the four Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) operatives in Mumbai at a crowded press conference, the Home Minister said the vital breakthrough came when the hijackers, through one of their associates in Pakistan, contacted their Mumbai associate and asked him to tell a TV correspondent in London to put out the news on the international channel that the plane would be blown up if the demands of the hijackers were not conceded.

"This conversation took place on the night of December 29. The cue was taken and the four were rounded up," the Home Minister disclosed.

The four picked up by the Central intelligence agencies and the Mumbai police have been identified as: Mohammed Rehan, Mohammed Iqbal, both Pakistanis, Yusuf Nepali, a Nepalese and Abdul Latif, an Indian from Mumbai. Latif was recruited by the ISI while he was in the Gulf region. He later underwent intensive



The five hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane: (L to R) Ibrahim Athar (brother of Masood Azhar), Sunny Ahmed Kazi, Shahid Akhtar Sayed, Mистри Zahoor Ibrahim and Rajesh Gopal Verma alias Shakir.

training in two camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan. All the four operatives had told their interrogators that the hijacking of Flight IC-814 was an ISI operation executed with the assistance of Harkat-ul-Ansar.

The four were Mumbai-based associates of the hijackers and Abdul Latif had made several trips to Kathmandu over the past two months.

The four were activists of the Harkat-ul-Ansar, a fundamentalist outfit based in Rawalpindi, which after being declared a "terrorist organisation" by the U.S. in 1997, rechristened itself as Harkat-ul-Mujahideen.

Mr. Advani also released the photographs of the five hijackers and identified them as (1) Ibra-

him Athar, (2) Shahid Akhtar Sayeed, (3) Sunny Ahmed Qazi, (4) Mистри Zahoor Ibrahim and (5) Shakir. He said all the five hijackers were Pakistanis.

To the passengers of the plane, they were known as (1) Chief (2) Doctor (3) Burger (4) Bhola and (5) Shankar — the names by which the hijackers invariably addressed one another. Mr. Advani said that photographs of the hijackers — who were wearing masks most of the time — had also been shown to the passengers and the crew members who had been able to identify them. It is also learnt that the hijackers were carrying two AK-47 rifles, seven pistols, 11 grenades, 25 kg of explosives and Rs. 2.5 lakhs in cash.

Offering substantial evidence of

Pakistan's complicity in the hijacking, Mr. Advani released copies of two crucial pieces of communication where the Pakistani Government had requested the release of Masood Azhar. While the first letter of June 19, 1996 by Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Nasirullah Khan Babar, Interior Minister, to the then Indian High Commissioner, Mr. Satish Chandra, in Islamabad requested the release of Azhar on humanitarian grounds, the second letter of December 15, 1997 by the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi to the Ministry of External Affairs, urged consular access to Masood Azhar.

The release of Azhar was also demanded by the hijackers, Mr. Advani said.

The hijackers movements: Page 13

LOUDNESS OF THE LAMBS

The maiden attempt of the Atal Behari Vajpayee government to prove Islamabad's involvement in the hijack of Indian Airlines flight 814 was dismal. The Union home minister, Mr L.K. Advani, provided circumstantial evidence that many Pakistani nationals were involved in the hijack. There was no evidence that the regime of Mr Pervez Musharraf had a hand. Few doubt, at home or abroad, that Pakistan is a prime suspect. However, the court of world opinion cannot convict on such slender grounds. India is in danger of eroding its own international credentials.

The flimsiness of the government's case is perhaps a sign it has given up persuading the world and is seeking only to reassure its domestic constituency. Hence the recent fire breathing by the defence minister, Mr George Fernandes. New Delhi finds posturing before the Indian public easier than tying a military and diplomatic noose around Islamabad.

Diplomatically, India needs to move on three fronts. It needs to painstakingly piece together evidence of Pakistan's involvement in the Kashmir insurgency and its links with international Islamic terror. Hurriedly put together press conferences and overblown rhetoric impress only the gullible. A sound case will require years of piecing together.

Second, New Delhi needs to become more active in international efforts to curb terrorism. Until the Eighties, India tacitly backed many groups that hijacked aircraft and planted bombs around the world. Kashmir and Punjab made New Delhi change its tune, but it still avoided global agreements or statements denouncing terrorism *per se*. More important, the hard kernel of anti-terrorist diplomacy is a network of detailed, bilateral agreements. India has only recently started signing such treaties. Third, India needs to revive the use of the judiciary in the domestic battle against terrorism. For years, India has allowed its security forces to fight these en-

emies by circumventing the judicial process. It is no surprise then that New Delhi is at a loss to make a legal case. Thanks to a plethora of preventive detention laws, the authorities have forgotten how to convict a terrorist before a bench.

Even before he seized power, Mr Musharraf was known to believe the Kashmir insurgency was a means to tie down, if not break up, a militarily stronger India. Pakistan's ruler also believes south Asia's nuclear weaponization means India cannot militarily respond to covert provocations. In other words, Pakistan can support

terrorism without being overly concerned about India's conventional military might. Also, if India did try to respond, the threat of a nuclear conflict would trigger international intervention — which would also rebound in Pakistan's favour. Mr Musharraf recently laid out the nuclear argument again on CNN. This strategy motivated Islamabad's Kargil incursion but was foiled by India's policy of restraint.

But the nuclear shield is also why Pakistan continues to support cross-border terrorism. If the hijack was indeed masterminded by Islamabad, it would indicate a plan to spread terrorism into an arena beyond Kashmir.

New Delhi needs to be wary of falling into another Pakistani trap. Islamabad's reasons for encouraging terrorism are not dissimilar to the motives behind Kargil. Mr Musharraf would like the hijack to make the Vajpayee government look impotent domestically and irresponsible internationally. Indian bungling during the hijack has granted him his first goal. Statements like the recent one by Mr Fernandes that seem to imply India is prepared to fight conventional wars despite Pakistan's nuclear arsenal may help Mr Musharraf arrive at his second goal. During the hijack New Delhi alternated between panic and paralysis. After the hijack the Vajpayee government is merging hotheaded impulses with a lack of strategy.

After bungling the hijack, New Delhi is now posturing and making claims without proof. To portray India as irresponsible to the world community may be what Islamabad wants

Kargil panel submits report

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Jan. 7. — The Subrahmanyam committee, set up to review the Kargil conflict, submitted its report to the Prime Minister today "excising" even as it did so, information, the disclosure of which would not be in public interest.

A statement issued by the National Security Council Secretariat which serviced the committee says it undertook its work in a spirit of complete openness, objectivity and transparency in which it received the fullest possible cooperation from the government, the armed forces, the Intelligence agencies and the Jammu and Kashmir government.

Citing the reasons for withholding sensitive information, the statement says during the course of its inquiry the committee accessed highly classified information both in the form of documentation and through its discussions with the leadership, officials, civilian and military and retired persons which were reduced to paper as authenticated records of discussions.

"Conscious of the fact that the disclosure of some of this information would not be in the public interest for reasons of national security, the committee has itself excised the same from its report. In doing so it has followed a well-established procedure prevalent in many democracies."

The committee, which was set up on 29 July last year, has submitted a voluminous report running into 17 volumes and 2,000 pages.

Headed by Mr K Subrahmanyam, the committee was mandated by the government to review the events leading up to the Pakistani aggression in the Kargil district and to "recommend such measures as are considered necessary to safeguard national security."

THE STATESMAN
- 8 JAN 2000

Kargil report kept under wraps in national interest

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, January 7

THE KARGIL Review Committee today presented Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee its voluminous report on the Kargil conflict, detailing the events that led to the Pakistani aggression in the Kargil district of J&K last year.

The 2000-page report, however, does not contain some of the highly classified information that the committee had accessed during its deliberations. The sensitive details were not given "in the public interest for reasons of national security." The report was to be submitted by Oct 31, last year but was delayed due to Lok Sabha polls.

The committee headed by noted security affairs expert K. Subrahmanyam, comprised senior journalist B. G. Verghese and Lt. Gen K.K. Hazari (retd.). Mr Satish Chandra, Secretary, National Security Council Secretariat, was the member-Secretary of the committee.

Mr Subrahmanyam said it was for the government to decide whether to make the report public or not. The report could be shared with the Opposition. Asked if the report had drawn attention to any "lapses," he said "if there were no lapses, what was the need for instituting an inquiry."

The government set up the committee on July 29, 1999 and its terms of reference were "to review the events leading up to the Pakistani aggression in the Kargil district of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir," and "to recommend such measures as are considered necessary to safeguard national security against such armed intrusions."

The report has been presented in 17 volumes.

Although the committee was not statutory in nature, the government had issued specific directions to concerned Ministries and agencies to provide it the widest possible access to all relevant documents including secret and top secret papers. There was similar advice to the J and K government.

An announcement by the committee stated that it held over 100 meetings and interacted with eminent political leaders, senior civilian and military officers, serving and former diplomats, journalists, members of the public and others. The committee met the Prime Minister, former President R. Venkataraman, former Prime Ministers, Mr V.P. Singh, Mr I.K. Gujral and Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, and the Home, External Affairs and Defence Ministers.

The others interviewed by the committee included the National Security Adviser, the Cabinet Secretary, Service Chiefs, Secretaries of the Ministries concerned, Chiefs of Intelligence Services and young Army officers who were directly involved in the operations.

The committee was given presentations by all three Services and other concerned agencies. It circulated questionnaires to various organisations to obtain relevant information.

The committee toured J and K on four occasions to get a feel of the terrain and to interact with the local leaders and important officials—both civil and military—and the media. It also visited Bangalore for a discussion with experts on future technological options.

The committee examined media reports which appeared in the wake of the conflict to look for useful leads.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 8 JAN 2000

Azhar raises jihād cry against India

Bawalpur (Pakistan)

7 JANUARY

MAULANA MASOOD Azhar, Pakistani militant freed by India to end the hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane, on Friday threatened a holy war against India at a prayer meeting.

He urged the men in the congregation to sign up to fight against Indian rule in the Kashmir region. "There is no way open for us other than to wage jihād (holy war) against India" to achieve the goal, Azhar told thousands of people who gathered outside a mosque to hear his sermon.

"I have come here to give a call for jihād," Azhar said.

The people responded with raised fists and promised to join the insurgency in Kashmir.

Hero's welcome: Masood Azhar received a hero's welcome from family and friends when he returned home on Friday, witnesses said.

They said hundreds of people welcomed Masood Azhar as he reached his house in Bawalpur town, about 120 km (75 miles) south of the city of Multan in Punjab province.

Azhar, who was released from an Indian jail last week, was embraced by his weeping father and brothers and was surrounded by dozens of Muslim activists and clerics who showered him with flower petals.

Azhar said he was against hijacking and did not know the hijackers who demanded that he and two other militants held in Indian jails be released in exchange for the hostages.

"I oppose terrorism," Azhar said as he landed in Multan airport before leading a motorcade of admirers to his hometown. "I do not know who those people (hijackers) were," he added.

Azhar and the two others were exchanged for the 155 hostages in Kandahar on New Year's Eve and driven away from the airport with the hijackers.

He said the hijackers left on their own a short time later, adding that he was not stopped at the Pakistani border of Chaman when he entered the country.

The other two militants entered Pakistan with him.

Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar, a Kashmiri, returned to the Pakistani-controlled part of Kashmir but the third, Ahmad Omar Saeed Sheikh, who also holds a British passport, has not appeared in public.

Zargar was greeted by celebrating Kashmiri militants when he arrived in Muzaffarabad, capital of what Pakistan calls Azad Kashmir, or Free Kashmir, on Tuesday night. — Agencies

India supports U.S. demand to prosecute Maulana Masood

NEW DELHI: India on Friday termed as "entirely understandable" the statement by the United States asking Pakistan to prosecute Maulana Masood Azhar, one the three militants released in exchange for hostages of the hijacked Indian Airlines, for his speech in Karachi threatening Americans and Indians.

Reacting to the statement of US state department spokesman James Rubin, a spokesman of the ministry of external affairs (MEA) told reporters here that such strong statements had not emanated for the first time from terrorist groups which have been allowed to thrive in Pakistan.

Mr Rubin sternly warned it would hold Islamabad responsible for Azhar's "terrorist" activities which threaten the lives of Indian and U.S. citizens.

The MEA spokesman recalled that the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Toiba, during its recent convention in Lahore, had made statements calling for jihad (holy war) against the U.S. and India and threatened violence against various countries and their leaders.

"Pakistan has chosen to overlook such statements," he said, adding that last November New Delhi had brought to the notice of Islamabad the statements made during such terrorist conventions. He said Pakistan responded by contending that it respected freedom of speech. Islamabad, he said, did not take into account the fact that such speeches and statements incited and threatened violence.

Earlier, Mr Rubin had sternly warned Pakistan on terrorism after a threatening speech made by Azhar in Karachi on Wednesday. "With respect to the speech of Masood Azhar, we find deplorable and unacceptable his reported remarks about destroying America and India. Such language feeds a climate of hostility against both countries and incites violence," Mr Rubin noted.

Mr Rubin said Washington would hold Islamabad responsible should the militant's activities threaten U.S. interests. "Pakistan must assure the safety of Americans, Indians and all foreigners in Pakistan," he said. Mr Rubin called on Pakistan to investigate whether Azhar's activities were legal. He insisted that no country "permits terrorist activities to be organised from its soil".

On Wednesday, before a crowd of thousands at an Islamic seminary in Karachi, Azhar said the struggle

to rid Kashmir of Indian authority would continue. "Tell the Indians and those who have suppressed Muslims that mujahideen are a force of Allah and will hoist the flag of Islam in this world soon," he told the crowd. "I have only come here because I need colleagues. I need mujahideen who can fight for the liberation of Kashmir. I will not be at peace till Muslims get liberated," he said. "So marry for jihad, give birth for jihad and earn money only for jihad till the cruelty of America and India ends. But India first."

Asked whether Pakistan will necessarily be placed now on the list of countries that support terrorism or harbour terrorists, Mr Rubin said, "I am not going to speculate on the future. I think I used some quite strong language about our views on Pakistan's responsibilities here."

"When and if the secretary of state (Madeleine Albright) places new countries on the terrorist list, I will inform you and I don't think there is any need to speculate in advance of that," he added.

Meanwhile, Azhar returned home to an emotional welcome, witnesses said on Friday. A crowd of 200 relatives and friends met Azhar when he arrived late on Thursday in his home town, Bahawalpur, in central Pakistan, 100 kilometers south of Multan, the witnesses said. (Agencies)



Pak tells Masood to lie low

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 8. — Seemingly buckling under US pressure, the Pakistan interior ministry has asked Masood Azhar to refrain from making outbursts against foreign countries, including the USA.

Masood, who reached his hometown on Friday, has been advised to lie low and not agitate public sentiments. The ministry took the decision after USA warned Pakistan yesterday following the ultra's jihad call against America and India.

Yesterday, the US state department spokesman, Mr Ja-

mes Rubin, said that Pakistan would be held responsible if Masood continued indulging in such threats.

Responding to India's statement that Pakistan must try or deport the hijackers, Islamabad today said it will try them as per law if they are apprehended.

"If we can get hold of the hijackers, we will try them in accordance with the law," foreign office spokesman, Mr Tariq Altaf, said in an interview on CNN last night.

Mr Altaf, however, accused India of not providing any information about the hijackers and launching a campaign to declare Pakistan a terrorist state.

"We had in fact expected that India would give us some evi-

dence ... India has not contacted Pakistan at all since the hijack drama ended," he said.

"They (Indians) were in touch with us during the hijacking and we gave them all assistance as required by them," he claimed. "But since then, they have not contacted us. Pakistan had to call publicly for information if any was available with India as they have been claiming."

"We had said they should provide us with whatever information they have on the hijackers' identity or transcripts of talks

which they exclusively held with the hijackers. But they

had not given us anything at all," he said.

India's efforts on: The Union HRD minister, Mr Murli Manohar Joshi, today said that India was still trying to get Pakistan declared a terrorist state, but diplomatic ties with Islamabad would not be cut, adds UNI from Jaipur.

Addressing a news conference there, Mr Joshi said he saw no reason to snap links with the neighbouring country. "I don't find any reason for such a step. Moreover, it is premature as of now to think of it."

Echoing Mr Joshi's sentiment, Mr Brajesh Mishra said India has initiated steps seeking global cooperation in declaring Pakistan a terrorist state.

■ More reports on pages 6 and 10

7-12 ✓ Make Kargil Public ✓

It is symptomatic of the information gap in this country that the media seems to have assumed that the K Subrahmanyam committee, which has just submitted its report on the Kargil war, did not want the government to make its findings public. In fact, the opposite is the case. The Kargil review committee has submitted its report in four and a half months, which, by Indian standards for commissions and committees, is something of a record. The criticism that without being empowered under the Commissions of Enquiries Act the committee would not have access to classified documents as well as officials whose views, perceptions and accounts are absolutely vital for the review has been totally belied. The committee has been able to interact with everyone from the prime minister down to young officers who fought in Kargil, as well as field officers in the intelligence organisations. The committee has rightly focussed on what went wrong rather than on who was responsible for the alleged lapses that the media has written about. On the basis of the committee's findings on what went wrong, Parliament and the concerned government organisations will be in a position to fix responsibility for such lapses as may come to light. More important are the committee's recommendations on measures considered necessary to safeguard national security against such armed intrusions in future. The committee's press statement makes it clear that it is in favour of the release of the report for debate in the country. The committee has highlighted the fact that it has itself excised sensitive information that it is not in the public interest to disclose and has submitted a report that the government can straightaway release. The committee has not permitted the government the ground to plead that it has to go through the report and review it from the point of view of security before releasing it.

To date, India has not had a precedent for this kind of committee or report. The Henderson-Brookes report of 1963 was an inhouse enquiry ordered by the army chief and carried out by two uniformed officers subordinate to the army chief. That committee had access only to army documents and had no access to politicians, civilian officials and intelligence agencies. Having gone this far in making available to the Kargil committee all classified information and having allowed the concerned ministers and senior officials to be interviewed by the committee, the government would be hurting its own interests if the Subrahmanyam committee report is not immediately published. The longer the delay, the greater the likelihood of leakages, distortions and motivated twists issuing forth. The committee's findings and recommendations should be of great relevance even as next year's defence budget is to come up before Parliament. The government has a lot to benefit from in terms of its credibility not only in respect of this issue but also on other enquiries and committees it may have to initiate in future. By publishing this report without delay, the government has a unique opportunity to establish a new norm in terms of transparency and accountability.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

10 JAN 2000

'Fake notes were printed at Pak Security Press'

Sudhi Ranjan Sen
Kathmandu, January 9

HTC 10/1

THE COUNTERFEIT currency seized from a Pakistani diplomat on January 2 was printed at the Pakistani Security Press, senior officials of the Nepalese Central Bank told *The Hindustan Times* today. Indian experts who examined the counterfeit notes are said to have told their counterparts here that the counterfeit notes are "even better than the ones legally printed in India".

Significantly, apart from Asam Saboor, the Pakistani diplomat who was arrested following a sting operation that uncovered fake Rs 500 notes, another senior official of the Pak embassy is also believed to have been present when the notes exchanged hands.

Though the Pakistan embassy has described Saboor as an upper division clerk in the embassy, independent inquiries suggest that Saboor holds a very senior position and is addressed as "Sir" by senior Pakistan diplomats in Kathmandu.

Investigations into the hijacking of the Indian Airlines IC 814 have also revealed that First Secretary of Pakistan stationed in Nepal, Arshad Cheema, and another official of the embassy, Zia Ansari, had visited the departure lounge of Tribhuvan airport. They are believed to have handed over a packet to a person on the day the plane was hijacked. A vehicle of the

Passports soon?

ALL INDIANS travelling to Nepal may soon need passports, senior officials of the Nepal Government indicated on Sunday. Sources in Kathmandu said a Joint Working Committee comprising senior officers of the governments of Nepal and India is examining the post-hijack situation and it has been felt that the present system of recognising "any and every document" as valid travel document must be stopped. **HTC, Kathmandu**

Pakistan embassy (42 CD 14) was used by these two officials to go the airport.

Officials at the airport questioned by the police here have confirmed that the two officials had entered the departure lounge to deliver the packet, which was not subjected to any check because they enjoy diplomatic immunity.

The seizure of counterfeit currency and the visit of the two diplomats suggest the Pakistan embassy here co-ordinates all ISI activity in Nepal.

Ijaz Hussain Minaz, Counsellor (Political) of Pakistan here, and Cheema are suspected to be the key ISI operators in Kathmandu.

They are also credited with extending the ISI's presence and its area of operation in Nepal in a big way in the last two years.

Efforts of *The Hindustan Times* to contact them for their comments failed. Pakistan embassy officials claimed that they were out of the country.

Inquires further reveal that the Pakistan embassy has 25 registered diplomats in Kathmandu. Fourteen of them are suspected to be ISI operators functioning directly from the embassy.

Some of the key agents identified include Mohammed Raja Jail and Mohammed Tariq Ali and Col Mohammed Saeed Aleem.

According to sources, the number of diplomats in the Pak embassy "far exceeds Pak trade and bilateral interests" in Nepal.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

10 JAN 2000

Pak. had 'prior knowledge' of IA plane hijack

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JAN. 9. Nine days after the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane has ended, circumstantial evidence pointing to Pakistan's involvement in the episode continue to pour in.

Highly-placed sources here said that fresh information was now available to suggest that Pakistan had prior knowledge of the hijack. According to them, the Corps Commander and the Governor of Pakistan Punjab, had positioned themselves at the Lahore airport even before the plane had taken off from the Amritsar airport.

All access to Lahore Airport had been sealed by then. Medical and other reinforcements had been kept ready in advance. However, the "medical team" actually comprised intelligence operatives who entered the aircraft and reportedly passed on fresh instructions to the hijackers. In fact, the late Rippan Katyal was refused any medical attention at Lahore. The Corps Commander and the Governor left the airport within five minutes of the plane taking off.

Sources also point out that Pakistan's empathy for the hijackers was also evident in its decision to delay the takeoff of the helicopters carrying the Indian High Commissioner to Lahore by almost three hours thereby preventing his intervention.

Besides, the Air Traffic Control (ATC) in

Karachi, it is said, was also aware of the return of the hijack plane from Abu Dhabi to Kandahar via Pakistani airspace in advance.

The interception of the conversations at Kandahar between the hijackers with the operatives in Pakistan as well as the decision of the hijackers and the insurgents who were released to get into Pakistan at the earliest further implicate Islamabad.

Soon after the hijack, contacts has been established between India and the Taliban in New York. The dialogue between the two parties subsequently had several ups and downs before the hijacking drama ended in Kandahar on December 31.

Indian officials got in touch with the Taliban in Islamabad when the plane was returning from a military airfield in Abu Dhabi to Kandahar. Indian negotiators in the initial phase told the Taliban that the safety of the passengers and the crew was of paramount importance. Consequently, the plane once it landed in Kandahar should not be allowed to take off until the hijacking was terminated. New Delhi pointed out that any negative outcome to the crisis would only further sully the already tarnished international image of the Taliban. The Taliban initially, however, made it explicit that it wished to steer clear of the hijacking as far as possible. In fact, it declared that the United Nations should get involved in ending the emergency and Indian officials must talk to the hijackers directly.

By this time, contacts with the U.N. in New York had been established on December 24 itself. Indian officials were also in touch with the U.N. representative in Afghanistan, Mr Erik de Mul, who is based in Islamabad. India made it clear to the U.N. that it was not seeking mediation by the world body. But the organisation had a role to play in ensuring the safety and welfare of the hostages.

Negotiations with the Taliban ended an "intense phase" by December 26. It became clear then that Masood Azhar was the central figure in this episode and one of his brothers was the likely hijacker of the plane.

A "softening" of the Taliban's approach to negotiations was now becoming visible. On India's insistence, the Corps Commander of the Taliban in Kandahar publicly declared that the Taliban would storm the plane in case the hijackers harmed any of the passengers.

Sources pointed out that India by now had accumulated a much larger body of circumstantial evidence to implicate Pakistan than what the United States had obtained against Osama Bin Laden.

The interactions with the Taliban shows that the group continues to remain greatly dependent on Pakistan. India's stance on Afghanistan revolving round the recognition of the Northern alliance headed by the President, Mr. Burhanuddin Rabbani, remains unchanged.

Pak. being watched: Page 13

THE HINDU

10 JAN 2000

Pakistan is ready for talks with India without any preconditions

WASHINGTON: Pakistan wants to resume bilateral talks with India without any preconditions and with third party international intercession in a "Track II" approach towards resolving all outstanding issues between the two sides, Pakistan's ambassador to U.S. Maleeha Lodhi said.

"We are ready to go anywhere, talk at any place as we would like to resume bilateral negotiations without preconditions..." Lodhi told CNN in an interview Monday night. The ambassador said her country would like third party intercession to solve all outstanding issues with India. India is opposed to third-party intervention in bilateral issues.

"We believe in a "Track II" approach to try to resolve issues between us, one track being bilateral talks and the other being third party international intercession," she said.

"Half a century of conflict and confrontation has shown that antagonism between the two countries is so strong that unless there is international third party intercession they are not going to be able to look ahead at this century as a century of peace and of better life for

the one billion people who live in South Asia," Lodhi said.

"I think we have to ask the question about opportunity costs that both countries have to entail or confront as a result of this continuing confrontation," she said.

On the hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane recently, Lodhi said: "Pakistan has declared from the outset when the hijacking took place that it deplors and condemns any criminal act of terrorism." She said Pakistan has since been on the lookout to see if the hijackers are to be found in Pakistan, adding, "Of course, they will be immediately arrested and prosecuted."

She agreed that the hijacking saga had heightened tension between the two countries.

Meanwhile, high-level British and U.S. delegations would arrive in Pakistan this week to try to push the country's military rulers to set a time-frame for the return of democracy, diplomats said Tuesday.

A four-member Congressional delegation led by Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle arrives on Thursday, one day after Britain's chief of defence staff Sir Charles Guthrie was to arrive for a three-

day visit. "I know they will discuss the military's plans for a return to democratic government in Pakistan," a U.S. embassy official said.

Daschle's two-day visit was to have taken place before the coup in October but was delayed by a budget fight in Congress. It will be the highest level U.S. visit since Gen Musharraf seized power.

The embassy official said he expected Daschle's talks with Gen Musharraf to cover a range of topics, including regional security and the nuclear Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Pakistani critics of the treaty say it will prevent Islamabad from developing and modernising its nuclear weapon system, which they see as a deterrent to the nuclear programme of India.

In London, a foreign office spokesman said Guthrie's mission was aimed at establishing high-level British contact with Musharraf without endorsing his takeover. "The visit is not a sign of return to business as usual. He will be making it clear that the British government views the military coup as unacceptable and we are looking to Gen Musharraf to restore democracy," the spokesman said. (Agencies)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

12 JAN 2000

IC-814: A hijacking of Indo-Pak relations

Kashmiri militants successfully hijacked an Indian airliner from Kathmandu last December. It was one of the most successful hijackings in recent history. Lasting less than a week, the hijackers forced India to succumb to their demands and release Kashmiri militants held in Indian jails.

While the world celebrated the end of one century on December 31, 1999, the Indian government glumly gave in to the demands made by the Kashmiri militants. They had little choice. The families of those on board besetted the Indian government and forced its hand. The internal pressure was so grave that the Indian government was compelled to reverse its earlier headline stance not to negotiate with the hijackers.

The hijacking has cast a pall over the relations between India and Pakistan. Both countries are once again engaged in a bitter game of accusations and counter-accusations, which bode ill for peace and stability in South Asia.

India was quick to blame Pakistan for the hijacking. It claimed, at one stage, that the hijackers had travelled by Pakistan's national airliner to Kathmandu with arms, transferring

unchecked to the Indian airliner from the transit lounge. This was never proved. Pakistan, in turn, accused India of seeking to exploit the hijacking for partisan political purposes. Pakistan retaliated quickly to the Indian accusations of sponsoring terrorism. To make its displeasure known, it cancelled trade with India.

This may not work. The time is to reduce tensions, not exacerbate them. The hijacking may have ended. The phase of its repercussions has only begun. The new row clearly indicates that India, humiliated over the hijacking, will make every effort to retaliate. That retaliation will take the form of a new international campaign to declare Pakistan a terrorist state.

The hijacking could not have come at a worse time for Pakistan. It was just beginning to come out of the shadow of last spring's Kargil crisis when the two countries nearly went to war. Pakistan's new military ruler had been keen to send messages of goodwill to India, even reducing troops symbolically at the border. But India found it hard to trust the general whom they viewed as the mastermind of the Kargil conflict. That distrust has deepened to the detriment of South Asian

stability. The downswing in relations between the two countries takes place against the ongoing discussion on the signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Both countries have separately declared their intention to sign the treaty but are yet to do so.

Despite calls from the Pakistani Opposition to sign the treaty in May 1998, following the nuclear detonations by both countries, Pakistan chose not to do so. The delay has put Pakistan into a corner. Pakistan, with its focus on India, needed a much smaller nuclear capability than India, with its focus on China and Pakistan. Were India to undertake a series of fresh tests, it would put pressure on Pakistan. To respond in kind would be damaging internationally. Not to respond would be the public failure of the policy of parity-to do what India does.

Pakistan already faces a host of difficulties. The country is being run by an unelected and unrepresentative regime. The major political forces in the country, capable of uniting the people, have been marginalised.

BY BENAZIR BHUTTO

The Constitution has been suspended, the Parliament silenced and the judiciary threatened with "accountability" (a euphemism for corruption) if it does not toe the line.

More ominously, the economy refuses to respond to the measures taken for its revitalisation. The new regime has been unable to come up with an economic policy that could give confidence to the market or bring in foreign investment. Take away the numerous statements of goodwill towards foreign investors and one is left without a policy. This regime, like the one it replaced, is banking on IMF loans rather than the entrepreneurial skills of its people to turn the economy around. Meanwhile, unemployment continues to grow. Daily, scores of government employees are laid off, increasing social dissatisfaction and threatening discontentment. To ward off the discontentment, the regime keeps arresting people on unproven charges of corruption to offer hope to the people that money from "corrupt" elements will soon flow in to fuel the economy.

This is a dangerous policy. India understands the internal

difficulties that a politically divided Pakistan faces as it teeters on the verge of fiscal bankruptcy. Under pressure from the West to resume dialogue with Pakistan, India has seized the hijacking as the stick with which to beat Pakistan.

The hijacking succeeded in putting the Kashmir dispute again at the centre of international relations. There are many who will argue that daring actions are needed to awaken the world and only a threat of a potential nuclear conflict can force the international community into action. Certainly, the international media and the world politicians come into play every time there is a danger point. Witness the international focus on Kashmir when India and Pakistan went nuclear in 1998, or the G-8 interest when the Kargil fighting broke out in 1999 and the renewal of interest, though on a smaller scale, over the hijacking.

Yet, this is a dangerous argument. And an even more dangerous route. It has been tried for the last 50 years and failed to resolve the differences between the two countries. It has led to the disintegration of Pakistan in 1971 and the humiliation of the unilateral withdrawal

al from Kargil in 1999. India and Pakistan need to take a leaf out of West Asia. There,

intractable problems are being resolved through dialogue and discussion. The latest round of talks between Syria and Israel should be an eye-opener for the subcontinent.

But can a military ruler, bogged down in a difficult domestic situation, obsessed with hunting internal enemies through special laws and special courts, give peace and the attention it deserves? Can he have the foresight to take advantage of President Clinton's South Asian visit to make possible a breakthrough in Indo-Pakistan relations?

No one knows the answer to that yet, perhaps not even the general himself. But in that answer lies the outcome of the worsening relations between two nuclear-capable states. They nearly brought about a nuclear confrontation last spring. And last month's hijacking could culminate once again in a dangerous, potentially nuclear confrontation.

BENAZIR BHUTTO, former Prime Minister of Pakistan is the leader of Pakistan People's Party

By arrangement with Dawn

UK defence chief's visit to Pakistan irks India

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Britain's chief of defence staff Sir Charles Guthrie's three-day visit to Pakistan this week has disappointed India. New Delhi believes this kind of high-level contact goes against the spirit of the Durban Summit which had come down heavily on the military regime of General Pervez Musharraf.

India frets the visit will give just the kind of legitimacy to the military regime which African and Caribbean states as well as India were opposed to at the Commonwealth Summit. The defence chief's timing of the visit soon after the hijacking in which India charges Pakistan of complicity makes matters worse. Officials feel that U.K. has not been "sensitive to Indian concerns." Strangely enough, despite these concerns New Delhi has not formally aired its misgivings.

Britain has not kept the visit a secret: India knew about it, but there were no protests. Britain denies that the visit will in anyway confer legitimacy to the General. "The visit is not a sign of return to business as usual. Sir Guthrie will be making it clear that the British government

views the military coup as unacceptable and we are looking to General Musharraf to restore democracy," a British spokesman said in London on Tuesday.

"Sir Charles will also take the opportunity to underline British concerns about security issues and our expectation that Pakistan will play a responsible role in ensuring stability within the region." The spokesman added that Sir Guthrie and Gen Musharraf knew each other well from earlier military contacts.

Indian officials are not entirely convinced. Minister of external affairs Jaswant Singh who will meet British foreign secretary Robin Cook on Friday is likely to raise New Delhi's worries that engaging the General may not be the answer.

During the hijack crisis, though Mr Cook spoke to Mr Singh by telephone several times, London had not said a word. The EU issued a statement on behalf of the group, but the U.K. gave no separate statement, as it did during the Kargil intrusion. These little things are worrying India, but will probably be solved when Mr Singh and Mr Cook meet.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

13 JAN 2000

USA, Britain tell Pakistan to ban Harkat

INDIA ABROAD NEWS SERVICE

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 15. — The USA and Britain have asked Pakistan's Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf, to ban the extremist group suspected of hijacking Indian Airlines flight IC 814 in the first step of a crackdown on terrorist groups.

Officials from the two countries privately asked Gen. Musharraf to ban the Harkat-ul Mujahideen and disband its organisational presence in Pakistan, NNI news agency said. They also sought curbs on other terrorist groups active in Pakistan and improved relations with India.

The hand of the Harkat-ul Mujahideen, known previously as the Harkat-ul Ansar, was suspected in the Christmas-eve hijacking of the Kathmandu-Delhi flight.

In the first high-level meetings between Western officials and Pakistan's military regime, four US Senators and Britain's Chief of Defence Staff, General Charles Guthrie, held talks with senior Pakistani officials including Gen. Musharraf.

Although their visits were separately planned, Britain and the USA are closely cooperating in submitting a list of benchmarks which the army should meet if Pakistan is to regain international acceptability, gain time to carry out reforms and secure much needed loans from the World Bank and IMF.

Senior Western officials said they would like to see Islamabad curb known terror groups operating from its soil, sign the CTBT and make positive moves towards bringing about peace in Afghanistan.

They also want help in capturing Saudi renegade Osama bin Laden, and are pressing Pakistan to improve relations with India and set a timetable for

the restoration of democracy.

They said the first and most important step would be to curb the activities of the Harkat, which the USA has already designated a terrorist group. The Harkat has achieved the greatest international notoriety for terrorist acts against Westerners.

India has accused Pakistan of being involved in the hijacking and demanded that the world declare it a terrorist state. Pakistan denies the charges.

Both the US and British visitors expressed grave concern

Musharraf to convince us that he is taking steps in the right direction".

The US Senators said they were appreciative of Gen. Musharraf's attempts to "put Pakistan back on the rails," but Washington was still looking for concrete measures towards resolving the social and economic mess in Pakistan and curbing terrorism.

Diplomats said that as Pakistanis were getting impatient with a lack of progress in the army's reform agenda, Western capitals were also getting impatient.

This message will be delivered even more strongly to Pakistan next week when a high-level US diplomatic mission headed by Assistant Secretary of State, Mr Karl Inderfurth, which will include top counter-terrorism officials, visits Islamabad.

Western diplomats said Mr Inderfurth would be delivering a very tough message to Pakistan as the USA wanted to see measures taken on the ground.

Also at stake is a trip to South Asia by President Bill Clinton at the end of March. Although Mr Clinton was presumed to have cancelled his trip to Pakistan because of the coup and the government's inability to give a timetable for a return to democracy and would now only visit India and Bangladesh, diplomats said the President could still come to Islamabad if certain positive steps were taken by Pakistan.

Curbing the Harkat and other such groups is not risk-free for the junta because it could unleash a backlash from Pakistani and Kashmiri Islamic fundamentalist groups.

However, it is clear that Pakistan needs to distance itself from the extremism of some groups in order to ensure that its Kashmiri cause is not jeopardised, NNI said.



General Pervez Musharraf

about the escalating war of words between India and Pakistan, but said there was no proof to back Indian charges that Pakistan was involved in the hijacking.

However, they sought a strong statement from Pakistan condemning terrorism backed by action against the most active groups such as Harkat.

"I stressed the need (to Gen. Musharraf) for Pakistan to join international efforts to eradicate international terrorism in all its forms," Gen. Guthrie told journalists after his meeting with Gen. Musharraf. "Everything is now up to General

'Initiative now lies with India'

India has practically avoided all contact with Pakistan, says its High Commissioner in an interview to **AUNOHITA MAJUMDAR**

ACCUSING India of carrying out a hostile anti-Pakistan campaign without any supportive evidence, Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi Ashraf Jehangir Qazi says the initiative now rests with India to change its attitude and take cognisance of the realities including the need to improve relations between the two nuclear neighbours.

In an interview with *The Statesman*, Qazi said the Indian government must first take cognisance of the popular domestic support for the government in Pakistan and engage with it and begin an unconditional result-oriented dialogue for a principled settlement of the Kashmir issue.

Referring to the international community's call to both countries to initiate dialogue and resolve issues and take steps to prevent any nuclear mishaps, he said, "and yet India has practically avoided all contact with Pakistan. This does not appear to be a responsible approach. Pakistan does not solicit or beg for dialogue. Pakistan recognises its responsibility and is prepared for dialogue as and when India is ready. But it takes two hands to clap".

On the steps required to defuse tensions, the High Commissioner said India would have to recognise the popular response to the regime in Pakistan and its domestic agenda and to "engage with it as every other country in the world is prepared to do". It should also recognise that the Pakistan Chief Executive had made positive, realistic and sincere statements. "They need to reciprocate that by agreeing to an unconditional, serious, result-oriented dialogue so that we can restore the Lahore process and the dialogue process and move forward to a principled Kashmir

settlement in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir" which would also create the space for movement on other fronts. "If India avoids that India is deliberately eliminating the prospect of an improved relationship with Pakistan."

The initiative, the High Commissioner said, "rests with the country that has taken the initiative to adopt a negative attitude. That country is not Pakistan".

On the charge of terrorist camps operating in Pakistan, Qazi said organisations in Pakistan did hold religious and political meetings where the speeches might be strongly worded. They did not reflect government policy and as long as they did not indulge in activities contrary to the laws of Pakistan they were free to express themselves, the High Commissioner said, drawing analogies to the existence of the Bajrang Dal, Jagran Manch and other organisations in India making fiery speeches.

On the groups in Pakistan, the High Commissioner said, "they may have arms. They are not allowed on the basis of our law to indulge in acts of violence or criminal activity on our soil. They operate within the politics of Pakistan, and the territory of Pakistan. They do not cross the LoC. Certainly not."

On the current state of bilateral relations, he said relations between the two countries had always been less than normal primarily because of the Kashmir issue other issues being the normal bilateral problems.

Qazi said 1999 was a particularly bad year. Even the Lahore declaration was underprepared and the two countries viewed it differently. While India saw it as a means to improve relations on the basis of the status quo on the issue of differences, Pakistan did not, undermining the potentiality of the process.

Following this had been Kargil, the underlying reason for which was Kashmir. In the Indian general elections the ruling party had made hostility towards Pakistan a significant part of its electoral campaign. Subsequently India had reacted negatively to the internal political changes in Pakistan, ignoring the domestic welcome

accorded to it as also to the Chief Executive's stated intention of improving bilateral relations by addressing sincerely and seriously the one issue that had kept the two countries apart — the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Rather than a wait and see approach, which would have been justified, Qazi said India had been leading a crusade as it were or a campaign against Pakistan.

Finally in the hijacking episode India had sought to deflect internal criticism of its handling of that crisis onto Pakistan on the basis of a whole list of spurious and unsupported charges.

The international community, the High Commissioner said, had certainly not bought any of India's allegations. If the hijackers were identified and found in Pakistani territory, Qazi said, "we are obliged and we recognise our obligations under international conventions, to take all possible actions. Hijacking is a crime. Hijacking is a capital crime in Pakistan."

Whatever India's feelings, it must do the world the courtesy of producing credible evidence before making a serious charge he said, adding that it could not do so because the government of Pakistan was not involved. On the Pakistan government's counter-allegations to Indian charges, Qazi said they were a response to the extraordinary charges made by India.

On India's charge that the only obstacle to improving relations was cross-border terrorism, he rejected the charge saying that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir was a result of an indigenous people's movement. If India ignored the alienation and instead accused Pakistan of creating the problem there was no way forward.

Qazi dismissed the idea that Pakistan had been further isolated saying India had been completely unsuccessful in its campaign to isolate Pakistan. While several countries had expressed their reservations about the internal political changes they had also understood the reasons behind it and continued to engage with Pakistan.

The author is on the staff of The Statesman, New Delhi

India asks Pak to hand over hijackers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Jan. 15. — India today demanded that Pakistan extradite the hijackers of Indian Airlines flight IC-814 to this country which had jurisdiction over the matter. There was "strong ground to believe that the hijackers were currently in Pakistan", Indian authorities said.

Making the first formal move against Pakistan on the issue, the foreign secretary, Mr Lalit Mansingh, this afternoon summoned Pakistan's High Commissioner in India, Mr Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, to the ministry of external affairs and

HJACK

(Continued from page 1)

left the aircraft in Kandahar, the MEA today maintained that there had been no delay in initiating action — officially addressing Pakistan for the first time on the subject after the drama ended.

Action could be taken only today as legal provisions of various conventions relating to hijacking and terrorism and the status of Pakistan's subscription to them had to be studied, MEA officials said.

The High Commissioner's attention had been drawn to Pakistan's legal obligations under: the Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation (1971); the Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (1970); and the SAARC Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. Pakistan was party to all three.

Mr Qazi was also told that "the government of India had jurisdiction over the offences committed by the hijackers and their accomplices".

"He was reminded that Pakistan also had legal obligations under the Simla Agreement to prevent the organisation, assistance or encouragement of any act detrimental to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations and also to prevent hostile propaganda" a MEA statement said.

Support to terrorism, including the hijacking and subsequent anti-India public statements by Masood Azhar who was in Pakistan (the MEA's description of him is not without significance), were in contravention of Pakistan's obligations under the Simla Agreement, Mr Qazi was told.

Seeking to establish a certain Pakistani complicity in at least the post-hijacking events, the statement said the High Commissioner was reminded that the terrorists whose release was secured by the hijackers had since made their appearance in Pakistan and PoK.

BAN HARKAT-UL-MUJAHIDEEN: USA, UK

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 15. — The USA and Britain have privately asked Gen Pervez Musharraf to curb militant groups operating from Pakistan, and as a first step ban the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and disband its organisational presence in the country, a leading daily reported today. — PTI

(Details on page 11)

On page 9 : 'Initiative now lies with India'

emphasised that Pakistan was obliged to take such action under a host of bilateral, regional and international conventions.

The government of India "reserved the right to take further measures as appropriate",

"Given that a large number of terrorists whose release was sought by the hijackers are Pakistani nationals, and that the first destination chosen by the hijackers was Lahore, there was strong ground to believe that the hijackers were currently in Pakistan" said the statement.

"Accordingly, Pakistan, as a state party to the above Conventions had the clear legal obligation to take them into custody and extradite them to India."

It was made clear that India expected Pakistan to take the necessary measure to apprehend the hijackers and their accomplices in Pakistan, to extradite them to India for prosecution in fulfilment of its obligations under the international conventions, to cooperate in connection with criminal proceedings against the offenders, and to report to the International Civil Aviation Organisation all relevant information in its possession regarding the hijacking and action taken against the offenders.

The MEA statement also referred to the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism adopted by the UN General Assembly, and the increasing international consensus against terrorism as reflected in the Security Council resolution on 18 October 1999 which "unequivocally condemned and called upon all states to prevent and suppress terrorist acts."

the High Commissioner was told. But the MEA refused to disclose to the media what the other measures might be.

Pakistan was also told that it was required under the Simla Agreement to ensure that its territory was not used for anti-

India propaganda — as has been done by Masood Azhar, one of the militants released in exchange for the freedom of the passengers aboard IC-814.

In making a formal demand for extradition, India has taken the first legal steps in a matter which it would hope is followed up by other countries which had citizens aboard the Kathmandu-Delhi A-300 flight on Christmas Eve. The criminal aspect of the hijacking was not restricted to violating only Indian law.

Even though a fortnight has elapsed since the passengers

■ See HJACK: page 10'

THE STATESMAN
16 JAN 2000

Pak dismisses hijack charge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ^{and} ^{PK}

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 16. — Pakistan has rejected Indian accusations of involvement in the recent hijacking, saying they were part of a "vain attempt to malign Pakistan" and "deflect criticism" from New Delhi's "mishandling" of the incident.

Yesterday, a foreign office spokesman said allegations on Islamabad's involvement in the hijacking, outlined in an Indian demarche handed to the Pakistani High Commissioner in New Delhi, Mr Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, were rejected forthwith.

The spokesman said the Indian demarche repeated "the now familiar baseless allegations which have been already dismissed by Pakistan..."

"The media continues to make allegations, which are unfound-

Indian staffer roughed up

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 16. — Pakistani Intelligence men today assaulted an Indian High Commission staffer, accusing him of trying to deliver a bomb and some money to unknown persons. The whereabouts of Mr P Moses, who was shown on PTV with a badly bruised cheek, were not known till late tonight. — PTI

■ Pak smells Sharif's RAW deal: page 8

ed and not supported by a shred of credible evidence," the spokesman said.

"This is part of a vain attempt to malign Pakistan. The Indian

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purpose is to deflect domestic criticism of the government's mishandling of the hijacking incident. The international community has already asked India to desist from provocations against Pakistan in the interest of peace and stability in the region," he claimed.

Pakistan "is opposed to all forms of terrorism, including hijacking, which it condemned unreservedly."

US-Pak talks: The US assistant secretary of state, Mr Karl Inderfurth, is arriving Islamabad on 20 January to hold talks with Pakistani officials. Observers here feel that Indo-Pak relations may dominate the talks.

The talks will cover the gamut of US-Pak relations, including economic cooperation, trade, terrorism and Indo-Pakistan ties, *The News* reported.

THE STATESMAN
17 JAN 2000

Pak smells Sharif's RAW deal

5-8
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SAIFUR
INDIA ABROAD NEWS SERVICE

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 16. — The Pakistan government is looking into the deposed Prime Minister, Mr Nawaz Sharif's alleged links with the Indian intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing, the Urdu daily, *Jung*, reported.

Citing sources, the paper said a number of other Pakistan Muslim League leaders, including former federal ministers, are also under investigation for contacts with RAW, NNI news agency reported.

"In the government of Mr Nawaz Sharif, the RAW personnel had free access to some government places," the paper alleged in a front-page story. It claimed RAW personnel enjoyed the patronage of highest-ranking officials in the Nawaz Sharif government.

"Whenever Mr Nawaz Sharif would go abroad, meetings with the RAW men were a regular feature," the report alleged.

Mr Sharif, his brother, Mr Shahbaz Sharif, the former Chief Minister of Punjab province, and five others are in Landhi Jail in Karachi, facing various charges including treason, that could send them to

the gallows if proved. They are alleged to have plotted to kill General Pervez Musharraf, the Chief of Army Staff who overthrew the Sharif government on 12 October.

The *Jung* report also named the ousted Prime Minister's son, Mr Hussain Nawaz, and former Ehtesab (Accountability) Bureau chief, Mr Saifur Rehman, as among those who attended meetings with RAW men.

Mr Hussain Nawaz is also under custody, but no case has been registered against him.

The paper said a day before his government was ousted, Mr Nawaz Sharif met Mr D J Khana, whom it described as an important RAW official. Mr Khana, according to report, was extraordinarily active during the Kargil crisis. He reportedly went back to India by road on 12 October.

"Mr Khana's accommodation, transport and other needs were the responsibility of Mr Saifur Rehman. Mr Khana has complete information about the Pakistan Army's inner mechanics," the paper said.

It said an army officer was also present during the Sharif-Khana meeting on 11 October. That officer is also under investigation.

THE STATESMAN
17 JAN 2000

'MY GOVERNMENT IS LEGITIMATE AND POPULAR'

India must trust me, says Gen. Musharraf

By Malini Parthasarathy

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 16. General Pervez Musharraf, Chief Executive of Pakistan's military-led Government, has said that India's attitude of questioning the legitimacy of his regime and its consequent reticence to engage him diplomatically, is not in the interest of progress in bilateral relations. Pakistan's new military ruler, in an exclusive interview to *The Hindu*, the first ever given to an Indian newspaper since he took power last October, pointed out that other countries were now "coming around" and had understood the compulsions of Pakistan's internal situation. "Therefore, I would request now that Indians, in the interest of peace, if they carry on thinking that this Government is not legitimate when the whole of Pakistan are with us... I don't know what to say... we won't progress anywhere... the reality of the situation must be understood." While affirming that he was for peace in the region, he also specifically said that India should take him "at face value" and that "they have to trust me and that whatever I am saying, I mean, and they have to come along."

'We should start talking'

General Musharraf, who spoke to this newspaper for about 55 minutes last Saturday morning at his office in Islamabad, made clear that contrary to the perceptions of him as a hardliner and nay-sayer on peace initiatives, he was in favour of bilateral talks, provided the core issue of Kashmir was specifically addressed. "We have been trying all kinds of bus diplomacy and cricket diplomacy and everything. Why has all of it failed? It has failed because the core issue was not being addressed... because there is only one dispute, the Kashmir dispute... others are just aberrations, minor differences of opinion which can be resolved." He said that India must accept that Kashmir was a

dispute. "Let them accept that we need to resolve it. And we should start talking." He also refuted the impression created by earlier remarks that he had said that there was a change in policy and that Kashmir would have to be discussed first before all other issues. Maintaining that he was not against a simultaneous discussion of all issues, if Kashmir was given priority in emphasis, he said he was against the "apologetic" tone of the references to the Kashmir dispute in the Lahore agreement. "I am not saying that we need to immediately resolve Kashmir. I am saying that we need to start a dialogue on Kashmir, we need to accept Kashmir as a problem and start a dialogue and simultaneously let us discuss everything else. I am open to discussion on every other thing. What is the problem?"

Insisting that he had no problem with the existing frameworks for bilateral discussion such as the Shimla agreement and the Lahore accord, he maintained that bilateralism had failed because the main issue, the Kashmir dispute, had been "sidelined". He made clear that he was "not really against bilateralism or talking with India on a bilateral basis... that is a good way of addressing if the two sides... the two belligerents are really... it shows maturity that both sides resolve their disputes themselves..." But since 1972, had the two countries addressed the main dispute? "Okay, today, I am saying, let's start bilaterally. Let's address all issues, Kashmir and other issues... I'm forthcoming. I will agree on talks, let's face facts and let's adhere to the Shimla accord... the only thing I am saying is, let's not please sideline Kashmir because that is the only dispute."

'Hijackers not in Pakistan'

Pakistan's Chief Executive strongly rejected suggestions that Pakistan was providing support and cover for acts of terrorism such as the recent hijacking of the Indian Airlines flight from Kathmandu. Asked why his Government could

with any one, we are against it... we will not allow it and he'll be put on trial if he comes to Pakistan."

Asked whether he had received suggestions from the United States and other powers to ban and clamp down on the various terrorist groups involved in the Kashmir insurgency, General Musharraf said that he had received no such suggestions. However, he did discuss the issue of terrorism with the group of U.S. Senators who had been visiting Pakistan that weekend. "We are absolutely and totally against terrorism of any form, export of terrorism or using religion for the purpose of terrorism... if any group is involved in terrorism, I accept that this will not be allowed from the soil of Pakistan."

Significantly, General Musharraf made clear that he was hurt by the tenor of Indian diplomacy, particularly the campaign to get Pakistan declared a terrorist state. In a reference to the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh's trip to London, he said: "This diplomacy that is being carried on... your Foreign Minister is in the United Kingdom, maybe to undercut this Government or to malign this Government; to try to get it declared a terrorist state... if they want to continue like this... tension will continue... and I may also add that I am not one of those that when you keep receiving all this flak from across the border, I keep sitting and turn my other cheek."

'CBMs only cosmetic steps'

Asked whether in the context of Kargil and the continuing tensions, including the fact of the nuclear status of both countries, temporary confidence-building measures could not be put in place, General Musharraf said that these would look "like a farce". As a former Director-General of Military Operations, he could say that these were "really cosmetic" and hardly served any purpose. "Confidence-building measures without addressing the root cause

is just like plucking a leaf from a tree. You go to the root or otherwise it is not going to serve a purpose."

'Everyone was on board on Kargil'

General Musharraf expressed dismay over media reports portraying him as creating hurdles when the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, had come to Wagah last year and said categorically that he had discussed the modalities of the entire affair earlier with the former Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, and it had been decided that while Mr. Sharif would receive Mr. Vajpayee at Wagah, he along with the other service chiefs were the first to receive Mr. Vajpayee when he got off his helicopter in Lahore and had later met him again at the Governor's House in Lahore. The Chief Executive also strongly refuted the perception that he was the main architect of the Kargil episode. The former Prime Minister was also involved in it, he said. "Everyone was on board, I still stand by it, whatever was happening in Kargil, everyone knew what was happening."

Asked whether the direct takeover of power by the Army in Pakistan would make a resolution of India-Pakistan differences easier than when political administrations were at the helm, General Musharraf's reply was "Yes, absolutely." He went on to draw a parallel with the BJP's rule in Delhi. "Even on the Indian side, when the intelligentsia talks of who could address the Kashmir problem, one always thought it would be the BJP, although the BJP are the hardliners... one always thought here that maybe Congress would not be able to address the Kashmir issue, the BJP can."

Is the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, visiting Pakistan when he comes to South Asia? Denying that there was any such stated or implied linkage between the presidential visit...

a return to democracy, General Musharraf, however, said it would have to be made clear as to what the U.S. President was coming here for. "If the President is coming for bringing a rapprochement between India and Pakistan or bringing peace to the region... if he is coming to contribute towards the lessening of tensions... then I really don't see how this objective can be achieved without going to both India and Pakistan. But if he is just coming for some economic cooperation... then that is a different issue altogether."

'Military has a role in Pak.'

On the crucial issue of when and how Pakistan would return to a democratic system of Government, General Musharraf questioned the premise of "return" to democracy as there had not been any democracy existing in Pakistan before October. "There was no democracy here. We will bring democracy and this will take some time. The time-frame cannot be given, it's not possible because before returning to civil rule, there are certain prerequisites." These, he identified as stabilising the economy and improving governance. He also affirmed that the idea of a referendum, envisaged earlier, had now been given up as it would be "a total distraction" from the main issues facing the Government. Asked whether this meant the Army would have a permanent role in the Pakistani political system, General Musharraf said that unlike in India, the military was involved in nation-building, and to say that the military did not have a role, when it always had, would be "hypocrisy". Would he implement a sentence of death penalty if the former Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, was awarded one after conviction? The General's reply was: "I can't answer that. Let the courts decide first. And then when I am faced with the issue, I will deliberate on it... but I am not a very vindictive man..."

India, Pakistan relations

By K. K. Katyal

Had the hijacking not intervened, would India and Pakistan have moved towards resumption of contacts?

One guess is as good as another.

TO SAY that the India-Pakistan relationship is at its lowest ebb since 1971 is to stress the obvious.

One wishes one could be optimistic about the prospects of a serious move to stop the drift, if not to repair the damage. In this situation, it is hard to be clear how the two sides would conduct themselves, except to discount the highly alarmist interpretations by a section of foreign diplomats — and, at their instance, by their respective Governments. Such a reading emanates from the theory, often propounded in most industrial capitals, describing South Asia as a flash point. In practice, there are quite a few checks and balances, not excluding the nuclear status of the two sides.

There is no mistaking the factors that have strained the bilateral ties, as never before in nearly three decades — one, Kargil, two, the aftermath of the coup in Islamabad, and now the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane. The deadly mix of the three has claimed a heavy toll and a respite does not seem in sight, what with the increasing level of militancy and trans-border terrorism continuously hardening the mood in India, both at the official and non-official levels. In Pakistan, the outcome of the hijacking is seen as having undone the humiliation caused by the retreat in Kargil and the mood is upbeat.

At this stage, one could only mention a likely case scenario for the near future. There will be varied manifestations of strong pressures in each country. In India, as is already evident, the Government would be faced with the twin challenge of stepped-up terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir, as reflected by daring attacks on the security forces, paramilitary and police personnel, and the post-hijacking problems, especially the formulation of a strategy to ensure against recurrence of such tragedies. To build world opinion against trans-border violence, New Delhi has called upon major powers to declare Pakistan a terrorist State. This is to be seen as a sign of exasperation rather than a practical proposition. The U.S., perhaps the only country where the national legislation provides for sanctions and embargoes against states determined as

from India, Mr. R. K. Mishra, a journalist, met several times fill their mission was interrupted by the Kargil crisis.

Proceeding on the basis that Ladakh and Jammu remain in India, they were stated to have discussed various formulae to deal with the valley (all of which treated "Azad" Kashmir as part of Pakistan). They delved into the records of the marathon rounds in the distant past between Swaran Singh and Z. A. Bhutto, then in charge of their respective foreign offices, and talked about the various ideas mooted then.

It turned out that the division of the valley on the basis of the present LoC (with slight changes) was not acceptable to Pakistan while India was not agreeable to a new dividing line, along a specified river. Also figuring in this informal intervention was the proposal by a Kashmir study group, seeking to marry the concept of two sovereignties (of India and Pakistan, in the areas under their respective control) with maximum autonomy for the two parts.

Kargil disturbed the back-channel contact but did not scuttle it. Both Mr. Mishra and Mr. Naik shuffled between the two capitals, with the immediate agenda — to bring an end to the fighting. An agreed basis, however, could not be found.

The coup in Pakistan did scuttle that process. In the new situation, where the Lahore process was downgraded, it was not hard to imagine the fate of the informal discussions. But those who thought that Mr. Naik would be on the wrong side of the new regime because of his role in secret talks and also because of his public comments, involving him in an unsavoury controversy with the army (before the coup), may have to revise their opinion. Mr. Naik attended a prestigious seminar in Kathmandu early last month as part of an 11-member team from Pakistan and strongly pleaded with the Indian participants in the seminar for New Delhi's dealings with Gen. Musharraf. The military rulers would not have let him go to Kathmandu, if he had fallen from grace. Had the hijacking not intervened, would the two sides have moved towards resumption of contacts? One guess is as good as another.

Ministers, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mr. Nawaz Sharif, seeking to build upon their personal rapport, to take concrete steps to reverse the adversarial trends. The much-hailed bus diplomacy produced the Lahore Declaration with its framework for negotiations and the memorandum of understanding, re-defining their relationship as nuclear powers.

The euphoria was short-lived, as the massive intrusion of Pakistani troops into Kargil and the subsequent armed conflict washed away the gains, so painstakingly achieved. New Delhi felt cheated by the betrayal of the trust reposed in Islamabad. The thought that Pakistan's armed forces were busy planning the Kargil misadventure when their Prime Minister was swearing by the peace agenda produced bitter disenchantment. New Delhi, it was clear, would be highly wary in its response to any fresh move for a dialogue. But despite the changed posture, the resumption of talks was not ruled out. Another blow was administered when the democratic Government was dismissed in November last year and Pakistan once again found itself under military rule led by the Chief of the Army Staff, General Pervez Musharraf, widely perceived here as the architect of the Kargil operation. New Delhi made no secret of its stand — to confine the dealings with Islamabad to the working level. The hijacking, master-minded as it was by Pakistan-based terrorist organisations, infuriated India. It completed the dissimilarity between the situation now and 12 months ago.

The change of Government in Islamabad put an end to the back-channel diplomacy, of which we first heard during the Kargil conflict. Going by the details available now, it was initiated soon after the Lahore bus journey — in pursuance of the decision of the two Prime Ministers. Islamabad nominated a senior retired bureaucrat but, because of his death, the job was entrusted to a former diplomat, Mr. Niaz Naik. He and his opposite number

"terrorist", has made it know that the present situation arising from the activities of the organisations such as the Harkat-ul-Ansar (now called Harkat-ul-Mujahideen), need to be tackled differently. New Delhi, however, may keep up the pressure, calling upon Washington to deal suitably with the Pakistan-based elements, designated by it as "foreign terrorists". More important, it will be under pressure to plan tougher measures to deal with the new reality, the increased militancy. The non-official opinion would require the Government to add teeth to its response, making use of the advantages that accrue to the country of the size and with the resources of India, with its strategic location. (These suggestions are not to be confused with calls for extreme steps, which are confined to fringe elements).

In Pakistan, there is already a change in the official priority in the matter of dealings with India. Kashmir first, and other issues later — is the line of the military regime. More of it may be heard in the days to come, investing the rhetoric from Pakistan with a new ominous ring. The likes of the HuM would plan new terrorist activities — with the help of intelligence agencies in the belief that they were close to the "final blow". At the official level, the new deterioration of the bilateral ties would be seen in a renewed bid to internationalise the Kashmir issue. In this mood in the two countries, any meaningful contact would be a major casualty.

A less likely case scenario, if Islamabad were to spell out a reasonable vision of dealing with India, New Delhi may find it hard to continue the present line — of refraining from doing substantive business with the military regime. The contactlessness may give place to contacts, even though uneasy.

The contrast in the dealings of the two countries at the beginning of last year and at the present juncture could not have been sharper. The year 1999 started on a promising note, what with the two Prime

RDX recovered from 'toys'

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, January 17

THE SPECIAL Cell of the Delhi Police arrested a Pakistani national and two Indians for allegedly transporting RDX, detonators and timers concealed inside plastic toys. The three were allegedly acting as agents for ISI and were involved in transporting explosives smuggled in from Pakistan.

According to the police, the explosives were smuggled into India from Pakistan through the Attari and Wagah borders and regular passengers called sawaris were used to transport the 'toys' in trains and buses to Delhi and other places.

Although the accused have not yet disclosed the exact purpose for which these explosives were being brought, sources in the police say that they were meant to create a series of blasts in the Capital and neighbouring states

around January 26.

The explosives were found hidden in cavities of three plastic toys shaped as buses and jeeps. Two slabs of RDX weighing 860 grams, two highly-advanced electronic timers and four detonators have been recovered from the innards of the three toys.

"We had received information that explosives were being smuggled into India concealed in toys. Surveillance was increased and we found that Abdul Rasheed, a Pakistani national from Lahore residing at Jama Masjid was in close contact with the sawaris," said Ashok Chand, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell).

Investigation revealed that Rasheed, who is an ISI agent, was arrested in September 1998 for circulating fake Indian currency. He was released on bail in January last year. On January 16, the police got information that Rasheed had received a consign-

ment of explosives and was about to deliver the same to some associates.

A team of plainclothes policemen followed Rasheed who was carrying a plastic bag. At the Inter State Bus Terminal (Dhaura Kuan), as Rasheed was about to hand over the plastic bag to two persons, the police team arrested the three.

A search of the plastic bag revealed the 'toys'.

A case under sedition, conspiracy to wage a war against the state, and offences under sections of the Explosives Substances Act have been registered and investigations are on. The two other accused have been identified as Aas Mohammed and Mohammed Ismail, both residents of Gurgaon.

"We have managed to identify the person who had supplied these explosives to Rasheed. He will be arrested soon," said Mr Chand.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
18 JAN 2000

Musharraf calls for US role in Kashmir

Beijing, Jan. 17 (PTT): Pakistan's military ruler General Pervez Musharraf sees a "serious" role for the US in mediating the Kashmir issue and ensuring peace and security in South Asia, an official Chinese newspaper reported today.

"We believe the US can make a serious contribution to establishment of peace and security in the region and expedite a just and fair settlement of the Kashmir problem in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people," Musharraf, who began a two-day working visit to China today, told the *China Daily*.

Musharraf said Pakistan desired friendly ties with all countries, including the US. "In the past, we have welcomed international efforts aimed at reducing tension and initiating a meaningful dialogue between Pakistan and India in order to resolve contentious issues, including the core issue of Kashmir," he said.

Musharraf reiterated Pakistan's support to Kashmiri militants and accused Delhi of failing to respond to Islamabad's initiatives to reduce tension. "We shall continue our unflinching moral, political and diplomatic support to our Kashmiri brethren in their struggle to achieve self-determination," he said.

The general claimed to have initiated an important step to reduce military presence along Pakistan's borders with India. "It is unfortunate, but not surprising that India has failed to respond positively to our gesture and has instead embarked on a vilification campaign against the new govern-

ment to isolate it in the international community," he said, referring to the hijack of IC 814.

"Pakistan will remain committed to dialogue and the peaceful resolution of all issues. At the same time, we are opposed to hegemony and power politics," Musharraf said.

Asked when civilian rule would be restored in Pakistan, Musharraf, who seized power in a coup on October 12, avoided giving a firm commitment.

"We must fix our vision on realisation of the agenda at hand and not worry too much about the timeframe. The armed forces have no intention of staying in charge any longer than absolutely necessary to pave the way for true democracy to flourish," he said.

"The choice before us on October 12 was between saving the body (the nation) at the cost of losing a limb (the Constitution)," Musharraf said. "I chose to save the nation and yet took care not to sacrifice the Constitution."

Musharraf said the new regime faces an uphill task, but had succeeded in identifying its priorities. "The economy is showing signs of recovery, law and order has improved considerably and the new administration is making several decisions to pave way for genuine democracy through delegation of power at grassroots level," he said.

In a statement issued after his arrival in Beijing, Musharraf hailed China as "a country which Pakistan holds dear as its most reliable and trusted friend".

He said: "China has stood by Pakistan in difficult times."

THE TELEGRAPH

18 JAN 2000

Undeclared war by Pak: Advani

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Jan. 17. — Pakistan has “unleashed an undeclared war on India”, the home minister said today.

Mr LK Advani was referring to Islamabad’s efforts to aid and arm Jammu and Kashmir ultras since the Kargil conflict. “This is not a declared war. Pakistan has unleashed an undeclared war,” he asserted after a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security.

The three-hour meet, chaired by the Prime Minister, chalked out new strategy to combat militancy in the state and check deterioration in law and order.

The committee decided to deploy more paramilitary forces along the LoC and the international border to fight counter-insurgency operations.

Other measures include:

- The area under counter-insurgency operations will not be divided into 49 sectors under the unified headquarters controlled by the chief minister. The two corps commanders are advisors to Mr Farooq Abdullah.

- Another unified HQ will be set up for areas north of Zojila Pass to combat terrorism

- Security forces have been asked to adopt a pro-active approach against militants and establish area domination during day and night. This move is significant because recent ultra attacks on the headquarters had forced security forces to concentrate on their camps, thereby reducing the area under their “domination”, specially at night

- Security in Srinagar has

been strengthened and forces have been asked to hit terrorist bases inside the city

- Retired soldiers and village defence committee members will be asked to participate in operations to curb infiltration and exfiltration. Village defence committees will be made part of the counter-insurgency grid and provided with sophisticated arms and modern

peace talks were a desperate bid to avoid the growing feeling in western countries that Pakistan was responsible for cross-border terrorism.

A white paper on the ISI’s activities will be ready by the next Parliament session, he said.

The defence minister, present at the briefing, refused to say anything even when Mr Advani asked him to do so.

An external affairs ministry spokesman later said the government had found nothing “encouraging” in Gen Musharraf’s offer to resume bilateral dialogue. “We have received different kinds of signals from Pakistan on re-opening of bilateral talks,” he said, but wasn’t aware of “anything new or encouraging”.

“We would consider cessation of cross-border terrorism against India to be encouraging,” the spokesman observed. India has repeatedly, and specifically, said that such an atmosphere will be created when there is an end to cross-border terrorism. Only a couple of days ago, New Delhi had reminded Islamabad of its obligation under the Simla Agreement to prevent “hostile propaganda”.

US effort: The USA is working to get India and Pakistan back on the negotiating table, the *New York Times* said in Washington.

“The USA has repeatedly said, ‘You have to be talking to each other, not shouting at each other, especially when things seem to be at their worst,’” the paper quoted Ambassador Richard Celeste as saying.

‘FORCED CONFESSION’

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 17. — The Indian High Commission clerk, abducted and assaulted by Pakistani intelligence operatives yesterday, was made to sign “confessional” statements before he was released early this morning. Mr Ponniah Moses was forced to confess he was carrying a remote-controlled bomb and Rs 5,000 for an unknown person, the acting Indian High Commissioner said. While in illegal custody, “threats were made on his personal safety and family amounting to physical and psychological torture”. — PTI

communication equipment

Talking to reporters later, Mr Advani said Pakistan started sending suicide squads to attack Army installations after the Kargil conflict. The attacks were planned to generate publicity and make people think that militants had gained the upper hand.

Aid to ultras appeared to have increased after General Pervez Musharraf took over, the home minister maintained. The general’s statements about

Pakistani held in Delhi with RDX

RDX:

(Continued from page 1)

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Jan. 17. — A Pakistani, suspected to have ISI links, was arrested here yesterday while passing 860 gm of RDX along with four electronic detonators and two timers, concealed in three toys. Two Indians receiving the consignment were also arrested.

Police are yet to ascertain whether the RDX was concealed in toys only for safe transportation and are also trying to find out whether any such assignment has already reached the country.

While the Pakistani has been identified as Abdul Rasheed, alias, Sheeda, alias, Khalid Saleem, 42 (from Lahore), the two Indians have been identified as Aas Mohammed, 45, and Mohamed Ismail, 40, both from Gurgaon in Haryana. Abdul was earlier arrested for running a fake currency racket in India at the behest of ISI, police said.

The three have been booked for sedition and waging war against the State under the Indian Penal Code and the Explosive Substances Act.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell), Mr Ashok Chand, said the two persons who gave the consignment to Abdul have also been identified and were likely to be arrested soon.

The police was tipped off by Intelligence agencies that explosives concealed in toys were being smuggled into India through Attari and Wagha Border and that "sawaris (carriers)" using buses and trains from Pakistan were transporting such toys.

Abdul has been residing in the Jama Masjid area and was constantly in touch with a number of such "sawaris". His activities were monitored and it was found that he had been arrested in September 1998 in a fake currency racket and released on bail last January.

■ See RDX: page 6

Yesterday, police came to know that Abdul had received a consignment of explosives and was going to deliver it to some unidentified persons at a bus stop near Dhaula Kuan in south-west Delhi. He was seen boarding a bus in front of Red Fort with two polythene bags. He got off at Dhaula Kuan, proceeded towards Inter-State Bus Terminal and met two persons when the police swooped down on the three.

Three toys were found in the bags. They were later found to carry the RDX, two ABCD timers — which could be set to trigger an explosion between eight minutes to 194 days — and four electronic detonators.

Abdul confessed that he had started off as a petty smuggler and had first come to India in 1992. About two years later, his activities were detected and he was barred from visiting India.

He was then approached by some ISI officials to circulate fake currency notes in India. He entered India again in 1998 with a fake passport, but got arrested. After his release next year, he was contacted by ISI agents and told to lie low and wait for instructions, but merge with the local populace. Abdul's "handler" is based in Lahore, codenamed Tariq Bhatt, police said.

As for the other two, Aas Mohammed said during interrogation that he was an unsuccessful businessman who was approached by a ISI agent on a visit to Pakistan two months ago. The agent, codenamed Subban, offered Aas to work for him. Mohamed Ismail was jobless when he was roped in by Aas, police said.

THE STATESMAN

18 JAN 2000

High Commission staffer freed

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 17 Mr. P. Moses, the Indian High Commission official abducted in Islamabad yesterday, was released in the early hours of Monday by Pakistani authorities after a strong protest was lodged by the High Commission with the Foreign Office.

A shaken and shattered Mr. Moses told *The Hindu* that the entire case was trumped up and baseless. "I was coerced into making a statement on Pakistan Television. Apart from causing me physical harm, they also threatened the physical safety of my family," he said.

Even though Mr. Moses has been released, there are continued fears about his safety and security and also other Indian High Commission staffers, as Pakistan believes that 'others' are also involved in the 'plot'.

The 54-year-old Mr. Moses, a devout Christian, is from Tamil

'evidence' of direct involvement of the Government of India in 'sponsoring terrorism' in Pakistan.

Mr. Vyas rejected the allegations on the spot and said that the Moses affair was an attempt by Pakistan to cover-up its own failure in maintaining law and order in the country. India, Pakistani officials were told, did not sponsor terrorism in any country.

The Acting High Commissioner also told Pakistani officials that the question of 'disclosing the identity' of other High Commission 'accomplices' of Mr. Moses did not arise as the allegations were wild and baseless.

In a press release, Pakistan said that the 'cooperation' of the High Commission had been sought in 'making those officials involved in the incident available for prosecution in accordance with the local laws'. Given the fact that the charges against Mr. Moses were baseless, this question also did

not arise, Mr. Vyas told Pakistani officials.

Despicable acts, says New Delhi

NEW DELHI, JAN. 17. India today lodged a strong protest with Pakistan on the intimidation and abduction of Mr. P. Moses, a staff member of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad and condemned the "despicable acts of the Pakistani authorities" as beyond the realm of civilised behaviour.

A spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs said that "unfounded and baseless allegations have been made by Pakistan in respect to the abduction of Mr. Moses in Islamabad."

The protest was lodged with the Pakistan Government by the acting High Commissioner of India in Islamabad, Mr. Sudhir Vyas.



Mr. P. Moses. — AP

Nadu. In a related development, the Acting Indian High Commissioner, Mr. Sudhir Vyas, was summoned to the Foreign Office and told that the involvement of a High Commission official was

Now a 'deadly bus' from Lahore

By Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar

9:00 PM

NEW DELHI, JAN. 17. They look as appealing as any other toy. But the three Chinese-made toys recovered by the Special Cell of the Delhi police from a Pakistan national described as an agent of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) could have spelt death for many here as these were packed with 860 gm of deadly RDX, four electronic detonators and two ABCD timers with a range of 8 minutes 32 seconds to 194 days.

The seizure was made by the Special Cell after it got intelligence inputs that explosives were being smuggled in from Pakistan through the Atari-Wagah border.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell), Mr. Ashok Chand, said on Monday the 42-year-old Pakistan national, Abdul Rasheed, was nabbed by a police team from the Dhaula Kuan bus stand here over the weekend.

Abdul Rasheed, who lived in Delhi's Jama Masjid area, had earlier been arrested in September 1998 for circulating fake currency in India at the instance of the ISI. He had been released on bail in January 1999. Thereafter, a watch was being kept on him.

Mr. Chand said information was received on Sunday that Abdul Rasheed would deliver a con-

HD-1 18/1

signment of explosives to some persons at Dhaula Kuan and was failed. He boarded a bus at Red Fort and alighted near Dhaula Kuan. Subsequently, he proceeded on foot towards the inter-State bus stand where he met two men — identified later as Aas Mohammad and Mohammad Ismail of Gurgaon in Haryana. Police swooped on him and nabbed him. Two polythene bags were recovered from Abdul Rasheed. These contained three toys, one of them a "school bus".

The toys were dismantled by the police and explosive material was recovered from inside. Cases of sedition and waging war against the state were registered at the Delhi Cantonment police station. During interrogation, Abdul Rasheed — who hails from Lahore — is said to have told the police he first came to India in 1992 and took to petty smuggling. In 1994, he was banned from coming into India after his smuggling activities were detected.

In 1998 he entered India on a fake passport under the assumed name of Khalid Saleem. He began circulating fake currency but was nabbed. Upon his release on bail, he was engaged as a "sleeping agent" by ISI, which directed him to merge into the local populace and await further orders.

THE HINDU
18 JAN 2000

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2000

HD-10

A KASHMIR-CENTRED AGENDA

THE HARDLINE REMARKS of the Chief Executive of Pakistan, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, during his exclusive interview to *The Hindu*, demonstrate that the lessons of the past half a century of the roller-coaster bilateral relationship have not been learnt by the rulers of that country. By holding the entire gamut of the ties hostage to the intractable Kashmir dispute, Gen. Musharraf is setting the clock back, negating the substantial gains of the past decade when a measure of hard-nosed pragmatism was introduced into the conduct of the evolving relationship. In the total absence of mutual trust following the Kargil flare-up, such an approach can be counterproductive. If the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration contained one common message it was that, as the relations matured, the two countries would benefit by following a multitrack approach to the different aspects of the bilateral ties. India and China have successfully pursued a similar policy which, while the two tackled the vexed, longpending territorial question, allowed for movement in other areas of the wideranging ties. It never meant — neither country could have accepted any such interpretation — that the border issue was being sidelined or put in cold storage. It meant that even as the two neighbours set up the machinery at several levels to deal with the intricacies of the border question, they saw wisdom in not allowing the relationship to be held to ransom by that one issue, however fundamental it is.

Gen. Musharraf's comment, "Kashmir is the only problem, the others are aberrations, minor differences", betrays a mindset that is a worrisome throwback to the days of his military predecessor, Gen Zia ul-Haq, when bilateral relations hit the nadir. It was the Zia regime which pegged the bilateral relations firmly to the Kashmir issue as part of its Islamisation agenda and pushed Pakistan down a dangerously slippery path. By repudiating the Lahore process, trashing (military?) confidence building measures which have

in the past prevented irritants from reaching the flashpoint and by more or less rejecting Track II diplomacy, Gen. Musharraf is shutting out whatever little warmth had come into the relationship. His expressed readiness to resume the interrupted dialogue with India contrasts with his Kashmir-centred agenda. For India to respond he must create the right atmosphere by acting decisively to end cross-border terrorism and support to the increasingly bloody proxy war in Kashmir. Against the record of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, his defence of the activities of fundamentalist militants like Masood Azhar is unconvincing. India certainly would like the authorities in Pakistan to curb such firebrands and prevent a whipping up of frenzy against this country.

Even while putting across a hard line on the substantive issues, there are signs of some procedural flexibility including a willingness to proceed on the bilateral track. At times conciliatory and at others deliberately hardline and even hostile, Gen. Musharraf conveys one clear message: he is here to stay and the rest of the world had better get ready to deal with him and his regime on a long term basis. As the former Army Chief sets about establishing his bona fides, he has assumed the mantle of national saviour and reformer like his two predecessors had done. His claim to legitimacy can hardly be judged on the basis of the record of his 100 days in office. Gen. Zia and before him Gen. Ayub Khan, too, had registered a number of initial gains like restoring law and order after a period of chaos, some measure of efficiency in administration and resumption of normal socio-economic activities. Both became repressive as the initial euphoria died down and the time came for delivering results and were reluctant to establish a framework for transfer of power to civilians. Like them, Gen. Musharraf promises a return to suitably-trimmed civilian rule. He has a task on hand.

THE HINDU

18 JAN 2000

Pak. expels Moses

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 18. Mr. P. Moses, a staffer of the Indian High Commission here, abducted and arrested on false charges of carrying a "remote device" for a bomb on Sunday afternoon, was asked today by Pakistan to leave the country within seven days.

The announcement came 24 hours after the acting Indian High Commissioner, Mr. Sudhir Vyas, had told Pakistani authorities that there was no question of Mr. Moses or other unidentified staff members being "made available" for prosecution under local laws.

Given the serious nature of the charge, it is surprising that Pakistan did not act earlier to have Mr. Moses removed from the scene. The approach is reflective of the fact that Pakistan wanted to use this pretext for launching a propaganda campaign against India.

Mr. Vyas was summoned again today to the Foreign Ministry and when he reiterated that Mr. Moses would not be "made available" for prosecution, a note declaring the Indian staffer persona non grata was handed over to him.

The acting High Commissioner was informed that since India was not cooperating with Pakistan, Mr. Moses might be withdrawn from the mission. The charge of his being involved in terrorist activities was made again.

India blamed for blast

The Daily Telegraph reports from Lahore:

Pakistan is blaming Indian intelligence agents for Monday's bomb explosion which killed six persons in a bazaar in Karachi. Officials said the bombing was part of an increasing campaign by India to undermine its neighbour.

No group has claimed responsibility but a senior official in Islamabad said: "It is most likely to be part of India's on-going campaign of aggression to try to intimidate Pakistan."

THE HINDU

19 JAN 2000

Masood Azhar

HD 13 weds 19/1

MULTAN, JAN.18. Masood Azhar, one of the three Pakistani militants freed by India to end the hijacking of the Indian Airlines jet, has married in a quiet ceremony, his father said today.

Azhar returned to his home early this month after his release in exchange of 155 hostages on-board the hijacked plane at Kandahar in Afghanistan. He married late yesterday at his home in Bahawalpur, in central Pakistan, 100 Km south of here, his father, Allah Bakhsh Sabir, said. *Sd. PAM*

"It was a simple ceremony just for a few family members," Sabir said. Only 12 relatives were present at the ceremony, he said.

Azhar, who has links to the 'Harkat-ul-Mujahideen' group, appeared in public several times since his release and spoke at an Islamic seminary in Karachi earlier this month, vowing to wage a holy war against India. — AFP

THE HINDU
19 JAN 2000

Give
for

Musharraf gets China's 'unconditional support'

HD
19/1

BEIJING, JAN. 18. The Pakistani military ruler, General Pervez Musharraf, today left for home after winning unconditional diplomatic and political backing from the Chinese leadership for his administration.

The unconditional Chinese backing for the Pakistani military-led government came during two days of talks between Gen. Musharraf and Chinese leaders, including the President, Mr. Jiang Zemin.

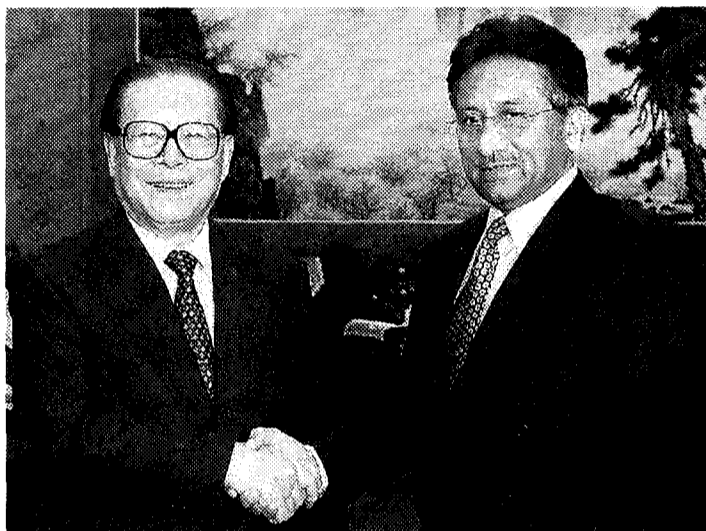
"China pursues a comprehensive partnership with Pakistan and would make new efforts to consolidate and advance Sino-Pakistani relations, Mr. Jiang, also general secretary of the ruling communist party, told the Pakistani chief executive during a meeting here, the Xinhua news agency reports.

Earlier today, the Chinese Parliament Speaker and former Prime Minister, Mr. Li Peng, told Gen. Musharraf that Sino-Pakistani friendship was firmly entrenched.

"The friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries had been strengthened while cooperation in political, economic, military, scientific, cultural and other fields had borne fruits," Mr. Li said.

During talks yesterday, the Prime Minister, Mr. Zhu Rongji, told Gen. Musharraf that China's support for Pakistan would continue regardless of developments on the domestic or international scene.

Mr. Jiang described China and



The Chinese President, Mr. Jiang Zemin (left), greets the Pakistani Military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf in Beijing on Tuesday.

Pakistan as good neighbours and that their friendship, established on the basis of the fundamental interests of the people of the two countries, had stood the test of time.

"The mutual understanding and support of the two countries are due to adhering to the five principles of peaceful co-existence," he stressed while hoping that Pakistan would maintain social stability and economic development.

"China would like to see a more stable, prosperous Pakistan in future," he said.

He also declared that China

would pursue good relations with all neighbouring countries on the basis of the five principles of peaceful co-existence and would not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

Gen. Musharraf described his visit to China as fruitful and thanked the Chinese leadership for their understanding and support over the years.

"Cooperation and friendship between the two countries should be cemented in the new century," the Pakistani chief executive, who arrived here yesterday for a two-day working visit at the invitation of Mr. Zhu Rongji, said. — PTI

India flies alone

Illusions and misplaced assumptions of reasonableness must not be factors in India's Pakistan policy

9-10
2011

India should treat Pakistan as a state sponsor of terrorism and deal with it in a decisive and pre-emptive manner

The seven day hijack of Indian Airlines flight 814 attracted much international media attention, particularly television. One noticeable aspect of the coverage was how clinical and non-committal was the foreign media's commentary on the hijack. The hijackers were assiduously referred to as "militants from Kashmir, an area of dispute between Pakistan and India". There was no condemnation of the act of terrorism nor any critical references to those groups or countries which were in a position to provide assistance to the hijackers. There was an absence of emotion and hype of the type that attends terrorist acts where citizens of more powerful countries are involved.

The Western media's coverage of the tragic events of December last year reflected a deeper reality. Namely, that while the world takes note and will take note of such critical events, the basic responsibility of dealing with them remains with the affected country. Neither in terms of value judgments nor of operational support should anyone expect effective pressure on the terrorists and their supporting agencies to come from other governments. Dealing with challenges to India's security is and will be a lonely responsibility — as is the case for other countries — except when collective self-interest impels other states to take action.

Facts regarding the hijack have been available to the public for three weeks now. The manner in which the government tackled the problem, from start until the foreign minister's trip to Kandahar to deliver the terrorists, has been subject to acrimonious cogitation. Rather than repeating these many *post mortems*, it would be better to look at the policy lessons of this particular case of crisis management.

First, and most significant, is that the way the crisis was handled showed a policy orientation that placed the highest value on human lives, even if this had negative implications in terms of security and counter-terrorist activity. Second, India seemed to lack a clearly defined national policy on hijacking and

other terrorist acts. Third, though aware of Pakistan's long term policy to foment subversion in India, India is still short of adopting a categorical and decisive posture against Pakistan in response to its declared intentions.

While the organizational arrangements for dealing with such crises exist, including the operational instruments with the necessary coordination and real time response, much more has to be done to bring things up to mark and allow effective and timely counter-measures.

There is an apex crisis management committee, chaired by the cabinet secretary. There are also specially trained personnel like the national security guards. There also exist people trained in negotiating in terrorist situations. There also exist procedural manuals, detailing action on a step by step basis.

But whether it was the Purulia arms drop or the recurrent terrorism in Kashmir and the Northeast or the hijack, the Indian response is marred by compartmentalization of responsibilities, shortcomings in coordination between different agencies and consequent delays in response. It was an unanimous intelligence assessment that Pakistan would increase its sponsorship of violence following its debacle in Kargil. India should have moved on to a higher level of alertness and security deployment. The need now is to speculate on what remedial action can be taken.

Foremost is the need to define firm policy stances on negotiating with terrorists when they are engaged in violent acts. Like Israel and the United States, India could take a decision not to negotiate or compromise with any category of terrorist. Second, the crisis management procedure should be fine-tuned to ensure efficient coordination and quick response. Third, India needs to negotiate agreements with other countries, particularly in south Asia, to enable Indian security guards to do the final security check before passengers board Indian planes from airports in neighbouring countries. It goes without saying that better security systems will also be needed in airports within India.

Special forces entrusted with counter-terrorist tasks should be deployed in a decentralized manner, with one or two central units kept in reserve. Each unit should be provided with logistical support to allow for quick time response. India could get assistance and advice for training such personnel from countries with experience of terrorist pressure. Their response is likely to be positive.

It is important to assess external reactions to the hijack and structure

India's approach to foreign governments in a realistic manner. It is my assessment that a diplomatic and publicity campaign to have Pakistan declared a terrorist state is a futile exercise. While countries like the US were supportive and helped India with information and intelligence inputs during the hijacking, indications were given from official sources from most important countries that they were not inclined to declare Pakistan a terrorist state and subject it to sanctions.

The alternative is simple, logical and direct. India should treat Pakistan as a state sponsoring terrorism and deal with it in a decisive and pre-emptive manner to the extent possible. India must simultaneously put the important powers and the international community in general on notice that this will be the nation's approach.

Events following the hijack and communication intercepts between the hijackers and their controllers clearly establish Pakistan's involvement in the hijack. The facilities given to the terrorists who were freed, allowing them to travel to Pakistan and make public pronouncements, the speed with which these statements were recorded and distributed in northern India, should make us conscious of the extent of the Inter-Services Intelligence network in India. It would be sufficient to inform foreign governments and the United Nations regularly and extensively about Pakistani sponsored terrorism. There is no point in beseeching the world to give Pakistan a negative certificate. India must deal with Pakistan the best that it can.

The *taliban* regime undoubtedly contributed in a marginal way to defusing the crisis. But it did so not because of any empathy or goodwill towards India. A cardinal motivation of the *taliban* is to safeguard their own credibility and image with the world community. This is especially true given US pressure on the *taliban* regarding pan-Islamic terrorism. The *taliban*'s role can be acknowledged, but only if one is aware of their motives. India should indicate that if the *taliban* gain effective control of Afghanistan and stabilize the country internally, respecting human rights, India would be willing to deal with them. Relations with the *taliban* have to be an exercise in practical politics.

Overall, the Indian government dealt with the specific issue of the crisis as best it could, at least once the aircraft left Amritsar. Ensuring the passengers safety in the face of adverse circumstances was desirable and this objective was achieved. The cost and implications of this compromise is still to be dealt with. Hence the need for better internal management and need to recognize that India alone must deal with Pakistan. Illusions and misplaced assumptions of reasonableness should not be factors in India's Pakistan policy.

The author is former foreign secretary of India

India expels Pak. staffer

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JAN 19. Close on the heels of the expulsion of a staffer by Pakistan, India today asked Islamabad to "withdraw" one of its officials from its High Commission here.

The Foreign Office today twice summoned the Pakistani Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Akbar Zeb, and sought the withdrawal of Mr. Shabir Hussain Shah, a staffer in the Pakistan High Commission. Mr. Shah, according to the Foreign Office spokesman, was being expelled for "indulging in activities incompatible with his official status." The Government has sought his removal by January 26. The spokesman parried questions about a link between the expulsion of Mr. P. Moses, a staffer in the Indian High Commission at Islamabad yesterday and that of Mr. Shah.

In a related development, the Foreign Office summoned the Pakistani Deputy High Commissioner for a second time to "categorically and unequivocally" reject the allegations made against Mr. Moses.

Allegations absurd: Page 13

THE HINDU
20 JAN 2000

No talks until Pak creates right atmosphere: Jaswant

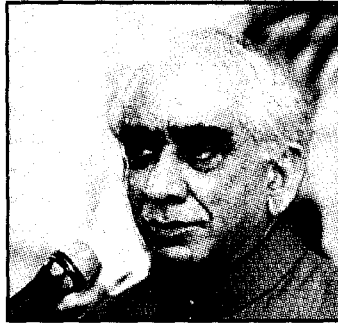
London, January 20

INDIA HAS ruled out a dialogue with Pakistan till Islamabad created a proper environment by adjuring violence, giving up encouragement to cross-border terrorism and ending the daily cry of jihad against it. "These are not preconditions, these are essential integrals for the creation of a proper environment," External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh said last night on BBC World TV's 'Asia Today' programme.

"We will remain committed to dialogue and reconciliation. But it is obvious that, for this, not as a precondition but as an integral of the dialogue process itself, a proper environment be created," Singh said.

He said Pakistan has to recognise that this compulsive hostility that it demonstrates towards India must cease. "I don't wish to particularise it and concentrate only on the

hijack at Kandahar, which was a trial for large number of Indians, but there is need for Pakistan to come to terms with reality," he said. Answering a query on



Jaswant Singh

whether he has any hostility towards Gen. Pervez Musharraf, Chief Executive of Pakistan, the External Affairs Minister said "of course not, not in the slightest. I scarcely know the gentleman."

Asked whether the working group on counter-terrorism set up at the tenth round of Indo-US talks on nuclear issues be linked to the recent hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane, Jaswant Singh replied in the negative.

"It is not a consequence of the hijacking alone - if that's what you mean by linking -- but it is a joint working group to combat the international menace of terrorism because both these countries have recognised such menace and it needs to be addressed jointly."

To a query whether US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott agreed with India's position that Pakistan was directly involved in the hijacking, Singh said, "Well, we discussed it but it was not my expectation that I will want from Strobe Talbott a judgement one way or another. These are necessarily issues that are considered at some length by various countries from different angles." (PTI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
21 JAN 2000

‘Proper climate needed for parleys with Pak.’

LONDON, JAN. 20. India has ruled out a dialogue with Pakistan till Islamabad created a proper environment by adjuring violence, giving up encouragement to cross-border terrorism and ending the daily cry of Jehad against it.

“These are not preconditions, these are essential integrals for the creation of a proper environment,” the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, said last night on BBC world TV’s ‘Asia today’ programme.

“We will remain committed to dialogue and reconciliation. But it is obvious that, for this, not as a precondition but as an integral of the dialogue process itself, a proper environment be created,” Mr. Singh said.

He said Pakistan had to recognise that this compulsive hostility that it demonstrated towards India must cease. “I do not wish to particularise it and concentrate only on the hijack at Kandahar, which was a trial for large number of Indians, but there is need for Pakistan to come to terms with reality,” he said.

Asked to define reality, he said, “the reality being that India really has no hostility towards Pakistan, that Pakistan can simply not have a position of perpetual confrontation towards India which will cause irreparable damage.”

Asked whether the two countries were conducting a proxy war, Mr. Singh said, “Pakistan is certainly conducting a clandestine war, not a proxy war. And

so far as India is concerned and certainly since the BJP Government came to power, not last year but in 1998, “there is no question of any such kind of activity in Pakistan ever having been encouraged by India,” he said.

Asked whether the working group on counter-terrorism set up at the 10th round of Indo-U.S. talks on nuclear issues was linked to the recent hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane, Mr. Jaswant Singh replied in the negative.

“It is not a consequence of the hijacking alone — if that’s what you mean by linking — but it is a joint working group that India and the U.S. have set up to combat the international menace of terrorism because the assumption being that there is recognition by both countries that there is indeed such menace and it needs to be addressed jointly.”

Asked if the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott agreed with India’s position that Pakistan was directly involved in the hijacking, Mr. Singh said, “Well, we discussed it but it was not my expectation that I will want from Strobe Talbott a judgment one way or another. These are necessarily issues that are considered at some length by various countries from different angles.”

Asked whether India’s hostility to Pakistan was based on the belief that Mr. Musharraf was in charge of Pakistan’s Army during the Kargil conflict, Mr. Singh said India had no such hostility as the questioner suggested.— PTI

PM lambasts Pak for aiding N-E insurgents

PTI and HT Correspondent
Shillong, January 21

PRIME MINISTER Atal Bihari Vajpayee today hit out at Pakistan for backing insurgents and separatists in the North Eastern States, in a bid to destabilise India and said the activities of these outfits perpetuated backwardness and poverty in the region.

"It is now well established that Pakistan is backing some of these groups as part of its larger game plan to destabilise India," he said, inaugurating a two-day conference of Governors and Chief Ministers of the North-East States and Sikkim, on "Security Issues and Regional Development".

"One of the many factors that have impeded economic development in some North-East States is violence unleashed by insurgents and externally-aided separatists besides criminals," he said.

Though some State Governments displayed strong determination in confronting these anti-national and anti-social forces, a lot more remained to be done to create a proper environment for

investment and implementation of development programmes in the region, he said.

The conference is being attended, among others, by Home Minister L K Advani, Defence Minister George Fernandes, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission K C Pant and Minister of State for Water Resources Bijoy Chakraborty.

Addressing the conference, the Prime Minister stressed the Centre's deep and abiding commitment to the rapid economic progress of the region.

Regretting that the North-Eastern Council has not lived up to the role it was assigned, the Prime Minister said that increased funding alone could not solve the economic and social problems of the region and Sikkim. "One such issue is that large sums of money do not find their way to the projects for which they are intended", Mr Vajpayee said.

Expressing that elections to local bodies must be held on time, the Prime Minister said, "We need to pursue development policies and programmes that generate employment, though not neces-

sarily in Govt sector".

At a press conference in the evening jointly addressed by the Union Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha and Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission K. C. Pant, the north-eastern states were asked to identify thrust areas for investment to ensure quick economic development and create employment opportunities.

"The Prime Minister wanted the N-E states to prepare project reports on the thrust areas so that the Centre would take appropriate steps to help them", Mr Pant said.

Mr Sinha said the Centre had offered to constitute a task force to look into the financing needs of the tea industry of the region.

The proposed task force would study the problems of the tea industry and make recommendations to remove them, he said.

Earlier addressing the meeting, Assam CM Prafulla Kumar Mahanta demanded 50 per cent share of the State from the central pool of non-lapsable funds stating that 72 per cent of the population of the North-East resided in the State.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
22 JAN 2000

Fierce India-Pak clash on LoC

'25 Pak soldiers killed' • Both sides claim other attacked • Pak to protest

HTC/Agencies
Jammu/Islamabad, January 22

AT LEAST 17 Pakistani soldiers, including an officer, were killed when the Indian Army repulsed a heavy attack on an Indian post along the Line of Control (LoC) in Chhamb early this morning.

(A PTI report said 25 Pakistani soldiers were killed.) One Indian Junior Commissioned Officer and a soldier were killed, and two others were injured.

Pakistan, however, claimed it had repulsed an Indian attack in Ifrikharabad sub-sector in

Chhamb, and "inflicted heavy casualties on the invading forces."

The clash is the most serious since the Kargil conflict. A spokesman of the Indian Army's 16 Corps said it started at around 5 am, when a group of 25 Pakistani troops of the 25th Baluch Regiment led by an officer emerged from their Tower 12 post, and opened fire on Indian post PP 13. They used heavy mortars, heavy and medium machine guns, recoil-less guns and rockets.

Local Army sources said the Pakistanis lost at least 10 more soldiers, when one of their bunkers was blasted in a counter-attack. Indian Army units have recov-

ered three AK assault rifles, six carbines, one universal machine-gun and one rocket launcher.

The Pakistani offensive follows increased activities on the Jammu and Kashmir border on the eve of Republic day. The BSF had killed two Pakistani intruders bringing an arms consignment in Hiranagar sector yesterday.

In Islamabad, Foreign Office spokesman Tariq Altaf and ISI spokesman Brig. Rashid Qureshi, told newsmen that Indian forces crossed the LoC at 3.30 am, and attacked a Pakistani post between the two channels of the Tawi river. "This was preceded by intense Indian mortar fire, which

damaged the bunkers of the Pakistani post," Brig. Qureshi said. He claimed that "at no time" did Pakistani troops cross the LoC. He said two Pakistani soldiers had died and five were missing.

Mr. Altaf said latest reports indicated that firing by Indian forces continued. "Our forces are taking appropriate action," he said.

Pakistan would lodge a strong protest with the Indian Government, "calling upon it to desist from crossing the LoC. It will also bring this matter to the notice of the United Nations military observers group in India and Pakistan," he added.

Mr. Altaf also alleged that India

had "vitiating the atmosphere" for the resumption of dialogue by launching a "venomous campaign" against Islamabad.

Asked about the talks US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Karl Inderfurth had with Pakistan on the issue of terrorism, the spokesman said the Americans were concerned about terrorism as a global phenomenon.

About the hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane, he said, "India has neither given to Pakistan nor to the world any clue about the identity of the hijackers. Finding phantoms is not easy." Pakistan would try and prosecute the hijackers according to law if they were found.

25 Pak. soldiers killed near LoC

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, JAN. 22. At least 25 Pakistani soldiers, including an officer, were killed near Raipore in the Akhnoor sector of the Jammu division early this morning, when Indian troops repulsed an attack launched by them on a post in the Chamb area. Four Indian soldiers were injured during the attack on the post, 'PP 13'. 28

The Pakistani forces reportedly used heavy mortars, medium and heavy machine guns, recoil-less guns and rocket launchers.

According to Brig. Randhir Singh, Brigadier General Staff (BGS) of the Nagrota-based 16 Corps, about 30 soldiers of the Pakistan Army launched an attack on the Nodiyaal post in the Chamb area along the Line of Control (LoC) at around 5 a.m. They resorted to heavy firing and crossed the LoC, he told *The Hindu*. "However, they were beaten back."

Retaliatory firing pushed them further away, even as the bodies of five Pakistani soldiers, including a Lieutenant of the 24 Baluch Regiment, were recovered, he said. In the retaliatory attack, a two-storeyed bunker was damaged and at least 12 Pakistani soldiers were killed. The number could, however, be more, Brig. Singh said. "Our men saw them dragging bodies out of the damaged bunker," he said. Other sources put the number at 25.

About casualties on the Indian side during the two-hour long operation, the BGS said four soldiers were injured and the condition of two was serious. About the disposal of the Pakistani soldiers' bodies, he said this matter would be taken up at the Director-General of Military Operations (DGMO) level. "If there is no re-



Security forces in Srinagar conduct a surprise search operation in view of the threats from militant outfits to strike on Republic Day. — Photo: Nissar Ahmad

sponse from Pakistan, we will go for an Islamic burial."

Arms recovered

In Jammu, with few days left for the Republic Day celebrations, panic gripped the Civil Lines area today when police recovered two AK-47 rifles and grenades left behind by two militants travelling in an autorickshaw.

Police sources said two militants wearing combat dress boarded an autorickshaw from Talab Khatikhan and reached the railway station from where they moved back. The driver, noticing

the suspicious movements of the two, informed a police patrol.

However, before the police could act, the militants managed to escape. Security in the city has been further beefed up.

Claim by Pak.

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 22. Pakistan, however, came out with the allegation that the Indian forces "crossed" the Line of Control in the Iftikharabad sub-sector in the Chhamb area and "launched" a company-

strength attack on a Pakistani post.

"The Government of Pakistan will be lodging a protest with the Government of India... adhering to its policy of peace, Pakistan will continue to exercise restraint... We call upon India to exhibit responsibility and refrain from aggressive action which could result in grave consequences..."

"We call upon the world community to restrain India from escalating tension in the region," a Foreign Office spokesman said at a briefing this evening.

Musharraf warns India against crossing the LoC

Pak's proxy war will be crushed: Venkaiah

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, which failed to capture an Indian post in Kashmir on Saturday, has warned India against crossing the Line of Control (LoC).

Interestingly as Pakistan accused India of crossing the LoC, General Pervez Musharraf, in an interview the same day, said "Indians are not refraining from crossing the LoC out of any love for Pakistan."

"They would have done it long before if they could. We will teach them a lesson on the LoC or anywhere else."

He said he did not want to issue a challenge, but "the Indians should not make the mistake of trying anything..."

In the panel interview to the *Nation* and the *Nawa-i-Waqt*, Gen Musharraf said the foremost concern of the visiting U.S. delegations was terrorism although discussions were also held on Kashmir.

"The Americans did not say that the Kashmiri freedom struggle should be stopped but only showed concern over terrorism in the Valley relating to killing of civilians," he claimed.

The Americans, he said, were also concerned with Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden. "They have shown concern over (released militant) Maulana Masood Azhar's statements that he will eliminate America. But they are not talking about him in the context of Kashmir," he claimed.

He dismissed reports that the U.S. had warned Pakistan on terrorism-related issues.

Gen Musharraf told the papers that, he believed, "such comments that can damage Pakistan should be avoided." "The Americans have not warned us on terrorism-related issues at all," he claimed.

"During the talks with the Americans I used the word reciprocity that should be observed in the case

of Kashmir. If Indians want an end to the Kashmiri struggle then they should accept that Kashmir is an issue and discussions should be held on it. They should end the atrocities and if there is a reduction of Indian troops in Kashmir, we will request the Mujahideen."

When asked about the U.S. "pressure" to restore civilian rule, Gen Musharraf said it was not possible to give such a timeframe and the Americans have accepted this position. Questions were being raised, he said, about the road map for return to civil rule. "We will

install real democracy and don't want to bring back sham democracy as previously." He said the road map to civilian rule, included placing a system for devolution of power by the end of 2000. Elections will be held at the grassroots level paving way for real democracy.

Defining his connotation of "real democracy" he said officials will be subordinate to elected representatives, speedy justice will

be provided to people at their doorsteps and there will be an end to atrocities by the police.

Meanwhile, the BJP on Sunday cautioned Pakistan against continuing its proxy war with India and said that the country was more than capable of giving them a fitting reply. "Pakistan seems to feel that by these activities it will be able to achieve its goal, but it will be sadly disappointed to know that the country is capable of meeting the challenge from Pakistan", BJP general secretary and spokesperson M. Venkaiah Naidu told mediapersons in Chennai. Referring to Saturday's incident at the LoC, Mr Naidu said Pakistan was yet to learn lessons from its previous follies.

It was continuously engaged in aiding and abetting terrorism. Pakistan could not face India in battlefield and hence it was getting involved in such activities. (PTI)

Army gets total control to crush insurgency in Kargil

NEW DELHI: The army has been put in total control of the recently-constituted unified headquarters at north of Zojila as part of the Centre's "pro-active" policy to be pursued in Jammu and Kashmir. The newly set up 14 Corps will now look entirely after the Drass, Mushkoh Valley, Kargil, Chorbat La and Leh areas and will be responsible for tackling any insurgency activities from that front, official sources said here.

Meanwhile, the police on Sunday detected and defused a bomb near the route of the Republic Day parade on Rajpath here just before the start of its final rehearsal. (PTI)

Untying the Kashmir tangle

By K. K. Katyal

Whenever the dialogue is resumed, any hesitation to discuss Kashmir will do New Delhi no good. At the same time, Pakistan needs to be clear that talks on the "core issue" are not to be held on its terms.

INDIA IS fully justified in insisting, as has been done by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and other senior leaders — that Pakistan create a "proper environment" for a dialogue. A situation in which trans-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir has risen steeply is obviously not congenial to any meaningful effort to sort out bilateral problems. But while making known its concern over the spurt in militancy, should New Delhi be conveying the impression that it shies away from talks on Kashmir? Unfortunately, such a belief prevails in some major world capitals, enabling Islamabad to make full diplomatic use of it, to New Delhi's detriment. There is no point letting Pakistan hijack the talking points.

Last year, the two countries agreed, to quote the Lahore Declaration, to "intensify their efforts to resolve all issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir". The Chief Executive of the military-led Government, General Pervez Musharraf, is not happy — as he said in an interview with *The Hindu* — with this "apologetic" reference. He is not against simultaneous discussion of all issues: "I am not saying that we need to immediately resolve Kashmir. I am saying that we need to start a dialogue on Kashmir, we need to accept Kashmir as a problem and start a dialogue and simultaneously, let us discuss everything else."

In practice, there is not much difference whether Kashmir is taken up as part of a comprehensive dialogue, as agreed to earlier, or whether there is a simultaneous discussion on it and other issues. As such, New Delhi should have no problem with Islamabad's new formulation provided the environment is free from terrorist activities. At some stage, it will need to modify the present stand — of not doing business with the military regime, for haven't we dealt with the military rulers? If the people of Pakistan have accepted the military rule again, there is no point our bothering, beyond a point, about the demise of democracy.

It will, however, be a matter of acute worry if its policies or the activities of its agencies are directed against India. The end of hostile acts, in that situation, will

what you say, Mr. Bhutto fooled your Prime Minister". The unpublicised understanding between Indira Gandhi and Bhutto — of which graphic details are available now — has been public knowledge from the time the Agreement was signed. It was known that the idea of inserting secret clauses was mooted but did not find favour.

Indira Gandhi was influenced — in the decision to accommodate the head of the defeated country — by the argument of her Principal Secretary, P. N. Haskar. He did not want Pakistan driven into a corner, citing the Treaty of Versailles which could not prevent another world war.

Indira Gandhi was blamed — especially by those speaking with hindsight — for losing on the negotiating table what had been gained on the battlefield. As for Pakistan, Bhutto's "artistry" and skill might have worked in his dealings with India but could not be of much help to him in relation to Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, whom he appointed the Chief of the Army Staff, ignoring the claims of other seniors. Early on, Bhutto's "skill" hastened the vivisection of his country when he provided political confirmation of the ground-level military reality in the erstwhile East Pakistan, telling its leaders: "Tum udhar, ham idhar".

The Pakistani establishment — and at its instance, the people — may find it hard to accept the unpublicised understanding of 1972. It pins hopes on the success of destabilisation acts to achieve what is considered in New Delhi an impossible objective. As against that, the maximalists in India would not accept any settlement which does not end Pakistani occupation of part of Kashmir. There are two ways of ending the stalemate — to work for a solution acceptable to each side or equally unacceptable. Converting the LoC into the international border falls in the second category and, as such, is worth working for, despite the obvious obstacles. The LoC also coincides with the ethnic divide — between the Punjabis and the Kashmiris.

India could have settled the Kashmir issue in Shimla had it not been unduly anxious to avert a failure of the talks. All that is now part of the ifs and buts of history.

India and now deals with the negotiation in much greater detail in his just-published book — "Indira Gandhi, the 'Emergency' and Indian Democracy".

The 36-page chapter on the Shimla Agreement contains revealing points: "Bhutto agreed not only to change the ceasefire line into a line of control for which he had earlier proposed the term 'line of peace', he also agreed that the line would be gradually endowed with the characteristics of an international border (his words). The transition was to take place in the following manner. After the resumption of traffic between India and Pakistan across the international border had gained momentum, the movement of traffic would be allowed at specified points across the Line of Control. At points of entry, immigration control and customs clearance offices would be established." With the gradual use of the LoC as the *de facto* frontier, it was assumed, public opinion on both sides would become reconciled to its permanence, while the opening of trade would lead to easing of tensions. According to Mr. Dhar's account, "When Mrs. Gandhi, after recounting their points of agreement, finally asked Bhutto: 'Is this the understanding on which we will proceed?', He replied: 'Absolutely, *aap mujh par bharosa keejiye* (you can rely on me)".

Mr. Dhar recalls how Pakistanis reacted in disbelief when he first made public these details five years ago. Mr. Dhar's book quotes Mr. Humayun Gauhara, a leading Pakistani commentator, who said in the *Political and Business Weekly* of May 15, 1995: "If it took a private talk between Mr. Bhutto and Mrs. Gandhi in which he made certain commitments to her but which he was clever enough not to have written down in the Shimla Agreement or on a separate piece of paper, then it was diplomatic artistry of the highest order. Face it Mr. Dhar, even if we accept

become essential for substantive bilateral contacts. New Delhi is not to be blamed if it gives priority to bringing to justice the hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane and ensuring against recurrence of such tragedies and insists on an end to the export of terrorism.

But whenever the dialogue is resumed, any hesitation to discuss Kashmir will do New Delhi no good. At the same time, Pakistan needs to be clear that talks on the "core issue" are not to be held on its terms and that none of the two sides is barred from affirming its stand. For any one party to expect that the other would accept its maximal position as the basis for a settlement is highly unrealistic. Nay, such an attitude would mean an advance guarantee of failure.

This brings us to the discussions in the past, especially at the time of the Shimla Agreement in 1972. Pakistani leaders have sought to make light of — even disowned — the commitments made by Z. A. Bhutto, Pakistan's Premier of the day, during the protracted discussions with his Indian counterpart, Indira Gandhi. The Shimla Agreement converted the ceasefire line into the Line of Control, thus giving it greater weight and sanctity. That it was ultimately intended to be the international border as part of a step-by-step process was not in doubt. India was keen on putting the stamp of finality on it then and there but agreed to a staggered arrangement to accommodate Bhutto, who feared strong domestic opposition, with serious consequences not only for himself but also for the future of the democratic set-up in Pakistan.

An inside account of the negotiations is now available from Mr. P. M. Dhar who, as head of the Prime Minister's Secretariat, was among the few senior officials who assisted Indira Gandhi in Shimla. Mr. Dhar first lifted the veil of secrecy in 1995, with his two-part article in *The Times of*

Musharraf's charges of LoC violation rejected

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, January 24

INDIA TODAY firmly rejected Pakistan military ruler General Pervez Musharraf's allegation that Indians had recently crossed the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir.

Brushing aside Gen Musharraf's remarks that Indians were not refraining from crossing the LoC, a foreign office spokesman said, "It is pointless telling India this. It was Pakistan which had violated LoC during the Kargil conflict."

In an interview to a Pakistani daily, Gen Musharraf had said that India would be "taught a lesson" if it tried to cross the LoC.

Meanwhile, bodies of five Pakistani soldiers of 24 Baluch unit, who were killed in Akhnoor sector last Friday, are still lying unclaimed in the custody of the Indian Army.

According to an Army spokesman, Pakistani authorities, despite being fully aware of the involvement of its troops in the attack on Indian post PP 13 in Akhnoor sector, continue to maintain total silence on claiming the bodies of their fallen soldiers.

"This is in line with the trend evinced during Operation Vijay, where 271 Pak troops were killed. The Pak aggression is proved beyond doubt by the way of their having left behind bodies and a large number of weapons in the Indian territory," the spokesman said.

Official sources said Pakistan had stepped up firing from across the border since last one week and even today there was heavy mortar firing in the Krishnaghathi and Pallanwala sectors of Jammu region. The firing left two Indian soldiers with splinter injuries in Krishna Ghati area.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 JAN 2000

Pak suffering from Kargil syndrome, says Fernandes

HT-1
25/1
HT Correspondent
New Delhi, January 24

DEFENCE MINISTER George Fernandes today said Pakistan was suffering from the "Kargil syndrome" and maintained that the recurring volatile clashes along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir indicated that Islamabad was still smarting over the blow.

In an apparent reaction to Pakistan military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf's threat to "teach India a lesson" after last Saturday's LoC clash near the Akhnoor sector, Mr Fernandes said: "It appears that Pakistan is still smarting under the Kargil blow. It is time they got over this syndrome."

The Defence Minister said the Pak rulers, instead of speaking in

language of threats, should make the conditions conducive for talks.

Talking to newsmen after addressing an international defence seminar on 'Asian Security in the 21st Century', Mr Fernandes said that it was Pak troops that had crossed the border on Saturday but were beaten back by Indian troops.

"It was a special charge made inside our territory. We have bodies of six Pakistani soldiers still lying with us. They have to ask us for these bodies thus acknowledging that it was they who had crossed the border," the Defence Minister emphasised.

Asked whether he saw a pattern in these recurring clashes, Mr Fernandes said, "Ups and downs keep taking place on the border." On the reported visit of freed

Harkat-ul-Ansar ideologue Masood Azhar to Kandahar from Karachi in Pakistan, the minister said everyone knew of the Taliban's involvement with Pakistan and the hijackers of the IA plane. "There was not only sympathy but much more than that for hijackers in Kandahar," the minister said. "At that point, the Taliban had facilitated the Indian negotiating team and beyond that we have not gone to compliment them."

Meanwhile, in his inaugural address at the symposium organised by Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, Mr Fernandes said India's nuclear strategy was defensive, "one of retaliation only" and that New Delhi's aim was to deter a nuclear threat against the country.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 JAN 2000

Call for vigil along Pak. border

By Our Special Correspondent

HYDERABAD, JAN. 24. Lt. Gen. S. Padmanabhan, GOC-in-C, Southern Command, said here on Monday that the threat from Pakistan was far from over as could be seen by the latest statement of Gen. Pervez Musharraf, that he would teach India a lesson or two.

India was passing through a phase of internal turbulence and never was the country beset with so many problems. "We hope we can solve them by showing willingness to listen", he said, while speaking at a civilian-military liaison conference presided over by the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr. N. Chandrababu Naidu, here today.

Reviewing the security environment, Lt. Gen. Padmanabhan, said that China would become sufficiently strong by 2015 A. D. to challenge other big nations, including the U.S., which was pres-

ently calling the shots in a unipolar world. Although there was peace along the China border, it would be foolish for India to live on goodwill without building its strength.

The General said Pakistan desperately wanted to bring in a third party to mediate between India and Pakistan. "We will not allow this to happen", he said.

Calling for utmost vigilance on the borders and in States with a porous coastline such as Gujarat and Maharashtra, he disclosed that a huge quantity of RDX had left Karachi port and it was hoped that the ship carrying the explosives would be intercepted soon.

He identified three other areas requiring vigilance — Pakistan's attempts to destabilise the economy by circulating fake currency notes, internal sabotage and plain terrorism by planting explosives in public places like the one discovered near India Gate in New

Delhi on Sunday.

The GOC-in-C observed that Pakistan, which had compulsive hostility to India, was exploiting the widening of internal differences in the country, poor governance in some States and using certain communities willing to help it. The ISI, though over-rated by certain sections, was a potential mischief maker and had created numerous problems in Kashmir and the North-east. It had now penetrated deep South.

Mr. Chandrababu Naidu said China was becoming strong militarily because it had made rapid strides on the economic front. Although it had no democracy worth the name, China had pushed its economic reforms aggressively and achieved a 11 per cent annual growth rate.

India too must also build its economy and improve its growth rate from the present 6 to 7 per cent if it were to emerge as a pow-

er to reckon with. Other countries would listen to India only if it was strong.

Referring to ISI's subversive activities in India, Mr. Naidu said there was no alternative to maintaining constant vigilance.

The Chief Minister announced that the State Government was planning to construct a war memorial in Hyderabad to promote patriotism among people. He sought the Army's suggestions regarding the design and location of the memorial on which work would start in about three months.

Mr. Naidu offered to solve the various land-related problems faced by the Army in Hyderabad and to allot a piece of land in Tirupati for construction of a guest house for army personnel.

Senior officers of the Army, the State Government and the Air Force participated in the conference.

President tells Pakistan to stop 'propaganda of hatred'

■ We want peace with our neighbour, Narayanan asserts in R-Day address

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JAN 25

PRESIDENT K R Narayanan on Tuesday asked Pakistan to eschew terrorism and propaganda of hatred and asserted that India wanted to live in peace with that country.

"We want to live in peace with Pakistan. We want the relations to conform to the best traditions of good neighbourliness, eschewing terrorist interventions and the propaganda of hatred," he said in his eve of Republic Day address to the nation.

"The principles like the respect for the territorial integrity and independence of nations, non-interference in their internal matters and mutual benefit and equality are precious concepts which cannot become redundant in a world of globalisation," he said.

The President said India was privileged to be playing a role to see that in the new millennium all

the nations of the world, enjoy the same political status and have a level playing field, economically and technologically.

"This will be our endeavour in all the world bodies of which we are proud to be members or associated with - the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the Non-Aligned Movement and the new formations such as the WTO and important groupings like ASEAN, SAARC, the Indian Ocean Rim Association."

Narayanan said even the end of the cold war has not ended all conflicts, it has only changed its character.

"Even as we want equality amongst ourselves, so do we want equality among the nations of the world. This does not and cannot mean that all countries have the same of everything. But it does mean that no nation or continent

can seek overlordship over others claiming political, economic, technological or strategic superiority," he said.

The President said Indians were privileged to have played a leading role in the decolonising of the mighty continents of Asia and Africa.

"We are the initiators of the concept of non-alignment in a world when it was bitterly divided by cold war, and whether the great powers now recognise or not the role of non-alignment ending the cold war, the fact of its contribution remains for all to see," he said.

Stating that India was proud to belong to South Asia and to the Asian continent, he said, "We celebrate this year the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with China. We wish that country and its people every hap-

piness."

Greeting India's immediate neighbours and the sister continent of Africa, the Commonwealth of Nations, the European Union, the United States of America and Latin America, Japan, and the Arab nations and the countries of the Pacific and Central Asia with whom India has traditional ties of friendship, he said, "To Russia with which our political, economic, cultural and strategic relations remain strong, we reiterate our fraternal goodwill."

Narayanan said there was need to organise a people's movement for stopping the pollution of rivers and ground water reserves as water is a basic need and a fundamental right of the people.

"Yet, today millions of our people are struggling to get adequate clean drinking water," he said adding that good water management can help to increase water supply and regenerate rural ecology and rural economy.



K R Narayanan

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Jawing about War

A doctrinal debate has started between India and Pakistan which has not attracted adequate public attention. Defence Minister George Fernandes, army chief General V P Malik and other strategic experts in India are focusing on the possibility of limited wars even under conditions of mutual nuclear deterrence. Across the border, however, General Pervez Musharraf is arguing that in the light of mutual nuclear deterrence, limited conventional wars are not very likely but there is an increasing probability of proxy war. Though General Musharraf put forward similar arguments in April 1999, that did not stop him from trying out a limited war in Kargil, a war which he tried hard to pass off as a proxy war. What is occurring is not just an academic debate between the two countries but a process of communication on strategies likely to be adopted in their ongoing 52-year confrontation. Pakistan had formulated its long-term strategy against India on the assumption that India would not fight back; last October, General Musharraf himself told his troops after Kargil and the military coup that Indians were cowards and would never attack Pakistan. There is a widespread belief in the Pakistani military and political establishment that they can deter India with their nuclear weapons, tie down the Indian forces with terrorism and mercenary militancy, and seize Kashmir at an appropriate moment when the Indian government is weak and vacillating. Hence General Musharraf's emphasis on proxy war.

What India is trying to signal is that with its increased capability to detect and liquidate militants as they enter Indian territory, there are distinct possibilities of Pakistan's proxy war escalating into border clashes and limited wars of the Kargil type. The responsibility for such escalation will squarely rest on Pakistan. In the nuclear age, the international community does not favour any alteration of borders or lines of control through the use of force or nuclear blackmail. Therefore, the Pakistani leadership should be left in no doubt that India would deal firmly and forcefully with any attempt at escalating the proxy war into territorial intrusions of the kind that occurred in Kargil. In the late 1950s, when faced with a similar threat from the USSR, the US adopted the strategy of flexible response to deal with anticipated 'salami slicing' tactics. Kargil demonstrated that India could do the same effectively. What is now being advocated by Mr Fernandes and General Malik is an appropriately updated version of the flexible response strategy vis-a-vis Pakistan in the light of the principles laid down in the Helsinki declaration of 1975 and enforced by the US on Pakistan in the Clinton-Nawaz Sharif communique of July 4, 1999. These perspectives will have to be impressed upon General Musharraf and the Pakistanis as and when the first interaction between the two countries occurs and should also be widely publicised to ensure that Pakistan does not start another war under the dubious assumption that India would not fight back.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

29 JAN 2000

Azhar forms group to wage 'jihad'

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 28. Masood Azhar, the Pakistani cleric released in the terrorists-for-hostages deal by the BJP-led Government on December 31, has announced the formation of the Lashkar-i-Muhammadi (LiM), a new outfit, to wage "jihad" (holy war) against India.

A report in the Ausaf newspaper today quoted Azhar as telling a gathering of religious leaders here yesterday, that he would soon raise a force of six lakhs for the "jihad" in Kashmir. He called upon the other "jehadi groups" to unite under the new Lashkar.

He took exception to India's description of Kashmir as an "atoot ang" or integral part of India. "Ham India ke ang, ang ko tor denge (we will break every part of India)," Azhar was quoted as saying.

He claimed that the LiM would be run on the lines of the Taliban and called upon the "ulema" to nominate one "mujahid" to be the Amir-ul-Momineen or supreme leader, as in the case of the Taliban. If the ulema in Pakistan could not take a decision on this issue, a final verdict should be left to the Amir-ul-Momineen of Taliban, Mullah Mohammad Omar.

Expressing great pride in India's "defeat" at Kandahar, Azhar claimed that the Indian Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, had said that during his lifetime, the Pakistani terrorist would not be released. But the Indian External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, had to bring him in his own aircraft to Kandahar and

hand him over to Mullah Omar and the Taliban leadership.

The announcement of the new "jehadi" outfit comes close on the heels of a statement by the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen chief, Fazlur Rehman Khalil, that Azhar had "no links" with the Harkat. He did, however, admit that Azhar had links with the Harkat earlier.

It appears as if the Harkat has become suspicious of Masood Azhar and his activities. Information available suggests that the Harkat had served a show-cause notice on Azhar soon after he surfaced in Pakistan after his release. Questions are being raised as to why Masood Azhar went to Kashmir on a Portugese passport, where he was arrested. An explanation had been sought by the Harkat on why Azhar had gone to Kashmir.

PTI reports:

Mr. Masood Azhar has threatened to "settle scores" with the RSS soon for the Babri Masjid demolition.

THE HINDU
29 JAN 2000

Working to defuse Indo-Pak crisis: Clinton

WASHINGTON, JAN. 28. ²³¹ ⁴⁰⁻¹¹ The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, has said that working to defuse the crisis between India and Pakistan was one of the "fundamental challenges" the United States must meet globally in the 21st century.

In his final State of the Union address last night, Mr. Clinton said "America cannot prevent every conflict or stop every outrage. But where our interests are at stake and we can make a difference, we must be peacemakers."

Meanwhile, media reports here today said Mr. Clinton may skip Pakistan during his upcoming South Asia visit citing new security issues in addition to support by some Pakistan Government agencies to terrorist organisations.—
PTI

THE HINDU

29 JAN 2000

Bus ride between Delhi, Lahore still smooth

LAHORE: Dewan Lal is an unlikely passenger on a bus that has come to be recognised as the symbol of a failed diplomatic initiative for peace between India and Pakistan.

A Pakistani Hindu, he travelled to India from a remote area in Sindh to seek treatment for his terminally ill 11-year-old daughter, Rabel. His wife of 15 years, Bela, and younger daughter Sushma look on as Lal bares his heart after an initial hesitation. Rabel suffers from thalassemia major, a condition that requires prohibitively expensive multiple blood transfusion to keep the patient alive. Doctors give her only a few more years, he explains with a lump in his throat.

Lal, a third year MBBS dropout, now runs a small 'kirana' business. Illiteracy in the remote areas of Sindh is widespread and people do not come forward to donate blood, he says, as the luxury bus *Sada-i-Sarhad* (Call of the Border) is piloted through traffic by a siren-blaring police escort. Incidentally, it is the same bus that carried Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to Lahore in February last year.

Lal's in-laws migrated to India in 1988 and are now settled in Indore. "Treatment for Rabel is not readily available here, so I became a member of the Thalassaemic Society of Indore which takes care of most of the expenses. I too am thinking of migrating to India for my daughter's sake."

Farha (27) is torn and tormented, unable to decide which side of the border her loyalties lie. Her mother was an Indian, and so are her two young sons and husband. But ten years into marriage, the Pakistani girl is still awaiting Indian citizenship, which has so far been denied to her due to bureaucratic red tape.

Farha's grandfather is from Bulandshahr in Uttar Pradesh and married off her mother in 1967 to a cousin in Multan. A little over two decades later, it was Farha's turn to be separated from her family, as she found herself returning to her roots in Bulandshahr after marrying a cousin. "Now I ask my mother why she married me off across the border after herself having gone through the agony of separation with her family. *Ab main apne behen bhaiyon ke liye tarapi hoon* (Now I yearn to be with my brothers and sisters)."

For passengers on board the bus, Kashmir may well not exist. "The Pakistani leaders should first solve the numerous problems facing the nation. Kashmir is more like the Ram temple issue. You cannot keep flogging it forever. Already the charm is beginning to wear off," says Sharfuddin, a businessman from Rawalpindi. The tension palpable in newspapers on either side of the border could not be felt as Indians and Pakistanis watched love-sick Salman Khan and Bhagyashree prance around trees in *Maine Pyar Kiya*. (Agencies)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

30 JAN 2000

Pak. to abide by Lahore accord

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 30. Without naming the Lahore Declaration, Pakistan has said that it is "prepared to implement" the February 1999 Pakistan-India agreement pledging the two countries to the intensification of efforts for the resolution of outstanding issues, including Kashmir.

This is, possibly, the first time that Pakistan, in an official formulation, has acknowledged that the military Government of General Pervez Musharraf is committed to the Lahore Declaration.

In a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, however, claimed that India seemed "intent on avoiding fulfilment of the (Lahore) agreement. That obviously falsified Indian propaganda blaming Pakistan for the present hiatus in bilateral talks."

The contents of the letter are in sharp contrast to the remarks made by Mr. Sattar at his first press conference on November 8, 1999, after taking over as Foreign Minister. "There are scores of agreements between Pakistan and India. The Lahore agreement of February 1999 was one of them. We will scour that agreement for positive aspects and we'll be prepared to implement them."

Mr. Sattar — quoted by the official APP news agency as saying in his letter that Pakistan was also prepared to comply with the U.N.

Resolution No. 1172 of June 6, 1998 — argued that the centrality of the Kashmir issue was obvious in India-Pakistan relations.

"Any attempt to sideline this core issue would be an ostrich-like response of burying one's head in the sand," the letter said.

Mr. Sattar said both India and Pakistan should welcome any and every means of peacefully resolving their disputes. "Negotiations are obviously the first but not the only means. If they prove sterile, as has been the experience between Pakistan and India, then the other civilised means evolved by the community of states should be availed of in the interest of peace," the letter said.

Mr. Sattar was also quoted as saying that a final decision on whether or not the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, would visit Pakistan was expected in a week or two. The U.S., he said, could also be proud of the role it played in defusing crises between India and Pakistan in 1990 and 1999. However, that record needed to be built upon.

Ready to meet Vajpayee: Musharraf

NEW DELHI, JAN. 30. Terming Indo-Pakistan relations at its "lowest", Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, today said he was ready to meet the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, provided that "centrality" of the Kashmir

issue was accepted. "Yes, as long as the centrality of the Kashmir dispute is accepted and we are prepared to initiate a dialogue and there is reciprocity on Kashmir," Mr. Musharraf said when asked in an interview whether he was willing to meet Mr. Vajpayee.

Asked if Indo-Pakistan ties had gone from bad to worse, he said "yes, they are more dangerous now. Our relations with India are at the lowest".

On the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane and reports that the hijackers were currently in Pakistan, Mr. Musharraf told Star World's 'Focus Asia' programme "I don't know at all that this is a fact. They disappeared from Afghanistan... And I presume they are in Afghanistan."

Asked to comment on New Delhi's demand for declaring Pakistan a terrorist State, he said "we are not a terrorist State. They (India) have been trying to brand us as one since long". "Now lately, they have got a good excuse of the hijacking which they are pinning on us which is absolutely wrong again," he said.

To a question on whether he would declare a "no-first-use" policy on nuclear weapons, he said "nobody in his right mind will use nuclear weapons... Our weapons are to be used absolutely as the last resolve. I hope and pray that never happens".

'Another Kargil planned': Page 13

THE HINDU
31 JAN 2000

'Pak. has planned another Kargil-type offensive'

ND-13
31/1

NEW DELHI, JAN. 30. The Pakistan Army has reportedly planned a major Kargil-type offensive in the coming months aimed at cutting off large formations of Indian forces in Jammu and Kashmir, according to a former aide to a top Taliban commander.

The Pakistani military planners have directed big mercenary groups to attempt to cut off the Jammu-Srinagar and Jammu-Poonch highways in a bid to isolate troops stationed on the Line of Control (LoC). They have asked large groups of mercenaries to concentrate on the lightly-held heights of the Pir Panjal range straddling the two highways.

A former close aide of a top Taliban commander, Maulvi Abdul Rasul Rab Sayyaf, who recently left Afghanistan for sanctuary in the West, said preparations and plotting of the proposed offensive were undertaken by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) commanders at the Harkat-ul-Mujahiddin-run Khawar Zilli camps in the Khost province of Afghanistan recently.

"The ISI has, or may be is, in the process of infiltrating regular Pakistani soldiers in mufti to lead and direct these operations and Pakistani military planners might raise the stake by arming mercenaries with light artillery guns and 84- and 120-mm mortars for the offensive," the Taliban aide said on the condition of anonymity.

A self-styled commander-in-chief of a major Kashmiri militant group, the Hizbul Mujahiddin, Syed Salhuddin alias Mohammaed Yusuf, who is now housed in the Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir capital of Muzzaffarbad by the ISI,

was recently quoted by Pakistani papers as threatening that mercenary groups on the Kargil pattern were ready to launch major attacks to cut off Indian border troops from their rear bases.

Harkat preparations

According to military strategists here, Pakistan's aim could be to attempt to bring the two national highways under artillery threat, making the movement of vehicles difficult if not impossible. While the big mercenary groups have been told to occupy vital heights straddling the two highways, the Pakistani military planners are plotting to pin down border troops on the LoC by heavy engagement from across the LoC.

The Afghan aide said a large number of Harkat and Lashkar mercenaries, who infiltrated into Jammu and Kashmir during the Kargil conflict, had been directed to build huge mountain cave defences on the mountain heights overlooking the two highways to locate heavy mortars and light artillery guns.

Azhar's move

The new drive by the freed top Harkat commander, Maulvi Masood Azhar, to form a unified mercenary group under the label of Lashkar-e-Muhammadi, according to reports here, is part of the efforts to coordinate among the groups.

The aide said according to ISI directions, the *fidayeen* (suicide) groups of the Lashkar had been asked to keep Army and para-military formations pinned down by launching suicide attacks on formation headquarters. — PTI

Kargil-type plan is on Pak table again, warns Taliban aide

By A.K. Dhar

NEW DELHI: Pakistan army has reportedly planned a major Kargil-type offensive in the coming months aimed at cutting off large formations of Indian forces in Jammu and Kashmir, according to former aide to a top Taliban commander.

The Pakistani military planners have directed big mercenary groups to try to cut off Jammu-Srinagar and Jammu-Poonch highways to isolate troops stationed on the Line of Control (LoC). They have asked large groups of mercenaries to concentrate on lightly-held heights of the Pir Panjal range straddling the two highways.

A former close aide of a top Taliban commander, Maulvi Abdul Rasul Rab Sayyaf, who recently left Afghanistan for sanctuary in the West, said preparations and plotting of proposed offensive were undertaken by ISI commanders at the Harkat-ul-Mujaheddin-run Khawar Zilli camps in Khost province of Afghanistan recently.

"ISI has sent or may be in the process of infiltrating regular Pakistani soldiers in Mufti to lead and direct these operations and Pakistani military planners might raise the stake by arming mercenaries with light artillery guns and 84 and 120 mm mortars for the offensive," the Taliban aide said on condition of anonymity.

Self-styled commander in chief of Hizbul Mujaheddin Syed Salhuddin, alias Mohammed Yusuf, who now is housed in the PoK capital, Muzaffarabad, by the ISI, was recently quoted by Pakistani papers as threatening that mercenary groups on the Kargil pattern were ready to launch major attacks to cut off Indian border troops from their rear bases.

According to military strategists here, Pakistan's aim could be to attempt to bring the two national highways under artillery threat, making vehicular movement difficult if not impossible.

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The Afghan aide said large number of Harkat and Lashkar mercenaries, who infiltrated into J&K during the Kargil conflict, had been directed to build huge mountain cave defences on mountain heights overlooking the two highways to locate heavy mortars and light artillery guns.

The aide said the Harkat camps at Khost in Afghanistan were shared with the group led by Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden, who might have imparted the expertise in building mountain cave defences to the Harkat group. During the Afghan campaign against Russian forces, Bin Laden was acknowledged for expertise in building mountain cave defence and ammunition dumps.

The Taliban aide said ISI had summoned major commanders of Harkat, Lashkar-i-Toiba and Al-Badr groups to the Khost conclave to finalise the offensive.

The new drive by freed Harkat commander Maulvi Masood Azhar to form a unified mercenary group under the label of Lashkar-i-Muhammadi, according to reports here, is part of the efforts to coordinate among the groups.

The aide said that according to ISI directions, the Fedayeen (suicide) groups of Lashkar had been asked to keep Indian army and para-military formations pinned down by launching suicide attacks on formation headquarters. "Such attacks in coming weeks would become more intense with even civilian leaders and establishments being targeted," the Taliban aide said. (PTI)