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India will welcome General Musharraf's assurance to the Pakistani people that there was no threat of either a nuclear or conventional war between his country and India. The General was obviously reacting to Indian Army Chief General Padmanabhan's statement that his tasks included preparing the army for both nuclear and conventional wars. The Pakistani chief executive said much the same thing in April 1999; then, he went on to add that while nuclear and large-scale conventional wars were ruled out because of nuclear deterrence, proxy wars were not. Indeed, he argued that the probability of proxy wars had gone up, which he subsequently proved by launching the Kargil intrusion. At that time his calculations were perhaps that the fear of the invasion escalating to a large-scale conventional war, and even to a nuclear exchange, would persuade the international community to impose a ceasefire: In short, Pakistan would retain the newly-occupied Indian territory across the Line of Control. This attempt at 'salami slicing' miserably failed since India dealt with the intrusion successfully without crossing the LoC. Rather than help Pakistan, this led to international recognition for the inviolability of the LoC. Soon after jointly signing the Blair House declaration with President Clinton, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had argued that "the directions of atomic missiles were also aimed towards Pakistan". Regardless of the truth in this claim, what this shows is that Pakistan felt itself deterred this time unlike on the earlier three occasions in 1984, 1987 and 1990, when it claimed to have deterred India. Last year, Abdul Sattar, the present foreign minister, in an article in *News International* accepted that nuclear deterrence operated during the Kargil conflict and ensured that it did not escalate.

In his meetings with American South Asia specialists in Washington, Prime Minister Vajpayee highlighted the stability of mutual deterrence and played down the possibility of escalation. This was to caution the US scholars against exaggerating the risks of nuclear exchange as that tended to play into the hands of those who try to take advantage of nuclear brinkmanship. In that sense, there appears to be a commonality of views between the Indian prime minister and the Pakistani military ruler. Though Pakistan's track record is not confidence inspiring, it is in India's interest to take unilateral steps to reassure the people of India, Pakistan and the rest of the world that mutual deterrence is stable, and the risks of escalation are virtually non-existent. The government can start by accepting the draft nuclear doctrine based on the basic principles of no-first-use, credible minimum deterrence, and renunciation of nuclear war-fighting doctrines. India must also take the initiative to have expert level talks on nuclear doctrines and confidence building measures with Pakistan. This is not to be mixed up with political level talks on other issues. The Indian policy of restraint in respect of the LoC and the nuclear issue — which has paid handsome dividends — must be consolidated to further advantage. //

THE TIMES OF INDIA

5 OCT 2000

Pak may use nuclear bomb against India if its security is endangered: Musharraf

By T.V. Parasuram

WASHINGTON: Pakistan could use its nuclear bomb against India if its security is jeopardised, its military ruler General Pervez Musharraf told *CBS-60 Minutes* television programme.



Gen. Musharraf

"I would never like to use it first of all. But if you ask me a direct question when would I use them...If Pakistan's security gets jeopardised, then only one would like to think of it," Mr Musharraf told the TV programme Sunday. He said he was proud of Pakistan's nuclear bomb "for Pakistan's sake".

Asked how secure were Pakistan's nuclear weapons, Mr

Musharraf said "very secure. That is my guarantee. The national command authority is in place".

According to the Federation of American Scientists, Pakistan has 25 to 35 nuclear bombs which have the capability to target any city in India.

General Anthony Zinni, retired chief of Central Command, told CBS that Mr Musharraf may be America's last hope in Pakistan, and if he fails, the fundamentalists would get hold of the "Islamic bomb". Justifying the coup, Mr Musharraf said "the people of Pakistan were fed up with what was going on" in the country and that he "restored confidence".

Mr Musharraf asserted "Pakistan is not a banana republic or a failed state in the region with nuclear weapons, a state that could end up in a nuclear war with India". (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

17 OCT 2000

Pak rules out war, wants talks

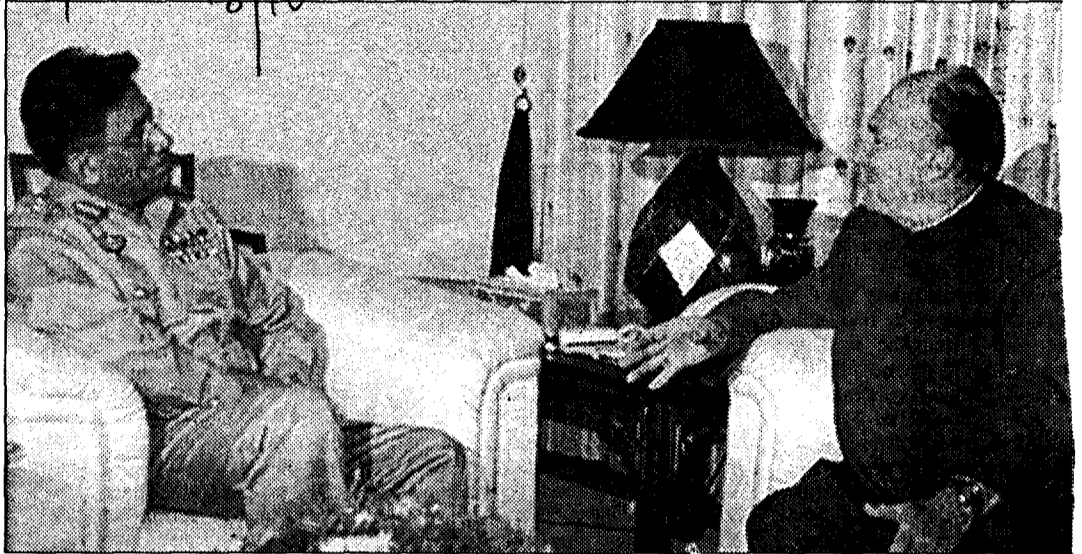
New Delhi, Oct. 17: Pakistan's military ruler General Pervez Musharraf has hoped the Indo-Pak talks will take off and discounted the possibility of war between the two neighbours. "I hope we start talking," the General said during a lengthy interview to BBC (Urdu) broadcast on Friday and Saturday.

He said he would rid his country's economy of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank influence and its politics of money and feudal power by the year 2003. By that time, the General said, he would make Pakistan economical-ly so strong that it would not be dependent on the two international agencies. The Supreme Court has directed the General to restore democracy in Pakistan by October 2002.

About the possibility of the Army being assigned a constitutional role to play in Pakistan's politics in future, he said he would not like to say anything on the issue at present. "We will think about it after devolution of powers at the grass-roots level."

General Musharraf plans to hold district-level elections and devolve some powers to the elected representatives which, according to him, is "grassroots democracy."

He said there was scope for political leadership at the district level but the people could not fight elections due to lack of money. General Musharraf said the Pakistani electoral system is controlled by money power, feudal lords and family cult, an obvious reference to the Bhuttos and the Sharifs. Promising to encourage grassroots democracy, he said he would be touring the country in November. (UNI)



GENERALLY SPEAKING: Prince Karim Aga Khan (right) meets Pakistan's General Pervez Musharraf in Islamabad on Monday. Gen. Musharraf lauded the tremendous contribution of the various philanthropic and social development programmes being undertaken by the Aga Khan in Pakistan. (Reuters)

'Prithvi missiles are a threat'

United Nations, Oct. 17: Pakistan's ambassador Munir Akram has told the General Assembly that Prithvi missiles deployed by India against Pakistan along the border and the Line of Control in Kashmir were a permanent threat to peace in the region.

Mr Munir said that Pakistan would have to strengthen its armed forces with additional acquisitions, estimated to cost over \$10 billion from three of the five permanent members of the Security Council and certain other states. "Aggression and attacks are being threatened, with increasing frequency, by India's political and military leaders", he added. Pakistan's conventional capabilities have been severely eroded by unjust embargoes and sanctions, Munir said, adding history will confirm that Pakistan was a "reluctant" nuclear power.

Pakistan even voted for the NPT in 1968 but despite India's 1974 nuclear explosions, Pakistan continued to pursue the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free South Asia, he said.

After India's May 1998 nuclear test, Pakistan received no credible indication that their security could be assured by other means, he said.

The five permanent members of the Security Council did not meet nor was the Security Council convened he said "We acted to re-establish the deterrence which had existed in South Asia for over a decade."

Mr Munir said Pakistan's proposal to a strategic restraint regime involves mutual nuclear and missile restraint; conventional arms control and balance; and peaceful resolution of the underlying tension. (ANI)

THE ASIAN AGE

18 OCT 2000

PAK. MASSES TROOPS NEAR RANN OF KUTCH

India steps up vigil along international border

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, OCT. 21. India today said it was keeping a close vigil along the international border with Pakistan following media reports from Islamabad that the latter was conducting a major military exercise near the Rann of Kutch.

An Army spokesman said Pakistan has not officially informed India about the conduct of any exercise. "The Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) has received no intimation from his Pakistani counterpart on undertaking any exercise along the borders."

The DGMOs of the two countries talk to each other once a week, with the option of frequent conversations, if necessary. India and Pakistan, under an existing confidence-building accord, are expected to keep each other informed about any planned military exercise involving a division of around 10,000 troops or more. Pakistani news reports claimed that nine divisions have been mobilised for these manoeuvres.

Reports from Pakistan, quoting an army spokesman, however dismissed these reports as "concocted."

Nevertheless, highly-placed sources in the Government here see these news items as a deliberate attempt by the Pakistani establishment to draw international attention to South Asia and Kashmir at a time when world attention was riveted on the tensions in West Asia and its larger implications on the flow of oil and gas to the rest of the world.

The sources pointed out that Pakistan has also repositioned its defences in recent months. The Pakistani military establishment,

they pointed out, was war-gaming the concept of "limited war" which revolved around testing the limits to which a conventional war with India could be fought without the conflict going nuclear.

Besides, Pakistan was also reshuffling its missile defences. For instance, its M-11 missiles were now being stored in Sargodha and Gujranwala. The Shaheen and the Ghauri missiles were being kept at Fatehganj and Jhelum for deployment around Rawalpindi and Peshawar. The short range Hatf-1 was being stored at Attock, with Kahuta as the area of deployment.

Routine training, says Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 21. Pakistan today denied reports of a large-scale build-up of its troops on the Indian border saying the "troops are busy in routine training within their respective units and their training areas".

A spokesman of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Directorate said the reports in the Urdu daily, *Jang*, and its English counterpart, *The News*, on the troop build-up were totally incorrect and concocted.

"It appears that the concerned reporter and the editorial staff lack basic knowledge about defence matters and matters pertaining to troops movement. Troops are busy in routine training within their respective units and their training areas. No unusual movement or activity has taken place. It is unfortunate that the newspapers carried the news item despite a

firm denial from the ISPR spokesman earlier. Making sensational stories on such issues may create panic and lead to serious consequences," he said.

Later, the ISPR chief, Maj. Gen. Rashid Qureshi, described as 'hog wash' the papers' claim that nine Army divisions had moved with ammunition towards the "entire working boundary of India for conducting exercise".

The newspaper report said that deployment had been launched from Marala to the Rann of Kutch in the south. The report said troops starting rolling on Thursday and the process of movement was still on till Friday late.

"It is important to note the troops don't carry ammunition along while going on regular exercise, but sources have disclosed the border-bound companies were equipped with proper ammunition, a signal that army might have been alerted against a possible threat from India", the report said.

The News said it is unusual practice to conduct exercise on such a massive scale across the entire border and that too without any prior intimation or announcement. The report said the deployment is either aimed at preempting any aggression from India.

The denial of the news item by the military government is yet another indication of its bad vibes with the press. Gen. Musharraf on recent occasions has made known his irritation with the press for its 'irresponsible' style of reporting. On Friday, the General presided over a Corps Commanders' conference on national security, where the performance of his government's one-year rule was reviewed. The paper also sought to link the build-up to Friday's Corps Commanders Conference.

THE HINDU

22 OCT 2000

Barak sets final deadline for Palestinians

AGENCIES

JERUSALEM, Oct. 21. — The Israeli Prime Minister has given Palestinians till tomorrow to end violence before he suspends the seven-year-old peace process indefinitely.

Mr Ehud Barak said on Israeli TV that attacks on Israelis must stop in Palestinian territories before the end of a two-day Arab summit in Cairo that began today.

As a new spurt in violence led to 10 Arabs being shot in the West Bank yesterday, Mr Barak blamed the Palestinians for failing to meet an earlier deadline agreed at Egypt's Sharm-el-Sheikh.

"After what has happened, it is impossible to continue with the peace process as if

nothing has happened," Mr Barak said. The suspension will last "howsoever long is necessary in order to evaluate the situation and determine what we have to do, and what the other side is doing."

An Israeli spokesman said the suspension could persuade Mr Barak's hardline political opponents opposed to peace with Palestinians to join him in a "national emergency government". That could prolong Mr Barak's hold on office and would make it virtually impossible to revive land-for-peace negotiations with the Palestinians or Syria.

But Palestinian President Yasser Arafat told President Bill Clinton he was committed to the peace deal despite the fresh killing of Palestinians, the White House said.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat

accused Israel of provoking clashes by sending troops and Jewish settlers into Palestinian areas. He challenged Mr Clinton to say which side had violated the accord he brokered.

At the Cairo summit, Arab leaders accused Israel of aggression and warned that West Asia peace was at stake. "It is time to tell Israel frankly and clearly of our concern over peace and the future of co-existence and stability in the region," Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak told the summit.

Lashkar move: The Pakistan-based militant outfit Lashkar-e-Taiyaba plans to send its cadre to West Asia to join the Palestine fight against Israeli "aggression".

■ **Photograph, more reports on page 12**

Buses burnt after accident kills youth

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CALCUTTA, Oct. 21. — A mob torched two private buses and damaged vehicles on APC Road at Borotolla today after a private bus knocked down and killed a 24-year-old polytechnic student and seriously injured his father.

Three fire tenders fought the blaze before the buses were completely charred. The mob damaged eight other vehicles, including three state buses.

Eyewitnesses said the traffic constable on duty was smoking inside a shop when the accident occurred. He fled the area immediately after the accident. About 2,500 people kept APC Road blocked for more than two hours and threw brickbats at policemen. No one was injured. The blockade was withdrawn around 12.30 p.m. after police intervened.

The accident occurred around 10.30 a.m. in front of Sahitya Parishad Library. Rajani Kumar Das and his father, Mr Shankar Das, were waiting at the bus stop for an Esplanade-bound bus, when a bus on route no 234 knocked them down in its attempt to overtake another bus on route number 34B/1.

Rajani, a student of APC Polytechnic Engineering College, died on the spot.

India, Pak deny border troops movement

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Oct. 21. — Unlike their shrill posturing every time either undertakes a military exercise, the defence authorities in both Islamabad and here have together denied reports in the Pakistani media of the Pakistan army was undertaking a massive exercise along the international border.

"No unusual movement", a defence ministry spokesman said here after checking out what the news agencies had reported from Islamabad. The situation on the border was being monitored as always, he said, and added that the director-general of military operations had received no word any major exercise from his Pakistani counterpart.

A bilateral arrangement requires prior information conveyed when exercises at the corps level are taken within a specified distance of border. It also lays down the axis on which the troop movements would be made. Exercises at a lower formation level, however, do not require any information being transmitted between the two DGMOs.

Agency reports from Islamabad said a spokesman of Pakistan Inter Services Public Relations had not just denied what "The News" and 'Jung' had said about a major exercise, but regretted that "sensationalising" routine training "may create panic and lead to serious consequences."

"The News" had said the Pakistan Army had moved nine divisions with ammunition towards the international border with India from Marala to the Rann of Kutch to "conduct massive exercises". The troops from the III Corps started rolling towards the border with India on Thursday and the movement was still on till last night, it quoted sources in the armed forces as saying.

The newspaper called the movement "unusual" and said the massive exercise along the entire international border with India was being undertaken without any prior information or announcement. The paper quoted the sources as saying that the troops had been shifted to the borders for defensive purposes, and that some sort of threat of aggression was not being ruled out.

THE STATESMAN

22 OCT 2000

India, Pak won't give up N-arms'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA 518

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3. — The USA today admitted that neither India nor Pakistan were "going to give up their nuclear weapons" unless some underlying issues were resolved but appealed for restraint on both sides, even as it ruled out its mediation over the Kashmir issue.

US assistant secretary of state, Mr Karl Inderfurth, also dismissed the apprehension in some quarters that India and Pakistan were "on the brink of nuclear war" over the Kashmir issue but said "concern about their nuclear missile production is one that we share".

"There is an expression about the Kashmir issue that India cannot lose it, Pakistan cannot win it and the Kashmiris themselves cannot survive it. It must be addressed and I hope the USA can continue to play a useful role there," Mr Inderfurth said in a panel discussion on American University Radio.

"I believe it is possible for India and Pakistan to resolve this (Kashmir issue). I don't think it is beyond the grasp of the two countries. With political will and courage, it could be addressed. The USA should do everything we can to support that process," he added.

But "we cannot mediate as we have said publicly over and over again.... We can demonstrate our concern, and that is something President Clinton has done during his time in office, and I believe the next President will take up that same concern."

The USA also wanted China, another nuclear neighbour of India, to exercise restraint, Mr Inderfurth said when a questioner pointed out that New Delhi had to keep Beijing's nuclear arsenal in mind in regard to its own security.

THE STATESMAN

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Think-tanks unfold peace blueprint

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, OCT. 23. Seeking to impart a new sense of realism, two key think-tanks of India and Pakistan have, for the first time, joined hands to recommend ways to revive the stalled dialogue between the two countries. In a study entitled 'The Beginning of the Future', the Institute of Regional Studies, Pakistan, and the International Centre for Peace Initiatives, India, have identified underlying principles and concrete steps which could pave the way for lasting peace between the two nuclear neighbours.

Respecting the principle of bilateralism, the two think-tanks have avoided recommending any third-party mediation or facilitation.

The two sides, according to the study, must anchor their dialogue to key first principles in order to make it meaningful. Both must refrain from reinterpreting the history of their antagonistic relations and, instead, focus on a future-oriented and "forward-looking" peace process. They should recognise the centrality of Kashmir, which is the "core issue of discord" between the two neighbours.

The recognition of the importance of Kashmir, however, imposes certain crucial obligations on both India and Pakistan. India, must "sincerely acknowledge" the existence of Kashmir as a dispute. Pakistan, on its part, must commit itself against using force as a means to arrive at a solution. While the Kashmir question must be addressed frontally, it does not mean that two should shelve a dialogue on other differences.

The two countries must not threaten each other with nuclear weapons. Finally, the group emphasises that any settlement on Kashmir must also be "in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people".

Having defined the basic premises, the study advocates concrete steps which would bring about incremental progress for durable peace. The group, for instance, has suggested a two-track approach to involve the Kashmiris in a possible peace deal. Designating the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), political arm of the Kashmiri militant groups, as a nodal organisation, it has recommended that New Delhi should hold a "limited dialogue" with this organisation.

India, it says, should establish a "working channel of communication" with the APHC "only for the limited purpose of ensuring human rights and mitigating violence by all sides by all sides against innocent people". There should be discussion not on the substance but only the process for resolving the Kashmir conflict. These talks should also be aimed at eliciting India's cooperation for initiating a dialogue between the Kashmiris on both sides of the LoC. An intra-Kashmir dialogue involving Kashmiris of all faiths and political views must also be initiated.

Indian security forces, on their part, should suspend operations against those groups which have announced a "ceasefire"; while Pakistan should encourage various groups operating from its soil to stop violence anywhere across and beyond the LoC.

Unofficial diplomacy

During this preliminary phase, the group has designated a high profile to "unofficial channels" endorsed by the two Governments for steering these talks till sufficient ground has been broken for an official dialogue to begin.

Not surprisingly, the group has advocated that preliminary contacts between the two Foreign Secretaries or Ministers can be made

on the sidelines of a multilateral conference. During this "phase two" of the peace process, the two sides should discuss the modalities of an official and periodic dialogue which should be held "at least once every few weeks irrespective of the state of bilateral relations".

Phase three

These contacts, in turn should pave the way for "phase three" of the peace process revolving around a "composite dialogue" with two components -- one on Kashmir, peace and security issues; and another on the rest of the issues engaging the two Governments. These talks should take place at least thrice every year. Until this dialogue reaches a "logical conclusion", both sides must renounce violence, support for terrorism and firing across the LoC.

Once sufficient progress has been made, a focused attempt should be made to create a national consensus on a possible peace deal. The Governments should enter into a political dialogue with parties and groups of a "religious-political" nature. Multi-party groups, mediapersons, civil society groups and business delegations must intensify their interaction.

"Phase four" should also see contacts established between the heads of the Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Research and Analyses Wing (RAW). The entire effort should be steered by "special envoys" who have been appointed by the heads of Government.

After completing all the groundwork, the two heads of Government should meet and "specifically explore a political solution, in particular on Jammu and Kashmir, and work out a compromise solution".

THE HINDU

24 OCT 2000

Pak. army, air force on alert

By B. Muralidhar Reddy *Special Correspondent*
ISLAMABAD, Oct. 28. The Pakistan army and air force have been put on alert as India is set to conduct three major exercises near Pakistan's western and southern borders. Quoting sources, the *Pakistan Observer* said the alert was to avert any untoward incident. The Indian Air Force would be backed by ground forces for "integrated war plan" exercises. The paper said the exercises being planned by the IAF would be the biggest ever in the last two decades.

A fine blend of over 300 MiGs, Mirages and SU-32 fighters would take part in the three-phased exercise. "According to analysts the exercises are meant to browbeat the South Asian neighbours including Pakistan". The report said under a bilateral agreement, India and Pakistan are obliged to inform each other about military exercises and went on to add that lately India had been guilty on this count. Islamabad had not been informed of the current exercise.

12 Pak. soldiers killed in clashes

By Our Special Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Oct. 28. At least 12 Pakistani soldiers were reported to have been killed and

several injured in a major border clash in the Nowshera sector of Rajouri district in Jammu and Kashmir since last evening. Two Indian soldiers also lost their lives and five others were wounded in a fresh spate of firing between the two sides in the region. In another incident, a Saudi Arabian national was killed when a *fidayeen* (suicide squad) of the Lashkar-e-Taiba attacked a security camp in Surankot.

Reports reaching here said Pakistani troops began firing in Kerni, Lam and Manjia areas of Rajouri district early today. Indian forces returned the fire and the exchange continued till late afternoon. Confirming the firing by Pakistanis soldiers in an attempt to capture a post on the Line of Control, Major General P. P. S. Bindra, northern command, Urdhampur said, "they attempted to a raid a post on the LoC but were beaten back."

Alert troops repulsed the attack and caused extensive damage to the enemy side. "As per our assessment 12 Pakistani soldiers were killed and several injured," he said adding that they managed to drag the bodies away. Three AK rifles were recovered by Indian troops.

Maj Gen Bindra said only two Indian soldiers were injured while police sources said five soldiers had been injured adding that

two of them had been airlifted to the Udhampur Army Hospital.

At the Kalsia post in the same sector, two soldiers of the 17 Sikh regiment were killed when Pakistan troops fired at them. The casualties on the Pakistani side were not known.

Abu Asamah, a Saudi Arabian member of the Lashkar was killed when a *fidayeen* group attacked a camp of the State police's

5 Indian soldiers killed, says Pak.

By Our Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD, Oct. 28. Pakistan has claimed that its troops killed five Indian soldiers and injured a larger number of others in a clash along the Line of Control on Saturday.

In a statement issued here, the Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate said the fighting erupted when Indian troops attacked a forward Pakistani post in Khanjar area of Bhimbar sector. The Indian attack, heavily supported by artillery, mortar and small arms fire, was repulsed, the statement claimed.

special operations group at Surankot in Poonch district. A CRPF jawan, B. K. Roy, was also killed.

The DIG, Rajouri-Poonch, Mr. Ram Lubhaya, said over phone that around 10.45 p.m. on Friday, a group of Lashkar militants tried to storm the camp but the alert forces returned the fire and foiled their attempt. According to Mr. Lubhaya, Abu Asamah of Jeddah was identified by another Lashkar militant who surrendered recently.

Two Lashkar militants were gunned down by security forces in Kot Jarwal area of Buddhal in Rajouri district. One of them was identified as Abu Haroon of Pakistan.

Two Hizb-ul-Mujahideen militants were killed in an encounter with security forces at Rabiar Ganderbal Kahmiand, and foreign militant was slain at Post Farbal in the Gurez sector of the Kashmir Valley. A boy was killed and 5 others injured in a clash at namba in the Uri sector.

Reports baseless: India

PTI reports from New Delhi:

India has described as baseless reports that its Army fired shells across the Line of Control last week. An Army spokesman said the reports were "absolutely baseless and unfounded" and "Indian Army does not target civilian areas".

India 'ready for composite talks' with Pak.

10-12/10
BERLIN, OCT. 27. India has expressed its commitment to a "composite" talks process with Pakistan but made it clear that Islamabad should honour existing bilateral agreements and abjure cross-border terrorism to facilitate a "meaningful dialogue."

India's constant endeavour to "engage" Islamabad at the political and official level should not leave "any doubts" in Pakistan on New Delhi's capability to deal "effectively" with any threat to its security, the Director-General of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Mr. Himachal Som, said on Thursday.

Mr. Som, addressing an audience at Cologne on the occasion of the 100th death anniversary of the noted German Indologist Max Mueller, highlighted India's offer to normalise relations with Pakistan. Mr. Som made the remarks on Indo-Pak relations during a discussion on the theme "Neighbours-Partners: Recent Political

28/10
Developments in the Indian sub-continent" at the three-day meeting of foreign policy specialists, academicians, German industry representatives and diplomats.

Noting that India did not see its development in isolation, Mr. Som said New Delhi saw its fortunes linked with the prosperity and stability of its Asian neighbours, especially those on the Indian sub-continent.

He said Pakistan's "negativity" as seen by its compulsive hostility towards India has been enhanced in the recent years because of the "decline" of the Pakistan State.

Mr. Som said the current military leadership in Pakistan had repeatedly repudiated both the Simla agreement and the Lahore declaration. Referring to India's position on the CTBT, Mr. Som said New Delhi will not prevent the treaty's entry into force pending the evolution of a national consensus on India signing the treaty. — PTI

THE HINDU

28 OCT 2000

PAK BOARD THREATENS TO SEVER TIES

Centre vetoes cricket tour of Pakistan

SNS & AGENCIES

NEW DELHI/LAHORE, Nov. 15. — The Prime Minister's Office today shot down a BCCI proposal for a Pakistan tour next month, prompting a threat from the Pakistan Cricket Board to boycott all matches with India.

The Indian team were scheduled to play a five-match one-day series and three tests in Pakistan.

The Centre urged Pakistan to create a climate conducive to assuring India of the "security and welfare" of its cricket team.

The sports ministry said India can't afford to play a test series with Pakistan in the present circumstances. The PMO took the decision after the youth affairs and sports minister, Ms Uma Bharti, met the Prime Minister last night.

The external affairs ministry spokesman said Pakistan's hostile propaganda and the constant calls for jihad against India by the establishment as well as militants has created an environment where a regular tour of Pakistan by the Indian cricket team seems "inappropriate".

The Indian government's decision invited a sharp reaction from the PCB chairman. "We have not been informed about the tour's cancellation but we have confirmed news that the Indian tour is off...it's disappointing," Gen Tauqir Zia said today.

"We would like to review our relationship with India and may not play them even in off-

shore, tri-nation or one-day events," he said.

"We'll host the Asia Cup and the Asian Test Championship in April and September irrespective of whether India comes or not," Gen Zia said.

Threatening to launch an official protest, he said: "We will...ask the ICC to include a clause whereby the governments of test-playing countries are not allowed to interfere in cricket."

Pakistan would have to reject the ICC's 10-year itinerary of international cricket unless the PCB receives a guarantee that India would

tour Pakistan, the PCB chairman said.

Bangla offer: The Bangladesh Cricket Board has invited Pakistan for a home-and-away series, Reuters adds from Dhaka.

The BCB general secretary, Syed Ashrafu Huq, said: "Pa-

kistan would tour Bangladesh to play two tests and two one-dayers and then we would go to Pakistan immediately to play an equal number of Tests and one-dayers."

CBI allegation: The CBI has alleged that three Doordarshan officials cheated government of about Rs 21 crore and showed undue favour to two private television networks and certain officials of International Cricket Council and its subsidiary ICC Development International regarding grant of telecast rights for ICC Knock-Out Tournament at Dhaka in 1998.

■ Another report on page 8

POLO POLICY

NEW DELHI, Nov. 15. — The Centre may have vetoed the Indian cricket team's proposed tour of Pakistan but polo players and professional golfers from the neighbouring country played on our soil recently.

Moreover, four of the Pakistani players and the team manager at the Polo World Cup 2000 held in Jaipur were army men. — SNS

(Details on page 8)

India's sincerity will be on test, says Pakistan

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 20. Pakistan has said that the "short-term" ceasefire offer made by India could only be tactical in its efforts to impose a military solution and if it was really sincere about a "just and durable solution" to the Kashmir problem, India should end the "repression" in the State and agree to a tripartite dialogue.

At a press conference here today, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said New Delhi's sincerity of purpose would be on test and that Pakistan would closely watch the developments in Kashmir and the "intent and purpose of the Indian announcement".

The views of the Kashmiri leadership, specially the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), (on the Indian announcement) would be important, he said.

Asked whether the militant groups, in Pakistan's opinion, should respond positively to the ceasefire, the spokesman pointed out that Kashmiris took recourse to an armed struggle because of "Indian repression".

THE HINDU

21 NOV 2000

Militants reject Centre's truce offer, threaten to step up violence

The Times of India News Service
and Agencies

MUMBAI: Even as a number of political parties and the international community hailed the Centre's unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir for the Muslim holy month of Ramzan, most of the Pakistan-based militant outfits rejected the olive branch, indicating that it would be an uphill task to restore peace in the state.

Even the Hizbul Mujahideen, which had tried to initiate a dialogue with the government earlier this year, refused to go in for a reciprocal gesture. The only silver lining seemed to be its offer to match the Centre's proposal "only if it was the start of a larger peace process".

Despite the rejection of the peace overture by most militant outfits, the Kashmir chief minister said the ceasefire might be extended if everything went well and that "more and bigger steps will gradually follow".

However, Union home minister L.K. Advani said operations to check Pakistan-backed infiltration of militants along the line of control and the international border would continue, the ceasefire notwithstanding.

"This limited ceasefire..has no meaning or utility for the people until it is set up to initiate a mean-

ingful dialogue for the ultimate resolution of the Kashmir conflict," said Syed Salahuddin, supreme commander of the Hizbul, the most important Kashmiri militant outfit. "Ceasefire for ceasefire has no meaning," he said, vowing that the struggle would continue. However, unlike the other militant groups, the Hizbul did not threaten to step up operations during the holy month.

Other militant groups issued acerbic statements criticising the ceasefire offer while Pakistan said it will "closely watch" the developments arising out of the ceasefire and the "intent and purpose" of

New Delhi's announcement.

"The offer is a drama..and part of the fraud (sic) of Indian politics," the Lashkar-e-Toiba said, adding that "jihad is a sacred mission and we will continue it

during Ramzan."

Terming the offer an "eyewash", the Harkat-ul Mujahideen said, "We reject it outright..India is trying to fool the world community." It said the outfit would accelerate its activities in the holy month.

While the Al-Badr said, "We do not accept or believe India..Jihad is the only solution," the Harkat-e-jehad-Islami said, "We will use all our energy against Indian troops during Ramzan."

► Russia, UK hail offer, Page 7

AFTER-EFFECT

- Operations to check infiltration will continue, says Advani
- Pakistan to 'closely watch' the 'intent and purpose' of offer
- Hurriyat meeting on Tuesday to decide on truce proposal
- Russia, Britain welcome ceasefire

THE TIMES OF INDIA

21 NOV 2000

Demons in the mind

THE EXTERNAL Affairs Ministry's argument that 'strained' bilateral relations persuaded it to deny permission to the Indian cricket team to tour Pakistan has the virtue of being straightforward and unambiguous. Undeniably, mutual ties between the two neighbours have rarely been as bad as at present. What is more, there is little sign of Pakistan discouraging its mercenaries trained in terrorist camps on its own soil and in Afghanistan from waging a *jihad* in Kashmir. There is little doubt that Pakistan today is India's most venomous adversary, in fact the only one which has maintained a relentlessly hostile posture presumably in the expectation that its decade-long proxy war in Kashmir will somehow succeed. ^{HG-10}

Against such a grim background, the games played by the 'flannelled fools', to recall an old British jibe against cricketers, might have seemed somewhat incongruous. It would have appeared even more so if Pakistan succeeded in carrying out an act of terrorism while the matches were in progress. Clearly, as New Delhi has pointed out, the present atmosphere is not 'conducive' for such a visit. However, it can also be said that had the conditions been better, the approval of the visit would have been a routine one. Therefore, the point to ponder is whether tours of this nature help to improve the atmosphere or whether they make it worse.

Since there are almost constant exchanges of visits by human rights activists, artistes, writers, journalists, social workers, retired army personnel and even sportsmen playing less popular games like polo, not to mention the ordinary people as well as those engaged in the so-called Track II diplomacy, a cricket tour would not have been anything out of the ordinary except that it would have aroused enormous interest on both sides of the border in contrast to the other events which pass off virtually unnoticed. There is also a pleasant aspect of the attendant publicity. Given the television ritual of interspersing sporting contests with vignettes of a country's social and cultural life, a cricketing encounter often resembles a festival, especially in the subcontinent. True, there are tense moments as in all games, not least because defeat is not always accepted gracefully by everyone. Even then, such interactions on the playing fields hinder those who try to demonise the other side. Cricket can play a positive role in this respect especially because it has a larger-than-life presence in these parts. The Indian decision, therefore, has not been a wise one.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

17 NOV 2000

Economic ties & regional security

By Michael Krepon

Cooperation (between India and Pakistan) on a gas pipeline will not put an end to the Kashmir dispute. But it will help narrow the conflict.

AN ECONOMIC transactions and cross-border infrastructure projects facilitate regional security? Yes and no. Take the case of Chile and Argentina, which nearly fought a war in 1978. Subsequently, these countries have successfully resolved over 20 territorial disputes. Now, Chilean Government pension funds are invested in Argentine power grids that were once, presumably, on the Chilean Air Force's list of targets in the event of war. In this case, economic interactions have clearly facilitated regional security.

In other instances, economic cooperation has not prevented war. In the late 19th century, Japan and China had developed extensive economic and cultural interactions. No less than one-fifth of Japan's trade was with the mainland. Nonetheless, Japan's soldiers carried out a military campaign against China in 1894. In this instance, war aims trumped economics.

The complex linkage between economics and regional security is especially relevant for Asia. In South Asia, India and Pakistan remain at loggerheads over Kashmir and the nuclear issue. Direct trade between these two countries is minimal. Might not greater economic cooperation facilitate movement on currently intractable problems? Plans are on to establish a natural gas pipeline originating in Iran, transiting across Pakistan, and terminating in India. At present, Washington and New Delhi are disinclined to support this project. Do pipelines have a role in curtailing enmity in South Asia?

Tensions across the Taiwan Strait have grown with the political drift of Taiwan away from the mainland, even though trade and investment flows are quite substantial. Are the considerable economic interactions now in place between Taipei and Beijing sufficient to prevent a damaging clash? Would increased trade and investment help in this regard?

Japan and China are rising powers in the Asia-Pacific region, with substantial economic and minimal defence interac-

tions. In this case, economic confidence building has not yet paid dividends for regional security. Is this imbalance healthy, and can it be changed?

A recent Stimson Center study suggests the following preliminary answers to these important questions:

First, cross-border economic transactions may have many immediate and tangible benefits, but they do not necessarily translate into greater regional security. For positive spillover effects to be realised, states must clearly reassure their neighbours that regional ambitions will not be realised by coercive means. Put another way, a positive spillover from economic interactions to regional security is possible when national leaders either accept existing territorial boundaries — or at least agree not to change them by violent means.

In the success story of Argentina and Chile, the spillover effect of economic interactions on to the security domain is quite clear and convincing. But in this case, the non-violent resolution of all outstanding territorial disputes resulted primarily from high-level political commitments to do so, rather than from increased economic activity. Once national leaders set aside revisionist territorial ambitions, economic interactions clearly accelerated regional cooperation.

Second, substantial cross-border economic interactions are no safeguard against military campaigns to secure territorial claims or economic advantages. This was true in the historical China-Japan case noted above, and many presume it to be true today in the case of China's relations with Taiwan. In contrast, contested territorial claims between China and Japan are presently limited to the seabed and rock outcroppings in the East China Sea. Consequent-

ly, while the difficulties of seeking to translate Sino-Japanese economic cooperation into regional security cannot be underestimated, this goal appears within reach of creative and purposeful diplomacy. Economic interaction between Tokyo and Beijing has effectively promoted stable political relations, serving as a buffer through troubled periods, and paving the way for new diplomatic initiatives.

These conclusions suggest that, while economic cooperation between India and Pakistan would not prevent further clashes over Kashmir, they could nonetheless be helpful. In this deeply troubled case, there is only one example of successful cooperation — the Indus Waters Treaty — which is predicated on separate utilisation of river waters and joint commitments not to take actions disturbing their flows. Direct trade is minimal, and tensions remain high, reflecting Pakistan's rejection of the status quo in Kashmir.

During the past decade, it has not been possible to build on the Indus Waters Treaty, since economic projects requiring cooperation have been held hostage to the Kashmir dispute. In a significant potential departure, the Government of Pakistan has now expressed its support for the gas pipeline project. This project would provide India with energy essential for national growth, but it would also provide Pakistan's military with substantial revenues. Given Pakistan's revisionist ambitions, does the pipeline project make sense?

The Stimson Center's assessment, written by E. Sridharan of the University of Pennsylvania's Institute for the Advanced Study of India, concludes that the pipeline project deserves support. In addition to fuelling India's economic growth, it would also help the long-suf-

fering Pakistani national economy, while altering long-standing policy in Islamabad regarding cross-border economic cooperation.

Cooperation on a gas pipeline will not put an end to the Kashmir dispute or stop Pakistan's support for militancy in Kashmir. But it will help narrow the conflict by removing a major issue area — energy cooperation — from the arena of conflict, just as the Indus Waters Treaty greatly limited the scope of conflict regarding river waters.

Moreover, the Army leadership in Pakistan has pledged that the pipeline would not be disrupted. Indeed, if the pipeline were attacked, this would not only rob Pakistan of desperately needed revenue, it would also greatly damage its future prospects for foreign investment. And if Pakistan's Army can successfully protect the pipeline from militancy, how could it persuasively argue an inability to stop militancy elsewhere in the country?

The construction of a pipeline would require a change in longstanding U.S. policy to block projects that would provide economic benefit to Iran — resources that could facilitate Teheran's nuclear ambitions. A reconsideration of U.S. policy in this instance seems warranted, since the pipeline project could not only be useful in South Asia, but also in helping to ameliorate future tensions that could arise between Iran and Pakistan.

In addition, the pipeline project runs at cross-purposes with Indian policy, which seeks to isolate and contain Pakistan. During the Cold War, the U.S. sought to contain — but not isolate — the Soviet Union. Instead, Washington pursued a mixture of containment plus engagement to reduce nuclear dangers, to help transform the Soviet Union, and to keep the Cold War from becoming hot. If New Delhi persists in pursuing a containment plus isolation strategy against Pakistan, far more that the pipeline project would be placed at risk.

(The writer is president emeritus of the Henry L. Stimson Center.)

THE HINDU

24 NOV 2000

Pakistan shifts gear, concedes it has duty to stop LoC intrusions

By Siddharth Varadarajan
The Times of India News Service

ISLAMABAD: In a small but potentially significant shift in policy, Pakistan has admitted that it has a duty to stop militants from crossing the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir.

Speaking to *The Times of India*, Pakistan's foreign minister Abdus Sattar also said that his government was prepared to stand by the July 4, 1999 statement signed by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and U.S. President Bill Clinton. That statement commits Pakistan to respect the sanctity of the LoC and, until now, the Musharraf regime has never explicitly endorsed it. Indeed, the view of General Pervez Musharraf, who now rule Pakistan, has been that Mr Sharif stabbed the country in the back by undertaking to end the Kargil incursion.

"Pakistan, having agreed to the (Washington) statement has an obligation to comply with it," Mr Sattar said. Asked whether "respecting the sanctity of the LoC" meant that Pakistan was obliged to prevent armed individuals from making unauthorised crossings, he replied, "Yes, I think that's a fair assumption."

At the same time, Mr Sattar rejected the suggestion that Pakistan had not done enough to stop crossings. Implicitly conced-

ing that his government was not fully in control of the happenings in its own territory—something quite astonishing for a foreign minister to do—he said, "Both sides have an obligation, but India, which has some 700,000 troops in Kashmir, is surely in a better position to prevent LoC crossings than the 50,000 troops Pakistan has on its side of the line. We do what we can within the limits of our means and India should see that its capacity to ensure observance of the LoC is much greater."

Mr Sattar said that his government had no reservations about the Sharif-Clinton statement. "But I don't know why one insists on the observance of the July 4 statement when we have the Simla agreement to respect the LoC," he added. When he was reminded that General Musharraf had himself raised doubts about Simla, Mr Sattar shifted ground and said that the main issue was "India's refusal to implement the UN resolutions of 1948-49".

When pressed, Mr Sattar admitted that Pakistan had not withdrawn its troops from Kashmir—as stipulated by the UN resolutions—but said that this "should be the subject of discussion and not a mere debate in order to find a way out of the stalemate in the arguments between Pakistan and

India".

Conceding that India had received "much greater support" for its position on Kashmir than Pakistan had, Mr Sattar denied that this had anything to do with the perception that his government wasn't doing enough to curb terrorist acts emanating from its territory. "A state is not responsible for the views and actions of every one of its citizens. The state is responsible for actions by the organs of the state. Of course, individuals who engage in crimes should be tried."

When this correspondent said that the leader of a prominent militant group had admitted, off the record, that he had planned the August 8 car bombing in Srinagar in which several civilians, including a photojournalist, were killed, Mr Sattar said this was the first time he had heard of the matter. "If (this man) were to admit this publicly and proof (is) given to us by the (Indian) authorities, then, on the basis of that, subject to understanding between the two countries, trials can take place," he said, a trifle unconvincingly.

The foreign minister didn't find it strange that visiting journalists could gather more information about the involvement of Pakistani residents in crimes across the LoC than Pakistan's own police and intelligence agencies.

Good news has come a bit late for India

Udayan Nambodiri
New Delhi, November 22

THE NEWS from Washington is, on the face of it, good for India. The US, after years of looking the other way as China supplied missiles in semi-knocked down condition to Pakistan, has lifted sanctions on China and slapped another layer of them on Pakistan and Iran. China is being rewarded for promising to strengthen its missile-related export control regime.

Pakistan, as customer, has been booked because transfers from China contributed to the so-called Category-I missile activities. Predictably, the Pakistan govern-

ment, reeling under sanctions already, has denied that such transfers had taken place and has termed the sanctions as 'unwarranted'. In a cautious response tonight, India sounded a little vindicated when the MEA spokesman said the country had been voicing concern about the missile proliferation in the region for some time. "It is our expectation that this process will be halted and there will be no grounds for complaint in future," he said.

The announcements in Beijing and Washington occurred almost simultaneously. Just how much of an impact this will have on

Pakistan's already much-advanced missile programme is bound to be analysed in the days to come. "The Chinese have given their word before and have broken it. We are not sure whether the North Korean window will be left open

Sanctions on Pak

for China through which it can continue to slip to Pakistan the technology it needs for its ballistic missiles," a senior official said. It is argued that North Korea has already achieved capability to develop Solid Fuel missiles like the M-9, M-11 and Shaheen that Pakistan possesses. Previously, Pakistan relied on North Korea only for the liquid fuel based

Ghauri. Even if China honours its latest commitment, the North Koreans can fill the vacuum for Pakistan as they are believed to have come up with the technology to replace China as the source for solid fuel missiles.

The 'good news', insofar as India is concerned, has come much too late. Ghauri is believed to have a range of 1,500 km and Shaheen, can go up to 1,200 km. Though a missile fired from across the border cannot yet reach Chennai, it can still cross the Vindhyas. In recent months reports of more additions to the missile arsenal of Islamabad with names like Abdalli, Tipu and Taimur have been seizing the Indian threat perception.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

23 NOV 2000

PRESSURE ON NEIGHBOUR AS INDIA BASKS IN WARMTH OF GLOBAL APPROVAL

Pak calls ceasefire move 'tactical'

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 20 NOVEMBER

WITH THE UK and Russia extending unreserved welcome to India's ceasefire offer, the cynosure of international attention has now moved to Pakistan, as it is burdened with the responsibility of a credible and responsible reaction.

The Pakistani government, however, chose to take a churlish stand on Monday, categorising it as "tactical." The foreign ministry spokesman, Riaz Mohammed Khan, said on Monday evening the offer was "part of India's effort to impose a military solution."

"We cannot overlook the fact that India had tried to exploit an offer of ceasefire by Hizbul Mujahideen last July to sow dissension within the freedom movement and to try to exclude Pakistan from negotiations for a solution of the Kashmir dispute," he said.

Pakistan, however, faced its first hint of international pres-

sure with the UK asking Pakistan to act responsibly on the Kashmir issue. Welcoming the Indian government's unilateral ceasefire offer in Kashmir, visiting minister of state for foreign affairs Peter Hain said India's initiative should be respected and Pakistan should follow suit.

"All groups, both within India and across the border, including the Pakistan government, must act with responsibility in respecting the ceasefire offer by India," he said. However, a visiting EU troika team in Islamabad chose to tread the tested line on supporting the Lahore Declaration. But there are signs that the onus for the success or otherwise of India's offer will be on Pakistan.

Mr Hain said the UK will convey the same sentiments to Pakistan. In an interview, Mr Hain said he "understood" India's reservations on renewing a dialogue with Pakistan, "given the Kargil attack last year and instability caused by the

military coup in Pakistan."

The first deputy foreign minister of Russia in Delhi for the first meeting on the Indo-Russian joint-working group on Afghanistan, V.I. Trubnikov, added that India should be congratulated for the Ramzan ceasefire declaration.

India reckons that the international community, which has been looking for just such an instance, will now put considerable pressure on Pakistan to rein in its militants in the Valley and cease cross-border terrorism. In fact, countries like the US are not likely to be sympathetic to Pakistan blocking peace initiatives yet again, especially since Pakistan has been repeatedly asking for a resumption of the dialogue.

With this offer, the ball, according to Indian officials, is in Pakistan's court. Pakistan will find itself in an uncomfortable situation as it tries to balance its own obligations as a nation with the militant organisations it has nurtured in its soil, all of whom find such ceasefire offers to be

an anathema to their cause of integrating Kashmir with Pakistan.

Analysts here believe that neither Pakistan nor organisations like the Hurriyat can be seen to be responding negatively to the ceasefire offer.

"Pakistan will continue to closely watch the developments in the Indian-occupied Kashmir and the intent and purpose of the Indian announcement," he said.

Although Islamabad-based militant organisations have denounced the offer, both the Hizbul Mujahideen and the Hurriyat went into a huddle separately to discuss a response to the Indian offer.

The Hurriyat will be meeting on Tuesday afternoon in Srinagar to formulate their decision.

JKFP leader Shabir Shah will also announce a decision on Tuesday. Former Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq also extended a cautious welcome to the ceasefire offer.

The Economic Times

21 NOV 2000

Message of Peace

New Delhi's offer of a unilateral ceasefire during Ramzan appears to have thrown Islamabad and its cohorts into confusion. As expected, their initial response has been negative though hasty conclusions from it at this stage would be premature. In continuation of its policy over the last 11 years of proxy war, Pakistan is compelled to strike a tough military posture vis-a-vis India. Most of the major powers, the US, the UK and Russia, have come out in favour of the call for ceasefire. New Delhi's initiative gives a face-saving device to Islamabad and its proxies to de-escalate violence in the Valley and enable the resumption of dialogue, with not only the militants but Pakistan as well. This is a time when international financial institutions will be looking at Pakistan's reaction, and taking a decision on financial support to it. The ceasefire gives the Pakistani government an opportunity to prove that it is in control of the situation in its territory, and is interested in a negotiated settlement with India in consonance with the Shimla pact, the Lahore process and the Blair House declaration of July 4, 1999. Inevitably there will be hardliners in the Pakistani army and among the *jehadi* groups, who would like to subvert any attempt towards peace. India and the international community must be prepared for a major provocative act by such elements, either prior to the ceasefire or in its early days. If that were to happen, the international community will be compelled to conclude that General Musharraf is in no position to reach a peaceful agreement with India.

By dealing with the Burmese generals, New Delhi has sent out the message that in the interests of national security it is prepared to deal with co-operative military regimes. The Pakistani military establishment now has a chance to prove that it is prepared to address India's legitimate security concerns, reduce support to *jehadi* violence and conduct itself according to international norms. There are preliminary indications that sections of indigenous militants and a number of Hurriyat leaders are prepared to respond to the ceasefire positively and initiate a dialogue. There is a possibility of a clash between moderate elements and the *jehadi* mercenaries in the Valley, leading to an escalation of violence; in the period before and during the ceasefire the security forces must maintain a heightened vigil. Prime Minister Vajpayee has displayed a high order of statesmanship with this initiative, though he also runs the risks of once again being betrayed as he was after his Lahore bus ride. However, so long as the security forces remain vigilant, and no undue expectations are raised, there is nothing to be lost by the ceasefire offer. Simultaneously, an imaginative information campaign needs to be launched in Jammu and Kashmir to enlighten the people on the benefits of the ceasefire and the consequences of its rejection. A vigorous diplomatic drive in all international capitals and on the electronic media is also called for as a follow-up.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

7 7 2000

Advani takes Lahore II to Wagah

27/11/91
FROM CHANDAN NANDY

Wagah, Nov 26: Acting as Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's emissary, L.K. Advani today indicated that the government was prepared to talk to Pakistan if "all goes well" during the Ramzan ceasefire.

The home minister chose to throw hints of improving relations with Islamabad at this border checkpoint on the Grand Trunk Road, which is barely 50 km from Lahore, and from where Vajpayee had undertaken the famous bus journey last year to herald the first peace initiative by the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government.

Advani opened a gallery for viewers to watch the evening retreat at the checkpoint, the sub-continent's Checkpoint Charlie.

As he spoke on the Lahore peace initiative, it was obvious what agenda the home minister had come here with a day before the beginning of the Ramzan ceasefire.

Attired in the formal *bandhgala*, Advani said: "Last year from this very gate Vajpayeeji crossed over to Pakistan and went to Lahore. That was a historic initiative. We were prepared to talk, but then Pakistan wanted to resolve problems by other means." He was hinting at Islamabad's Kargil misadventure.

Later, speaking to reporters on the return flight to Delhi, Advani described the government's ceasefire offer for the holy month of Ramzan as "Lahore II".

He said the government "did not rule out the possibility" of extending the ceasefire if militants do not violate it during Ramzan.

Advani indicated that if the ceasefire was "honoured" by Pakistan, "at whose behest the militants act", the Vajpayee administration would have no hesitation in restarting dialogue at the government-to-government level.

Earlier, before witnessing the retreat at Wagah, the home minister said Pakistan had "failed to seize the advantage which had come about as a result of Lahore. A few days back, the Government of India launched a second initiative, and I expect Pakistan to take advantage so that both countries live in peace and prosperity. I request them to reply to our call for peace".

Advani, however, said there would be "no tripartite talks" as demanded by some militant groups. His message was heard in stony silence by a crowd that had gathered across the "zero line" that constitutes the border. There were no claps from across the border and it took some time before the statement could sink in among the Indians who had come to view the retreat.

Advani felt that "if Pakistan responds positively" to Indian overtures, it "would be a tacit admission that in the last 10 years it had been fuelling terrorism in Kashmir".

Respond positively, Advani tells Pak.

9/11/13
PKA

11
HD-13
29/11

By Vinay Kumar

WAGAH CHECKPOST, NOV. 26. A week after the Vajpayee Government announced a Ramzan ceasefire against the militants in Jammu and Kashmir, the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, moved a step ahead today by formally appealing to Pakistan to respond positively.

"The Pakistani Government and its leaders should think about it and give a positive response to it."

The ceasefire offer was nothing less than "Lahore II" in terms of a major peace initiative, Mr. Advani said recalling that the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, had travelled down the same road and the Wagah border checkpost to Lahore in February last year.

The significance of Mr. Advani's choice of the venue could not be missed. Addressing a press conference later, he elaborated on the events that marked the post-Lahore phase in the relations between the two nuclear neighbours.

"After the Lahore bus trip of Mr. Vajpayee, Pakistan mounted Kargil incursions and whipped up its proxy war. Earlier this year, Pakistan-backed militants indulged in the killing of innocent Sikhs in Chattisingpora and again intensified the violent campaign in Kashmir," he said.

Referring to the breakdown of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen's ceasefire offer in August, Mr. Advani said Pakistan had not expected India to respond to it positively. "I understand that there are inhibitions in Pakistan of admitting that it is training militants and pushing them into Jammu and Kashmir. But it should grab this second major peace initiative."

Asserting that the Government's intention was not to establish superiority by "gun power", Mr. Advani said the people of Kashmir had suffered for the past 12 years and it was time their hardship came to an end.

Referring to the recent incidents of violence in Banihal and Kishtwar, he said they have caused concern but hoped that in general terms the ceasefire would hold good. "We are not going to let down our vigil on the border. Our forces are fully prepared to

protect civilians and face any challenge. Declaration of suspension of combat operations against militants is not a sign of weakness," he said.

India's peace initiative had been hailed by the world community. Pakistan's support to cross-border terrorism, particularly in the context of the post-Kargil scenario, had made a marked difference in shaping the international opinion vis-a-vis Indo-Pakistan relations.

'Extend offer beyond Ramzan'

NEW DELHI, NOV. 26. A cross-section of Kashmiri leaders today asked militants to respond to the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee's offer of ceasefire so that a conducive atmosphere was created for lasting peace in the State.

In an appeal read out at the end of a two-day international symposium 'Next steps in Jammu and Kashmir: give peace a chance' here, they suggested extension of the ceasefire beyond Ramzan and a comprehensive dialogue for lasting resolution of the Kashmir problem. "We welcome the announcement of a unilateral ceasefire by Mr. Vajpayee, call for an extension of the ceasefire beyond the month of Ramzan and for a comprehensive dialogue for permanent resolution of the problem and impress upon all parties concerned to promote a conducive atmosphere for lasting peace in the State."

The appeal was made and "unanimously passed" by representatives from South Asia, North America and Europe. Kashmiri academics, lawyers and political leaders from all over the world, who participated in the deliberations, noted that the offer signalled "a new beginning and created breathing space within which a multilateral dialogue could take place."

Addressing the gathering, Lord Eric Averbury, of the House of Lords, said there was a universal desire for peace in Kashmir and the people of the State had to be involved in the process. Lord Avebury said the source of funding of armed and separatist groups should be probed by an international organisation.— PTI

THE HINDU

27 NOV 2000

India, Pak agree to de-escalate firing along LoC

By Dinesh Kumar
The Times of India News Service
and PTI

NEW DELHI: In the first major initiative of its kind since General Pervez Musharraf seized power in Pakistan, Indian and Pakistani armies have reached a tentative understanding to de-escalate firing, reduce tension and resist changing the current status of the Line of Control (LoC).

The 'understanding', which is meant to be linked to the government's unilateral ceasefire, was reached during the weekly telephonic conversation between the two directors-general of military operations (DGMO) on November 21.

Consequent to the DGMO-level talks, Army Headquarters (AHQ) has issued strict instructions to all the formations deployed along the 740-km LoC and the 110-km actual ground position line (AGPL) in Siachen not to engage in "retaliatory", "speculative", "planned" and "direct" firing on Pakistani posts. However, this excludes firing to prevent infiltration.

The 'understanding', however, has since already been violated by the Pakistani army, which conducted a sneak raid on an Indian post in the Rajouri-Poonch sector a day after the DGMO-level talks. One Indian soldier was killed and three others, including a JCO, were wounded. This, however, could be due to teething problems. The LoC 'understanding' will be reviewed by the two DGMOs next Tuesday.

Informed sources said there were serious differences between the AHQ and the Udhampur-based northern command on the modalities of suspending combat operations, which comes into effect on Sunday midnight. A long

list of categorical instructions issued by the AHQ and all northern command formations includes a unilateral blanket ban on conducting cordon-and-search operations even in villages close to the LoC, on area-domination patrols and on conducting night operations and ambushes against militants.

All retaliatory action will require prior clearance and no unarmed person should be arrested. Instead, a defensive posture is to be adopted and precautions taken by guarding against high casualties, strengthening the lines of communication, reducing and controlling vehicle movement and protecting camps and posts with extra men and vigil against suicide attacks. Army units will be allowed to retaliate only in self-defence.

Informed sources said the northern command had expressed serious reservations about the suspension of all counter-insurgency operations as this could help militant organisations, most of whom have already rejected the ceasefire offer, to consolidate, escalate violence and engage in selective killings and target attacks.

Interestingly, the AHQ has also simultaneously asked the northern command to prepare for limited action by Pakistanis along the LoC and the danger of mass killings, but without launching any offensive operations.

Meanwhile, the government has started preparing the ground for talks with the militants, Jammu and Kashmir governor Girish Saxena said in Jammu on Saturday. "The ground is being prepared for a dialogue," he told reporters after attending a meeting of the group of ministers (GOM) on internal security headed by home minister L.K. Advani.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

26 NOV 2000

Violence will not buy peace, India tells Pak

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 24 NOVEMBER

INDIA TODAY put Pakistan on notice by firmly rejecting bilateral talks until it ceases sponsoring violence. "Violence cannot be used as a negotiating tactic," said Jaswant Singh, external affairs minister.

Replying to a foreign policy debate in Rajya Sabha on Friday afternoon, Mr Singh announced a breakthrough in Sino-Indian relations by exchanging maps of the middle sector, clarified its position on signing the CTBT and dwelt on India's relations with other powers.

On CTBT it was clear that India's decision would hinge largely on the US stand on the issue. The US Senate is yet to ratify the treaty and the Republicans have demanded safeguards at best and dumping

the treaty at worst.

Mr Singh's categorical statement on Pakistan buttressed and further nuanced the Prime Minister's speech on Thursday when he refused to retract the ceasefire offer after being harangued by NDA ally Shiv Sena.

Responding to Opposition criticism urging the government to renew talks with Pakistan, Mr Singh said accepting violence as an instrument of negotiations was effectively "granting Pakistan the veto on the cessation of violence."

During the debate over the past couple of days, several MPs had pointed out that the government was talking to Pakistan in Lahore when 20 Indians were massacred in Kashmir.

In the current context, a positive response by Pakistan to India's ceasefire offer may consi-

border terrorism before India would agree to sit down at a table.

Appealing to Pakistan to 'come to terms with its history and geography' Mr Singh clarified, what Mr Vajpayee had done in Lahore last year, that India does not covet Pakistani territory nor did it have any designs on its sovereignty.

Its an argument trotted out by Pakistani hawks who traditionally accused India of wanting to reverse partition. Mr Singh also set at rest speculation that India was not willing to deal with a military government. "Pakistan's gov-

ernment is its prerogative and of its people," he said, adding that the shape of the government in Islamabad did not determine whether talks would be held or not. Breaking fresh grounds in India's relationship with China, Mr Singh announced that for the

first time since 1988, Indian and Chinese expert groups exchanged detailed maps on over 545 km middle sector of the line of actual control paving the way for simpler exchanges on the eastern and western sectors.

The experts, who met in Beijing on 13-14 November would compare maps of an area stretching from Himachal Pradesh to tri-junction of India, China and Nepal in Uttaranchal to pinpoint differences which would then be taken up at the next meeting of the Indo-Chinese expert group.

Describing this as a "significant" development, Mr Singh said in his meeting with his Chinese counterpart, Tang Jiaxuan on May 5, the two countries had proposed to expedite the maps clarification to exercise in a time-bound manner to be completed by end of next year.



Jaswant: Breaks new ground

tute the "suitable environment" being sought by India as a legitimate basis for talks. Government managers acknowledge that in the past this was not a consideration. But things changed after Kargil, which was the genesis for the resultant Indian hardline position that Pakistan had to stop cross-

Playing cricket in Pakistan would have meant more diplomatic gains for India

The show must go on

BY AMULYA GANGULI

BEFORE THE strange lapse of judgment which made the Atal Behari Vajpayee Government call off India's cricket tour of Pakistan, it had shown a remarkable sense of maturity as well as diplomatic finesse. This perceptive approach towards a peevish and hostile neighbour was evident as much in the impulsive Lahore initiative as in the show of restraint during the Kargil conflict when India scrupulously maintained the sanctity of the Line of Control despite Pakistan's gross violation of the border.

The same maturity was also evident when Vajpayee skilfully skirted the issue of holding talks with the Kashmiri militants within the parameters of the Constitution by suggesting adherence to the norms of *insaniyat* (humanity) during the negotiations. Rarely before had an adversary been wrong-footed so effectively. No less perceptive was the Government's offer of ceasefire in Kashmir during the Muslim holy month of Ramzan.

War is not fought on the battlefield alone. It is also waged in the mind. If India is now widely perceived to be winning international support for its case in Kashmir, it is primarily because it has exhibited far greater responsibility in dealing with a sensitive issue like Kashmir. Pakistan, on the other hand, has emerged as something of a curmudgeon, stifling internal democracy and exporting terrorism.

India, in contrast, is an economic giant in the making, "famously democratic", as *The Economist* recently said, and revelling in the glow of freedom with its Bollywood extravaganzas, a vibrant social scene, a multitude of television channels and a seemingly endless round of elections — panchayat, municipal, students' union and others of greater significance. There are no Kalashnikov-wielding *jehadis* here. The atmosphere is one of untrammelled freedom where religious bigotry has no place.

The essence of diplomacy is to capture the high ground. India can get away at present without responding to General Musharraf's plaintive offers of holding talks anywhere, any time because the world has recognised the justice of India's cause. As President Bill Clinton pointed out during his

visit to India, not only has the old formula of plebiscite lost much of its relevance because of subsequent events, including the break-up of Pakistan in 1971, it is also necessary to consider whether the multicultural concept, which is the bedrock of Indian democracy, should be imperilled because of Kashmir. Besides, he was probably the first US President who referred to Pakistan's encouragement of terrorism in Kashmir.

India could have built on these advantages which it enjoys at the moment by seemingly persisting with the Lahore initiative by allowing the cricket tour. Sometimes it helps to separate politics from sports, as China did when it opted for the so-called ping pong diplomacy a few decades ago.

The fact that the two are mixed more often should not be regarded as a sacred rule which cannot be broken. Politics is also mixed with religion (as the BJP will vouchsafe), with casteism (as V.P. Singh will testify), with corruption (as any Congressman knows). But that does not in itself provide any justification for such cynical ploys.

At the moment, India's stature would only have been enhanced by playing cricket with Pakistan because it would have re-emphasised its sobriety. The tour would have also helped New Delhi to persist with its refusal to talk with Pakistan unless it

stopped cross-border terrorism. But by not talking and also not playing, India is courting the danger of being seen as ill-tempered and intransigent.

These dubious attributes are something which the hardliners in both the countries cherish. Both the *jehadis* in Pakistan and the saffron camp in India would feel utterly distressed if more frequent people-to-people contacts begin to dispel the notion of regarding each other as ogres which they would like to sustain. The hardliners would want the enmity between the two Governments to characterise the relations between the ordinary people of the two countries as well.

For the saffron lobby, such an attitude of unrelenting hostility towards Pakistan also serves a political purpose, for it encompasses the Indian Muslims in its ambit. Since the Sangh parivar's *weltanschauung* is based on demonising the Muslims (and Christians), the low points in India's ties with Pakistan suit its supporters to the hilt.

Little wonder that a VHP stalwart had wanted Vajpayee to go to Lahore in a tank and not a bus.

Cricket is a funny game whose capacity for influencing relations is enormous, especially in the sub-continent. Ping pong cannot hold a candle to it. Nor can other games — like polo which recently included Indian and Pakistani competitors, or even hockey which has lost its earlier lustre — or the vis-

its of artistes, writers, human rights activists and others, if only because they mainly perambulate in the cocktail circuit. The ordinary people are often unaware of their comings and goings.

Cricket obviously is a different kettle of fish. It is not only that it has become something of an obsession in these parts, the game has also acquired the dimensions of a festival, with its worldwide coverage, celebrated former players providing commentaries, umpires and match referees from 'third' countries, a myriad television cameras, including one hovering in the sky over the stadium, focusing not only on the game but also on what the spectators are eating and wearing, and on the city in which the match is being played.

Cricket lends itself to such excesses of attention because it is not a game which lasts for a couple of hours only with extra time and penalty shoot-outs. Even the shortest version takes up the better part of a day while the longer one can end without a result even after five days.

The duration, and the focus on events outside of cricket, are of inestimable value for they help the people of the two countries to see each other pursuing normal avocations and not as mortal enemies in battle gear, as the hardliners would prefer.

As some of the Pakistani players have pointed out, the more the two teams play each other, the present tension which permeates such contests will gradually disappear as people will not only realise that it is a game after all but also that a defeat can be redressed.

True, Pakistani acts of terrorism can vitiate the atmosphere. In fact, it is possible that the ISI will step up its activities during a cricket series for no other purpose than to disrupt it, for the bigots in Islamabad, too, cannot be pleased if Pakistanis begin to see Indians in a less unfriendly light. But that does not mean that we should make their task easier by shunning all forms of contact.

As long as diplomatic relations are maintained, there should not be any bar on sporting ties and especially on cricket, the most popular of all games. A clear distinction must be made between official and non-official interactions.



By not talking and also not playing, India is courting the danger of being seen as ill-tempered and intransigent

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

27 NOV 2000

Govt wants to watch Pak reaction to ceasefire offer

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 27 NOVEMBER

DESPITE HAVING ordered ceasefire from the first day of Ramzan, the Centre has decided to watch the response of militants and the Pakistani military junta to its offer before embarking on a final peace initiative in Jammu and Kashmir.

This strategy was chalked out at a high-level meeting convened by the Prime Minister to review the interlude between his offer of ceasefire and the onset of Ramzan, Union home minister L.K. Advani said on Monday. The meeting was attended by Mr Advani, external affairs minister Jaswant

Singh, defence minister George Fernandes, Army chief General S. Padmanabhan and heads of intelligence agencies.

Mr Advani said: "Militants can do what they want in Kashmir but now I am addressing Pakistan.

Islamabad may say that the so-called freedom fighters are responsible for the situation in the state. What Pakistan can do now is to immediately stop infiltration by militants and smuggling of weapons, RDX and cracking down

upon the militant training camps."

The meeting took stock of the situation in Jammu and following the Prime Minister's announcement of cessation of operations against the militants in the state. It was decided that the government would wait till the militants and the Pakistani establishment reciprocate the ceasefire offer by suspending hostilities in Kashmir.

Suri to head J&K police

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 27 NOVEMBER

THE GOVERNMENT has selected Mr A.K. Suri, an IPS officer of the Jammu and Kashmir cadre, to be the new director general of Jammu and Kashmir police.

Mr Suri, who is currently additional director general in the Criminal Investigation Department, will succeed Mr Gurbachan Jagat, who will move out as the new chief of the Border Security Force (BSF). BSF director general E.N. Rammohan is due to retire on November 31.

28 NOV 2000

The Economic Times

28 NOV 2000

Pak. concerned over India, Russia defence ties

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 9 Pakistan today maintained that the recent defence agreements between India and Russia could have a destabilising effect in the region. The Foreign Office spokesman said it was natural for Pakistan to be concerned over the prospect of a "massive induction of arms" thanks to the agreements.

Pakistan pursued a policy of "restraint and avoidance of arms race" in contrast to the stand of New Delhi, the spokesman said and quoted the hike in the Indian defence outlay for 2000-2001. "All this does not augur well for promotion of security, trust, peace and confidence. It is in the interest of the region that nothing is done to whet the Indian ambitions."

This statement of the spokesman is in contrast to the stand taken by the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar. In reply to a question on the subject in the course of an interview with a Japanese daily, Mr. Sattar had said that "we have no problem about the bilateral ties of other countries. Every country has the right to improve ties with the other."

The spokesman quoted from the speech of the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, at the UN millennium summit, offering reduction in forces as proof of Islamabad's policy of restraint and avoidance of arms race. To a question on cooperation between India and Israel in the field of defence,

the spokesman said any induction of arms and equipment could be destabilising for the region. The major powers, instead of allowing India build up an arms race, could play a positive role by persuading it to follow the path of "dialogue and co-operation". At the same time the spokesman asserted that the defence of Pakistan was impregnable and it was capable of facing any aggressive design.

Asked about the resolve of India to cooperate with the big powers on terrorism, he said Pakistan was also opposed to terrorism in all forms. "In our view the most serious and grave form of the terrorism is the state sponsored terrorism. Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism. It was cooperating with the international community in tackling terrorism."

The spokesman also expressed serious concern over the latest developments in Middle East.

The Foreign Office spokesman said Pakistan has acknowledged that India, as a member of the UN has a role in helping the efforts for peace and conciliation in Afghanistan. The conflict had been a matter of international concern for two decades and Pakistan had always backed efforts for peace.

Asked what role a country like India, which does not share the border with Afghanistan, could play in its affairs, he said every member of the UN would be interested in supporting the efforts for peace and conciliation.

THE HINDU

10 OCT 2000

11/10 Mission Peace 11

Union home minister L K Advani's appeal to Pakistan that it "respond positively" to the Indian government's ceasefire in Kashmir as a precondition for the resumption of dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad marks an important new initiative which the Musharraf regime would do well to act upon. Together with the Ramzan ceasefire itself — which has already taken effect throughout Kashmir despite the lack of reciprocity by any of the militant groups — Mr Advani's appeal shows that the Vajpayee government is prepared to be flexible on both the question of restoring peace in Kashmir and resuming the dialogue process with Pakistan. Till now, New Delhi has tended to lay the greatest emphasis on the cessation of cross-border terrorism, a demand that Islamabad has quite rightly, if cynically, termed an attempt to place the cart before the horse. How can one of the outcomes of any dialogue — the end of cross-border terrorism — be made a pre-condition for the start of talks, is what Islamabad has maintained. What the government's unilateral ceasefire does is create the conditions for Pakistan to persuade the jihadi groups to suspend their trans-border operations. The Musharraf regime loses nothing by taking the ceasefire offer at face value. Indeed, as Mr Advani's appeal makes clear, a helpful stance will help pave the way for the resumption of bilateral dialogue, something Islamabad has been demanding for a long time. On its part, India loses nothing by continuously ratcheting the peace pressure on Pakistan. Rethinking the cancellation of the cricket tour might, therefore, not be a bad idea.

Pakistan must realise that implicit in the Vajpayee government's ceasefire offer is the understanding that an initiative of this kind is inherently in our national interest, regardless of whether Islamabad or the militants reciprocate. The security forces in the Valley have been instructed to suspend all search and cordon operations and 'crackdowns' — actions which inevitably inconvenience and alienate the local population. There is a growing realisation among the political and military leaderships of this country that the insurgency in Kashmir cannot be defeated without winning the confidence of the ordinary Kashmiri. Thus, ways will have to be found — even if the present ceasefire is suspended or breaks down — to pay utmost attention to human rights considerations in the conduct of counter-insurgency operations. On the political plane, the Vajpayee government has been playing its cards well but it needs to look for ways to broaden the stage. Speeding up judicial proceedings against those accused of terrorism — many of whom have been in jail for several years now — and releasing those against whom there is no proper evidence would go a long way towards building an atmosphere of trust. The biggest problem successive governments have faced in Kashmir is the lack of credibility. Mr Vajpayee has the political sagacity to reach out and convince the diverse strands of opinion in the Valley about the sincerity of his approach. The ceasefire is an excellent first step along this route. What is needed is the political resolve not to falter in the face of hostile provocation.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

20 NOV 2000

MILITANTS BLOW UP ARMY VEHICLE, 3 SOLDIERS KILLED

Ceasefire offer addressed to Pakistan also, says Advani

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 28. The Government's ceasefire initiative in Kashmir is addressed not only to Kashmiri militants but "also to Pakistan," the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, said today, even as in the Valley militants blasted an Army vehicle killing three soldiers and wounding 12. (In all, 11 persons, including five militants, were killed, and 22 injured in various incidents on the first day of the unilateral ceasefire.)

Addressing the BJP parliamentary party, Mr. Advani said the Lahore busride (in February 1999) by the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, was India's first attempt at offering a hand of friendship and establishing peace in the region, and now this was the second attempt, which he felt "Pakistan should take advantage of".

He admitted, though, that the ceasefire was a "calculated risk" to give peace a chance. The bus diplomacy ended with Pakistan "back-stabbing us", but he hoped this time Pakistan would respond by stopping the training and funding of militants.

He said the people in Jammu and Kashmir, political parties and citizens across the country had appreciated the initiative. Throughout the world, India's credibility as genuinely desiring peace had been established, first by the Lahore bus diplomacy, and now the peace offer.

At the same time, he reassured the MPs that the soldiers "are not laying down their arms"; though they "will not fire the first shot".



Policemen at Lal Chowk, Srinagar, seem relaxed on the first day of the ceasefire on Tuesday. — Photo: Nissar Ahmad

He also said that vigilance on the Line of Control had been intensified; there is no ceasefire there.

This was the second parliamentary party meeting of the BJP in this session; today, too, the Prime Minister did not attend. When asked, the party spokesperson, Mr. Vijay Kumar Malhotra, said Mr. Vajpayee was "taking rest on doctor's advice".

Vehicle runs into IED trap

By Shujaat Bukhari

JAMMU, NOV. 28. On day one of the month-long Ramzan ceasefire, militants detonated an improvised explosive device (IED) near Nowpora Dooru, 25 km from Anantnag, killing three soldiers and injuring 12 others. Some of

the injured are in a critical condition. A party of 36 Rashtriya Rifles was on its way to the unit headquarters in Larkipora when the vehicle ran into an IED trap on the Srinagar-Verinag road. The SSP, Anantnag, Mr. Munir Khan, told *The Hindu* over phone that three soldiers died on the spot and eight were injured. Mr. Khan confirmed that no retaliatory operation was launched as per directions.

Seize the chance, say former PMs

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 28. Four former Prime Ministers today jointly welcomed the Vajpayee Government's ceasefire initiative, and exhorted militant groups to seize the opportunity and secure the release of Jammu and Kashmir from the "clutches of foreign vested interests", and to create an atmosphere that would prolong the ceasefire beyond Ramzan.

Mr. V.P. Singh, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda and Mr. I.K. Gujral lent their moral support to the peace initiative, signalling to groups in and out of Kashmir that the rest of the country was supportive of the Centre's initiative. "Peace is the dire necessity in Jammu and Kashmir and no one can be allowed to play with it for their narrow sectional interests," they warned.

The foursome invited the militants to come forward "and start negotiations with the Government of India".

Hizb claims responsibility: Page 13

THE HINDU

29 NOV 2000

'TERROR CAMPAIGN ON THE RISE'

Pak. not diluting proxy war, says Vajpayee

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 28. Accusing Pakistan-backed terrorist organisations of sabotaging peace talks in Jammu and Kashmir, the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, today said there was no dilution of Islamabad's proxy war.

He also charged Pakistan with stepping up its terror campaign in direct proportion to the mounting desire for peace among the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India, engineered by protagonists of terror across the border, is an example of the challenges we face," Mr. Vajpayee told the 35th annual conference of the State Police chiefs, heads of Central police organisations and Intelligence Chiefs here.

"The ramifications of the threats we face today are much deeper and wider than ever before. Hence, all agencies of the state, all wings of administration, civil and police, have to pool their resources in a combined fight against crime. The Centre and the States have to work in collaboration, in a spirit of cooperation."

Stressing the seriousness of the internal security scenario, the

Prime Minister said: "Hostile forces emanating from our neighbourhood have stepped up their subversive activities, seeking to undermine our democratic polity, damage our social fabric and disrupt our economic progress."

N-E situation worrisome

The Prime Minister also talked about the situation in the North-East which was "worrisome" as separatist and terrorist groups, apart from criminals bereft of ideology of any shade, were continuing with violence and extortion which affected development schemes.

"Yet another challenge to our internal security is the scourge of Left extremism. Innocent people in several States continue to fall victim to these perpetrators of violence. We must deal with Left extremist groups with a firm hand to drive home the message that there is no space for violence in a democratic polity," he said.

While holding the police responsible for instilling confidence among the people, Mr. Vajpayee said this objective would be best fulfilled if they efficiently discharged their duties in accordance with the laws of the land.

"Not only can we then ensure

freedom from fear, but also rapid social and economic development. For, progress is best assured when there is rule of law and social stability."

Mr. Vajpayee asserted that nation's security "is an indivisible, single entity". Taking a holistic view, he added that "It must be seen as securing the unity and integrity of our nation. Indeed, the very future of a billion people."

"As the economy globalises, so does crime, at an even faster rate. Sophisticated international crime syndicates mastermind a complex network of political and economic crimes, claiming innocent victims in the pursuit of their diabolical objectives," he observed.

Earlier, the Intelligence Bureau Director, Mr. Shyamal Dutta, said that intelligence agencies faced unnecessary criticism for their failures but their success went unnoticed.

Economic globalisation had put multi-nationals on centre stage and the world was fast becoming borderless where trading blocs and market shares were more important.

Mr. Dutta said the emergence of private sector in telecom was adding to the problems of the security and intelligence agencies.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2000

119-12
BEYOND A REALITY CHECK 3/9

THE PRIME MINISTER, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has unfailingly reminded the internal security authorities about the externally engineered challenges facing India. There is of course nothing really new in his latest call to them to keep Pakistan in focus as the persistent sponsor of an ongoing proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir. However, quite apart from the inevitability of this note of warning at an annual conference of national and State-level security-intelligence officials, there seems to be some diplomatic purpose behind the timing of Mr. Vajpayee's assertion that Pakistan has not shown any sign of soft-peddalling its activities of propping up proxies to undermine stability in Jammu and Kashmir as also elsewhere. The new diplomatic context is predominantly defined by the growing rapport between India and the United States on some sensitive issues of direct concern to New Delhi. At a different diplomatic level, perhaps behind the scenes, Mr. Vajpayee cannot be oblivious to the incremental and somewhat dramatic efforts by the Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to try and woo Russia — India's long-time friend with a significant track record of empathy for New Delhi's Kashmir policy through many vicissitudes. Doubtless, the Vajpayee administration will now begin to assess whether Gen. Musharraf is decisively trying to induce or implore Moscow to play a zero-sum game in the subcontinent as regards its equation with Islamabad and New Delhi.

The emerging political and tactical calculations on the Pakistan-Russia front will have much to do with their respective preoccupations with issues of common concern such as religious extremism and the related terrorism. But Mr. Vajpayee should be able to zero in on the big subcontinental picture, if any, that the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, may have in mind during his prospective visit to India. Given the enormous range of relations and the sheer breadth of vision that have traditionally characterised India-Russia ties, New

Delhi rightly feels confident at this stage about being able to manage a new Pakistan factor, should it surface at all, on this front. One does not need to reminisce about the old Tashkent Accord to acknowledge that Pakistan had in the past too figured prominently on Moscow's horizon. There has been no dilution since then of India's insistence, for a variety of reasons, that the singular need is for an exclusive bilateral dialogue with Pakistan to settle all outstanding issues, including the Kashmir question. A conspicuous new buoyancy in New Delhi's diplomatic outlook in regard to Islamabad is, however, traceable to the outcome of the latest talks between the Prime Minister and the outgoing U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, in Washington. A meeting point is the obvious recognition by both India and the U.S. at this juncture that a renewal of the New Delhi-Islamabad parleys will require an appropriate political-diplomatic climate.

Mr. Vajpayee has been harping for some time that New Delhi can talk to Islamabad only when the latter ceases to indulge in perceivable acts of "cross-border terrorism" designed to destabilise civil society across India. Mr. Vajpayee's latest reality check, which is perceived to reveal Pakistan's undiminished fervour in fomenting terrorism in India, is another definitive indicator that fresh talks with Islamabad are not on the cards, at least for some time. While there can simply be no question of condoning terrorism directed against the Indian state, even a genuinely righteous indignation is no long-term substitute for hard-headed strategies in diplomacy. The Shimla Accord and the Lahore Declaration enjoin the two sides to engage each other in parleys, and the dangers of a drift in a region without an agreement on nuclear security-related stability cannot be exaggerated. While India must enhance vigil to reinforce its sense of security, it should at least explore whether Pakistan is merely bluffing by calling for bilateral talks at any time, any place and any level.

WE WILL RETALIATE IF PROVOKED, SAYS ARMY CHIEF

Pak. bid to damage peace will be defeated: Jaswant

Indo Pak

NEW DELHI, NOV. 29. The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, today said India resolved to defeat all attempts by Pakistan to damage prospects of peace in Jammu and Kashmir even as security forces defused an improvised explosive device (IED) and averted a tragedy in Srinagar as militants continued to ignore the ceasefire offer. And, the Army Chief, General S. Padmanabhan, said in Pune that the security forces would "reciprocate militant attacks during the ceasefire period".

Speaking during question hour

HDI

in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Singh said the Government was continuing efforts to normalise the situation in the State, and to hold talks with all those prepared for dialogue "in keeping with the strong desire of the people of Kashmir for peace". As part of these efforts, the Government announced a unilateral ceasefire and instructed the security forces not to launch operations against militants during Ramzan.

'Army not vulnerable'

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters after the 99th passing out

parade of the National Defence Academy in Pune, the Army Chief said the security forces would retaliate if militants carried out attacks during the ceasefire in the State.

Clarifying that the Army would not undertake any operations that would create problems for the State's people, he said the killing of four jawans in a mine blast yesterday should not be considered the "outcome" of the ceasefire declaration as militants carried out such attacks to hamper peace.

In Srinagar, the security forces averted a major tragedy when

they detected and defused an improvised explosive device (IED) in the high-security tourist reception centre while elsewhere in the State, three persons, including a foreign mercenary, were killed in militancy-related incidents.

Official sources said the two-kg IED, tied to a grenade and planted in a tiffin box inside a bathroom in the TRC complex, was detected around 11.40 a.m. The bomb disposal squad which was rushed to the spot defused the device.

Meanwhile, two jawans injured in an IED blast in Anantnag district of south Kashmir yesterday succumbed to injuries, taking the toll to five. — PTI

Pak. assessing Advani's statement

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, NOV. 29. Pakistan is carefully assessing the recent statement from the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, that the unilateral Indian ceasefire was not only directed at the Kashmiri militants but Islamabad also diplomatic sources here said.

Mr. Advani's declaration, reaffirmed over the last couple of days, may have some potential to reduce the profound misperceptions in Pakistan that the Indian ceasefire was purely tactical in nature and aimed at dividing the militancy in the Valley and cut Islamabad out of any peace process in the Valley.

The Minister had clearly stated the Indian readiness for a renewed peace process with Pakistan if Islamabad was prepared to endorse the ceasefire and stop cross-border terrorism. Until Mr. Advani's statement, there was no formal signal from the Government that it was ready to engage Pakistan under certain conditions.

Observers of Indo-Pak relations here say Mr. Advani was only making explicit what was always implied in the Indian position on engaging Pakis-

tan. Since the Kargil confrontation last summer, India has insisted it will not talk to Pakistan unless there is an end to cross-border terrorism.

Mr. Advani has converted this negative formulation into a positive construction and located it in the context of the current unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir. Mr. Advani has asked Pakistan to "take advantage" of the "second Indian peace initiative" since the Lahore bus journey by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, in February in 1999.

In suggesting that India is ready to engage Pakistan if there is an end to violence in the coming weeks, Mr. Advani may be offering the military rulers in Islamabad a way out of the current impasse in Indo-Pak relations.

That the statement has come from Mr. Advani, who is seen as a hardliner across the western border, and has been repeated with some consistency, is said to be making the Pakistani establishment sit up and take notice. But no one here is betting that the reassessment of Indian intentions in Pakistan will necessarily lead to positive decisions in Islamabad on ending cross-border violence.

GoM discusses security measures

NEW DELHI, NOV. 29. The Group of Ministers, set up to study recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee, today held discussions to finalise measures to strengthen defence management.

The group, headed by the Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, has been holding meetings to present their recommendations to the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, on the basis of reports by four task forces set up by it. After the meeting, the Jammu and Kashmir Governor, Mr. Girish Saxena, said "today was incident-free in Jammu and Kashmir but it is no guarantee that nothing would happen tomorrow. I hope better sense will prevail on them who are taking a negative attitude." — PTI

Pak. for more steps: Page 15

THE HINDU

30 NOV 2000

Pressure India for talks: Pak.

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 8. Pakistan today asked the world community to "exert pressure" on New Delhi to hold talks with Islamabad to resolve the Kashmir issue as it said the prospects of Indo-Pakistan dialogue was "very poor".

"The world community should see how it could exert pressure on India for resumption of talks ... The talks should be purposeful to address the root case of tension," the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, told leading Japanese daily *Nikkei*.

"Prospects of the Indo-Pakistan talks are very poor," he said, accusing New Delhi of "not responding to the call for resumption of stalled talks."

Referring to the nuclear issue, Mr. Sattar said Pakistan would review its unilateral moratorium on further nuclear tests if "another country" conducted explosions. "We will not be the first to resume tests," he said.

On the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin's recent visit to India during which the two countries

embarked upon a strategic partnership in nuclear and defence fields and resolved to cooperate in combating international terrorism and religious extremism, Mr. Sattar said Pakistan had no problem about the bilateral ties of other countries as every country had the right to improve ties with other.

Asked about reports that Pakistan had tested long-range Shaheen-II missiles, Mr. Sattar said his country's missile development programme had been going on for a decade and that he had no information about any new tests.

He denied any support to Pakistan by North Korea and China in missile development, saying Islamabad's missile programme was indigenous.

On CTBT, he said the military regime was building a domestic consensus on the issue.

"Pending signatures on the treaty, Pakistan will observe its key obligation of no further tests," he added. — PTI

THE HINDU

2 OCT 2000

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2000

110-12
CAUTION IS THE KEY 3/11

INDIA AND PAKISTAN must avoid scare-mongering of any kind about the intentions of either side in regard to the latest flurry of media reports on each other's 'military exercises'. While there certainly is no case at all for lowering vigil along the international border and the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, India has already done well to put the issue in some perspective. However, the need for utmost restraint cannot be exaggerated in the absence of any ongoing bilateral dialogue on confidence-building measures for risk reduction with reference to the conventional and nuclear security concerns of the two sides. It is a matter of satisfaction that the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, has held out an assurance that there is "no cause for alarm" in the overall context of the latest reports of Pakistan massing troops near the border with India for war-games. Taking the unusual step of contradicting the veracity of press reports in Pakistan about the supposed movement of nine divisions of its Army towards the border with India in the Rann of Kutch sector, Mr. Fernandes has noted that Islamabad has deployed its military personnel for exercises at locations as far as 70-75 km from the Indian frontiers. This, in his view, should pose "no threat to India" at this stage. Given the general belief that India must have toned up its intelligence capabilities following the initial surprise which it suffered in the Kargil sector last year, Mr. Fernandes may consider himself to be on a strong wicket this time in making such an assertion. But the real issue at stake goes beyond the question of credibility of India's intelligence-gathering prowess. It is one of exercising strategic caution.

The view from Pakistan, where the military rules the roost at this juncture, will surely be differential in its scope. Pakistan's Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, is facing a particularly challenging period at present on the domestic front, especially on account of the dismal economic situation there. Yet, his regime is

keen to dispel any impression of being war-minded in its ties with India. In denying the reports of a large-scale thrust by Pakistan's troops towards the Indian border, the Musharraf regime has intentionally or otherwise spun a nuance. It is that what has been dismissed by the Musharraf regime pertains (in sum) to the media version in Islamabad that Pakistan's latest military activity may in fact be a response to "a possible threat from India". It can of course be argued that this is no explicit or credible disputation by Pakistan of a perceived 'threat' to its security from India. However, the point is that while Gen. Musharraf does cite Pakistan's "external" environment as one of the factors impinging on its poor economic performance, he is eager to gain recognition as a responsible player on the international stage.

Pakistan's official portrayal of its reported military movement as no more than a routine training drill has now been followed by a new media account in Islamabad that the Musharraf regime has placed its army and air force on alert in anticipation of India's prospective "war plan" exercise of an "integrated" nature. While it is alleged in the Pakistan media that India has kept Islamabad in the dark about these latest moves for a military exercise, something that deserves to be corrected is the tendency in the non-official circles of Pakistan to misconstrue normative war-games as "war plans". Moreover, India's line, too, is that it has not been officially informed of any military exercise by Pakistan at this time. The short answer to these purported riddles is political transparency which the two sides must adopt on such matters so as to avoid accidental or misjudged clashes between them. The bilateral tensions over military exercises in the past cannot be ignored as a lesson. More importantly, India cannot afford the intangible but real costs of strategic uncertainty caused by a persistent refusal to engage Islamabad in talks over sensitive issues.

THE HINDU

3 NOV 2000

India escalating tension along LoC: Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 31. Pakistan has accused India of escalating tension along the Line of Control (LoC) and said the situation could aggravate if it was not de-escalated.

A Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman told a news conference here today, "There is escalation of tension along the LoC with regular reports of Indian shelling on the Pakistan side. We have always maintained that there should be de-escalation and lowering of tension because escalation can only aggravate the situation and achieve nothing."

Pakistan had regularly kept the United Nations Military Observers Group posted of the "violations" across the border by India. It was keeping a vigil on the situation and was fully prepared to deter any aggressive designs. On

whether there was any "hotline" between the two countries, he said there were contacts "when needed at the field level".

The spokesman's observations come in the wake of allegations that this year Indian firing and shelling had killed 175 civilians and wounded 722 in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). A Pakistani Commander in the region has been quoted as saying that Indian troops had fired about 64,000 mortar and artillery shells on civilian positions over the last 10 months. Indian forces have been accused of targeting houses, markets, schools, power supply stations, water reservoirs, mosques and other civilian buildings.

Asked whether Pakistan would support a ceasefire by any militant group operating in Kashmir, the spokesman merely referred to the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen ceasefire and said In-

dia had missed the opportunity provided by the militant group. He accused India of trying to exploit the opportunity provided by the Hizb to create divisions within the "freedom movement" and misunderstanding between the "freedom movement" and Pakistan.

Instead of responding positively to the Hizb offer, India imposed pre-conditions by insisting that any talks would be within the framework of the Constitution. "That was tantamount to asking freedom fighters to renounce the very objective of half a century of struggle."

The spokesman said the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, invoked the philosophy of 'insaniyat' (humanity) as a precondition for a dialogue with the militants but went back on it the next day under "pressure from various quarters".

THE HINDU

1 NOV 2000

Pak envoy sees 'sliver of hope' in post-ceasefire developments

By Seema Guha

NEW DELHI: Though it is too early for optimism, Pakistan sees a "sliver of hope" in recent developments on the ground. Since Prime Minister Vajpayee's announcement of a unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir and Pakistan's response to it, there has been some movement forward, says Pakistan high commissioner Ashraf Jehangir Qazi.



Ashraf J. Qazi

After 18 months of sabr-rattling and trading of charges against each other, India and Pakistan appear to have had second thoughts about continuing with the current stalemate. The signals from both Islamabad and New Delhi are positive, though Pakistan would have liked to see a little more enthusiasm from India after their foreign secretaries' announcement of maximum restraint along the Line of Control.

Mr Qazi's optimism is based on Pakistan's positive response to the PM's announcement of a Ramzan ceasefire and the recent statements from Islamabad, which has kept India happy. The statements from Islamabad said that the Kashmir problem must be worked out keeping in mind international agreements, including the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration.

Pakistan has also met New Delhi's criterion of an improvement in the ground situation. Though Pakistan denies sponsoring terrorists or abetting violence in Kashmir, the Indian establishment has acknowledged that the level of firing on the LoC has decreased, and infiltration has also come down.

"This is a kind of watershed, confrontation seems to have run its course," the high commissioner said. Now it is time for both countries to "seize the opportunity" and move forward, he says. However, proper groundwork should be done, so that the talks don't end in limbo.

"It should not be another exer-

cise in futility," Mr Qazi said. The only way to ensure this is to see that, "An India-Pakistan dialogue should lead to some movement forward. Both countries need to take bold steps and shed the stereotype positions that have guided them so far".

Pakistan predictably wants New Delhi to change its stand. "India's position is too rigid," Mr Qazi says. "There is no point starting talks if the attitude is: Kashmir is not your business and we don't want you to meddle in our internal affairs".

There is no point in shutting our eyes to reality, says Mr Qazi. If India has to change its position on Kashmir, what about Pakistan? The answer is, Pakistan has no position on Kashmir. "We support the people of Kashmir that is our position.

We have no independent views on Kashmir," said the suave high commissioner. "However, we support the Kashmiri viewpoint that they should be consulted while

coming to any agreement on Kashmir".

The fact is that Pakistan and India are both involved in Kashmir, that is the reality of the situation today, said Mr Qazi. Keeping that in mind no solution can be worked out without the three main protagonists being part of any agreement. Mr Qazi feels that even if it is not called 'tripartite' discussions, the term could be changed to suit India. But, in actual fact, consultations have to be held with Pakistan too.

Keeping in mind India's insistence on all issues, Mr Qazi said that Pakistan is ready to talk on other issues as well and adhere to the "composite" structure, India insists on.

PTI ADDS: India should permit Hurriyat leaders to visit Pakistan to help take forward its peace initiative, Mr Qazi indicated. "You (India) don't allow them to travel to Pakistan, you are not talking to Pakistan. The first step that India needs to take is to review that so we have a negotiating process acceptable to all and including all," he told a TV channel.

FIRST SIGNS OF A THAW

- Firing along LoC, infiltration has decreased
- India, Pak should take bold steps
- India's position too rigid: Pak
- Pak has no independent views on Kashmir

Ceasefire is forward-looking new idea, says India

NEW DELHI, DEC. 8. India today responded to Pakistan's call for ideas to resolve the Kashmir issue by pointing out that the unilateral ceasefire was a positive and forward-looking "new" idea.

An External Affairs Ministry spokesman said there had been "recognisable reduction" in firing from across the Line of Control (LoC) and attempts at infiltration had not taken place in any "marked manner".

"The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee's initiative, announced on November 19, is very positive and forward-looking and constitutes a new idea."

He was asked about the Government's response to remarks by the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, that New Delhi come out with ideas to resolve the Kashmir issue if the formulation put forth by Islamabad was not acceptable to it.

In its detailed and calibrated official response to Islamabad's December 2 announcement of observing "maximum restraint" along the LoC, India said as initiators, it was ready for "early" resumption of the composite dialogue process.

The spokesman said India's approach was towards taking the peace initiative forward and "we have remained steadfast" in this. India had consistently held that Islamabad had to stop cross-border terrorism to create the right

conditions for resumption of the stalled dialogue. — PTI

Pak. 'flexible' on proposals

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 8. The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, has again indicated that Pakistan was 'flexible' on details of the proposals it had made on December 2.

In an informal talk with journalists here, he said Pakistan welcomed the statement made by the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, that India was prepared to consider any request from leaders of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) to travel to Islamabad.

In the December 2 statement, the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. Inamul Haq, suggested that APHC leaders be allowed to hold separate discussions with the Indian and Pakistan Governments, paving the way for a "tripartite" dialogue.

Mr. Sattar said it would be unrealistic on the part of India to expect the militant organisations to return to the path of peace just on the basis of a month-long ceasefire. "I think the Kashmiri freedom struggle is at this time expecting forward movement and if there is some visible movement from India, you can expect a response. Once confidence is established that India is prepared to enter into a purposeful process

for the settlement of the Kashmir question, then I think it would be reasonable to expect a positive response from the Kashmiri freedom struggle."

In a related development, senior APHC leader, Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone, accused vested interests in India and Pakistan of trying to create hurdles in the path of a settlement to the Kashmir issue.

In an interview to the *Washington Post*, Mr. Lone said there were important vested interests in both countries, who wanted the conflict to continue. "I think the biggest danger now is from the extremists. They will make serious efforts to undermine the ceasefire," he told the paper.

Mr. Lone also expressed disappointment with the press both in India and Pakistan vis-a-vis the Kashmir conflict. "The national press in India only gives the Government version on Kashmir and it is the same in Pakistan."

PTI reports:

The situation along the LoC was reviewed here today at the highest level. The military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, presided over a meeting of Corps commanders at Rawalpindi, which also deliberated on the geo-strategic environment in the region, besides internal and external security, an official statement said.

The participants were given a comprehensive update on the army monitoring mechanism by the Director-General, Military Operations.

THE HINDU

9 DEC 2000

HP-1
8/12

Come up with ideas, Sattar tells New Delhi

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

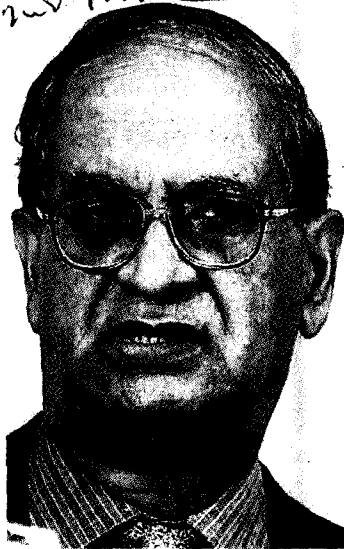
ISLAMABAD, DEC. 7. The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, has urged India to come up with ideas to resolve the Kashmir conflict if the formulation put forth by Pakistan was not acceptable to it. In an interview with *The Hindu* here today, Mr. Sattar expressed disappointment with the reaction of the Indian Government on the formulation made by Pakistan for a dialogue on Kashmir in its December 2 statement.

"My disappointment with the Indian statement (December 6) is that it does not engage in exploration of any openings. It simply shuts the door on the ideas and openings we sought to inject in the December 2 statement," the Minister said.

Mr. Sattar praised the ceasefire decision of the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, and said Pakistan responded to it positively as it firmly believed that the "good decision" of Mr. Vajpayee needed to be sustained and strengthened. "Our proposals would launch India and Pakistan on a course of permanent settlement of the Kashmir issue."

'Not despondent'

Maintaining that Pakistan



Abdul Sattar

was disappointed but not despondent over the Indian response, Mr. Sattar said the continuing stalemate was very easy to resolve. The rest test of human ingenuity is in terms of discovering ideas that lead to a forward movement in the given situation.

Asked if Pakistan was prepared to address the Indian concerns on infiltration from across the border and continuing violence in Kashmir, Mr.

Sattar denied the charge. In support of his contention he quoted the statement of the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, to the effect that Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, the largest militant organisation, consists of indigenous Kashmiris.

"We believe that the allegations made by India against Pakistan seem to be an evasive tactic designed to prevent a forward movement towards a settlement of the issues," he said.

On being pressed whether or not Islamabad would exercise its authority on the militant outfits and urge them to give a chance to the new initiatives in Kashmir, the Minister frankly said Pakistan alone was not in a position to bring about a "conversion or transition from militancy to peaceful means". Unless India was prepared to take steps to create an atmosphere in which people regained confidence on the effectiveness of peaceful means of protest, peace would not return.

Mr. Sattar said the best way of moving away from militancy is to open up the peace process.

Text of Interview: Page 14

THE HINDU

8 DEC 2000

Pak. awaiting Indian response to talks offer

NEW DELHI, DEC. 7. Pakistan is awaiting a positive response from India to the proposal of its chief executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, for holding talks on the Kashmir issue at any time and place.

The Pakistan High Commissioner, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, told reporters at an Iftar party hosted by him here this evening that India should not hesitate but should move forward towards holding negotiations on all bilateral issues, including Kashmir.

He said there should be some concrete proposal on Kashmir. Holding talks for the sake of talks would not serve any purpose. "We should come out of this phase of allegations and be positive in the resolution of all bilateral issues." — UNI

THE HINDU

8 DEC 2000

India welcomes Pak offer of restraint

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 5 DECEMBER

CARRYING FORWARD the Prime Minister's view that Pakistan's response was good but not substantive, India, on Tuesday, officially welcomed the offer of restraint along the line of control (LoC) but asked Pakistan to cease cross-border terrorism and infiltration and create a conducive environment for dialogue.

The government declared its response to Pakistan's offer at a press conference after Congress stalled Parliament proceedings on the eight-year-old Ayodhya issue.

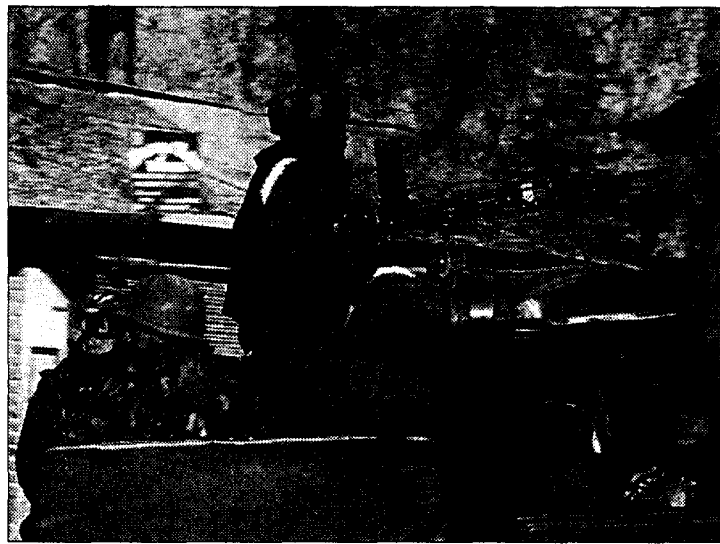
Categorically rejecting tripartite talks on Kashmir, India made it clear that it was ready to "have talks with all parties and groups in Jammu & Kashmir, including the militants." The Pakistan statement issued on Saturday made the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) the focal Kashmiri group for dialogue with India, asking India to "invite APHC in the current month of Ramadan to prepare for the commencement of tripartite negotiations between Pakistan, India and APHC immediately after Ramadan."

To reinforce caution on this count, the Indian government promised a review of the ground situation after Ramadan before announcing its next course of action. On Monday, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee had said that the ceasefire could

be extended beyond Ramadan if infiltration and hostilities were stopped.

There was also official recognition of the reduction of vio-

lence along the border. This was confirmed by the DGP of J&K in Srinagar. Regarding infiltration, an MEA spokesman said: "Because of the enhanced vigil of our security forces, attempts at infiltration have not taken place to a great extent," he said.



CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER: Indian soldiers drive towards a paramilitary camp after an assault by two members of a Muslim suicide squad in Anantnag, 55 km south of Srinagar, on Tuesday. — AP

This is in addition to the fact that since winter has already set in and the passes are snow-bound, there is a natural reduction of movement into the

Valley. The real test therefore will have to wait until the snows melt. Government sources attribute the current violent incidents to the militants already

pushed in before the ceasefire took effect. Both India and Pakistan are at pains to clarify that the Pakistan's offer was "nothing new." This was stated by Pakistan foreign minister Abdus Sattar on Tuesday: "There is no new peace initiative and our foreign secretary Inamul Haq has already elaborated Pakistan's position. It has two parts — one, that we will show maximum

restraint along the LOC and two, that efforts should be made for a tripartite process to begin."

The Indian statement concurred, saying: "Our security forces have always exercised the utmost restraint in the face of persistent provocation and violations of the LOC and they will continue to do so." This is an echo of Mr Fernandes' statement that firing across the LOC was in itself a violation, therefore Pakistan's observance of restraint was "not new."

Indian government sources pointed to the numerous "red herrings" in the Pakistani statement intended to deflect Indian attention. From tripartite talks, to UN charter to the UNMOGIP, the Pak statement is replete with references that India considers unacceptable. Nevertheless, India's involvement with the substance of the Pakistani offer has been evidence of a mature handling of the situation by New Delhi.

Contrary to past instances when ministers and political leaders have tended to shoot off individual reactions to foreign policy decisions, this time, the Indian leadership has exhibited a rare coordination and maturity in its responses.

The tone of Tuesday's statement — as well as the statements made by the Prime Minister, Mr Advani and Mr Fernandes — has been generally positive, without opening up any windows of opportunity for misinterpretation.

The Economic Times

5 DEC 2000

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2000

A WELCOME SIGNAL *gndp*

PAKISTAN'S CONSIDERED DECISION to observe "maximum restraint" along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir is a positive development in the context of India's current initiative for a Ramzan-related ceasefire in the State. No less significant is the parallel affirmation by Islamabad of a desire for a "meaningful dialogue" with India on the Kashmir dispute. However, Pakistan will do well to enhance the substance of its offer by expressing an explicit commitment to revive the Lahore process and explore the avenues for confidence-building measures (CBMs) in conjunction with India. It requires no insight to recognise that any categorical move by Pakistan towards a policy pronouncement of this magnitude will suit its tactical and strategic purposes as well. In fact, the hawks in New Delhi's political establishment will then find it less defensible to stick to their position of non-engagement. Since last year's Kargil conflict, the Vajpayee administration has remained hostile to the idea of any engagement with Pakistan in the absence of a perceivable halt to its transparent support for "cross-border terrorism". Now, notwithstanding this arguably 'moralist' formulation by New Delhi, the bilateral ambience will dramatically improve if Pakistan opts for a positive pledge in regard to the inter-related issues of the Lahore process and CBMs.

Statesmanship demands that New Delhi, too, assess the emerging context in a perspective framework beyond the myopic range of tit-for-tat gamesmanship. Best avoided is the temptation to score debating points with an eye to presumed international opinion. This elementary prudence requires reiteration because the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, has reportedly made the point that Pakistan's latest pledge of military restraint is proof of its confession to a practised policy of firing across the Line of Control. This may be smart politics, given the obvious imperative of maintaining the utmost

vigil on the Indian side of the Line of Control, but it simply is bad diplomacy without prejudice to the ground realities. Having made a carefully-crafted move of declaring a unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, New Delhi must not falter in sizing up the spin-off effect of Pakistan's limited but significant announcement. For India, what is at stake now is nothing less than a fresh opportunity to consider Pakistan's stated willingness to renew the bilateral dialogue as the concomitant of its military "restraint".

MD RD-17
The totality of Islamabad's statement reflects in its own nuanced shift towards the primacy of tripartite talks involving Pakistan, India as also its separatist-militants and Pakistan-identified "true representatives" of the Kashmiri people. However, a resumption of parleys with Islamabad can be explored even without New Delhi having to rethink its line against the tripartite format. Pakistan is certainly cognisant of the favourable international support for New Delhi's latest ceasefire strategy. India's efforts within its domestic context to address the grievances of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, including those of the separatist-militants, have indeed reached a delicate stage now. So, New Delhi should sustain this momentum, too, while evaluating the scope for talks with Pakistan on an altogether separate track that has been historically defined by the Shimla Agreement of 1972 and the Lahore Declaration of 1999. Overall, the definitive context of Islamabad's new offer has qualitatively distinguished it from the earlier statements by the Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, of his willingness to hold talks with India at any time, at any place and at any level. The Vajpayee administration should not, therefore, slam the door on the idea of resuming talks with Pakistan on issues of immediate interest. This will be compatible with the principle of direct talks between New Delhi and the Kashmiri groups.

THE HINDU

6 DEC 2000

A welcome half-step, says Sattar

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 5. The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, today dubbed the Indian initiative on Kashmir a "welcome half-step" and said the question of a permanent ceasefire on the Line of Control depended on the prospect of successful negotiations starting in the near future.

Speaking on the state-controlled Pakistan Television (PTV) the Minister said it would be better if India decided to end its "military operations" in Kashmir permanently. "It's a welcome half-step. It would be far better if instead of just merely prolonging the suspension, the Prime Minister of India had decided to terminate the military operations once and for all."

Mr. Sattar said Mr. A.B. Vajpayee should have commented on the Pakistani offer of a process leading to a Pakistan-India dialogue for the settlement of the Kashmir question in conformity with the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

In an interview to a foreign agency, Mr. Sattar was quoted as saying that "Pakistan's own offer to exercise maximum restraint in order to stabilise the ceasefire on the LoC is not limited in terms of duration. We would like to cooperate in ensuring the stability of that ceasefire permanently."

The Minister said that for the objective to be achieved it was necessary that the efforts succeeded in bringing an end to violence in Kashmir and in promoting a settlement of the Kashmir question.

Denies

In another development, a Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson denied there was a shift or softening of stand by Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. Such an impression seems to have been created after a foreign agency on Monday evening put out a report suggesting that there was a significant shift in the Pakistan's Kashmir policy.

The agency substantiated its report on the basis of the quote from an official in the For-

ign Office that Islamabad would not have any objection if the APHC were to have separate parleys with the India. Perhaps the Pakistani authorities took note of the report when Indian television networks began splashing it in a big way.

Actually the position vis-a-vis the tripartite dialogue was articulated very clearly in the statement read out by the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. Inamul Haq, on Saturday. The formulation of Pakistan had envisaged the APHC talking separately to the Indian and Pakistani Governments. The second and the crucial element of the formulation is that separate negotiations should lead to a tripartite dialogue.

Lashkar, Hizb reject Pak. LoC move

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 5. Three days after the Pakistan Government announced "maximum restraint" on the Line of Control, the initial feeble response from militant organisations based here is getting crystallised with more outfits expressing reservations about the move.

The Lashkar-e-Taiba chief, Sayeed Hafeez, in a strongly-worded statement has not only rejected the Pakistan ceasefire but cautioned the military Government against the possibility of "getting caught in the Indian trap".

Prof. Hafeez said his organisation would continue its mission of targeting the security forces that are engaged in Kashmir operations. The Lashkar-e-Taiba spokesperson openly claimed responsibility for the two attacks on CRPF camps in Kashmir in two days.

Revenge, says Lashkar

The spokesperson, Mr. Yahya Mujahideen, told *The Hindu* that the two attacks were carried out under what is known as *qasas* (murder-for-murder) operations. He alleged that

the CRPF personnel had killed several children and innocent civilians in Kashmir recently and the two attacks were meant to take revenge.

"If the Indian forces do not stop their atrocities, we will not only attack the units responsible, but all Indian Army operations in Kashmir," he said.

In a separate statement, the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen chief, Syed Salahuddin, said a ceasefire for the sake of ceasefire had no meaning unless it led towards the resolution of the Kashmir dispute as per the "wishes of Kashmiris". It is not clear what was the provocation for Mr. Salahuddin's statement, as only two days ago the Hizb had enthusiastically welcomed the Pakistani restraint on the LoC.

The Hizb chief said for the Indian ceasefire to become meaningful, the India should agree for unconditional talks with Pakistan and Kashmiris, release all Kashmiris detained in jails, and take back the armed forces from Kashmir. The statement warned that no one would be allowed to betray the cause of Kashmiris.

In another development the Al-Badar Mujahideen rejected outright the Indian ceasefire saying it was meant only to provide much-needed rest to the tired security forces.

Positive, says U.S.

PTI reports:

In Washington, the U.S. State Department spokesperson, Mr. Richard Boucher, welcomed Pakistan's announcement of temporary truce. "There have been positive developments... Pakistan has reiterated its intention to exercise maximum restraint along the Line of Control in Kashmir, and we certainly welcome that."

Stating that Washington had been calling for restraint and respect for the LoC, he said, "Pakistan's affirmation of that principle is an important complement to the suspension of military operations announced by India last week. So that is certainly a welcome development in that region."

THE HINDU

6 DEC 2000

NEW DELHI RULES OUT TRIPARTITE TALKS

'Concrete steps by Pak. needed'

AD1
By Atul Aneja 9/12/00

NEW DELHI, DEC. 5. India today acknowledged that Pakistan had reduced firing along the Line of Control (LoC) and hoped that it would follow it up with concrete additional steps which would address New Delhi's "many concerns" on cross-border terrorism.

In its first formal reaction to the Pakistan's December 2 statement saying it would exercise "maximum restraint" along the LoC, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) expressed measured optimism. "The Government hopes this statement of Pakistan is the precursor of a meaningful change in its attitude."

"There has been a marked reduction in firing across the LoC," an MEA spokesperson said at his daily briefing. Besides, infiltration by militants had dropped. But denying Pakistan credit, he said the fall in infiltration should be attributed to the enhanced vigilance of the security forces.

But Pakistan, the statement added, needed to take concrete steps to push the budding "peace process" forward. First, Pakistan, responding to the initiatives of the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, should "cease promotion of cross-border terrorism". "We expect Pakistan to address our concerns and those of the international community about cross-border terrorism, infiltration into India, and aiding and abetting violence."

India, it warned, would "robustly" meet any attempt by Islamabad to push terrorists during the month of Ramzan. Rejecting a role for international monitoring along the LoC, the MEA reiterated that "there is no role of any kind for any third party here".

Swears by bilateralism

Second, India rejected the format of "tripartite talks" as proposed by Pakistan. Committed to the principle of bilateralism, New Delhi, however, was ready to base its engagement with Pakistan on the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration. In fact, the MEA statement sought a clarification from Pakistan on its disposition to these agreements. References to "earlier agreements" in the Pakistani statement, it hoped, reflected Islamabad's adherence to principles laid out in the Shimla and Lahore doctrines. On Pakistan's open-ended proposal for a "dialogue", the MEA said any future dialogue should be based on the "composite dialogue process" which has been initiated prior to the Kargil war.

Third, India was ready to open a separate track for talks with "all parties and groups in Jammu and Kashmir, including also the militants". But a decision on the modalities will be taken by India. Keeping the door open for extension of the ceasefire, the statement said



Security forces in action against two militants holed up inside a CRPF camp at Ashajipora, Anantnag. The militants accounted for the lives of six soldiers and injured 10 others before being killed in the 22-hour operation. — Photo: Nissar Ahmad

the Government will announce a "further course of action" after Ramzan.

Militants step up attacks

By Shujaat Bukhari

JAMMU, DEC. 5. Hours after Monday's *fidayeen* (suicide squad) attack, in which six Central Reserve Police Force soldiers and two militants were killed, militants stepped up attacks on the security forces today. Another CRPF camp in Anantnag was attacked in which one civilian was killed and five were injured. The Army foiled a similar attack in Kupwara, killing one militant. In Pulwama, three Indian Air Force personnel were injured in a blast.

In Anantnag, militants attacked a CRPF camp in a local hotel hours after the operation launched yesterday was called off. The militants hurled grenades and fired at the camp. The paramilitary forces retaliated. Six civilians were injured in the crossfire; one woman died on the spot.

It was officially confirmed that six CRPF per-

sonnel of the 61st Battalion were killed in Monday's Lashkar-e-Taiba attack at Heewan Cinema in Anantnag. Official sources said three militants followed a CRPF vehicle in a car, sneaked into the camp, hurled grenades and followed it with indiscriminate firing killing the sentry. The militant, who made his entry through the main gate, killed the CRPF jawans one by one. Eight other soldiers were wounded. The encounter ended this evening.

Three IAF personnel were injured when their vehicle ran over a landmine in Padgam-pora, Pulwama district. The blast occurred a few kilometers from the IAF airport in Malang-pora.

The Army foiled another attempt of a two-man *fidayeen* to sneak into a camp in Lolab Kupwara last night, according to a defence spokesperson. One militant was killed on the spot and another managed to escape. In an IED blast in Adipora, Baramulla, three Army soldiers were injured.

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A half-step, says Sattar: Page 13

THE HINDU

6 DEC 2000

India nudges Pak for next step

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Dec. 5: India today officially reacted to Pakistan's maximum-restraint offer by reiterating its commitment to resuming "composite dialogue" early, but was firm that export of terror and infiltration had to stop if the neighbours were to return to the talks table.

Delhi hoped that Islamabad's announcement was a "precursor" to a meaningful change in its attitude. It also said it was ready to hold talks with "all parties and groups" in Jammu and Kashmir, including militants, provided its conditions were met.

However, South Block made it clear that there was "no room for any kind of third party" in these negotiations, hinting at the Pakistani proposal for holding bilateral dialogue alongside talks with the Kashmiri leadership.

In a statement, foreign ministry spokesman R.S. Jassal today

conceded that there had been a "recognisable reduction" in firing across the Line of Control (LoC). There had not been much infiltration either due to tighter vigilance by Indian security forces, he added.

Jassal declined to give a categorical answer when asked if India would resume talks with Pakistan if this "restraint" continued till the end of Ramzan. He merely said the situation would be reviewed then and a decision taken accordingly.

Though the Prime Minister has off and on indicated Delhi's response to Islamabad's offer, foreign minister Jaswant Singh was to have made a *suo motu* statement in Parliament yesterday. However, the House was adjourned over the Babri ruckus before Jaswant could do so.

South Block felt that delaying its response further would not serve any purpose. Therefore, it was left to Jassal to read out the

statement.

Jassal said the Indian high commissioner in Islamabad, Vijay Nambiar, had been called to the Pakistan foreign office and handed the statement made by foreign secretary Inamul Haq on December 2. He said Pakistan had conceded "there was nothing new in its proposal but there were new ways of saying things".

The spokesman pointed out that Indian security forces had "always shown maximum restraint in the face of persistent Pakistani provocation and violation along the LoC and will continue to do so." But he added that "any attempt to misuse this phase and push terrorists will be robustly met".

Jassal said the Union home ministry would grapple with the Hurriyat leaders' demand to cross the border to hold talks with the Pakistani government if and when the situation arose.

Hurriyat leaders met Pak-

istan's high commissioner Ashraf Jahangir Qazi in Delhi today. The Hurriyat will meet in Srinagar shortly to discuss the ceasefire and formulate an "appropriate" response to the Centre's statement today.

Dubbing Vajpayee's November 19 ceasefire statement as "positive and forward-looking", Jassal said it gave a chance to all parties, including Pakistan, to respond favourably.

From the two-page statement, it is clear that Delhi does not rule out resuming talks with Pakistan. But it will not do so till Islamabad stops cross-border terrorism.

India is also not sure whether the Musharraf regime is willing to return to the Lahore peace process. Also, India is worried because the Pakistan foreign secretary had hinted at finding a solution to the Kashmir dispute through UN resolutions. Delhi sees this as an attempt to involve a "third party".

THE TELEGRAPH

5 DEC 2000

'ISLAMABAD RESPONSE GOOD, BUT NOT SUBSTANTIVE'

Ceasefire can be extended: PM

By Harish Khare *HP-1*

NEW DELHI, DEC. 4. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today indicated that the Government was not averse to extending the current ceasefire beyond Ramzan provided Pakistan responded in a "substantive" manner. Noting that Pakistan had announced its intention to observe maximum restraint along the Line of Control, the Prime Minister observed that "Islamabad's response has been good, but not substantive" *Q&A Sark*

Even as the Prime Minister was talking of the possibility of extension of ceasefire, reports came in of a suicide squad attack on a CRPF camp in Anantnag district and a landmine blast in Baramulla, leaving in all two killed and about 37 injured.

Mr. Vajpayee's made this observation while interacting with the mediapersons at the Navy Day function. Originally, the Prime Minister was to make a statement in the Lok Sabha; and this would have given some idea of the Government's response to Pakistan's announcement last Saturday. However, the Government's thinking remained unspelt out as the Lok Sabha proceedings got disrupted.

Jaswant statement likely

It is expected that the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, would make a statement on the situation in Kashmir tomorrow in Parliament. Since Parliament is in session, the Prime Minister was constrained not to say too much outside the House.

Nonetheless, when Mr. Vajpayee was asked what he expected Pakistan to do, he said, "What they have to do, they know." By way of elaboration, he reiterated the Government's formulation that Pakistan needed to indicate

the end of its support for cross-border terrorism. *5/12*

The extension of ceasefire, according to the Prime Minister, would depend on the ground situation. "We are looking for reciprocity," he indicated. Mr. Vajpayee's remarks summed up the collective sense among the senior Ministers that the requisite "concrete" response from Pakistan was still awaited.

Hurriyat hopeful

Meanwhile, two senior Hurriyat leaders, its current chairman, Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat, and a former chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, have been camping in the capital. Though there has been no contact, formal or informal, between the Hurriyat leaders and

the officials, the possibility of such contact is not ruled out. For now, the officials are trying to deconstruct the utterances of the APHC leaders, here and in Srinagar, to see whether there was any, if at all, change in the organisation's stance.

Prof. Bhat and other Hurriyat leaders have reason to be happy with Pakistan's Saturday statement, as for the first time Islamabad has acknowledged the APHC as relevant to a resolution of the Kashmir issue. Prof. Bhat today said the Hurriyat was prepared to participate enthusiastically in any comprehensive peace process. However, the APHC chairman thinks that the Prime Minister has to follow up his Ramzan ceasefire initiative with

"much bigger steps so as to create an impression that the past has been buried and the future is being built on a firm solid base". Mr. Bhat's expectation is the Government could take the next big step by releasing prisoners, allowing the Hurriyat leaders to travel to Pakistan, and to permit political activity freely in J&K.

Those officials who deal with Jammu and Kashmir are inclined to believe that the Centre would have no difficulty in constructively engaging the Hurriyat leaders provided they give indication of disengaging themselves from Pakistan. The Hurriyat leaders are expected to visit the Pakistani High Commissioner's residence tomorrow for an Iftar party.

Sattar for tripartite talks: Page 43

2 killed in landmine blast

By Shujaat Bukhari

JAMMU, DEC. 4. After two days of relative calm in the Valley, militants struck at two places today. In Baramulla, unidentified militants triggered an IED-induced landmine blast killing two persons and injuring 20; while in Anantnag, a Lashkar-e-Taiba suicide squad attacked a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) battalion, injuring at least seven soldiers.

In the Baramulla blast, one soldier was killed. Among civilians, one was killed and 10 were injured.

Reports said unidentified militants detonated an improvised explosive device in Khanpora around 12.30 p.m. when an Army convoy was passing through. A bus, a jeep and another Army vehicle were badly damaged in the blast. The Baramulla SSP, Mr. Abdul Qayoom Manhas, told *The*

Hindu over phone that one soldier died on the spot and at least 20 others were injured. The condition of at least six soldiers is critical.

Unlike in earlier post-ceasefire incidents, the troops today retaliated, resorting to lathi-charge and firing in the air.

Anantnag attack

In Anantnag, militants belonging to the Lashkar-e-Taiba's *fidayeen* (suicide squad) struck in a big way forcing their entry into the headquarters of a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) battalion, injuring at least seven soldiers. One militant was killed in the encounter that followed.

The IGP, Kashmir zone, Mr. Ashok Bhan, said a group of three heavily armed militants stormed the headquarters of the 61st Battalion of the CRPF at Heewan Cinema in Anantnag at around 5 p.m., first hurled gre-

nades and then started firing indiscriminately. Four soldiers were injured, of whom two have been admitted to a Srinagar hospital, Mr. Bhan told *The Hindu*.

One of the three militants was killed in the retaliatory action of the security forces, though he has not been identified. The other two militants were engaged in an encounter till late in the night. One militant has taken shelter in a store room from where he is continuing to fire.

Police sources in Anantnag said at least seven CRPF soldiers were injured, some of them seriously. The guards were taken unaware at the time of Iftar.

A Lashkar-e-Taiba spokesman claimed responsibility for the attack. He told newsmen in Srinagar that the *fidayeen* squad of the LeT raided the CRPF headquarters and inflicted heavy casualties.

THE HINDU

PM sets terms for truce extension

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, December 4

PRIME MINISTER Atal Bihari Vajpayee today said the Ramzan ceasefire could be extended if Pakistan co-operated and created a conducive atmosphere to warrant such an extension.

Talking to mediapersons at the Navy Day function, Mr Vajpayee, in his first remarks on the extension of cease-fire, pointed out that the possibility of India sustaining its unilateral initiative beyond the month of Ramzan also depended on the "reality" on the ground.

His remarks that Pakistan should stop cross border terrorism and violence clearly implied that Islamabad's "maximum restraint" offer was only a part-fulfilment of what New Delhi expected from its neighbour to build upon the Ramzan peace process.

Over the past 24 hours, cross border firing has indeed gone down by 95 per cent. But there has been no appreciable let up in infiltration. As many as 14 intruders were reportedly gunned down by Indian troops.

Sources said that five per cent of the firing incidents by Pakistan were used to provide cover to infiltrators.

Interestingly, since the announcement of the Ramzan ceasefire, movement of mercenaries to the Pakistan side has virtually stopped.

In a related development today, sources told *The Hindustan Times* that New Delhi has already established contacts with Pakistan through emissaries with the sole objective of gauging Islamabad's intentions before opening negotiations for a regular dialogue.

The impression gathered from these parleys—held at levels quite distinct from the ongoing track-II diplomacy—was that Pakistan is "too eager" to start a dialogue on Kashmir.

Hurriyat leaders such as APHC chief Abdul Ghani Bhat and his predecessor, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, currently in Delhi, have kept up their exploratory talks with unofficial mediators, including retired diplomats and senior journalists. They are simultaneously in touch with the Pakistan High Commission here.

The Mirwaiz strongly felt that time was ripe for the Government to start a dialogue with the Hurriyat leaders. The APHC, he said, should be provided enough elbow room to reach out to the "mujahideens" to convince them about the necessity of a dialogue.

The comments the Prime Minister made this evening at the Navy Day function are expected to be dwelt upon at greater length by External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, whose statement in Parliament did not materialise today due to adjournment of Lok Sabha proceedings.

High Commissioner arriving: India's High Commissioner in Islamabad, Mr Vijay K. Nambiar, is to leave for New Delhi on Tuesday for consultations with the Vajpayee gov-

ernment on Pakistan's "maximum restraint" along the Line of Control, a local news agency quoted diplomatic sources as saying, reports HTC from Islamabad.

On Sunday, Pakistani foreign secretary Inamul Haque formally invited Mr Nambiar to the Foreign Office to convey Islamabad's decision to order its border troops to show "maximum restraint" in order to stabilise the Indian ceasefire in Kashmir.

Killings Continue

MILITANTS DETONATED a landmine that killed junior engineer Akeel Ahmad Shah and a soldier in Khanpora near Baramulla were killed and 28, including 24 soldiers, were injured on Monday. Militants also carried out a suicide attack on the headquarters of the 61 battalion of the CRPF on the outskirts of Anantnag, killing one person and injuring 30. Monday was the seventh day of the ceasefire announced by India.

HTC, Jammu

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

5 DEC 2000

11-10 Walk the Talk 5/12

Given Kashmir's scarred history, it is not easy to be an optimist. But, recent statements and developments seem to add up to a faint light at the end of the decade-long tunnel. The unilateral ceasefire undertaken by Indian security forces in the Valley seems to be holding, the instances of violation being too few and far between to be deemed significant. Similarly, the guns have fallen silent along the Line of Control dividing the Indian and Pakistani armies in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan foreign minister Abdus Sattar seems to want to force the pace, as suggested by his call for India to enter tripartite talks to resolve the Kashmir dispute based on 'maximum restraint' being shown by Pakistan. But given the less-than-helpful attitude of Islamabad to New Delhi's initiative, India cannot be faulted if it takes such declarations with a generous pinch of salt. Pakistan took an inordinate time in welcoming the ceasefire. Even now, Islamabad's response has been to say that its forces are observing 'maximum restraint'; presumably this means that they have ceased cross-border firing. But this does not mean that Pakistan has stopped sending armed men across the border. Mr L K Advani has rightly said that there is need to watch "the situation on the ground", which has been amplified by Mr George Fernandes to mean that the government will have to see whether or not Pakistan has ended the supply of men and material to combat Indian forces in the Valley. With the onset of winter, major cross-border movement would have ended anyway. But there are many areas south of Poonch that are open to clandestine cross-border traffic. The real test of Pakistani intentions will be here, and it will take another week or two to determine whether or not it is genuine in its desire for a negotiated settlement for Kashmir.

New Delhi deserves credit for its business-like handling of the situation. By its restraint, both in word and deed, India has shown that it is dealing with both the secessionist Kashmiris and Pakistan from a position of strength. This is as it should be. India is a large country, and a democracy to boot, although not a perfect one. This puts the onus of leadership on the Indian government. The reaction of the international community, too, should hearten New Delhi. Almost everyone that matters has commended the Indian initiative. It might not be far-fetched to suggest that the delayed Pakistani reaction came after it became apparent that Islamabad was being viewed as a spoiler. There is still a great distance to go before we can reach the end of the tunnel. Many questions remain, relating primarily to the nature of future talks and whether apparently irreconcilable positions can find commonality on the negotiating table. Then there is the question of Pakistan's real gameplan. Even the most enthusiastic votary of Islamabad will agree that the situation there is far from clear. Who is running the show, General Musharraf or his Lahore Corps Commander, Lt.-General Mohammed Aziz? Is the ISI going along with the present position of 'maximum restraint', and what about jihadis like the Lashkar-e-Taiba? However, for the present, any step that will lessen, if not end, the bloodshed in the Valley must be welcomed.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

5 DEC 2000

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Uneasy calm

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Pakistan must cease fire beyond the LoC too

PAKISTAN'S declaration that its security forces would exercise restraint along the Line of Control has predictably posed questions about its intent. This suddenly expressed desire for quietude could well be meant to signal Islamabad's ever-so-slight endorsement for the process initiated with New Delhi's unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir. On the other hand, it could just as easily be an attempt to score brownie points while surreptitiously scuttling progress towards a political resolution of the Kashmir tangle. All that is known with any certainty is that Pakistan's foreign secretary has a fascinating way with words — he expressed the hope that India would reciprocate his government's initiative and "cease firing across the LoC". In any event, it is to be hoped that the volatile de facto border in Jammu and Kashmir will witness a respite from the sporadic firing that provides residents with a totally unwelcome light and sound show, that serves as a cover for militants zipping between the two countries, and that always threatens to escalate into a wider conflict.

It may be premature to hail Pakistan's overture, but the question is, why is its military establishment adopting a conciliatory posture after actually waving away the Ramzan cessation of hostilities as a gimmick which does not factor in a tripartite dialogue? The urge to mop up international support is always there, but for Islamabad a new variant seems to have provoked reappraisal. More than their counterparts in New Delhi being cast as peacemakers, the powers that be in Islamabad are bound to be worried about

Kashmir being perceived — both within the Valley as well as beyond the subcontinent — as an Indian problem. This fear would have been heightened on two counts. First, they would be worried about the overtly enthusiastic response by some Kashmiri separatist leaders to the ceasefire, especially those affiliated to the Hurriyat, and now the somewhat muted interest shown by the Kashmir wing of the Hizbul Mujahideen. Certainly, none of these leaders have dropped the demand that Pakistan be involved in a meaningful dialogue, but the evolving consensus among them that could lend a semblance of tripartite-ness to the proceedings by negotiating with New Delhi first and later with Islamabad could take discussions out of Pakistan's control. Second, there is said to be concern in Islamabad about Hurriyat leaders adding Kashmiri unification to their "Kashmir for Kashmiris" strategy.

In all of this, it is easy to view the peace process as a multidimensional game of chess, as a series of gambits and master-moves. That would be inadvisable, for it would only serve to desensitise the gathering at the negotiation table. At stake is finally reclaiming for the people of Jammu and Kashmir a chance to lead a life free of violence and terror. Hence, notwithstanding the caution Pakistan's little gesture merits, the Indian government would be well advised to go the extra mile if the reward at the end could be a respite from cross-border terrorism. Because, without that, not only would New Delhi's hopes of maintaining the calm be dashed, Islamabad's opportunity to prove its sincerity would also be frittered away.

INDIAN EXPRESS

5 DEC 2000

Why Musharraf is in a quandary over the ceasefire

The battle for peace

A SOLDIER welcomes a ceasefire because he knows what conflict brings in its train. Pakistan's CEO General Pervez Musharraf should have responded to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's initiative readily, particularly when he had at one time agreed to a six-month ceasefire. Instead, the military junta at Islamabad is encouraging terrorism in Kashmir and Pakistan TV and radio are ridiculing peace efforts all the time. Stopping guns at the LoC is only a half-hearted response by Islamabad.

Apparently, Musharraf feels diffident to take on the fundamentalists who are dead against the ceasefire. With political parties joining hands, Musharraf has only the fanatics as his instrument to fight the combination. He has also to reckon with his mullah-type colleagues and the men who want to intensify jihad, not peace. But probably the main reason for Musharraf's opposition to the ceasefire is that he is not clear about the next step. He is keen to know what New Delhi has up its sleeve. Probably, both countries are groping for a solution. Vajpayee is, at least, trying to create a proper climate for it.

Lately, there has been a spate of seminars on Kashmir. No cut-and-dried formula has emerged because the participants at seminars have made more efforts to touch as many points as possible than arrive at a consensus. Indians and the Pakistanis, however liberal, more or less toe their government line. The Kashmiris generally confine themselves to listing "the excesses" committed in the state and seldom apply their mind to any specific proposal.

For the past few months, another suggestion which is gaining attention, is that of a tripartite conference. A laudable proposal, but it is bound to fail if the ground is not prepared for it. No doubt, Islamabad is keen on having a tripartite conference. But it will serve no purpose if some private understanding is not reached on major differences. In its absence, talks will break down on the very first day. Probably, Islamabad has a feel-

ing that it could be left out of the process. The unilateral ceasefire seems to have created this impression. But this is not true. India has always tried to engage Pakistan. As far back as 1964, when Jawaharlal Nehru sent Sheikh Abdullah to Pakistan, India's intention was clear. It did not want to bypass Islamabad.

In his book *Ayub Khan*, the former Pakistan Information Secretary Altaf Guhar, who died a few days ago, has recorded the conversation between the Sheikh and Ayub. Says Guhar: "Ayub said that he was getting a little fed up with a variety of solutions that were on offer and told Sheikh Abdullah to forget about Pakistan and

suggested more than once that it does not mind New Delhi and Kashmir leaders starting a dialogue.

The real problem is Musharraf or, for that matter, the military. They do not want a settlement with India because their *raison d'être* is based on stoking the fires of differences. Kashmir is their cat's paw, which they use to keep India on tenterhooks. Cross-border militancy is one method, Kargil was a bigger operation with the same purpose in view. But Musharraf and his military junta also know that India can absorb all this, not only because it has more resources but also because it has a firmer belief in settling the Kashmir issue peace-



KULDIP NAYYAR

The real problem is Musharraf and the military. They do not want a settlement. Kashmir is their cat's paw, which they use to keep India on tenterhooks

come to any settlement he wanted with India. A little taken aback, Sheikh Abdullah exclaimed that there could be no settlement without Pakistan."

This holds just as good today as it did then. India has said so in the Shimla Agreement by recording that a "final settlement" on Kashmir was yet to take place. Vajpayee initiated a process at Lahore to pursue the matter. Even behind-the-scenes parleys through non-officials have sought to arrive at some basic understanding. In fact, former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has gone on record as saying that the efforts were fructifying. The military leadership has to realise that there will be confusion if all the three points, New Delhi, Islamabad and Srinagar, are touched at the same time. Any two can begin the process and the third can join later. Pakistan has itself

fully. Yet Islamabad has used violence, again and again, to solve the problem.

At Tashkent, following the 1965 war, Pakistan promised not to resort to arms to settle disputes with New Delhi. At Shimla again, Islamabad gave an undertaking not to alter the Line of Control (LoC) "unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations". Still it is a fact that Pakistan has trained, armed and sheltered those who came from the Valley. Islamabad also encouraged foreign mercenaries from Afghanistan and beyond to fight in Kashmir. Before Musharraf, it was a proxy war; now it is jihad. How can Kashmir or any problem between India and Pakistan be settled when the present rulers at Islamabad are imbued with such motives?

The entire blame cannot, however,

lie at the door of Islamabad. Where India has gone wrong is that it has tended to act as an adversary. It has thrived on Pakistan's troubles. The hawks sitting in our foreign office — they are invariably accommodated after retirement — have seldom tried to learn how to adjust and live with an intransigent neighbour. Even in ordinary matters like newspapers and books, New Delhi has only copied Islamabad. Why does India not unilaterally lift the ban?

I recall what Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then Pakistan's prime minister, told me after the Shimla Agreement. He was demanding the release of 90,000 war prisoners whom India had captured during the 1972 Bangladesh war. India's argument was that it could not do this without the approval of Dhaka, which was opposed to their release till Pakistan recognised Bangladesh. "Do you want another Ayub or Yahya in Pakistan?" Bhutto asked. "If not, why don't you help me?" Later at a press conference in Rawalpindi he said that India had never utilised opportunities for friendship in the past. The Shimla Agreement, according to him, was the last one: "I may not stay long but I do not think that Pakistan and India would ever be friends if India did not wake up to the chance now."

Coming to the present, New Delhi can take credit for building international pressure against Musharraf on Kargil. It can also take credit for winning over world opinion. Indeed, Islamabad stands isolated. But if such situations remain static for long, the law of diminishing returns will come into play. New Delhi has to talk to Islamabad, sooner or later. Let SAARC be activated. A SAARC summit has been pending for a long time. India should take the initiative in fixing the date. Once again Vajpayee will rise in people's estimate, as he did after the Lahore initiative.

By responding to the ceasefire, Musharraf can make good his words: "I am willing to talk to India at any level at any time and at any place."

INDIAN EXPRESS

5 DEC 2000

NOT AT FACE VALUE

The announcement by Pakistan's foreign secretary, Mr Inamul Haq, of Islamabad's decision to order its armed forces to exercise maximum restraint along the line of control has understandably invited scepticism in India. There are legitimate reasons for being cynical about Pakistan's posturing. It is clear that Pakistan's government was almost forced to make the announcement after the tremendous impact of the unilateral ceasefire being enforced by Indian security forces in Jammu and Kashmir during the month of Ramadan. The decision had been widely welcomed internationally, and Russia, Britain and the United States had explicitly signalled that Pakistan must reciprocate if it is genuinely interested in peace in the region. More important, public opinion in Kashmir was clearly in support of the ceasefire, and even the umbrella organization of the separatist parties, the All Party Hurriyat Conference — many of whose constituents have close links with forces in Pakistan — had indicated its approval of this bold new initiative by New Delhi.

Islamabad's announcement will not signal a real change in the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir — even if Pakistan genuinely exercises restraint on the LoC — unless it is backed by a ceasefire by the militant groups, especially those manned by Pakistanis, and financed and trained by Islamabad. Not even the most naïve observers accept Pakistan's propaganda that militancy operates autonomously and that it has little control over the terrorist groups that are wreaking havoc in Jammu and Kashmir. It is clear that the United Jihad Council — a conglomerate of extremist groups — for instance, cannot continue its tirade against India without the support and acquiescence of powers that lie at the heart of the Pakistan's establishment. Recall also that Pakistan has, several times in the past, made declarations of intent that have rarely lead to a real change in policy. In any case, Islamabad is bound by bilateral agreements signed over the last three decades in Tashkent, Simla and Lahore to respect the LoC, and explicitly committed itself to exercising restraint in the Washington communiqué of 1999.

Under the circumstances, India must respond with characteristic caution to Pakistan's latest declarations. New Delhi must reiterate that a resumption of a dialogue will be possible only once all the three conditions that it has spelt out repeatedly are met. First, there must be a de-escalation of the tension along the LoC. Although Islamabad's announcement suggests that this may have started, India's armed forces too must certify that this has indeed happened. Second, there has to be a significant reduction in the infiltration of militants into Jammu and Kashmir. This can only happen when Pakistan takes steps to not let its armed forces provide logistical support to militants, and begins a process of closing down of training camps. Finally, Pakistan must end its support to cross border terrorism. General Pervez Musharraf's regime must not just ideologically distance itself from the extremist groups, which it has not so far done successfully, but be seen to be acting decisively against them. Meanwhile, New Delhi must continue with measures designed to win back the hearts and minds of the Kashmiri people. It is commendable that the security forces are continuing their policy of restraint despite tremendous provocations. If this initiative succeeds, it will become obvious to the people of Kashmir that it is Pakistan and its outfits alone who are responsible for the continuing violence.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

5 DEC 2000

Ceasefire concerns

By K. K. Katyal

The Centre's stand on autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir and related matters has been marked by confusion. This deficiency, however, need not be allowed to create prejudice against the peace move.

A WEEK after it came into force and a fortnight after it was announced by the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, the cessation of operations by the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir holds good. That, no doubt, is a happy news. Not that there were no cases of terrorist violence, but the Government chose not to be deflected from the positive track adopted by it in the hope that pressures for peace would mount and saner counsel dawn on the militant and jihadi outfits and their mentors on the other side of the border. However, uncertainty and unease will continue till then.

As was evident from the start, the key to the success of the ceasefire is with Pakistan. The hard decision of the ruling establishment in Islamabad — whether or not to give the Indian “gesture” a chance — will determine its fate.

So far, Pakistan has not said anything that would mean a rejection of New Delhi's move. First it was ambivalent, later wanting the ceasefire extended beyond Ramzan and making a case for political dialogue, on the one hand, through New Delhi's talks with the Hurriyat and, on the other, with the regime in Islamabad. And finally over the weekend it announced it would exercise “maximum restraint” along the Line of Control. India treats this cautious response with ifs and buts as positive though the final judgment will be reserved until the ground situation provides firm, supporting evidence. There is no immediate insistence by Pakistan on making the talks trilateral, though this point continues to be stressed along with the need for adding “substance” to the Vajpayee announcement. Interestingly, the Pakistan Government is now for the Lahore process, as is evident from the statement of its Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdus Sattar. Soon after the military takeover, he gave the impression of the new regime distancing itself from Lahore — seeking to trivialise the Declaration with the use of a Punjabi expression *fallana, damaka*, (this one, that one), in reply to pointed queries.

Whether Pakistan's present stand is genuine or tactical will be known after some time. Because of the all-round welcome by the world community, Islamabad could not have brushed it aside. It could

not have forgotten the flak it received for wrecking the ceasefire move by the Hizbul-Mujahideen.

The Hizb essentially is a body of militants of the Kashmir Valley, but under the operational control of the elements on the other side of the Line of Control and the official agencies there. The Pakistani establishment cleared the earlier ceasefire suggestion by the Valley-based groups in the hope that it would not be acceptable to New Delhi. But the Centre's positive response upset its calculations. With New Delhi engaged in talks with a section of the State's militants, Islamabad feared that it would be sidelined. Hence the determined bid to scuttle the Hizb move. Hence the insistence on trilateral talks, involving Pakistan as well. Offered by New Delhi, the present unilateral move is qualitatively different. A lot more crudity would be required to wreck it.

The November 19 statement by the Prime Minister contained a lot more than was seen in it in the first instance or even later. There was no ambiguity about the operative part — that the Government instructed the security forces “not to initiate combat operations” against the militants during Ramzan, the most pious month in the Islamic calendar. What was not clearly understood was that the peace call was meant for Pakistan, apart from the militants. This was the meaning of the concluding part — Mr. Vajpayee's plea for full appreciation of the gesture was followed by an expression of the hope that violence in the State and — this was important — infiltration from across the Line of Control and the international border would cease and peace prevail. Read this point about the end of infiltration, along with the preceding reference to New Delhi's efforts to “hold talks with all those who are prepared for a dialogue” and you will find a flexibility, missing in the earlier, oft-repeated Indian formulation — talks only when trans-border violence ends. The

Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, merely elaborated this point when he told the BJP Parliamentary Party last week that the Government's initiative was addressed not only to Kashmiri militants but “also to Pakistan” and that Islamabad should take advantage of it.

Likewise, Mr. Vajpayee was not indulging in a *pro forma* exercise when he recalled his August 3 statement in Srinagar, calling for solutions in the spirit of *insaniyat* (humanism). The idea was to reiterate — for the benefit of those allergic to a dialogue within the Indian Constitution — that New Delhi intended keeping up the flexibility, indicated on the eve of the Hizb-initiated ceasefire call. He, thus, sought to underscore the parameters for fresh talks.

The Prime Minister's initiative was noteworthy on two counts — one, the unilateral announcement not to initiate action against the militants, and two, the readiness for talks with them and (impliedly) also with Pakistan. It, however, did not provide evidence of New Delhi's broad vision or the specifics of a solution to the problem it had in mind. One would not have laboured this omission had concrete or even semi-concrete indications been available in the past. On the contrary, the Centre's stand on the State's autonomy and related matters has been marked by confusion. This deficiency, however, need not be allowed to create prejudice against the peace move.

It is hard to be categorical about the outcome of what has rightly been described as a “calculated risk”, a “gamble”. Its great potential for restoration of normality in the hapless State is to be recognised. Sick and tired of a prolonged dislocation — and the incalculable harm it had done to an entire generation — the people will support any move which seeks to reverse the current tide. At the same time, it is clear that a small determined minority is enough to scuttle the initiative.

In the fortnight after the ceasefire announcement (on November 19), the reactions and responses were weighted in favour of peace (though, the killings by terrorist outfits, which did not hide their identity, could not be ignored). Within the country, there was all-round support. With the exception of a fringe group, ironically a constituent of the ruling alliance, the Shiv Sena.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the militants who took a positive view (despite reservations) of the ceasefire vastly outnumbered those who did not. On the other side of the border, it was a different story. Most terrorist organisations opposed it vociferously, and only a small minority seemed prepared to give it a chance. Pakistan could not be expected to own up its role in using the jihadi outfits based in its territory for terrorist campaigns in Kashmir. But their restraint is a material factor from the Indian standpoint. Pakistan could not pretend it had no control over them. Only last year, towards the concluding phase of the Kargil operation, when the then Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, accepted the U.S. demand for withdrawal of troops from the Indian side of the LoC, did these jihadi heroes threaten defiance and declare they would organise a march to Srinagar. However, Islamabad had no difficulty enforcing their obedience.

The present initiative is the outcome of the extension of the processes which were set in motion in the first quarter of this year, with unpublicised contacts between the Hizb's representatives and New Delhi which led to the announcement of the ceasefire by it. For a while, after the collapse of that move, there was a pause. Later, contacts were resumed at various levels, involving several persons both in individual and representative capacity. Neither the new young Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid nor Mr. Mansoor Ijaz, member of the U.S.-based Council on Foreign Relations and investment fund manager, who had been talking of having mooted formulae for India-Pakistan conciliation, is to be denied the satisfaction of projecting his role as crucial. The consultation process, however, was much wider — which was a plus point. What matters in the ultimate analysis is the result. Let us pray that it will be positive.

THE HINDU

- 4 JUNE 2000

- 3 JUNE 2000

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2000

BEYOND THE CEASEFIRE

HARDLY A week into the unilateral Ramzan ceasefire initiative in Jammu and Kashmir, announced dramatically by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, some serious questions have been thrown up about the Government's strategic approach with specific reference to the ceasefire. Of late, the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, has been dwelling on the 'Lahore-II' theme, asserting that the initiative is addressed as much to Pakistan as to the militant outfits. All along, the Vajpayee regime had been maintaining that insurgency in Kashmir was an issue strictly between the Indian state and some 'misguided' elements in the Valley and, for that reason, any peace negotiations would have to be only with those groups. The official response to the Hizb-ul Mujahideen's ceasefire offer last July also reflected that position. The militants perceived it as an attempt to play upon the 'indigenous-foreign' divide among them and as turning away from any engagement with Pakistan. But Mr. Advani's portrayal of the Ramzan-linked ceasefire as India's "second" major peace initiative after Mr. Vajpayee's bus journey to Lahore (1999) and as a "second chance" for Pakistan is substantially at variance with the Government's earlier policy enunciations.

What stands out in all the ceasefire-centred rhetoric emanating from the powers that be — insofar as it related to Pakistan — is the Vajpayee administration's two-track approach of being seen internally as tough towards Pakistan even while projecting itself to the outside world as reasonable and gracious towards a wayward neighbour. The wide support the ceasefire initiative has received from other countries, including the United States, the U.K., Russia and even China, seemed to strengthen the internal solution approach though the support may not last too long in the absence of a move towards a permanent solution. To the extent that it opens up an opportunity for de-escalation of violence

in the long traumatised Jammu and Kashmir, the ceasefire is a welcome development. There can be no denying the imperative of exploring every possible way of making it a success, either. And the positive reaction worldwide to India's move and the call, as a corollary, to all those concerned, including Pakistan, to respond positively to it are quite understandable in that context. But that cannot justify complacency of the type that has been very much in evidence in the post-ceasefire phase.

As for the situation on the ground, the scale of terrorist-related violence since the coming into operation of the ceasefire (November 28) must be said to be not particularly worrisome, considering the fact that it had met with a negative response from most of the major militant groups and that quite a few of the pan-Islamic jihadi outfits have declared their intention to step up their attacks during the Ramzan month, if only to register their disapproval of the ceasefire initiative. Even the All-Party Hurriyat Conference and the Hizb-ul Mujahideen, while not rejecting the offer outright, have expressed some serious reservations and would like India to "improve" upon the initiative. Whether the ceasefire, which is just a week old, will hold for the rest of the Ramzan month even at the current level is difficult to say. At one level, it depends on the Government showing a resolve to stick to its decision on cessation of hostilities (without, of course, lowering its guard against terrorist offensive) despite the likely provocative attempts to scuttle it. At another and more important level, it hinges critically on the Vajpayee regime moving towards engagement with Pakistan, apart from evolving a properly-calibrated multitrack approach that encompasses the various distinctive strands of the Kashmiri opinion and interest. For a start, the Government would do well to remove the confusion, and contradictions, its recent official pronouncements have thrown up in this vital area.

THE HINDU

4 DEC 2000

4 DEC 2000

GROUND REALITY: RESTRAINT PROPOSAL COMES WITH STRINGS ATTACHED AS PRESSURE MOUNTS FOR TRIPARTITE TALKS

India plays waiting game with Pakistan's LoC offer

Indrani Bagchi

NEW DELHI 3 DECEMBER

DEFERRING TO a Parliament session, the government put off until Monday its reaction to Pakistan's offer of restraint along the Line of Control (LoC).

The mood of the government was summed up by home minister L.K. Advani who said India would wait and watch for the ground realities to change before formulating a reply.

Indian ambassador to Pakistan Vijay Nambiar is also due to arrive on Monday for consultations.

India is playing the latest Pakistan offer cautiously and with good reason.

On the face of it the ceasefire does not mean much, since it addresses only one of India's demands, of stopping firing along the LoC.

The other issues, of stopping cross-border terrorism or infiltration, have not

been addressed by Pakistan.

In fact, Pakistan foreign secretary Inamul Haq was quoted by the country's newspaper Dawn as saying that it exercised no control on Mujahideen in J&K and could not persuade them to scale down their activities.

However, military analysts here pointed out that Pakistan frequently uses intensified shelling across the LoC as cover for militants entering the valley.

The government will therefore wait to see whether Pakistan's offer includes this particular subtext.

India's circumspection is also driven by the fact that Saturday's announcement was not made by either the Pakistani foreign minister or chief executive Pervez Musharraf. India's own ceasefire offer was ordered by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Further, after Kargil, Kandahar and Pakistan's scuttling of the last ceasefire

offer by Hizbul Mujahideen, India cannot afford to give Pakistan the benefit of doubt. And nothing less than changing ground realities will do.

Pakistan's "restraint" offer comes with strings attached. Not only does the country have made a case for tripartite talks, it also wants India to allow the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) "fulfil its mandate" by monitoring the situation.

India has not recognised the authority of the UNMOGIP since 1972. It believes it to be ineffectual and partial to Pakistan.

Besides, the Pakistani statement gives All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) the kind of importance India may not be completely comfortable with, given the professed pro-Pakistani sentiments expressed by some of its leaders.

The Indian government had begun exploring dialogue options with the

Hizbul Mujahideen, the largest militant group operating in the valley, and would want to continue that process. The local commanders of the Hizb have remained largely silent through the past week, all comments being made from Pakistan.

The easiest reason for Pakistan's response could be traced to statements made by the US assistant secretary of state, Karl Inderfurth, here a few days ago as well as Mr Advani's statement on the Wagah border, which was reported extensively in the Pakistani press.

The home minister had asked Pakistan "to take advantage" of the "second Indian peace initiative" since Lahore. Besides, it is believed that one of the IMF conditionalities is that Pakistan had to reduce military expenditure. This present restraint offer, therefore, was the absolute minimum Pakistan

could do without giving up any of their traditional positions.

The more charitable view is that Pakistan is finally responding to the sentiments in the Valley that is plugging peace. Both the Hurriyat and domestic voices within Pakistan have been urging Islamabad to take a more positive view of the Indian ceasefire offer.

According to analysts, one of the reasons for Pakistan's offer could be that in the event of a dialogue between Kashmiris and the New Delhi succeeding, Pakistan did not want to be left out in the cold. This, they say, is Pakistan's way of ensuring a toehold in any Kashmir talks.

As a matter of fact, Pakistan foreign secretary Inamul Haq on Saturday nuanced the Pakistan demand for tripartite talks, by saying that during the month of Ramzan, India and Pakistan should "separately" conduct talks with the APHC, working towards a tripartite solution afterwards.

The Economic Time.

4 JAN 05 6 2 00

DIALOGUE OFFER COMES WITH STRINGS ATTACHED

Pak. orders 'maximum restraint' along LoC

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 2. Yielding to pressure from various quarters, particularly the United States, Pakistan today ordered its troops along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir to exercise "maximum restraint" and formally conveyed to India its willingness to enter into a "meaningful dialogue" to address the Kashmir conflict.

At a crowded press conference here, the Pakistani Foreign Secretary, Mr. Inamul Haq, read out a three-page statement containing Pakistan's response to the November 19 Indian initiative on Kashmir.

An invitation to the executive committee of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) to visit Islamabad for consultations, a plea to India to invite the APHC leaders for a similar purpose and to allow them to travel to Pakistan, are the other components of the

formula unveiled in the press statement.

Tripartite talks

As Mr. Haq put it, Pakistan wants both India and Pakistan to utilise the Ramzan period (ending in the last week of December) to prepare the ground for a process of tripartite negotiations. It believes that permitting the APHC leaders to talk separately to the Indian and Pakistan Governments could pave the way for dialogue. "We want the tripartite dialogue to begin immediately after Ramzan."

It is believed that Mr. Haq formally invited the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. Vijay Nambiar, to the Foreign Office and conveyed to him the points made in the press statement.

Today's statement can undoubtedly be termed a positive response to the Indian initiative, though in effect it does not reflect any change in Pakistan's Kashmir policy. However, Pakistan has for

the first time since the ceasefire announcement acknowledged the initiative as a small opening for resolution of the Kashmir dispute and resumption of dialogue stalled since May 1999.

Ifs and buts

Mr. Haq said the Pakistani response was meant to test "India's sincerity" and emphasised that there was no basic shift in Pakistan's policy. The statement was full of ifs and buts. On the ceasefire on LoC, Pakistan not only expects India to reciprocate but wants India to allow the United Nations Military Observers Group for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) to effectively monitor the situation. It said suspension of military operations in Kashmir would be meaningful only if it was combined with a purposeful dialogue; also, India should announce a permanent end to the "policy of repression and violence, reduction of Indian forces, release all detainees and respect

the fundamental rights of Kashmiris".

"Pakistan is prepared to enter into a meaningful dialogue with India to address the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, correctly described by the United Nations Security Council as the root cause of tension between the two countries, as well as other disputes, in conformity with Security Council resolutions, principles of justice, international law and the past agreements between the two countries," the statement said.

The High Commissioner to Pakistan, Mr. Vijay K. Nambiar, is expected to visit New Delhi on December 5 for "consultations" on the ceasefire and the response from various quarters, including the Pakistan Government.

THE HINDU

- 3 DEC 2000

MILITANTS TRIGGER SERIES OF BLASTS; 11 INJURED

'A second chance for Pak.'

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, DEC. 1. Within a week of describing India's unilateral Ramzan ceasefire offer in Jammu and Kashmir as 'Lahore-II', the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, today asked Pakistan to seize the initiative as it provided yet another chance to Islamabad to resume the stalled bilateral talks. But militants in the Valley continued to strike terror effecting a series of blasts and grenade attacks, injuring 11 persons.

(Two bombs were set in cars in Srinagar's busy Jehangir Chowk area and an equal number of grenades were detonated at two places — one in Srinagar, and another in Pattan, Baramulla district.)

Undeterred by efforts by militants to undermine the ceasefire, Mr. Advani appealed to Pakistan to consider the ceasefire seriously and "end cross-border terrorism" as it would "help resume bilateral talks". He was speaking at a Raising Day parade of the Border Security Force.

The Home Minister said Pakistan has been isolated in the international community due to its active support and aid to cross-border terrorism. "The Lahore bus yatra by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, had provided it an opportunity to come out of this isolation. But Pakistan lost even that opportunity



A securityman inspects the scene where a bomb went off in a car in Srinagar on Friday. — Photo: Nissar Ahmad

when it sent its forces into Kargil last year," Mr. Advani said.

Calling upon Pakistan to give up the path of violence, Mr. Advani repeated that India only wanted it to accept its small demand of ending cross-border terrorism that would help in the resumption of dialogue between the two countries. "At this crucial juncture, Pakistan should keep the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration in mind and end terrorism to develop friendship with India."

"Terrorism is a crime against the whole humanity and not only against a particular country. The whole world has recognised this

and decided to isolate the countries supporting terrorism."

Mr. Advani also presented the President's police medals for gallantry and distinguished service to BSF personnel.

Bombs go off

By Shujaat Bukhari

JAMMU, DEC. 1. Militants set off a string of blasts and launched grenade attacks in Kashmir on the fourth day of the ceasefire, injuring at least 11 persons, three of them seriously, and damaging two cars. In other incidents, one former militant was killed and a civilian shot at in the city.

Unidentified militants hurled a

grenade at an Army vehicle in Pattan market on the Srinagar-Baramulla highway. The grenade missed the target and exploded on the road, injuring 11 civilians. However, as during the last three days, there was no retaliatory action from the security forces, even as panic gripped the area and shops were closed.

Two blasts were triggered in Jehangir Chowk in the heart of Srinagar in the afternoon. Police said the bombs were kept in two cars; though the cars were damaged there was no casualty.

(According to PTI, militants used tactics similar to the August-10 bombing when 15 persons were killed, mostly police personnel and a photo-journalist. They first blasted a car in Jehangir Chowk to invite the attention of security personnel, but failed. As the forces prevented curious on-lookers from moving towards the blast site, another car packed with explosives nearby blew up 15 minutes later.)

Police said a former militant of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, Noor Mohammad Bhat, was shot dead by unidentified militants in Chanpora. One civilian, Bashir Ahmed, was shot at by unknown assailants outside the Jamia Masjid in downtown Srinagar.

Lone' call: Page 14

THE HINDU

- 2 DEC 2000

Army optimistic about ceasefire

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, NOV. 30. Despite the recent landmine blast, the Army is optimistic that the ceasefire in Kashmir will hold during the month of Ramzan. The army has suspended "cordon and search" operations which involve forcible house searches. Besides, "pro-active" operations which include chasing and encountering insurgents have also been halted.

But it continues to adopt a defensive posture, namely providing security to military convoys, maintaining VIP security and guarding key "strategic installations" such as power plants and communication nodes with added vigilance.

The Government's expectation that the ceasefire will hold is based on two key factors. First, Pakistan's capacity to violate the ceasefire has been severely curbed. With the split between the local militants and the pan-Islamic "Jehadis" becoming increasingly visible, Pakistan's capacity to carry out attacks has been restricted. Sources say the local militants in the past catalysed the induction of the Jehadis into Kashmir. Specifically, they have been the key conduits for fusing the link between foreigners and the local Kashmiris and for providing them with the necessary intelligence for operations. But increasingly deprived of the local militant support, the ability of the Jehadi organisations such as the Lashkar-e-Toiba and the Harkatul Mujahideen to undertake operations is likely to diminish in the coming days.

Second, the quality of intelligence has dramatically improved. Sources say that with the sentiment against violence in Kashmir gaining ground, there has been an outpouring of "ac-

tionable" intelligence from the local population, helping to nip militant bids in the bud.

With Pakistan's potential for creating turmoil in Kashmir receding, Islamabad might focus on creating a military crisis in a "disputed area" along the Line of Control. Analysts, however, feel that such a situation is unlikely to arise. The weather along the LoC is worsening, discouraging such activity. Besides, the army has been deployed in force along the key infiltration routes which have

been identified, deterring hostile activity. Nevertheless, the army is not lowering its guard, especially along the LoC. Its concerns have been activated by the developments revolving around Afghanistan. With the U.N. security council sanctions including an arms embargo against the Taliban in Afghanistan imminent, the security establishment here is evaluating the possibility of a powerful Jehadi backlash both internally in the Pakistan-Afghanistan zone as well as its spinoff in Kashmir.

THE HINDU

1 DEC 2000

Pak must first take steps to restore confidence: PM

61-2

Tarun Basu
NEW DELHI 28 NOVEMBER

PRIME MINISTER Atal Behari Vajpayee on Sunday said Pakistan must first take steps to restore confidence before New Delhi and Islamabad can start talking again.

"The ground reality is hardly conducive to resumption of meaningful dialogue. Let Pakistan first take steps to restore confidence and create the right atmosphere for a meaningful dialogue," Vajpayee said in an interview.

Vajpayee said even before the military coup in Pakistan, India had made it clear that Pakistan must stop trans-border terrorism and end its hostile propaganda against India.

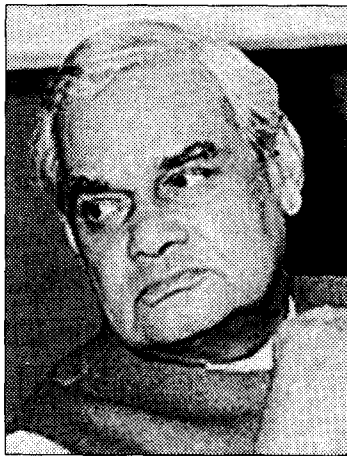
Pakistan also has to demonstrate its commitment to the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, the Prime Minister said.

He said talking to Pakistan did not amount to giving legitimacy to non-elected regimes as India has dealt with military regimes in Pakistan in the past. But "dialogue with Pakistan does not negate our stated position that democracy is

the best guarantor of peace and cooperation," he said.

Asked whether the United States was being somewhat ambiguous in its dealings with Pakistan despite its vocal advocacy of democracy, Vajpayee replied tersely: "It would seem so."

Returning from Durban, South Africa, where he had gone earlier this month to attend the Commonwealth summit, Vajpayee had wondered whether the US approach was guided by some other consideration and "democracy is not uppermost for them (US)."



Vajpayee: Security concerns

Vajpayee avoided answering questions on US President Bill Clinton's proposed visit to India but said as a result of the strategic dialogue between the two countries since last year, which he described as the most serious and substantive since independence, "our security concerns are better understood."

Vajpayee referred to the growing interaction between the two countries, particularly in sunrise industries, and said his government's efforts would aim to strengthen Indo-US dialogue and promote greater cooperation. — IANS

Musharraf firm on Kashmir's inclusion in talks with India

29 11

Muhammad Najeeb
ISLAMABAD 28 NOVEMBER

PAKISTAN'S CHIEF executive, General Pervez Musharraf, has ruled out a new approach towards India that would sideline the Kashmir dispute and insisted the issue holds the key to progress in bilateral ties.

"If you mean to put Kashmir aside, how can you do that?" he said in an interview to Time magazine when asked whether a new approach was necessary to improve relations with India.

"People are dying in Kashmir, and I go happy and smiling and grinning to meet all the Indian leaders? I'm not like that. I can't do that. If there is some tension in my heart, it is on my face," Musharraf said.

"We have to resolve all our issues with India. That is the only way this region can progress economically. But can we do anything without progress on Kashmir? No, it is just not realistic," he said.

"We have fought wars over it (Kashmir) and every day there is an exchange of fire along the Line of Control (LoC)," Musharraf said in the interview which is to appear in Time's next edition.

Musharraf also ruled out any referendum on his regime that came to power on October 12 after toppling the civilian government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, and evaded a direct answer on when and whether he planned to restore democracy.

— IANS

Pak involvement unlikely: IAF

Shishir Gupta
New Delhi, November 14

WHILE THE IAF is still ascertaining the causes of the Mi-8 crash in the Rann of Kutch, reliable sources here indicated that it was a normal accident and there is prima facie no involvement of Pakistan.

Highly-placed Government sources indicated that there was no evidence on ground to indicate that the helicopter had been shot down by unidentified "fishermen" in the Kori creek area or that Pakistan was involved in the mishap.

It was perhaps due to these reasons that the IAF today clarified that the reference to possibility of Pakistan's involvement in the incident, attributed to Air Chief A.Y. Tipnis by a section of the media, was factually incorrect.

The IAF spokesman said the Chief of Air Staff had only commented on the possibility of the helicopter being shot down. Air Chief Tipnis's response to this question said: "It is possible but it is premature to comment on that at this stage." According to the spokesman: "No reference was made to Pakistan. A court of inquiry had been ordered to establish the cause of the crash."

Later this evening, all the seven bodies had been

recovered and autopsies conducted in Bhuj. IAF spokesman said that in deference to the wishes of the deceased's first of kin, bodies of two IAF personnel had been sent to Jamnagar, while bodies of five others had been handed over to the BSF.

The crash took place in an area where the Indian armed forces had mounted a vigil amidst reports, from across the border, of Pakistani readjustment and reinforcement of forces since last year.

The Indian threat perception in the area, particularly the disputed Sir Creek, has increased in the aftermath of downing of the Pakistani Atlantique aircraft on Aug. 10, 1999.

In fact, intelligence reports have pointed time and again at the possibility of intrusion by mujahideens trained to undertake sabotage operations

in the industrial heart of India. These reports have spoken about Pakistanis intruding into Indian territory in the guise of "fisherman" in Kori and Sir Creek.

On the basis of these reports, the three armed services, the Coast Guard and the BSF conducted exercises off the coast of Jamnagar to foil any Pakistani design in the region. The war games were conducted to increase coordination and ensure faster Indian response in case intrusions took place in the area.



THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 NOV 2000

When neighbours can't be chosen

Musharraf, so what?

I NDO-PAKISTAN relations have been in doldrums for about 16 months now. A static inflexible attitude can serve Indian interests only up to a point. The determination to oppose terrorism should not diminish our ability to undertake political initiatives to safeguard our long-term interests. Bringing about a normal relationship with Pakistan is important. Our present policy stance of not resuming a dialogue with Pakistan till Pakistan stops violence in Jammu and Kashmir merits a review.

National security adviser of the outgoing Clinton administration Sandy Berger asserted in a recent speech to the George Town University that an Indo-Pakistan war was imminent in 1999 and that it was Clinton's intervention which prevented it. Assistant secretary of state for South Asia Karl Inderfurth clarified certain nuances of South Asian policies of the US. He underlined that there was no validity in the general assessment that the US had become pro-India and antagonistic towards Pakistan since the Kargil conflict. He stressed that the US deals with India and Pakistan separately within the framework of US interests. He emphasised that the US wants a resumption of Indo-Pakistan dialogue on bilateral issues. He implied that the most important issue is Kashmir, which cannot be wished away.

There would be a continuity in US perceptions and policies on Indo-Pakistan relations regardless of who captures the presidency. The main ingredients of the US policies on Indo-Pakistan relations are: Conflict-prone, tense relations between India and Pakistan will impact negatively on stability and peace in South Asia which compounds the tensions which the USA faces in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Such instability will also affect the security of the Gulf region, where the US has vital interests. Indo-Pakistan confrontation also spans religious extremism, terrorism and narco-crimes. The nuclear weaponisation of India and Pakistan is a dangerous element given the explosive historical

and emotional impulses affecting J&K and Indo-Pakistan relations. The US, therefore, considers the restoration of negotiations between India and Pakistan as an objective of its South Asia policies. The US has come round the view that any change of the territorial arrangements in J&K rooted in the Line of Control would lead to heightened tensions and military confrontation. So the US supports the Indian stance on the sensitivity of the LOC. This, however, should not be interpreted as US supporting India's stance on the basic and overall issues affecting J&K. The US considers Kashmir a dispute between India and Pakistan which has to be re-



J.N. DIXIT

Beyond a certain point of time, India's refusal to resume a dialogue will lead to perceptions about India being obstinate and unreasonable

solved bilaterally. It is also of the view that any solution of the problem has to take into account the interests of the people of J&K who live on both sides of the LOC. There will be continuity in this policy approach.

Discussions on political compromises based on the grant of more autonomy to J&K have become active and substantial. The two most important dissenting political groups, the Hurriyat Conference and the Hizbul Mujahideen, seem to be coming round to the view that they should engage in negotiations with the Government of India. The Hurriyat leadership and a major segment of the Hizbul Mujahideen seemed to be willing to talk to the government in what they call the first phase of negotiations without insisting on the presence of Pakistan. This modification of their view about the conditionality of Pakistani presence seems to be the result of three factors.

Political realism, the people of J&K being weary of the prolonged violence and perceptions about international attitudes and pressures necessitate a dialogue. One should at the same time realise that Pakistan will remain obdurate about any separate discussions being undertaken between Kashmiri opposition groups and the Indian government. But Pakistan may find it difficult

to stick to this negative attitude if the major Kashmir groups take the stance of agreeing to a dialogue without Pakistani presence in the initial stages. There are reports of Pakistan being advised by the US not to stand in the way of the initiation of the discussions.

The Musharraf government has adopted a clever public stance that it is willing to resume dialogue with India at any time, at any place, with Kashmir being the core issue on the agenda, without any pre-conditions. The US continues to have the capacity to exert some influence on Pakistan to move towards normalisation of relations with India.

While there is a stand-off between the governments of India and Pakistan, non-governmental contacts between the two countries have been going on. Delegations consisting of women's organisations and NGOs dealing with human rights have been exchanged with consistent frequency.

These delegations included journalists, former diplomats and former military commanders. Their objective has been to see if the aberrations caused by Kargil can be removed and some sort of a dialogue resumed. The general conclusion that one draws from these devel-

opments is that there is a groundswell of opinion in both countries and J&K to resume negotiations.

There is, therefore, a need for India to re-examine the policy stance that it has adopted of not agreeing to a dialogue with Pakistan till there is complete cessation of terrorist intervention in J&K. The Indian stance is logical and valid at the normative levels. But then there is need for flexibility which would be responsive to emerging political realities. That there is an inclination towards such a flexibility is reflected in the government's willingness to talk to the dissident groups of J&K without any political pre-conditions. No political compromise negotiated with the dissident groups of J&K can be durable without a separate discussion between India and Pakistan, leading to an endorsement of these possible compromises. There is a need to discuss confidence-building measures to ensure strategic restraint between India and Pakistan in terms of their nuclear weapons. This need was acknowledged during the Lahore meeting between Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif. The policy not to resume dialogue with Pakistan will only strengthen the military dictatorship as it would argue for its continuance in power to meet the threat from India inherent in its rejection of a dialogue.

Important world powers backed by the international community will move back from the generally supportive attitude that it has taken in favour of India's rational and mature reaction to the Kargil conflict. Beyond a certain point of time, India's refusal to resume a dialogue will lead to perceptions about India being obstinate and unreasonable. Our argument that we shall not deal with a military dictatorship, particularly a military leader who engineered the Kargil conflict, may find acceptance only for a limited period. The requirement of realpolitik is to deal with whatever government is in effective power in Pakistan. It is time both countries transcended their insular xenophobic antagonism to get back to the negotiating table.

HD-15

'Greater flexibility needed for peace'

11/11

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, NOV. 10. India and Pakistan should show a high degree of "honest resolve" to engage each other as the benefits of peace far outweigh the perceived advantages of conflict, urges a study by Major General Mahmud Ali Durrani, a former senior official of Pakistan Army. Under the present conditions, dialogue was the only option and both the countries ought to display a greater level of flexibility, detached from their rigid stands of more than half a century, says the study titled "India and Pakistan: The Cost of Conflict - The benefit of Peace".

Presenting the study, termed the "Balusa Study," Maj. Gen. Durrani said here today that there could be no negotiations from inflexible positions. Peace would help, not just Pakistan and India, but the entire South Asia, to prosper. It would require bold initiatives and statesmanship from the leaders of both the countries. Though a bilateral approach was recommended, a "trustworthy" facilitator could be a useful catalyst, he said suggesting third-party mediation.

In spite of their inherent strengths, India and Pakistan remained poor while many countries in the region, which were behind them in the 1940s, leapfrogged in development. High military spending and poor management of affairs were responsible for this underdevelopment. Improvement on both these fronts would have helped India and Pakistan join the Asian tigers. High military spending did not bring security. Instead, it resulted in retarded development. The hostilities of half a century were not able to even address the basic causes of friction between the two countries. Nuclearisation added an entirely new dimension to the security and development concerns of the region.

Supported by appropriate data, the study argues that peace can defuse nuclear time bomb, redirect funds from "guns to people" and from defence to development, increase bilateral trade and help develop an effective regional bloc and joint economic and industrial projects. It would improve the investment climate and bring about a positive nation-

al focus instead of the present obsession with adversarial positions. Besides bilateral engagement at the political level, there should be "track-II" efforts in which people of both the countries develop contacts. Other options could be expansion of SAARC and involvement of regional and world powers.

Referring to the "top ranks" India and Pakistan had in terms of the size of the military establishments as against deplorable GNP positions, Maj. Gen. Durrani said both the countries "were out of sync with the rest of the world". The annual growth of military expenditure went down everywhere else except here. It was absurd to rub shoulders with the five nuclear powers of the world, when the poor were wallowing in poverty.

Addressing questions from journalists at an open session, which followed the presentation of the study, on how a democracy like India could talk peace with a military regime in Pakistan, Maj. Gen. Durrani said the "world is full of examples that militaries and autocracies can cooperate with democracies". The regime in Pakistan genuinely shared the concerns expressed in the study, he said responding to another question. About the visions of a reunion of both the countries, as expressed in some quarters, he said 99.99 per cent of Pakistanis did not want reversion to the undivided status.

The study was meant to present to the people of both the countries the futility of war, the dismal plight of people caught in between and the benefits of peace, he said. It was also aimed at fostering the traditional ties between the two countries as a vehicle for peace.

Ms. Shirin Tahir-Kheli, Chairperson of "BALUSA Group," a small coalition of academics, journalists, intellectuals, former diplomats and army officials from Pakistan and India, working for the reduction of conflict between the two countries, introduced the study and Maj. Gen. Durrani. The presentation of the study was part of a meeting of the BALUSA Group which began in Chennai on Friday. The group had been meeting in Pakistan and India since 1996.

THE HINDU

11 NOV 2000

No tripartite talks on Kashmir, says Advani

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Pak

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UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

31/12

NEW DELHI, Dec. 30. — There can never be tripartite talks with Pakistan, because that "sort of" amounts to conceding an independent entity for Kashmir, Mr LK Advani said today.

India "will talk to our people" in J&K, and may even talk to Pakistan — but there can be no three-way parleys, the home minister told *Star News*. He ruled out the LoC ever being accepted as the international border.

Parliament had unanimously resolved a few years ago that PoK is a part of India, Mr Advani said. So there could be no question of the Centre "casually departing" from that stand.

The ceasefire initiative may run into difficulties and the results may not be visible immediately, he conceded. But a message has been sent out that ordinary Kashmiris — and the militants — long for peace.

The ceasefire was the second initiative, the first being the failed Lahore bus *yatra*, he said.

The Hizbul announcement about ceasefire some months ago failed because Pakistan had not been clear whether it wanted peace or not, he said.

Mr Advani agreed it may be necessary to treat Kashmir as a special case for devolution of power. But the Centre rejected the autonomy resolution as it was not possible to return to the pre-1953 position. Kashmiris already enjoy more autonomy than they did in 1953.

Mr Advani described the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba as an "outright" Pakistani outfit, financed, supported and abetted by Pakistan to wage a proxy war against



A paramilitary jawan stands guard on an armoured vehicle as a scooter passes by at Srinagar on Saturday. — AP/PTI

India.

Mr Jaswant Singh today said India is ready for talks with Pakistan but Islamabad must create a suitable environment and abjure *jehad* as a foreign policy.

Jaish threat

The Jaish-i-Mohammad today threatened to carry out suicide attacks in India after a bomb blast wrecked its office in Karachi, adds AFP. A girl was

killed and 10 people injured.

"Indian Raw was behind the blast at our office here. We'll now target Indian cities," Jaish leader, Mufti Jamil, said.

Jaish founder, Maulana Masood Azhar, said: "We'll send suicide bombers to Kashmir and Indian cities to avenge the attack that killed an innocent girl." **Ultras killed:** Five Al-Badr militants and two security men were killed in a gun-battle at Kandi in Kupwara today.

Ball back in Pak. court

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 29 The reported decision of the Indian Government to clear the travel documents of the leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), to enable them to proceed with their visit to Pakistan, puts the ball back in the court of Pakistan on the new initiatives in Kashmir in the last few weeks.

In its December 2 statement the Pakistan Government announced the policy of 'maximum restraint' on the Line of Control and extended an invitation to the Executive of the APHC to visit Islamabad for consultations on the Kashmir problem.

In extending the invitation to the Kashmiri leaders and appealing to the Indian Government to clear their travel documents, the Pakistani Government was perhaps testing the intentions of the Vajpayee Government more than anything else.

With the Indian Government having given the green signal to the APHC leaders to go ahead with their plans to visit Islamabad, in their individual capacity rather than as representatives of Kashmiris, the Pakistani Government would now have to gear up for the high profile visit.

What is more important the Pakistani Government would have to ensure that the visit goes off smoothly. And it is not easy in view of the divisions within the APHC on the role it wants Pakistan to play and perception of Kashmiri leaders on the role of

the Pakistan-based militant organisations. The issue of unification of Jammu and Kashmir as it existed prior to 1947 raised by some leaders of the APHC like Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone is another thorny issue for Pakistan. If any of the visiting Kashmiri leaders decide to rake up the issue, it could prove to be an embarrassment for the Pakistani Government.

Pakistan would also be anxious to ensure that the militant organisations operating from its soil do not go against the wishes of the Kashmiri leaders. The military government has not been able to reign in militant outfits such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Harakatul Ansari.

These organisations have not only rejected the peace moves by both India and Pakistan but have been openly advertising their intentions to strike at the military and other high profile installations and buildings in India. The recent attack on the Red Fort in Delhi is a case in point.

In the course of his recent visit to Islamabad, Mr. Lone had made it clear while help from the militant organisations was welcome in Kashmir, the political parties engaged in fight against India could not be expected to take dictation from them.

LeT threatens big strikes

PTI reports:

After its Red Fort strike, the Lashkar-e-Taiba has said it will carry big attacks on military installations and interrogation centres in India. The LeT chief, Mr.

Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, told thousands of worshippers on the occasion of Id-ul-Fitr that "fi-dayeen" (suicide) squad of the group would target Army installations in India and would "take revenge" on the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee for the Kashmiri killings.

CPI hails move

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, DEC. 29. The Communist Party of India today endorsed the decision of the Centre to allow Hurriyat leaders to travel to Pakistan and observed that the Government would at some point have to hold talks with Islamabad to resolve the Kashmir issue.

Describing the declaration of ceasefire as a step which was "long overdue", the CPI general secretary, Mr. A.B. Bardhan told *The Hindu* that the move could at best create a condition which would have to be followed up by substantive talks.

The party advocated that the Centre should first engage groups which had persuaded themselves to hold talks with the Government stating this in turn would create pressure on those who were recalcitrant. Unlike the shrill cry from NDA allies such as the Shiv Sena over the Ramzan peace initiative and subsequent attacks, the CPI said the country should not be 'disturbed' by some groups which were persisting in their violent activities and that these acts should not be allowed to derail the entire process.

THE HINDU

30 DEC 2000

Decks cleared for Hurriyat leaders' Pak visit

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 28. — The month-long tussle between Hurriyat leaders and the Centre over passport ended today with Mr L.K Advani clearing their passports and other travel documents to visit Pakistan for talks with militant organisations before participating in a dialogue with the Centre on the Jammu and Kashmir issue.

The special secretary in the home ministry, Mr TR Kakkar, refused to divulge any information. But sources in the ministry said the decision was taken last night at a high-level meeting after assessing the post-explosion and post-ceasefire security situation in the state.

The meeting was presided over by Mr Advani, who left for Mumbai this morning and is expected to return on 1 January.

"The government has considered the submissions made by the Hurriyat leaders, including its chairman, Mr Abdul Gani Bhatt," a home ministry official said. "The government is hopeful of holding talks with them early next year."

The Hurriyat leaders, at a meeting in Srinagar on 17 December, had unanimously decided to send a delegation on 15 January to start a dialogue with militants operating from Pakistan.

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"Allowing them to visit Pakistan is a step forward in the peace process. We hope militant organisations inside and outside the country and the Pakistan government will utilise the opportunity and resolve the dispute through negotiations across the table," the official said.

According to the home ministry, the impounded passport of Mr Abdul Gani Bhatt will be restored and a fresh passport issued to the JKLF chairman, Mr Yaseen Malik, who had applied for it in September.

Travel documents of the Shia leader, Maulana Abbas Ansari, whose passport was impounded after his recent visit to Doha, and Mr Abdul Bani Lone, who had been issued a country-specific passport, will also be restored.

Travel documents of the Jamaat leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, which was seized, has not been restored as he had not made any request. Former Hurriyat chairman, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, already has his papers in place.

"Initially, the names of Mr Bhatt, Mr Farooq and Mr Malik were not on the list seeking the government's signal for issue of travel documents. However, a consensus was reached on their names for the proposed Pakistan visit."



Locals chant pro-Pakistan slogans outside the Jamia mosque in Srinagar on Thursday. — AP/PTI

Pak behind ultras, repeats Advani

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 28. — Mr LK Advani has dismissed Pakistan's claim that it does not control the militant organisations operating in Kashmir.

Admitting that the "ceasefire" had made a "positive" impact, Mr Advani, said the government would review the situation in Jammu and Kashmir after 26 January to decide the future course of action.

The recent Red Fort raid was another attempt by militant organisations like the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba to unleash terror in the country and convey the message that they could even strike at the Red Fort, Mr Advani said.

India would not buy Pakistan's argument. The world knew that such organisations got training and support from the Pakistan government and the ISI. If they wish to, they can stop their operations, he said.

The home minister stressed that the ceasefire meant the security forces would not initiate any combat operations. "It does not mean that they would not return fire when attacked".

He expressed the hope that Islamabad would not let go of the chance offered by India in its second initiative for restoring peace in J&K. The minister said, "After a month of the ceasefire, we decided to extend it to give peace another chance. I hope that militant organisations and the Pakistan government will offer a correct response to the offer."

"The peace initiative is a part of the government's efforts to normalise the situation in the state and hold talks with all those who are prepared for a dialogue. It also generated considerable expectations for restoration of peace in the state," Mr Advani said.

Mr Advani said India had shown great assertiveness by making the ceasefire announcement, proving to the world that it could deal with militancy in Kashmir with a strong hand.

More militants had been killed in anti-militancy operations in the period from June to September than in the past few years.

Pak playing double game, says Bangaru

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, Dec. 27. — The BJP president, Mr Bangaru Laxman, today said that India cannot trust Pakistan and added that talks could not be held until and unless it stopped encouraging militancy.

Mr Laxman, addressing a press conference, said that going by the acts of terrorist organisations like the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba, it appears that Pakistan was playing a double game. "In order to send an international message, it declares that it will create a tension free atmosphere along the LOC. But on the other hand, it is continuing to encourage the activities of militant organisations," he said.

On the proposed talks between the Centre and the militants, the BJP leader said that it was possible as the extremists were getting desperate with the drying up of local cooperation.

"People have begun questioning militant organisations having outsiders like Pakistanis, Sudanese and Afghans, and are refusing them any kind of help," he said.

He, however, added that the Lashkar's latest threat to make the PMO its next target, was a matter of grave concern. This demonstrates that forces are out to subvert the Prime Minister's peace initiative, as it was yielding results and boosting the morale of the people in the valley, he said. He said that the recent attack on the Red Fort was one such act

NEW DELHI, Dec. 27. — The BJP today took exception to the reported threat by the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba that its next target was the Prime Minister's Office. The party held that the government might have to review the ceasefire decision if Pakistan failed to cooperate in the peace effort.

The PMO, however, brushed aside the threat saying that such threats keep coming to the office and there was nothing new in the one supposedly given by the Lashkar. The office clarified that the BJP spokesperson's view could not be taken as the government's view.

"When one moves ahead with the resolve to peace, such things are taken for granted," a source said. The government had anticipated an increase in activities of some militant outfits which are opposed to peace, the source added.

The senior party vice-president and spokesperson, Mr Jana Krishnamurthy, said Pakistan should take immediate steps to curb the Lashkar's activities. The organisation's threat was a challenge to Pakistan if it was serious on discussions with India on all pending issues, including Kashmir, he said.

Although India had declared a unilateral ceasefire, it could not continue for long and the entire world would have to take note of this, he said.

When asked on the recent strain in relations between the TDP and the Centre.

He said the state government was duty-bound to bring up the issues of the farmers to the Centre's notice. "I expect the state government too to do its duty. The government has to procure 70 per cent while the Centre has to procure 30 per cent of the rice," he added.

Mr Laxman said the situation in Assam and the North-east was alarming.

Chandrababu Naidu govern-

said. Even if efforts were made to thwart the peace process, it would seriously affect the situation, he said.

The BJP would call upon the Pakistani government to curb the activities of the Lashkar as the onus was on that country to prevent such nefarious attempts to disrupt peace, he said. "Outfits like the Lashkar, operating from Pakistani soil, with the connivance of the Pakistani government, have become desperate and are indulging in acts of violence... India can accept any challenge from Pakistan and Pakistan itself.

But if Pakistan is interested in peace and peaceful talks, it should not allow such outfits on its soil," Mr Krishnamurthy said.

The reason for these outfits' indulgence in violence was their fear that if peace came about, the very rationale of their existence would get knocked down, he said. Now it was for Pakistan to choose between peace and the militant outfits, he said.

Mr Krishnamurthy clarified that the party's stand was not taken out of fear of the Lashkar as it was confident that the security and Intelligence agencies were competent to tackle any such threat. He lauded the efforts of police to nab militants in the capital. — SNS

The Congress was not able to support the President's rule demand made by the Assam Congress unit. Similarly, the local Congress in Manipur wanted Central rule which the main party supported and later backtracked, he alleged.

He also criticized the Congress for taking up agitations on farmers issues now, as earlier the former Congress government itself had signed the WTO without keeping the farmers' interests in mind.

Violence casts shadow over peace moves

28/12
By K.K. Katyal

HD-13

NEW DELHI, DEC. 26. With most other procedural matters more or less becoming manageable, the continued terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir by jihadi outfits has emerged as a major issue to be taken up by India when it initiates "exploratory steps". This was a formidable hurdle in the way of the resumption of dialogue with Pakistan after the Kargil conflict, but the focus has sharpened now as the other impediments appear to have weakened.

The issue has crystallised in its starkest form. Here is a situation where India first announced a unilateral ceasefire and then extended it, while Pakistan decided to observe "maximum restraint" along the Line of Control and then to partially withdraw its troops from there. New Delhi reiterated its terms for talks with various Kashmiri groups, saying it was prepared to resolve all issues in the spirit of "insaniyat", while Pakistan gave up its earlier insistence on trilateral talks.

The level of violence has come down, the statements from New Delhi are conciliatory and the response by Pakistan, though halting, is positive. The resultant new situation, encouraging by itself, serves to highlight the criminality of the jihadi organisations and

their potential for causing damage.

Those speaking on behalf of these outfits do not mince words — they proclaim their resolve to continue the strikes and follow them with deadly actions. These organisations are based in Pakistan and use its sanctuary for planning and executing their plots against India. Despite disavowals by the Pakistani establishment, the fact that they enjoy official patronage, and all that goes with it — supply of arms, funds, guidance, training facilities — has not been in doubt. That some of them may have acquired a measure of autonomy is a different matter; none of them is outside the control of the Pakistani Government.

Witness the developments in the last three days. On December 22, three jawans were killed in the high-security Red Fort in Delhi by armed terrorists. The following day, Lashkar-e-Taiba claimed responsibility for the attack; its spokesman used the normal channels to contact the media. On December 25, a car-bomb explosion outside Army headquarters in Srinagar killed nine persons, including five soldiers. Responsibility for the attack was owned by two outfits, with known Pakistani connections.

New Delhi has moved away from its earlier position — that the end of trans-border vio-

lence is a pre-condition for re-starting the dialogue with Islamabad. It will, however, be well within its right in inquiring from Pakistan as to what it proposes to do to rein in the jihadis who, apart from indulging in heinous crimes, could jeopardise the peace process.

The activities of these organisations were very much in the mind of the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, when he announced extension of the ceasefire and related steps.

While noting the expansion of the constituency of peace and decline in terrorist violence, he referred to matters of continuing concern. Among these were the activities of the organisations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, "resulting in most unfortunate and regrettable loss of human lives, including of the personnel of the armed forces".

The continued violence casts a shadow over the peace moves and therefore, needs to be tackled effectively. This is recognised by the world community too. The United States President, Mr. Bill Clinton, for instance, while applauding the latest moves, said, "I continue to believe that all parties should reject violence and work for a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue."

THE HINDU

1999 DEC 26

Stop training militants, Fernandes tells Pak.

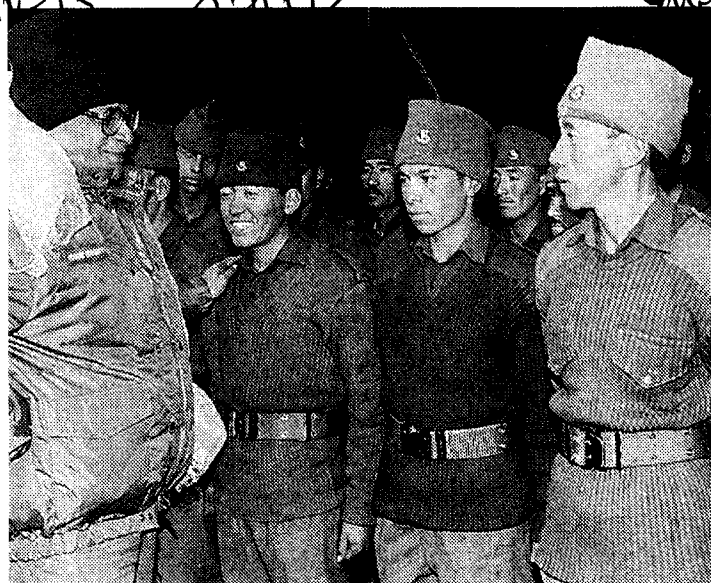
By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, DEC. 26. The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, today said Pakistan would have to dismantle terrorist camps inside its territory providing training to militants to establish the basis for a meaningful dialogue between the two countries.

"Pakistan's true intentions would be judged only when it stops giving aid to and training fundamentalists for creating disturbances across the border," said the Defence Minister while addressing troops in forward areas in Siachen Glacier and Kashmir Valley on Christmas Day.

At the same time, the Defence Minister maintained that terrorist activities such as the car-bomb explosion in Srinagar on Monday or the attack on the Red Fort will not deter India from attempting to bring stability to the disturbed areas of Jammu and Kashmir. "The time has come for Islamabad to realise that there was no alternative to pursuing the path of peace for the welfare of its own people and Jammu and Kashmir in particular."

The Defence Minister pointed out that during the last one month, firing on the border had considerably reduced and tension had gone down perceptibly. However, Pakistan had not stopped aiding and abetting terrorists in creating disturbances in various part of the India leading to loss of



The Union Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, talking to Army jawans at a forward Army base in Siachen Sector on Christmas Day.

innocent lives including women and children.

He said the extension of the ceasefire till January 26 will give an indication of Islamabad's intentions to establish a dialogue.

On the attack at Red Fort, he said it could not be termed a security lapse. While some Army troops were stationed in the fort, it was not as impregnable as generally assumed. Various civilian offices were located inside the premises and hundreds of visitors

from abroad and within the country visited the fort. There were also a large number of commercial establishments and many shop-owners living right in the fort. The back wall facing the Yamuna was open and unguarded. "In view of this, the place was not impregnable as is generally believed."

According to an official news release, the Minister "lauded the high morale of the forces and praised them for maintaining a strong vigil on the highest battle-

field in the world despite facing extreme weather conditions". This was Mr. Fernandes' 18th visit to the Glacier since he assumed office. On the occasion of Christmas, Mr. Fernandes distributed 5,000 pieces of cake to the troops. Mr. Fernandes said the key accused in the Bofors case the Italian businessmen, Mr. Ottavio Quattrocchi would be brought to India soon.

"There is no extradition treaty between India and Malaysia, which was causing delay and the Government was working out details to bring him to India," he told reporters after a talk on "socialism in the days of WTO" at the College of Combat Lawns in Mhow.

He said Mr. Quattrocchi's claim that he owned only one passport too would be proved wrong in due course.

Narrow escape

UNI reports:

Mr. Fernandes escaped unhurt when his car collided with a tractor, 15 km from Ratlam, in Madhya Pradesh, today. Police said the accident occurred when Mr. Fernandes was on way to Bamanaria from Jhabua district to attend the death anniversary function of socialist thinker Mama Baleshwar Dayal. Police have arrested the tractor driver Kaiju Badrinath.

THE HINDU

27 DEC 2000

World Court to consider India's objections

NO. 13 28/11/99
THE HAGUE, NOV. 25. The World Court has agreed to consider India's objection that it has no authority to rule on a Pakistani suit over the downing of a military aircraft that killed all 16 occupants.

Pakistan is seeking \$ 60.2 millions in reparations from India and compensation for the kin of the victims of the Atlantique aircraft shot down August 10 this year. *Indo Pak*

The U.N. Court said in a statement on Wednesday night that "the question of its jurisdiction to entertain the application shall be addressed first" before it would consider the Pakistani claim for damages.

The court said the parties had until February 28 to file arguments regarding its jurisdiction.

The court, formally called the International Court of Justice, frequently hears jurisdictional arguments based on international treaties before judging a case.

It has no enforcement powers of its own and relies on the U.N. Security Council to give teeth to its rulings.

India has rejected the Pakistani claim, arguing that the Pakistani military aircraft was on a hostile ~~military~~ mission and was engaged in espionage activity in Indian air space. — AP

THE HINDU

26 NOV 1999

Musharraf readying Pak. for 'flexibility' on Kashmir issue

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 25. A Pakistani-born US citizen engaged in mediation on the Kashmir dispute, Mr. Mansoor Ijaz, says that the Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, is preparing the country to show "maximum flexibility" for resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

In an interview to the Pakistani daily, *The News*, in Dubai, Mr. Ijaz has said that a pragmatic Gen. Musharraf cannot be expected to insist on U.N. plebiscite resolutions as the best mechanism to resolve the Kashmir problem.

Spelling out the blueprint for peace in Kashmir, Mr. Ijaz, who was recently in Delhi to interact with all those matter, envisages a summit meeting between the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and Gen. Musharraf some time in March that will kick-start the dialogue between the two countries.

Mr. Ijaz, who is considered close to the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, has said given the reactions in Kashmir to the 'jehadi' (militant) movement, Islamabad does not need another embarrassment of the Kashmiri people voting against accession to Pakistan.

He says Delhi is fully aware that it cannot maintain Kashmir as an 'integral part of its territory'. "Western theorists and interested third parties who have proposed elaborate balkanisation schemes fail to understand the delicate fabric that holds Kashmir together as a people with a unique genetic similarity. These divide and conquer proposals simply do not work even if supported by the U.S. State Department".

Mr. Ijaz says the only viable option is third alternative that allows Kashmiris pre-determined right to self-rule at some date in the future, with the option of going to both Islamabad and Delhi to win them over in an interim period of five years. As per the blue print spelt out by Mr. Ijaz, the summit meeting between Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf would simultaneously be followed by withdrawal of Indian troops from Kashmir.

He says that the process of empowering both civilian and militant Kashmiri voices remains the central objective of the mediation efforts because a strong Kashmir provides Pakistan and India with face-saving exit strategies.

In mid-January, political and

military leaders will meet in Islamabad. The objective of the mid-January meeting is to set a common political agenda for talks with New Delhi and to take Gen. Musharraf into confidence on the merits and rationale for their decision to talk to Delhi. "Once the internal agenda is agreed upon and various Kashmiri parties are united on a message and a delegation, the Indo-Kashmir dialogue can begin," Mr. Ijaz says.

In response to a question on the meaning of decision of Kashmiri leadership to talk to India means to Pakistan, Mr. Ijaz has said Gen. Musharraf is rapidly, flexibly and correctly adopting the Pakistani position to the reality that Islamabad's pursuit of jihad-based resistance in Kashmir has not worked. "As head of the state rather than just head of the Army, his responsibility to the larger interests of Pakistani people goes far beyond the narrow pursuit of an ideological war that is decimating an innocent population while deeply scaring the image and vitality of Pakistan as a nation. Principled resistance has turned into violent hatred and the Kashmiri political leadership has now said enough is enough".

He has claimed a change even in the thinking of the militant organisations operating in Kashmir and in support of his contention cites the example of the meeting of militant factions in Saudi Arabia. He has claimed that the militant leaders are carrying formulae for discussion and approval among the jihad's Arab backers that will serve as the base for discussions with Hurriyat leaders in mid-January.

Saudi role

Commenting on the role being played by Saudi Arabia, Mr. Ijaz says as a long time ally of Pakistan, as home to conservative Islam's wealthy spectrum of followers and as a potential large scale supply of energy to India the Saudi Government is taking an active role in finding mechanisms to moderate the militant movement in Kashmir. "It is no coincidence that Jaswant Singh will visit Riyadh in early January, just a week after militant Kashmiri leaders return from Jeddah and a week before Hurriyat leaders are scheduled to meet Salauddin and company in Islamabad. The Saudis have vested interest in Islamabad and New Delhi and a flare up in Kashmir serves no one's purpose", he says.

Pak softens stand on Kashmir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI, Dec. 24. — In an apparent softening of stand, Pakistan has indicated that it won't insist on its involvement in talks with India on Kashmir in the initial stages and suggested that New Delhi first hold talks with the Hurriyat Conference.

Mr LK Advani today didn't rule out resumption of a dialogue with Pakistan after an assessment of its behaviour during the extended ceasefire in J&K. The home minister indicated the possibility of talks with militant outfits like the Hizbul Mujahideen.

"India should invite Hurriyat leaders for a discussion which will be preparatory to the Pakistan-India dialogue," Pakistan foreign minister, Mr Abdul Sattar, told *The Voice*, an Islamabad-based English language magazine.

Mr Sattar said Pakistan had been "encouraged" by India's indications that it might allow Hurriyat leaders to travel to Islamabad. He termed as a "welcome half-step" India's announcement of Ramzan ceasefire and said the "full step would be to abandon the use of force once and for all."

Mr Sattar spoke about "a three-stage framework" of

talks. "First, stabilising the ceasefire along LoC. Secondly, a preparatory process that involves the Hurriyat Conference in a process of dialogue with Pakistan and India. The third is a dialogue to find a solution to the Kashmir problem acceptable to the people of Kashmir."

In Jammu, the RSS spokesman, Mr MG Vaidya, urged the Centre to initiate a dialogue with Pakistan. After

extension was set to end.

The home minister said: "I would like to emphasise that talks with our people in J&K would have to include the National Conference, Congress, BJP and Leftists, and representatives from Jammu and Ladakh...And if militant organisations like the Hizbul are prepared to lay down arms and become part of the talks, they are welcome."

He said: "The Hurriyat Conference must realise this. They have been issuing statements as if they are the sole representatives of the J&K people."

The Hurriyat today denied playing any "mediatory role" between India and Pakistan but said it wanted to apply the "keys with a purpose of unlocking the doors of goodwill and understanding.")

Mr Advani said resumption of talks was contingent upon Islamabad stopping support to cross-border terrorism. Asserting that Islamabad has been feeling the "pinch" of isolation, he said: "If it earnestly desires peace there should be evidence of it."

Killings: Thirteen people, including three militants and an NC activist, have been killed in separate incidents in J&K since last evening.

INSIDE:

On page 8:

- Delhi Police draw a blank
- They have the will to die for their cause
- Hostages relive hijack nightmare

Islamabad's announcement of restraint on the LoC, the time was ripe for a dialogue. "The government should talk to militants first and after that, a dialogue with Pakistan needs to be initiated..."

But in Ahmedabad, the VHP demanded cancellation of the ceasefire.

Mr Advani said the situation with regard to the ceasefire would be reviewed after the Republic Day when the

THE STATESMAN

25 DEC 2000

A window opens

By K. K. Katyal

Resumption of India-Pakistan dialogue in February does not look as far-fetched a proposition as it did till recently.

RESUMPTION OF India-Pakistan dialogue in February next? There is no basis yet to be definitive but it does not look as far-fetched a proposition as it did till recently, since Kargil. Yes, there is a case for optimism but it has to be heavily laced with caution. India's unilateral decision on a ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir was a major initiative, marking a refreshing departure from the reactive approach of the past. This, as also its extension beyond the month of Ramzan, produced a positive response (despite ifs and buts) in Pakistan and a section of the militants in the State and their political supporters. This was, no doubt, encouraging. As against that is the opposition to the peace process by jihadi outfits operating from the other side of the line and their resolve to continue the "mission", in other words, not to give up violence and terrorism. That theirs was no empty threat was ominously borne out by the killing of five Sikh drivers on the Srinagar-Jammu highway three days after the announcement of the ceasefire and the strike at the high security zone of Delhi's Red Fort a day after its extension, apart from attacks on the security forces.

The Government had factored in the continuance of terrorist actions on a reduced scale while deciding on the ceasefire and related steps. New Delhi's tolerance, however, could not be limitless — it will be hard to maintain the present restraint in the event of a major strike. That could lead to derailment of the ceasefire and the peace bid.

Hopefully, such a scenario will not materialise, the positive trends discerned now will continue and, perhaps, gather momentum and a qualitatively new process may well begin — entailing, in the first instance, consolidation of the ceasefire and, later, talks at various levels. The present "suspension of operations" by the Government is different from the ceasefire announced by Hizb-ul-Mujahideen some time ago (to which New Delhi responded positively). Though both New Delhi and Islamabad were kept informed when it was in the making and conveyed their approval, their subsequent conduct was different. New Delhi, which had given travel documents to Hizb leaders to facilitate their discussions on the two sides of the LoC,

did not lose time, after the ceasefire announcement, in designating a team of officials for talks. As a matter of fact, a meeting, in which the masked militant representatives took part, did fructify and although it provided unusual footage for television networks, the discussions did not take off. As for Pakistan, its intelligence agencies did clear the Hizb move but later retracted. Islamabad had counted on rejection of the move by New Delhi and on making a good propaganda use of it. With their calculations upset by India's positive response, the Pakistani agencies were quick with the retraction.

It is a different case this time. Having drawn flak from the world community for scuttling the Hizb-initiated ceasefire, Pakistan could not afford to adopt a negative stance on the Indian initiative. Islamabad could not have been unaware of the relief among the people of the State in the wake of the Hizb move and their subsequent disappointment over its withdrawal and, as such, may not be rash in dealing with the Indian move. Also the serious problems, economic and political, facing the military regime in Islamabad tend to induce caution. So while pointing out "deficiencies" in the ceasefire announcement and its extension by New Delhi, it chose a positive response — "maximum restraint" on the LoC, on the first occasion, and "partial withdrawal" of troops from it, in the second case. The decisions by New Delhi and Islamabad, no doubt, add up to major steps towards consolidation of the ceasefire. To say this is not to lose sight of the mischief potential of the jihadi extremists.

There is a faint sign of hope as regards resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan. Each has moved away from the earlier positions that came in the way of the renewal of contacts at the political level. In the last 18 months, New Delhi was in no mood to talk to Pakistan, first because of the Kargil treachery and, later, because of the army coup. After a while, India gave up its objection to dealing with the mil-

itary ruler, realising that it had done so in the past, but stuck to the other condition — that cross-border terrorism had to end so as to make the climate conducive to talks. It cited continued terrorist strikes in Jammu and Kashmir and intensity of firing along the LoC in support of its decision against resumption of talks. The ground situation has improved — as a result of the ceasefire and reciprocal steps announced by Pakistan. This is recognised by New Delhi and, as a result, there is flexibility in its approach to dialogue with Pakistan and, of course, a willingness to talk to Kashmiri leaders, representing various sections, notably the Hurriyat. The statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, on the extension of the ceasefire did emphasise that infiltration from the Pakistani side "must cease entirely" and reaffirmed the "Government's commitment to achieve this end" but stopped short of mentioning it as an absolute precondition. "The existence of a suitable environment for such a process (dialogue) is self-evidently necessary," it said. Then followed a reference to the continued commitment to the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration and the decision to initiate "such exploratory steps as are considered necessary by it (India) so that the composite dialogue process between India and Pakistan could be resumed".

What would the exploratory steps be like and to what purpose? Obviously, to find out whether Pakistan is prepared for bilateral talks — which is what Shimla and Lahore were all about — and whether it would accept the format, already agreed upon by the two sides. It envisaged a composite dialogue — with two issues, peace and security and Kashmir to be taken up by the Foreign Secretaries, and the other six including Sir Creek, terrorism, and economic and commercial cooperation by the officials concerned. The two sides, as a matter of fact, initiated the process in keeping with this agreed pattern. The Lahore Declaration did not supersede that

agreement but merely emphasised the "resolve to intensify the efforts to resolve outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir". Any resumption of the dialogue, therefore, means an adherence to this pattern — of bilateralism, of composite discussions with a pointed reference to Kashmir. This does not mean any trilateral discussions among India, Pakistan and "Kashmiri leaders".

Equally important, no "exploratory step" will be complete if it does not pinpoint Pakistan's responsibility for the activities of terrorist organisations operating from its territory — and openly bragging about them — and seek effective remedial measures. No government in New Delhi will find it possible to engage in dialogue, with public opinion exercised over incidents of the type witnessed at the Red Fort.

In some respects, Pakistan appears to have given up its earlier rigidity. For instance, the military ruler now accepts the relevance of the Lahore process, though soon after assuming power he sought to trivialise it. The concept of trilateral talks was invoked to wreck the Hizb ceasefire. The Pakistani rulers could not be so naive as not to realise that India would not accept any three-sided process. Islamabad has not formally given up that position but otherwise has let it be known that the requirements of trilateralism would be met if India were to initiate talks with the Kashmiri leaders, apart from resuming the dialogue with it. As regards talks with Kashmiri leaders, which India regards as a domestic affair, the Prime Minister has already made a beginning — with a plea for settling all issues in the spirit of "insaniyat" (humanism).

If the exploratory steps envisaged by Mr. Vajpayee serve to bring out the prior joint commitment on modalities, resumption of the dialogue could be a reality — say, soon after the present extension of the ceasefire expires on January 26 next (to be followed by further extensions), in February. This "achievement" will, however, take care of only procedural matters. The substantive aspect is yet to receive the required attention. Resumption of dialogue would not be of much use if it is confined to a public restatement of known positions on substantive matters. This could better be entrusted to back-channel diplomacy.

THE HINDU

25 DEC 2000

PAK. SOFTENS STAND ON KASHMIR

HD →
25/12
**New Delhi can first talk
to Hurriyat: Musharraf**
gndb
flmk

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 24. Apparently softening its stand, the Pakistani military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, today said his country would not insist on talks with India in the initial stage to resolve the Kashmir issue and New Delhi could first enter into a dialogue with the Hurriyat Conference for the purpose.

"India should invite the Hurriyat leadership for talks and there should be talks later between India and Pakistan," Gen. Musharraf told reporters in Karachi. Pakistan had earlier insisted on its involvement in trilateral talks on the Kashmir issue right from the start.

About the Hurriyat leaders'

possible visit to Pakistan, he said Pakistan has invited them for talks. Appreciating the steps taken by India to push through the peace process in Jammu and Kashmir, Gen. Musharraf said the talks between the two countries should start immediately to resolve the Kashmir issue. "We have made progress and taken several steps. India has also taken some steps. Now, the talks should begin immediately," he said. — PTI

'Signals encouraging'

B. Muralidhar Reddy writes:

The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, has indicated

that Pakistan would not insist on its involvement in talks on Kashmir at the initial stage itself. In an interview to an Islamabad-based magazine, *The Voice*, the Minister was quoted as saying: "India should invite Hurriyat leaders for a discussion that will be preparatory to the Pakistan-India dialogue."

This stand is consistent with the December 2 statement where Pakistan had urged India to invite the leadership of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) for a dialogue in New Delhi and appealed to India to allow them to travel to Pakistan for separate discussions with the Pakistani Government.

The December 2 formulation is a change from its earlier insistence of a dialogue right at the initial stage. The Minister said Pakistan was encouraged by signals from the Indian Government that it may not averse to the idea of letting the APHC leaders travel to Islamabad.

In the interview, he spoke of a three-stage framework for talks. "First, stabilising the ceasefire at the LoC (Line of Control). Secondly, a preparatory process that involves the Hurriyat Conference in a process of dialogue with India and Pakistan. The third is a dialogue to find a solution to the Kashmir problem acceptable to the people of Kashmir."

In another interview to a Pakistani news agency, the Minister said that Kashmir would be the core issue in any negotiation. The Minister said that the guns had fallen silent on the LoC and a war-like atmosphere did not exist any longer.

Mr. Sattar claimed that Pakistani troops on the LoC only retaliated in self-defence and had never fired without provocation. He said the partial withdrawal of Pakistani troops from the LoC is to be completed in a week. "This step by Pakistan would put tremendous pressure on India to reciprocate and cut the size of troops in Kashmir. Pakistan is in touch with important capitals in this connection."

We could talk to militants too: Advani

NEW DELHI, DEC. 24. The Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, today indicated the possibility of talks with militant organisations such as the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and did not rule out a dialogue with Pakistan after an "assessment" of its behaviour during the extended ceasefire peace initiative in Jammu and Kashmir.

"That possibility is there," he said about the chances of the Centre starting a dialogue with militant groups in the State in the wake of its peace measures. In an interview to PTI, the Minister said the situation with regard to the ceasefire would be reviewed after the Republic Day when the extension is set to end. On the possibility of talks with militant groups, Mr. Advani said, "I would like to emphasise that dialogue with our people in Jammu and Kashmir would naturally have to include all sections such

as the ruling National Conference, the main Opposition Congress, the BJP and leftists and representatives from Jammu and Ladakh.

"And if militant organisations such as the Hizb are prepared to lay down arms and become part of the dialogue, they are also welcome," the Home Minister said. He maintained that resumption of the stalled dialogue with Pakistan was contingent upon Islamabad stopping support and assistance to cross-border terrorism in India. Asked whether this ruled out talks with Pakistan in the immediate future, he said, "We don't say that." The ceasefire initiative, he said, has been taken in a manner to allow the Government to make an assessment of situation on the ground especially with regard to Pakistan's behaviour.

THE HINDU

25 DEC 2000

Hurriyat denies being a mediator

NEW DELHI, DEC. 24. The Hurriyat Conference today denied playing any "mediatory role" between India and Pakistan in resolving the Kashmir issue but said it wants to apply the "keys with a purpose of unlocking the doors of goodwill and understanding."

"I do not agree (to the role of a mediator), we are a party to a dispute and no party to a dispute can pass for a mediator. We would, however, as the principal party choose to apply keys with a purpose to unlocking the doors of goodwill and understanding," the Hurriyat chairman, Mr. Abdul Gani Bhat, told PTI over telephone from Srinagar.

About the conflicting signals emerging from the camp of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen where a self-styled commander of the outfit demanded annexation of Kashmir with Pakistan, Mr. Bhat said "everybody is onto himself. We should have a large heart in India and Pakistan because we are undertaking a stupendous task of easing out tension."

The Hurriyat chairman, however, feels very encouraged with the recent developments of India announcing extension of ceasefire and Pakistan deciding to withdraw its troops from the Line of Control (LoC).

"Considering the positive steps, Pakistan has taken in response to Indian initiative, I feel encouraged to trust that whatever steps Pakistan is required to take, will be taken in the right earnest," Mr. Bhat said, adding "a word in Delhi is transmuted into a deed in Islamabad."

About a Hurriyat team going to Pakistan for holding talks with militant leaders, Mr. Bhat said "the team is yet to be decided and the Government should now give us the travel documents."

Team's Pak. visit

The former chairman, Mr. Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, has a passport while travel documents of the Jamaat-e-Islamia leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the People's Conference leader, Mr.

Abdul Gani Lone, and the Shia leader, Maulana Abbas Ansari, have been impounded.

While Mr. Bhat had applied for a passport in 1994, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chairman, Mr. Yaseen Malik, applied for it this year.

MJC rejects Hurriyat move

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 24. In a rebuff to the Hurriyat Conference's initiative to talk to Pakistan militants for entering into peaceful negotiations on Kashmir, the Muttahida (United) Jihad Council (MJC), a conglomerate of militant outfits, today refused to abandon their armed struggle at any cost, media reports said here.

According to the daily *Nawa-i-Waqt*, the MJC has told Hurriyat leaders that the militants would not lay down arms and that talks with India on any formula in this context was impossible.

The council had also asked the groups in its fold not to accept any formula of the Hurriyat Conference individually, the paper said.

Hinting that violence by militants would continue, the council asked the Hurriyat leaders to convey to India that "if it is sincere in finding a solution to Kashmir problem, it ought to initiate talks amidst" violence. It urged militants to continue with the attacks unabated "as the council will not compromise", the paper said.— PTI

Stressing the need for the Hurriyat delegation's visit to Pakistan, Mr. Bhat said "I would very much want it because I think everything should go smoothly." Though Mr. Bhat re-

mained tightlipped about the names of Hurriyat team members to visit Pakistan, insiders in the conference said "a consensus has been arrived on the names of Mr. Bhat, Mr. Farooq and Mr. Malik."

Referring to remarks made by the Chief Minister, Mr. Farooq Abdullah, who termed the Hurriyat leaders as "black crows", Mr. Bhat said "we do not change colours, white in Delhi, red in Jammu and green in Srinagar, like him." — PTI

THE HINDU

DEC 24 1994

Pak proposes three-stage talks structure

FROM PRANAY SHARMA
AND PTI

New Delhi, Dec. 24: In a development that may finally lead to the resumption of Indo-Pakistan dialogue, Islamabad today put forward a "three-stage framework for talks" that will start with stabilising the "ceasefire" along the Line of Control.

The second stage will involve the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference in a dialogue with India and Pakistan, Pakistan foreign minister Abdus Sattar said. The third stage will lead to resumption of talks between Delhi and Islamabad.

Pakistan's initiative found an echo in the RSS. The Sangh today urged the Centre to start a dialogue with the Pakistan, saying after Islamabad announced restraint along the LoC, the time was ripe. "The government should talk to the militants in Kashmir first and immediately after that, a dialogue with Pakistan needs to be initiated," RSS spokesman M.G. Vaidya said in Jammu.

Sattar, in an apparent concession to India, said Pakistan would not insist on being present at the talks between India and the Hurriyat leaders. Late tonight, Pervez Musharraf echoed Sattar.

Home minister L.K. Advani, however, made it clear that Delhi would not limit its talks to the Hurriyat alone. It will engage various parties and organisations, including the Hizb-ul Mujahideen, in the process.

Advani told PTI in an interview: "I would like to emphasise that the dialogue with our people in Jammu and Kashmir would naturally have to include all sections like the ruling National Conference, the Congress, the BJP and Leftists and representatives from Jammu and Ladakh.

"If militant organisations like

the Hizb-ul Mujahideen are prepared to lay down arms and become part of the dialogue, they are also welcome," he said. He stressed that this was something the Hurriyat leaders have to realise. "They have been issuing statements as if they are the sole representatives of the people of Jammu and Kashmir."

Advani said though India was not ruling out the possibility of resuming talks with Pakistan, an assessment would be made after the ceasefire ends on January 26.

Although the home minister merely iterated Delhi's stated position, the remarks of the Pakistani foreign minister are encouraging. His suggestion of the three-stage framework for talks and the emphasis that the first one should aim at stabilising the ceasefire are significant.

This means Pakistan is willing to keep its side of the bargain by ensuring that shelling across the border does not take place. Since this is usually done to help militants cross into India, it also indicates Islamabad will stop helping armed militants.

Sattar said unlike in the past, Islamabad would not insist on a trilateral dialogue between India, Pakistan and the Hurriyat leaders. He stressed that in the initial stages Islamabad will be content with a dialogue between Delhi and the Hurriyat, though he added that at a later stage Pakistan and Hurriyat leaders would also meet.

Sattar described the dialogue between India and the Hurriyat representatives as a precursor to India-Pakistan talks.

"India should invite Hurriyat leaders for a discussion which will be preparatory to the Pakistan-India dialogue," Sattar was quoted as saying.

The Hurriyat leaders have expressed their desire to visit Islamabad on January 15.

THE TELEGRAPH

25 DEC 2000

India, Pak. to go into free trade zone

24/12
By B. Muralidhar Reddy HD-8

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 23. India and Pakistan are expected to meet in Islamabad in the first week of January to discuss a proposal for creation of a free trade zone and easing of transport links.

The English daily *The News* has reported that India has agreed to send a delegation of experts to take part in a transport committee meeting scheduled for January 6 and 7 under the auspices of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

It would be the first official delegation to visit Pakistan after the Kargil conflict in May/June last year and the military takeover in October 1999. It is to be followed by the SAARC Standing Committee meeting in the first quarter of 2001.

The last meeting of the standing committee was held in Sri Lanka in March 1999. A meeting of SAARC Foreign Ministers followed it.

The paper has said the meeting between officials of India and Pakistan is considered a major diplomatic breakthrough after Kargil. Quoting diplomatic circles the paper has said the meeting is a breakthrough as the SAARC summits had been frozen in view of India's reluctance to sit across the table with Pakistan.

The daily said given the present nature of relations between India and Pakistan, a summit-level meeting of SAARC was not possible. It said having taken a stand against participating in a political-level SAARC Summit, the Indian Government has now given a commitment to Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister, Mr. Lakshan Kadirgamar, during his recent visit to New Delhi that it would not block the day-to-day functioning SAARC.

THE HINDU

24 DEC 2000

Ceasefire still holds: George

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 23. — The ceasefire in Jammu & Kashmir will not be affected by last night's attack on Army barracks in the Red Fort, Mr George Fernandes said today even as a court of inquiry was appointed to investigate the incident independently.

A senior Army officer will head the court of inquiry. A separate investigation will be conducted by the Delhi police and the Army.

A red alert has been sounded in view of the coming festive week and the Republic Day celebrations next month. Delhi police said they apprehended trouble.

The attack was reportedly discussed at the meeting the Prime Minister held at his residence this morning with the home minister, Mr LK Advani, external affairs minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, and the defence minister.

Sources said recent reports by security agencies had routinely warned of possible attacks by suicide squads but not made any specific statement about an attack on the Red Fort.

Mr Fernandes, accompanied by senior Army officers, spent

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about an hour inspecting various points, including those from where the two militants probably entered and left the fort area.

Later, the defence minister denied that the intrusion could be construed as a security lapse. The security was "not only inadequate but negligible" since the fort complex has many areas which are not under the control of the Army and thus, affect its security, he said. The fort area is home to

■ Editorial: Ramzan, Red Fort to R-Day, page 8
■ More reports, photographs on page 10

many people and has about 100 shops. A part of the complex is under the control of the Archaeological Survey of India.

The minister said the ceasefire, which had been extended by Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, would remain in force till 26 January. "The Prime Minister had announced in Parliament to extend the ceasefire and it won't be affected."

It appeared that Pakistan was not interested in paving the way for talks. "We have clearly

indicated to Pakistan to rein in militant groups like Lashkar-e-Taiyaba and Harkat-ul-Ansar so that an atmosphere conducive to talks was created," he said. "Now it seems either Islamabad is not interested or it doesn't have control over these fundamentalist groups."

Mr LK Advani asserted that the incident would not have an adverse effect on the peace process initiated by the Centre in Jammu & Kashmir. "The government is determined to continue with the peace process and would not be deterred by militant acts," he said.

The government made clear that it hadn't come across any evidence to suggest that the Lashkar was responsible for the attack. A man claiming to be a spokesman of the outfit had yesterday called international news agencies and claimed responsibility.

According to an agency report from Kashmir, the outfit reiterated the point and identified the two militants involved in the attack as Abu Sakher and Abu Sajid. The report quoted a Lashkar spokesman in Islamabad claiming that the attack was aimed at inviting world attention to the Kashmir issue.

THE STATESMAN

24 DEC 2000

Pak. sees movement towards dialogue

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 23. The chief spokesman of the Pakistan military, Maj. Gen. Rashid Qureshi, today said that the recent initiatives of Pakistan, India and the Kashmiris suggested a movement towards the process of dialogue.

Talking to *The Hindu*, the Director-General of the Inter-Ser-

start dialogue immediately. The goodwill generated by the process of dialogue could help reduce the tension all around and pave the way for settlement of the differences," he said. Maj. Gen. Qureshi said Pakistan had always favoured resumption of dialogue.

The ISPR chief said the first step taken by Gen. Musharraf was aimed at reduction of tensions and resolution of differences. "India took some time to respond to the initiatives... The recent developments suggest that the movement towards dialogue seems to have started."

Maj. Gen. Qureshi said Pakistan wanted to start a substantial initiative to create the necessary atmosphere for the process of dialogue to begin and the announcement made three days ago regarding partial withdrawal of forces from the Line of Control was part of the endeavour. "The process of partial withdrawal of forces from the LoC is complete today." He said India should reciprocate the gesture and withdraw some of its troops in Kashmir.

On the negative response from some Pakistan-based militant organisations to the initiatives from India and Pakistan, Maj. Gen. Qureshi avoided a direct answer. He said there has been a mixed reaction from India to the militant organisations.

Troops withdrawn

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 23. The United Nations observers in Kashmir today monitored the withdrawal of additional Pakistani troops along the Line of Control. The troops are being shifted to nearby cantonments from where they will be mobilised in time of need. An observer who returned from the LoC confirmed the withdrawal. — UNI

vices Public Relations, Maj. Gen. Qureshi, said in the past few months there has been some progress by all the three parties — India, Pakistan and the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) — involved in the Kashmir dispute.

"India, Pakistan and the APHC should get into a situation where talks would start regardless of what anyone is saying. If we are all genuine and dedicated to the reduction of tension, we should

THE HINDU

20 DEC 1990

LASHKAR CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY; HIGH ALERT IN DELHI

Suicide squad storms Red Fort, kills 3 jawans

By Our Staff Reporter

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NEW DELHI, DEC. 22. A suicide squad, suspectedly belonging to the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, struck at the high security Red Fort late in the night on Friday killing three Army jawans and injuring two. The two militants barged into the sensitive area, catching unawares the jawans of the Rajputana Rifles and the Jat Regiment inside the premises.

Incidentally, the attack comes two days after the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, announced the extension of the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir by another month.

The Lashkar-e-Taiba had threatened to strike in the Capital during the Ramzan month.

According to reports, the militants barged into the high security zone around 9.30 p.m. and started firing indiscriminately from automatic rifles at the pickets of Rajputana Rifles and Jat Regiment there. The militants, believed to be carrying AK-47 assault rifles, took on the jawans of the two Army

regiments and exchanged fire with the guards. The militants made good their escape.

Unfazed by the presence of such a large number of Army personnel inside the Red Fort, which incidentally also houses the interrogation centres of Military Intelligence (MI) and Intelligence Bureau (IB), the militants engaged the jawans in a 45-minute gun-battle. Immediately, Army personnel wielding guns and search lights came out of the Lahore Gate, and started combing the area. The premises also houses the office of the Archeological Survey of India.

The police, who reached the spot, were not allowed to enter the Red Fort. The Army had cordoned off the area and were carrying out combing operations till late tonight to track down the militants.

The militants were able to outwit the security agencies by striking in the Capital despite there being definite information of such a planned attack.

It is learnt that the Delhi police had definite information that the Lashkar-e-

HD-1 28/12
Taiba militants were planning to strike somewhere in the Capital on Monday or Tuesday. The police had carried out a major combing exercise during the two days looking for suspects and had even conducted raids at suspected hideouts to pre-empt the move by the suicide squad (fidayeen). However, despite tough vigilance, they were not able to nab the culprits.

The high security Red Fort area, spread across 100 acres, was immediately sealed by Army personnel suspecting that the militants might still be holed up there.

The Delhi police sounded a high alert in the city following the militant attack. The police have stepped up searches and verification of vehicles at all entry and exit points. (UNI reports).

Pickets and barricades have been set up at various places in the capital, police said.

Senior police and army officials have reached the Red Fort area and were supervising the search operations.

THE HINDU

23 DEC 2000

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2000

A TIMELY GESTURE *gndv Park*

WITH INDIA'S EXTENDING the ceasefire in Kashmir and Pakistan reciprocating the gesture, efforts by the two estranged countries to address the Kashmir issue have received a new qualitative thrust. The Pakistan military's latest initiative of announcing a limited but unconditional pull-back of the troops deployed on its side of the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir is obviously intended to signal Islamabad's political will to match India's actions on the ground. Coming as a sequel to India's considered decision to extend its unilateral ceasefire within Jammu and Kashmir, the welcome military gesture by Pakistan can, if implemented to the satisfaction of both countries, enhance their bilateral diplomatic ambience. It is of course too early to foresee how these apparently independent moves by India and Pakistan will encourage them to push for a final settlement of the fundamental dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. But there seems to be a nuanced shift in the official mood in both India and Pakistan towards exploring the scope for addressing the overall issue in a measured manner. This climate of opinion, if harnessed carefully, should set the stage for bilateral discussions on confidence-building measures on a range of issues including the avoidance of nuclear brinkmanship in a new milieu of goodwill. It bears repetition that India and Pakistan should capture the mystique of hope inherent in the present moment for reviving the process of bilateral engagement.

Pakistan has packaged its present decision as a follow-up on its recent pledge of observing "maximum restraint" along the LoC and not as a direct response to the Vajpayee administration's extension of its studied suspension of security operations against the Kashmiri separatist-militants. The regime of Pakistan's Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has annotated its latest peace overture with the "hope" that India would suitably reciprocate it by "de-inducting" some of its military personnel engaged in combat du-

ties for long against the Kashmiri separatists. From New Delhi's long-term perspective, what really matters is Islamabad's discernible diplomatic intention and not its political discourse over its gestures. Islamabad has also recalled that the new partial withdrawal of troops is actually the second move of its kind since Gen. Musharraf assumed power. He had ordered what turned out to be a low-key pullout or at least a less-heralded announcement of a scale-down of Pakistan's military personnel along the LoC in the very context of his coup in October 1999.

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The crux of the current decision by Pakistan is its belief that this "manifests" a "genuine desire to de-escalate the situation" regarding the Kashmir dispute "in order to facilitate the process of meaningful dialogue on the issue". In a sense, the evolving context is reinforced by the Musharraf regime's recent affirmation of the validity of the Lahore process as also the other relevant agreements concerning India-Pakistan ties. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has also noted with satisfaction at this time that "relative peace has prevailed all along the LoC" since his first offer last month of a truce in Jammu and Kashmir. It was significant that India's original Ramzan-related ceasefire was followed by Pakistan's categorical commitment to observing "maximum restraint" along the LoC over an unspecified time-span. It stands to reason that the "relative peace" in this sector, quite explosive until recently, is traceable as much to Pakistan's "restraint" as New Delhi's truce as a constructive aspect of the overall anti-insurgency agenda in Jammu and Kashmir. These new dynamics could help revive the Lahore process. So Islamabad's latest willingness to reduce its troop concentration along the LoC as also the "line of actual contact" cannot be interpreted with reference to the idea of a de-induction of Pakistan's military personnel under the U.N. resolutions of a bygone era.

THE HINDU

22 DEC 2000

Pak. begins troop withdrawal

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, DEC. 21. Within hours of the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's announcement extending the ceasefire in Kashmir by a month, Pakistan has ordered some withdrawal of its troops along the Line of Control.

While orders were issued, the exact quantum of the pullout was yet to be discerned, highly-placed sources in the Government said. India, the sources said, was maintaining an active surveillance to monitor the expected pullout.

Observers here are specifically observing the movement of additional Pakistani forces deployed in the area after the Kargil conflict. Two brigades — 22 brigade belonging of the seventh division and 111 (I) Infantry brigade — had been sent to the high altitude areas under the Force Commander Northern Areas (FCNA). Critical to Pakistani defences, the FCNA looks after a region extending from an area north of Punch to the Siachen glacier. The pullout of the two brigades, highly trained and belonging to Pakistan's national reserves, is expected to further ease tensions along the LoC.

Sources, however, said Pakistan had decided to thin out FCNA forces in November on account of a reduction of the "threat perception" from India. It is possible this pre-decided pullout may now be timed with the Prime Minister's statement in Parliament so that suitable "political mileage" could be drawn.

The Indian security establishment is also keenly observing whether Pakistan will reduce

forces from the sensitive Sunderbani-Punch alignment, north of Jammu. Pakistan had earlier beefed up its forces under the Rawalpindi-based 10 corps to promote larger induction of militants into the Kashmir Valley. Not surprisingly, two brigades of the Pakistan Army's 19 division had been sent to beef up forces in the area. A pullout of forces in this area, can therefore signal Pakistan's intent to reduce infiltration from this area.

Analysts say any Pakistani move to rein in infiltrations will be well received in India. Stressing the issue of infiltrations, the Prime Minister declared in Parliament on Wednesday that cross-border movement of militants must cease "entirely."

Meanwhile, responding to queries today, the Government neither confirmed nor denied reports that Pakistan had already removed some of its forces along the LoC. The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, expressed scepticism about the Pakistani claim saying the Government would have to "verify" Islamabad's assertion before making any comment. "We have to understand the meaning of these claims. How can troops be withdrawn overnight from high in the mountainous terrain that marks the LoC?"

Asked about the reported Pakistani withdrawal, the Foreign Office spokesman said the Ministry of Defence was assessing the ground situation. "We can comment on this only after a complete evaluation of Pakistan's claim."

THE HINDU

22 DEC 2000

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22/12

Ceasefire decision positive but falls short, says Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 21. Pakistan is of the view that the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee's decision to extend the Jammu and Kashmir ceasefire has a 'positive tone, yet it falls short of a clear response' to its December 2 initiative.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman told a news conference here today that while Pakistan had come forward with a comprehensive approach on resumption of dialogue, the response from India was that of 'conditional statements'.

On Mr. Vajpayee's statement on exploratory steps for resumption of dialogue, the spokesman said Pakistan was ready for an unconditional dialogue at any time, any place and any level. "The dialogue can take in any shape. We are ready for it. We only want to ensure that there is meaningful progress towards settlement of long-standing dispute on Kashmir."

He said Pakistan's initiative envisaged a comprehensive approach with three main features. These are maximum restraint along the Line of Control with an appeal to India to 'completely abandon violence and repression'; consultations with the Kashmiri leadership, especially the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference and resumption of bilateral dialogue after Ramzan with the participation of the Kashmiri leadership for a just solution to the Kashmir conflict.

The spokesman said the latest unilateral step to withdraw a part of troops from the LoC was yet another demonstration of Pakistan's willingness to reduce tensions.

"This step should help start a meaningful dialogue with India to address the long-standing Kashmir dis-

pute. Pakistan's maximum restraint and India's offer of ceasefire are, however, a means and not an end themselves." On 'composite dialogue' with India, the spokesman said it meant dialogue at the level of Foreign Secretaries with a set agenda. The first two items of the agenda are Kashmir and security to be followed by other matters. "We are for a composite dialogue, with Kashmir as a priority, that remains halted for the last two years".

Asked if the latest initiatives were due to international pressure, the spokesman said that international community had always been keen on an early resolution of the Kashmir dispute and resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan.

To a question on the relevance of the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir, he said Pakistan's position was firmly based on U.N. resolution on the self-determination right of people of Kashmir through a plebiscite.

The modalities on the presence of security forces in Kashmir on both sides were spelt out in the 1952 resolution of the U.N. Security Council.

As per the resolution, Pakistan could post 3,000 to 6,000 security forces in Kashmir and India between 12,000 and 18,000 in their respective areas of control, he said. "Pakistan remains ready and committed to implementation of the U.N. resolution, Shimla Agreement and Lahore Declaration".

Pakistan was prepared to abide by any of the modalities prescribed in the U.N. charter, including international mediation for resolution of the Kashmir dispute. He said he was not aware of any role being played by Saudi Arabia on Kashmir.

THE HINDU

22 DEC 2000

Troops pullback began last month

Shishir Gupta
New Delhi, December 21

HFI 22/12 9:50 PM

THOUGH Pakistan announced the withdrawal of its troops from the fringe of the LoC yesterday, the pull-out actually began more than a month ago.

Highly placed Government sources indicate that Pakistan pulled out two battalions (a battalion has 800 troops), deployed as reserves in the area facing the Dras-Kargil-Batalik sectors, last month.

The withdrawal was linked to lower threat perception and the area getting snow-bound.

Post-Kargil, Islamabad had pushed in the 19 Division (a division has 8,000 to 10,000 troops) along the LoC. The 19 division, which has three brigades, is part of the Mangla-based I Strike Corps of Pakistan.

While two brigades of the 19 Division were positioned to supplement troops belonging to 12 and 23 divisions, the remaining brigade was 'floating' with the Gilgit-based Force Commander Northern Areas (FCNA) force. The FCNA comprises three brigades that are deployed at Minimarg, Skardu and Dhansam in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and face Indian forces in Siachen, Kargil, Dras, Zoji La and Kupwara.

The 12, 23 and the FCNA are division strength forces that are part of the Rawalpindi-based 10 Corps of the Pakistan Army. The 12 and 23 divisions of the Pakistan Army face the Nagrota-based 16 Corps and part of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps of the Indian Army.

Government sources indicate that Pakistan has not pulled out any troops from its defensive formations in the PoK, but is in the process of sending back reserve forces to cantonments.

The assessment is that Pakistan may thin out the remaining two brigades of the 19 Mangla division as part of its gameplan to show to the international community its earnestness to curb infiltration and reduce violence along the LoC.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

22 DEC 2000

Indian ceasefire offer: A chance for peace in Kashmir

WITH the Executive Council of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference having officially welcomed India's Ramadan ceasefire in occupied Kashmir, the momentum towards peace in the region should pick up. True, the mujahideen based in Pakistan strongly support an armed struggle and have called on Islamabad not to enter into a dialogue. But it is now plain that the predominant opinion in the Kashmir Valley favours an end to the protracted conflict. War fatigue has set in and the Kashmiris have had to pay a heavy price in terms of the disruption of normal life in the Valley, the devastation of the economy and the killings. By observing the ceasefire called on the eve of Ramadan very scrupulously, the attacks by the militants notwithstanding, India has won the goodwill and confidence of the Hurriyat leadership which feels that the time has now come to enter into dialogue to work out a settlement. This is a sensible approach because in modern times military victories do not resolve any disputes as is abundantly clear from what is happening in Afghanistan, Iraq and other parts of the world. Hence the Hurriyat's swing towards a political process in Kashmir. India too has shown wisdom and realism in rec-

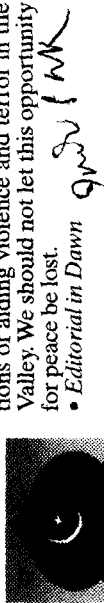
ognizing that the time has come to extend the olive branch.

Where does Pakistan stand on this evolving situation in Kashmir which has been the centrepiece of its foreign policy since 1947? Islamabad has acted wisely in responding to India's offer of a ceasefire by announcing a policy of "utmost constraint" along the Line of Control, and the firing across the LoC has actually stopped after several months of crossfire. If India allows the Hurriyat leaders to visit Islamabad for talks, as it has promised to do, the Pakistan government should welcome them with open arms. They should also be allowed to set the tone and direction of the negotiations they would like to hold with their two principal interlocutors.

Pakistan has always stood for the self-determination of the Kashmiris and if they have their own ideas about the future of their state, Islamabad should welcome it. India's stance on the issues related to a negotiated settlement is softening. PM Vajpayee is now speaking more fre-

quently about opening talks with Pakistan, though he still qualifies it with the demand that Pakistan put an end to violence and what he calls "cross-border terrorism". If Islamabad leaves it to the APHC to decide the role it would allow the Mujahideen to play in Kashmir, it would at least absorb itself of the allegations of aiding violence and terror in the Valley. We should not let this opportunity for peace be lost.

• Editorial in Dawn



Forceful empty talk

The much-awaited speech of chief executive General Pervez Musharraf was neither here nor there. As expected he held out a strong defence of his government's hugely controversial decision to send the deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif and his family into exile in Saudi Arabia. He justified the move on the grounds of pragmatism. It may also earn some economic benefits, he hinted. There was nothing by way of an explanation as to why this could only be achieved by packing the whole Nawaz tribe off to another country and not by enforcing the writ of law.

Even after the long speech the nation is

still in the dark about the process through which the decision was taken. Except for an oblique admission by Musharraf that the Saudi Crown prince did have a role in the whole affair, the public is not any better-informed than before.

The upbeat mood of the speech, which delivered the usual fulminations against the politicians and was vocal in detailing their misdeeds, too did not carry much conviction. The speech, on the whole, leaves no room for doubt that Musharraf believes that he is still popular enough in the people for them to blindly put their faith in his words and in his personal guarantees that he will not let them down.

This self-assessment however could well turn out to be misleading. The people of Pakistan have heard such fustian talk so many times in the past, and have been betrayed so consistently, that it takes much more than just verbal assurances for them to regain their confidence in the government of the day. Unfortunately both the issues he addressed were those on which the vast majority of the Pakistani public were shut out from the decision making process. He has to do more to earn the people's trust.

• Editorial in The News

India's Olive Branch

New Delhi's extension of the Kashmir ceasefire was both foreseeable and logical. More time is needed to create a conducive atmosphere for talks to be held with the Hurriyat leaders and to initiate the interrupted Lahore dialogue. Provided that the terrorists, Islamabad and some vested interests within Kashmir do not, through major acts of violence, seriously jeopardise the suspension of combat operations, the ceasefire is likely to be further extended. Pakistan's prompt response in announcing a reduction of its forces along the Line of Control is a positive sign, even though Islamabad runs no risks by doing so. True to the letter and spirit of the Simla pact, the Indian army has not posed a threat to the sanctity of the LoC, not even during the Kargil conflict. This notwithstanding, the Pakistani gesture is to be welcomed as it shows their army's willingness to signal to the terrorist groups in that country that Islamabad was positively responding to New Delhi's initiative. On the same day that India announced the extension of the ceasefire, General Musharraf went on Pakistan TV to explain that Nawaz Sharif's exile was necessary in the interests of ending hatred, promoting reconciliation, and creating a money-free politics of stability and harmony. Only the future will reveal whether these noble goals are to be restricted to Pakistan or will be extended beyond its borders. The CE's pronouncements come in the wake of mounting economic pressures on Pakistan, its increasing international isolation, and the further consolidation of General Musharraf's power through the promotion of new corps commanders of his choice. Coincidentally, the UN Security Council passed a resolution imposing sanctions on the Taliban, with the implied connotation that it was a warning signal to Pakistan as well about its extremist orientation and support to terrorism.

With the Bush-II administration taking charge in Washington, General Musharraf needs to exercise extra caution. Cheney, Powell and Rice were part of the administration which in 1990 imposed belated sanctions on Pakistan for its nuclear proliferation and for General Aslam Beg's support to Saddam Hussein's strategic defiance. In 1992, the Republican administration put Pakistan on the watch list of terrorist states. While war-weariness of the Kashmiri people, the decisive defeat of the Pakistani army at Kargil, and Washington's distancing from Islamabad are determinant influences on the Hurriyat leaders, there are vested interests — both within Hurriyat and outside — who have a stake in continuing violence in the Valley. New Delhi and its agencies have to be on guard against the mischief-making potential of such elements. The ceasefire extension has been hailed with great relief and joy by the common people, who for decades have been the hapless victims of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, local militancy, misgovernance and corruption. If New Delhi's demarche is to be productive, a massive information campaign needs to be launched to persuade the people of the Valley that their interests are best served by supporting this initiative against their enemies and oppressors — both within the Valley and across the Line of Control.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

22 DEC 2000

Extension of truce positive sign, says Pak

HT Correspondents
Islamabad/Jammu/New Delhi
December 21

PAKISTAN HAS described as "positive" but "short of expectations" India's unilateral extension of the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir until January 26. Islamabad hoped, a Foreign Office spokesman said, India would agree to tripartite talks for the settlement of the Kashmir issue.

In Washington, US President Clinton called India's decision a sign of Prime Minister Vajpayee's "determination to pursue a course of peace in Kashmir". The Pak Foreign Office spokesman maintained that the number of troops withdrawn from the LoC was "significant".

In response, New Delhi said it was assessing the "ground situation" and would welcome any step that leads to "real de-escalation" and reduction of tension. On Islamabad's contention that India should reciprocate by de-inducting part of its "seven lakh troops", a

Foreign Office spokesman in New Delhi said: "We do not wish to comment on the unrealistic and inaccurate assessment of the strength of India's security forces".

In a related development, the All-Party Hurriyat Conference today decided to send a delegation to

Pakistan on January 15 to talk to the country's and the militant outfits' leaders to push forward the peace process. It hailed the extension in ceasefire and reciprocal Pakistani steps as "courageous decisions".

The Hurriyat stance was articulated by its executive council at a five-hour meeting held at the residence of Awami Action Committee chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq in Srinagar. The meet follows the one on December

17 that was marred by clashes between pro-Pakistan and pro-freedom factions of the combination. When asked who would form part of the delegation, the Mirwaiz said it was yet to be decided.

● On Page 11: 'Hurriyat not central to talks with Pakistan'



Pakistan troop withdrawal claim has to be verified.
Defence Minister
George Fernandes

Ceasefire extension is a sign of Vajpayee's "determination to pursue a course of peace in Kashmir".

US President Bill Clinton



Indo-Pak steps are courageous decisions that can give a positive direction to the peace process.
Hurriyat leaders

Hurriyat leaders are black crows. There is no need to talk to them as they will toe the Pak line.

J&K CM Farooq Abdullah

Centre sees no role for Hurriyat in resumption of talks with Pak

APHC leaders may be allowed to visit Pakistan only in individual capacity • 'Don't pull back troops from the LoC'

Jay Raina
New Delhi, December 21

THE CENTRE is not averse to individual Hurriyat leaders using their influence over Pak-based terrorist groups to make them shun violence and lend support to the proposed peace process in Kashmir.

At the same time, New Delhi does not envisage any role for the multi-party conglomerate in the resumption of the bilateral composite dialogue process with Islamabad.

Highly-placed sources indicated that Hurriyat functionaries might be allowed to visit Pakistan to open channels with the militants in their individual capacity. But such missions would be informal in nature, without any official sanctity.

However, the sources maintained that such contacts with Pak-based terrorists would largely depend on the success of the second phase of unilateral ceasefire.

The Centre feels that the dialogue with the people of Kashmir has to be all-embracing and not Hurriyat-specific. And to make that possible, other political formations would have to be engaged with equal vigour.

The Government is already facing strong resistance from Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's National Conference against according "legitimacy" to Hurriyat leaders who, unlike the ruling party, did little to fight militancy in the Valley.

On the contrary, some of them maintained clandestine links with militant outfits targeting political activists

belonging to various democratic formations.

For the present, the Centre finds itself in an unenviable position on account of a complete lack of any political activity - to build upon the ceasefire move -- by mainline political parties.

"No political party, including the NC, has utilised the Ramzan ceasefire to mobilise people in support of a peace deal. All that they have done is to welcome cessation of combative operations by security forces," the sources remarked.

Even as the Hurriyat leaders were busy sorting out intra-party contradictions, their pronouncements over the need for a dialogue were devoid of any concrete formula or framework for talks.

It is generally felt in the official circles here that the Farooq-Government has failed in supplementing the declaration of ceasefire with any visible improvement in the quality of governance. "While harping on inadequate Central assistance, the State Government is using precious funds in non-priority areas," they averred.

On its part, even as the Centre has done precious little to encourage a proactive political atmosphere in the troubled state, it has plans to convene a meeting of political parties having presence in J&K.

But before it does that, it might have to take into confidence the national leaders of some such formations, notably the Congress, the Left and even the BJP

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, December 21

JAMMU AND Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah has advised the Centre against reducing security forces' presence along the Line of Control (LoC) in response to Pakistan's claimed withdrawal of forces. He also opposed the move to hold talks with the Hurriyat leaders, likening them to "black crows" whose colour could never be changed.

Talking to mediapersons after attending a meeting here today, he said it was difficult to verify the withdrawal of Pakistani forces from the LoC. "It would be difficult to plug the passes to check infiltration from across the border if India withdraws its forces. The security situation demands that the troops

still being killed by ISI agents," he said.

The meeting, chaired by Home Minister L.K. Advani, is understood to have reviewed J & K situation following Centre's decision to extend the ceasefire by another month.

While recognising a perceptible change in the security situation, the Centre was concerned that groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen were still indulging violent activities.

Later speaking at a function organised in the memory of Mirza Afzal Beg, a close associate of Shiekh Abdullah, the Chief Minister questioned the move to hold talks with the Hurriyat. "It is futile to try them again and again as they will never change," he said. Referring to possibility of talks with the Hurriyat, Abdullah said, "Even if you kick or leave us, our relations with India are full and final."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
22 DEC 2000

India and Pak are talking about talks

Pramit Pal Chaudhuri
New Delhi, December 21

HF-11 22/11
THE BUZZWORD in South Asia is "dialogue." Though India and Pakistan are speaking in circumlocutions, they are increasingly talking about talks. When Atal Bihari Vajpayee said on Wednesday that India "will initiate such exploratory steps as considered necessary" so that the "composite dialogue process between India and Pakistan could be resumed," he lowered the cold shoulder that's been proffered to Pakistan since Kargil.

Today's responses were all hedges. Pakistan complained India fell "short of a clear response" to resuming negotiations on Kashmir. New Delhi laid out what more Pakistan needed to do, like rein in the Lashkar-e-Taiba.

This is the normal verbal smokescreen. What is evident is that India has decided that conditions are ripe for it to consider ending its year-long policy of treating Pakistan as a pariah. Islamabad has been banging on the door: recall Abdul Sattar in October telling the world to

"pressure" India to resume a dialogue.

The question is why India feels it can open the door, even a crack. Lahore's false dawn, Kargil, IC814, Islamabad's ruining of the August Kashmir ceasefire - the record looks bad.

In New Delhi's view, Pervez Musharraf is boxed in.

One, Pakistan's isolation is unprecedented. From Islamic Iran to the US, no country is pushing India to talk with Pakistan. No country, not even China, upholds Islamabad's demand for tripartite talks. Instead, Washington has arm-twisted Pakistan. The US has told Islamabad to curb violence in Kashmir and reportedly made it a condition for its IMF bailout. It also blames Pakistan for the premature demise of the August ceasefire.

Two, if Pakistan is obviously obstructionist, it could lose militant support. In August, Islamabad was shocked by how many Hizb-ul-Mujahideen field commanders were ready to talk with India. So it pulled the rug from under. This time, Pakistan cannot play a spoiler's role again for fear it may splinter the Hurriyat or

even the Hizb. Hence its demand for tripartite talks and its getting the militants to echo that line.

It's a win-win situation for New Delhi. It gave Pakistan a charter of demands for a dialogue. It then launched a peace initiative with the militants. If Islamabad rejects India's demands it has to sabotage the ceasefire. But this would further tarnish its international reputation and raise questions among militants. So Pakistan, teeth clenched, has been acceding to India's dialogue terms.

The two are now stacking up the bargaining chips. India has been invoking Simla and Lahore. Vajpayee recently called the UN's Kashmir resolutions "irrelevant". The message: bilateral talks will be composite and about making the LoC a border. Islamabad's mantra is tripartite talks that are only about Kashmir. Indo-Pakistani talks have a poor record. But India has all the aces. Pakistan frets that it could be a loser whether the talks fail or succeed. As one Delhi-based Western diplomat noted, "Indian officials have rarely been so upbeat."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

22 DEC 2000

Ramzan truce extended, Pak pulls back from LoC

Shishir Gupta and Mubasshir Zaidi
New Delhi/Islamabad, December 20

THE CENTRE today extended its Ramzan ceasefire — scheduled to end in a week from now — in Jammu and Kashmir by a month. It declared it would look at ways of reviving the stalled dialogue with Pakistan.

Prime Minister AB Vajpayee informed Parliament that the "relative peace" along the LoC and the "encouraging" reduction in infiltration across it had made the Government extend the period of "no initiation of combat operations". The position would be reviewed after January 26, he said.

In Islamabad, a military spokesman said Pakistan had withdrawn most of its troops — "who are now back in their cantonments" — who were stationed along the LoC. This was done, he said, "to further consolidate" the ceasefire.

He added that the military is fully aware of its duties to defend the country's frontiers and prepared to meet any aggression on its borders.

Pakistan's Foreign Office said it would react to today's announcement by New Delhi tomorrow, after it had examined Vajpayee's statement. In his statement to Parliament, the Prime Minister singled

No more ifs about Bhat's Saudi trip

JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI (KASHMIR) chief G M Bhat will travel to Saudi Arabia for talks with Jamaat leaders of Pakistan and PoK on the peace efforts in Jammu and Kashmir. The Home Ministry will issue fresh a passport to Bhat. Abdul Majeed Dar, Hizbul Mujahideen's chief commander (operations), is reported to have reached New Delhi. He and outfit supreme commander Syed Salahuddin are likely to discuss the Kashmir situation following the Ramzan truce and corresponding measures taken by Pakistan on the LoC. Senior APHC leader Abdul Ghani Lone said the conglomerate was happy over the truce extension. J&K People's Democratic Freedom Party leader Shabir Shah said the extension indicated that India had realised that the solution to Kashmir did not lie in military might but in peaceful means.

HTC, New Delhi/Jammu

out the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen as the chief perpetrators of bloodshed in Kashmir.

Without setting any date for an Indo-

Pak "composite" dialogue, the PM declared: "As the initiator of the dialogue process with Pakistan, India is committed to it. As part of our continued commitment to the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, the Government will initiate such exploratory steps as considered necessary, so that the composite dialogue process between India and Pakistan could be resumed."

This represents a subtle shift from New Delhi's earlier emphasis on hinging the revival of dialogue on Pakistan terminating cross-border terrorism.

The Government indicated that the recent decline in infiltration of terrorists across the LoC and the international border was not sufficient as it had to cease entirely.

"The Government is committed to achieving this end," the Prime Minister assured Parliament. The statement is aimed at consolidating the peace initiative in the Valley, while segregating the ethnic Kashmiri militants from the foreign jihadis.

"It praises the efforts of citizens, political parties and other organisations in Jammu and Kashmir for their contribution to a "distinctly different and a more optimistic mood" now prevailing in the state."

See also Page 11

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

21 DEC 2000

New Delhi extends ceasefire by a month

Pak calls partial troops pullback

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
& Agencies

NEW DELHI, Dec. 20. — The peace initiative in Jammu and Kashmir got a fillip today with the Centre announcing the extension of the Ramzan ceasefire by a month and its willingness to restart dialogue with Pakistan, while Islamabad ordered partial troops withdrawal from the LoC.

In a surprise announcement, the Pakistan army said it had "unilaterally taken the bold initiative to withdraw part of its forces along the LoC .. the move-back has already commenced and the troops have started moving towards the cantonment". But it didn't specify the areas from which the troops were being pulled back.

Explaining the rationale for the ceasefire extension, the Prime Minister told the Lok

Sabha that militancy had declined during the Ramzan truce. He also suggested that the response from across the border had been positive, with fewer attempts to cross over.

Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee offered to initiate "exploratory steps" for resumption of talks with Pakistan, but said the government would do so only if infiltration attempts stopped altogether. The situation would be reviewed after the Republic Day, he said.

The Pakistan High Commissioner, Mr Ashraf Jehangir Qazi welcomed the ceasefire extension. "It is a positive step. We are very pleased .. I am waiting for a response from Islamabad," he said at an iftar party hosted by the BJP president, Mr Bangaru Laxman.

The Hurriyat and the Congress welcomed the move. But the BJP said it was a cal-

culated risk since the killings did not stop in the valley. Echoing this, Dr Farooq Abdullah said: "Ceasefire doesn't only mean silent borders." While the United Nations welcomed it, the Hizbul Mujahideen called the extension a "bluff".

Meanwhile, the stage is reportedly set for a meeting between the Jamaat-e-Islami chief, Mr Ghulam Mohammed Bhatt, and the Hizb leader, Syed Salahuddin, in Saudi Arabia. The step is aimed at continuing the dialogue initiated by the Hurriyat chief, Mr Abdul Gani Lone, on his Pakistan visit.

The Centre reportedly decided to allow Mr Lone visit Pakistan to start an unofficial dialogue process with militants and bridge the gap with them. Mr Bhatt's visit to Saudi Arabia is another step in this direction.

THE STATESMAN

21 DEC 2003

Centre shies away from talks with Pak junta

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Dec. 17: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee indicated today that the time is not ripe for dialogue with the Pakistan military regime.

The government, which will extend the ceasefire beyond the Ramzan month, believes there is "some peace" on the Line of Control (LoC) but not enough to carry its leadership to the negotiating table.

Vajpayee, who was talking to newly-elected councillors from Lucknow this afternoon, said: "We are ready for talks but violence, terrorism and killings must stop."

This implies that the government does not want to risk a dialogue with Pakistan at this stage. It is not convinced that the slump in violent incidents is a lasting one and is afraid that a fresh spate of bloodshed, provoked by Pakistan or committed by Pakistani-backed militants, might embarrass it.

Home minister L.K. Advani and defence minister George Fernandes made it clear yesterday that the ceasefire during the Ramzan month has been satisfac-

tory, barring stray incidents perpetrated by Pakistan-based militants. There was a relative lull even on the LoC.

Vajpayee echoed the observation today "Internationally, India's stand has been recognised and Pakistan has been isolated. There is pressure on Pakistan to initiate talks with India," he said.

External affairs minister Jaswant Singh had first dropped broad hints that India was preparing for a dialogue with its neighbour. Soon after the Ramzan ceasefire was enforced, Singh had told Rajya Sabha that once the killings stopped and the junta sent adequate signals that it wanted peace, the government would consider negotiating afresh.

Advani, who visited Wagah soon after, had also spoken of how the Lahore-II process was kicked off by the Ramzan ceasefire offer.

The Cabinet Committee on Security will meet within the next three days to ratify the renewed ceasefire offer. The Prime Minister wants to make a statement on the floor of the House. As the ongoing winter session of Parliament will close on Friday, the government will have to act fast and set the ball rolling within the next five days.

There is optimism in North and South Block, because though there were sporadic attacks on security camps, allegedly by mercenaries of Lashkar-e-Toiba, there were no mass killings as had occurred during the June ceasefire. Pakistani forces across the border have also been quiet.

The Vajpayee administration wants to take advantage of the winter season when the rate of infiltration drops and there is less violence.

Vajpayee, however, pointed out to the councillors that though there is peace on the LoC, militant groups were continuing to target the security forces and their camps. "There are certain Pakistan-based terrorist groups that are not accepting the ceasefire. They are against talks and are indulging in violence," he said.

But peace is being given top priority. Vajpayee said the ceasefire has "shown how the Kashmiris and the Ladakhis have been yearning for peace. The common people in Kashmir are against violence". He felt that it suited a few groups if violence persisted and added that the ceasefire did not imply that the security forces were refraining from taking action against them.

THE TELEGRAPH

18 DEC 2000

Hurriyat welcomes ceasefire, ready for talks with Centre

The Times of India News Service
& PTI

SRINAGAR: The All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), a conglomerate of 23 separatist outfits, on Sunday formally welcomed the Ramzan ceasefire announced by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and offered to hold talks with the Centre.

The decision was made at a stormy meeting of the Hurriyat executive which was followed by violent factional feud between the supporters of JKLF leader Yasin Malik and Syed Ali Shah Geelani,

leader of the Jamait-e-Islami. Around 12 people were injured in the clashes.

According to a Hurriyat spokesperson, the seven-member executive council, the highest decision-making forum of the organisation, had discussed the situation arising out of the ceasefire and unanimously reiterated its stand that the Hurriyat would take part in any meaningful and result-oriented political process aimed at resolving the Kashmir issue permanently.

The organisation said it considered the announcement of the ceasefire as a positive change in the policy of the Indian government. In a statement, the Hurriyat leadership sought an opportunity to initiate talks with the Indian and the Pakistan governments and the militant leadership to begin the process for a meaningful and result-oriented dialogue aimed at resolving the Kashmir issue and restoring peace in the strife-torn state.

The statement said, "The Hurriyat resolves to work unitedly and with discipline to reach its

goal," adding that any effort to create confusion and division in the ranks of the organisation would fail.

However, factional feud in the APHC was on display soon after the meeting when supporters of Yasin Malik and Syed Ali Shah Geelani got into a tussle. The trouble started when supporters of pro-Pakistan outfits like the Muslim Conference, Muslim League, Islamic Students League and the People's League raised slogans and tried to shout down the supporters of JKLF leader Malik.

Even as the APHC took a step

GIVING PEACE A CHANCE

- 12 hurt in clashes between Hurriyat factions
- Lashkar warns Pak against holding talks with India
- Kashmiri leaders likely to meet in Saudi Arabia

towards ensuring peace in the Kashmir valley, there was confusion across the border, with Pakistani militant outfit Lashkar-e-

Toiba urging Islamabad not to hold talks with India on the Kashmir issue, saying such a step would deal a serious blow to its activities.

In a chat with reporters at an iftar party in Lahore on Saturday night, Lashkar chief Hafeez Muhammed Saeed said Pakistan had made mistakes in the past by agreeing to hold talks with India and it should not repeat them. "Had Islamabad preferred 'jihad' (holy war) to talks, the situation would have been totally different and there would not have been any issue over Kashmir today. It is ridiculous on the part of the Pakistan government to say that it is exercising maximum restraint along the Line of Control (LoC)."

Meanwhile, a Hizbul Mijahideen spokesperson hinted that Kashmiri leaders from both sides of the LoC might meet in Saudi Arabia to discuss the Kashmir issue.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

18 DEC 2000

GOVT. LIKELY TO EXTEND CEASEFIRE

Talks only if Pakistan stops violence, says Vajpayee

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, DEC 17. Amid indications that the Government is ready to review, and possibly extend, the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir after the current ceasefire ends with Ramzan, the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today said that India was ready to hold talks with Pakistan, but the violence and killings by militants must stop.

Addressing a meeting of the MLAs, MLCs, newly-elected corporators, including the Lucknow Mayor and the Lucknow city executive committee of the Bharatiya Janata Party and other office-bearers of the party from Lucknow, the Prime Minister said that he believed there was pressure on Pakistan to initiate talks with India, he did not elaborate on it, clearly referring to the U.S. pressure.

Although it was an interaction with leaders from his own constituency, no detailed discussion of the state of affairs of Uttar Pradesh politics or the ground realities for the BJP came up.

There was some peace along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, but Pakistan-based militants were continuing to target security forces. Even as the Prime Minister here said that there were terrorist groups opposed to any peace initiative in the Valley, reports from Pakistan said that the Lashkar-e-Taiba was pressuring Islamabad not to accept holding talks with India.

What Mr. Vajpayee emphasised was that the peace initiative of his Government — the announcement of the Ramzan ceasefire — had been largely welcomed in Jammu and Kashmir and it had become clear that the people were yearning for lasting peace.

Urging the MLAs, corporators and the party office-bearers to spread the message of 'swadeshi' by asking people to buy Indian, he expressed concern at the dumping of Chinese goods. The Government would be taking stiff measures, including the anti-dumping steps already taken, to prevent these products from capturing the market and hurting the Indian

PM statement soon

ONBOARD SPECIAL AIRCRAFT, DEC. 17. The Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, today said the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, would soon make a statement in Parliament on whether the Government would extend the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir beyond Ramzan.

The Cabinet Committee on Security would review the situation based on inputs from various agencies and take a decision, he told newsmen accompanying him to Ahmedabad. — PTI

industry. Pointing out that the small-scale industry manufacturing toys, batteries and other small items was facing a stiff challenge, he said it was important to generate the 'swadeshi feeling.' While acknowledging problems in running a coalition Government, Mr. Vajpayee pointed to the 'stability' his Government was enjoying and the "slowing down" of the pace at which Governments had fallen since 1996.

"But I do not know how long this trend will continue," he said reminding those present of the recent problems the Government had faced after the Prime Minister's controversial remarks on the Ram temple. He said that the country was self-sufficient in food and foreign exchange reserves were adequate. He admitted that recently some decisions of the Government had increased the burden on the common man.

Pak. monitoring statements

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 17 Pakistan is closely monitoring statements emanating from various quarters in India on the possibility of resumption of dialogue between the two countries follow-

ing recent initiatives from both sides.

A senior official of the Pakistan Ministry of External Affairs who did not wish to be identified told *The Hindu* that while they noticed a change in the tone and tenor of Indian leaders, it was not substantial to merit a response at this juncture. The official said the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, and the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, continued to harp on the theme of 'cross border terrorism', even as they acknowledged that there was a noticeable decrease in infiltration and incidents of violence in the Valley. ever since Pakistan had announced a ceasefire on the Line of Control.

On his reaction to the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee's statement during the course of the day that India could consider resumption of dialogue with Pakistan if violence in the valley ended, the official said, "he appears to be saying what Mr. Advani had said on Saturday. We do not see any difference".

Pakistan was also waiting for the outcome of the crucial meeting of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, currently in progress in Srinagar, before making any comments on the progress of the recent initiatives.

In its December 2 statement, Pakistan had extended an invitation to the executive committee of the APHC to visit Islamabad for consultations with the Pakistan Government on resolution of the Kashmir conflict and appealed to the Indian Government to facilitate the travel of Hurriyat leaders to Pakistan.

Pakistan has noted the fact that contrary to expectations the APHC meeting in Srinagar had been a smooth affair and the response of the Hurriyat was seen as positive from the Pakistani angle. Pakistan might react formally after the Thursday meeting of the APHC.

The official maintained that India would have to concede Kashmir as disputed territory and be prepared for a tripartite dialogue.

'Positive response': page 14

THE HINDU

18 DEC 2000

India to monitor Musharraf's visit to Myanmar

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, DEC. 17. Keen to build special ties with Myanmar, India will closely monitor the visit to Yangon by the Pakistani Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf, early next month.

Gen. Musharraf is expected to pay a three-day visit to Myanmar from January 4. He is visiting Myanmar following India's red carpet welcome for General Maung Aye, the number two man in Yangon's political hierarchy last month.

India attaches considerable strategic importance to Myanmar. Myanmar is seen here as the centerpiece of India's "look east" policy. Since both countries share a common border, Myanmar offers a land corridor to India to South-East Asia. Besides, the shadow of Chinese influence in Myanmar has also jolted India into building closer links with Myanmar. The Indian side wants Myanmar to limit Chinese physical access to the east of the Chindwin river, a tributary of the Irrawady which splits the country into nearly two equal halves. Any movement west of Chindwin can expose India's sensitive north-east region to Chinese surveillance.

India's concerns about Gen. Musharraf's trip have been activated by his anticipated agenda. Highly placed sources in the Government point out that Gen. Musharraf's mission to Myanmar includes exploring the possibility of expanding its arms supply to it. Not surprisingly, Gen. Musharraf's delegation includes Mr. Javed Hasan, an Army officer, in-charge of weapons and equipment. The Pakistani delegation is likely to offer small arms and mortars to Myanmar's mainly infantry-dominated army.

India is well aware of Pakistan's pronounced emphasis on arms supply to wrest diplomatic advantages recently. Analysts here point out that Gen. Musharraf made skillful use of "arms diplomacy" by providing weapons to Sri Lanka in order to acquire a larger political profile in the island nation.

Pakistan's military ties with Myanmar are not new. It has recently supplied arms and ammunition worth \$2.5 million. These weapons had been transferred in two consignments during March and April 1999. Since both countries possess Chinese-origin weaponry, a Pakistani offer of certain spares and maintenance support to Yangon is not ruled out. Pakistan has also trained personnel from the Myanmar Army and the Air Force in some of its establishments and has since mid-1995, revived intelligence links with it.

On the political side, India apprehends that Pakistan is seeking a "toe-hold" in Myanmar, with a long-term objective of encouraging insurgency in the North-East. India is aware of reports about Pakistani attempts to acquire a physical presence at Haka in Myanmar's Chin State where it proposes to establish an air field.

Sources, however, are not unduly perturbed by Gen. Musharraf's visit. There is confidence here that India which has larger agenda in Myanmar and the region is well positioned to off-set any negative fallout of this visit. In fact, political and economic bonds between New Delhi and Yangon are expected to deepen even further during the visit to Myanmar next month by the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh.

THE HINDU

18 DEC 2000

Govt. ready for talks if Pakistan ends violence: Advani

The Times of India News Service
NEW DELHI: Addressing members of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee, home minister L.K. Advani said on Friday that "if violence in Jammu and Kashmir comes to an end or is drastically reduced, then New Delhi is prepared to talk to Pakistan."

He, however, clarified that this did not mean the government was contemplating tripartite talks to resolve the Kashmir issue. The all-party committee welcomed the Prime Minister's peace initiative on Kashmir. Mr Advani said this decision was arrived at after wide-ranging discussion between the Centre and the J&K government.

He said the government was monitoring the situation closely and hoped that some de-

cision will soon be taken to strengthen the peace initiative. He told the committee there had been perceptible change in the situation in J&K after the announcement of the ceasefire and militant activities had declined and the infiltration from across the border had also come down.

"This could be because Pakistan shelling had come down and infiltration generally takes place under the cover of fire," he said. Mr Advani termed J&K militancy as "essentially a proxy war" which was "incited by our neighbour." "Militancy in J&K is not an indigenous one," he stressed.

While Mr Advani pointed out that the *Ramzan* ceasefire offered Pakistan another opportunity to take positive steps so that peace talks could be considered, many members expressed concern over killings in the

North-East of non-Assamese by the insurgent outfits like ULFA.

CPM leader Somnath Chatterjee sought that the Centre take steps to check the activities Kamtapuri Liberation Organisation, reportedly belonging to North Bengal, which is demanding a separate, sovereign state.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah has said the unilateral ceasefire announced by Prime Minister Vajpayee would be followed up by a second move in pursuit of peace in the region.

A dialogue with Pakistan in the wake of the ceasefire was welcome but no solution should be expected within days as "the issues of 52 years are too complicated to be untangled so soon," he said at a function organised by Kashmir foundation for peace and developmental studies here on Thursday.

"Nobody should nurse the expectation that any dispensation in New Delhi could ever even think of parting with Kashmir," the chief minister asserted.

He said the Kashmir problem, though vexed, was not beyond solution provided Pakistan changed its attitude of obsession with Kashmir.

Pakistan knows that reality was hard to be ignored but tended to keep issues alive, Mr Abdullah said, adding that "once the issues are resolved, Pak army will loose control over the country that has been fed and brought up on Kashmir euphoria".

He said those thriving on militancy would only want to weaken peace efforts and create hatred between various sections of the people.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

16 DEC 2000

Hopeful Pak agrees to twin talks term

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Dec. 8: Keen to get back to the talks table, Pakistan today said it was okay with Delhi's decision to negotiate separately with Islamabad and the Kashmiri leadership as long as "all concerned parties are involved" in resolving the Kashmir dispute.

"As long as you get a formulation that takes the talks forward, you can call it whatever you want to," Pakistan high commissioner Ashraf Jehangir Qazi said. "If India is comfortable saying it wants to delink the talks, let it. If the All Party Hurriyat Conference wants to call it tripartite talks, let them. As long as all concerned parties are involved, we are happy."

Pakistan hopes developments following Delhi's Ramzan ceasefire call will lead to the resumption of talks between the nuclear neighbours. "After 18 months, we see a sliver of hope. We need to seize the moment and take bold decisions," Qazi said.

Qazi today held talks with Hurriyat chairman Abdul Gani Bhat. "Even the Hurriyat leaders are hopeful that, perhaps, this time the talks will lead somewhere," he said, adding that Hurriyat leaders should be allowed to travel to Islamabad

to hold talks with the Musharraf regime. "We are hopeful after the Indian Prime Minister said their request to travel to Pakistan will be considered."

Pakistan had responded to the truce call by promising to exercise "maximum restraint" along the Line of Control. But Delhi felt this was "too little" to resume talks and Islamabad should follow this up by stopping export of cross-border terror.

It also wanted Pakistan to send clear signals that it was committed to the Simla Agreement and the Lahore peace process.

Qazi today made several points to prove that Islamabad had done its bit to create "the right atmosphere".

One, it did not oppose the unilateral ceasefire as a "mere exercise in public relations". Two, its security forces were directed to show maximum restraint along the Line of Control to stabilise and strengthen the ceasefire. Three, Pakistan foreign minister Abdus Sattar had told an Indian newspaper that the Kashmir dispute would be resolved according to UN resolutions, the Simla Agreement, the Lahore peace process and other agreements between the countries. Four, India had admitted that cross-border

terror and infiltration had gone down in the past few weeks.

"I think all this should satisfy the Indian leadership that the right atmosphere has been created for resumption of talks between the two sides," Qazi said.

He emphasised that the main problem was not resuming talks but "sustaining" them. Qazi said this could only be done if India changed its mindset and approached the talks such that "all the concerned parties" were involved.

Asked if Pakistan was willing to change its mindset and look at the dispute afresh, Qazi said: "We don't really have a position on Kashmir. We only insist that whatever decision is arrived at should be approved by the people of Kashmir. How this will be done is something which can be discussed and agreed on."

He said it was time India responded positively, else it would send a signal that it was not interested in solving the dispute. But Indian foreign ministry spokesman R.S. Jassal made no commitment on resuming talks. "We will review the situation at the end of Ramzan and decide our future course of action," he said.

THE TELEGRAPH

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