

Pervez flaunts N-prowess, Qayyum for LOC as IB

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Dec. 30 — There was some bracing news and some belligerence, as is the norm, from Pakistan, as the year drew to a close. The Chairman of Pakistan's Kashmir Committee, Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan mooted the conversion of the Line of Control into the International Border, a proposal that the Indian government cannot comment on officially, given the Parliament resolution of 1994, but which, sources said, it would welcome.

General Pervez Musharraf, told Air Force veterans in that country today that he had been prepared to use nuclear weapons earlier this year when tensions with India were at a peak.

According to agency reports from Islamabad, General Musharraf said, "I personally conveyed messages to (Indian) Prime Minister Vajpayee through every international leader who came to Pakistan, that if Indian troops moved a single step across the international border or Line of Control, they should not expect a conventional war from Pakistan."

General Musharraf had, in Almaty earlier this year, dismissed talk of using nuclear weapons against India as "the height of irresponsibility." According to government sources, General Musharraf was forced to lower the nuclear pitch and withdraw similar

statements after the United States frowned on such threats.

Meanwhile, galled at the treatment meted out to him by Islamabad

Strategic command

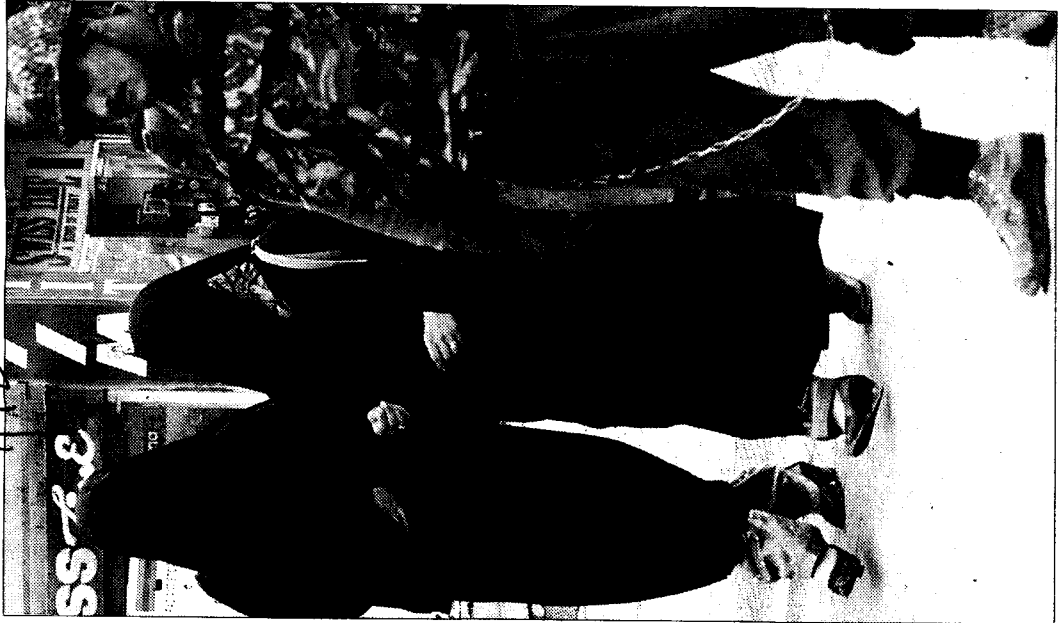
NEW DELHI, Dec. 30. — The Indian Air Force's decision to move Air Marshal TM Asthana to Air HQ here on 'attachment' is a sign that the decision on the Strategic Command that will be responsible for the country's nuclear weapons is likely very soon.

The Air Marshal was tipped to be chief of the Strategic Command but was waiting in another post as the decision was yet to be taken. Now, it appears that the Centre could clear a decision to have a strategic command in the next Cabinet Committee on Security meeting early next year.

The command will be responsible for the land-based missiles like the *Agni* which can be nuclear-tipped and the air force squadrons that will carry nuclear weapons. Pakistan already has a strategic system in place. — SNS

bad and the fundamentalists, Sardar Qayyum Khan has again raised the pitch by proposing the measure to convert the LoC into the IB, one that is neither acceptable to the authorities in Islamabad nor to the more fundamentalist elements in Pakistan.

In his advice to the new government headed by Mir Zafarullah



VEIL OF FEAR: Two burqa-clad women walk past a paramilitary jawan in Srinagar on Monday. — AFP

Khan Jamali, Mr Khan said they should evolve a comprehensive policy on Kashmir after holding consultations with former foreign ministers and Kashmiri leaders, including on the Indian side, and reiterated that the armed struggle could only help in raising the issue of Kashmir but not lead to a solution.

Mr Khan has also written to President Musharraf warning him about his policies on Kashmir. Cautioning the President about Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's government, the former President and Prime Minister of PoK said the installation of a new government in J&K called for a fresh look by Islamabad at its policies. Otherwise the "movement might suffer a setback even on the political front", he said in the letter, in contrast, "to .. the Indian side, whose working on Kashmir has ever since been consistent, target oriented and objective."

Mr Khan's self-flagellation comes when the term of his committee is coming to an end, on 14 January. The committee was set up with members from all the four provinces in Pakistan and PoK.

Pak response to visa curbs

Pakistan won't retaliate against India's decision to impose visa restrictions on visiting Pakistanis, though it thinks New Delhi's move will hamper efforts to normalise bilateral ties, PTI adds from Islamabad.

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI, Dec. 30. — Dispelning notions that Pakistan's nuclear capability deterred India from going to a war early this year, the outgoing Army Chief, Gen. S Padmanabhan, said: "We were absolutely ready... Our forces were well located but such a decision (whether to go to war) is ultimately a political decision."

On whether Islamabad's claimed possession of tactical nuclear weapons could have deterred New Delhi, Gen. Padmanabhan, who retires tomorrow, said: "When we assess our adversaries, we assess all its capabilities. We had evaluated it and were ready to cope with it."

On when India would have a formal Nuclear and Strategic Command to control the country's nuclear and missile forces, he said: "These are certainly things not in public domain. We may have



General S Padmanabhan 'Our troops were well located but we were waiting for a political decision'

Asserting that militarily the situation in the state was good contrary to what the media was depicting, Gen. Padmanabhan said: "It was due to their low morale that militants were hitting soft targets and indulging in barbaric acts like slaying women and children... We have been able to choke their (militants) money and arms supplies" he said.

Gen Paddy: We were absolutely ready

informal structure already and which in time could acquire a formal status."

Operation Parakram had proved a boon for the armed forces in upgrading training, along with equipment availability. He said with the procurement board in place, the modernisation drive in the Armed Forces had achieved a certain degree of momentum.

On Kashmir, the outgoing Army chief said with better detection measures and new weaponry being deployed, the coming months would prove tough for the militants.

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3 1 010 2002

'LOCAL SPONSORS SHOULD GIVE UNDERTAKING'

Govt. plans to curb Pak. nationals to three cities

9/12/12
Pak

HD-1
30/12

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, DEC. 29. In a tough posture in dealing with visitors from Pakistan, the Centre plans to restrict their movement to just three Indian cities from a dozen at present and begin a vigorous drive to round up those who have overstayed.

Yet another proposal under consideration of the Government aims to secure undertakings from local sponsors of Pakistani visitors in order to hold them responsible for the whereabouts of their guests till the time the visitors left the country.

Talking to reporters here today, the Minister of State for Home, Vidyasagar Rao, expressed concern over increasing cases of Pakistani nationals overstaying or going underground. He said all State Governments had been empowered by the Centre to identify, nab and deport those staying in the country beyond the time permitted in their visas.

"The Government has asked the State Governments to launch special drives to nab those Pakistan nationals staying illegally. State police forces and the registration offices for foreigners have been empowered to nab and deport them," he said.

The Government was also contemplating grant of citizenship on humanitarian grounds on a case-by-case basis to aged persons whose kin lived here or women who got married to Indian nationals.

Mr. Rao said that of the 11,208 Pakistan nationals who entered India legally but were overstaying or had gone underground, 2,324 could not be traced.

The Home Ministry would install computer software at points of entry and exit in different parts of the country so that information about foreigners was available nation-wide.

He said that a number of meetings had been held recently in the Home Ministry to review the situation, and added that the steps being contemplated stemmed from random verification

that 90 per cent of the addresses given by the Pakistan nationals for visa purposes in India were found to be false.

After the 1972 Shimla agreement, India and Pakistan had signed an accord on issuance of passports, which entitled nationals of both the countries to visit a maximum of three places. The accord also restricted issue of visas to meeting relatives or for diplomatic purposes.

However, Mr. Rao said that India had unilaterally increased the number of places which could be visited to 12 and also started issuing tourist visas. "We would like to revert to the original position of restricting the places that could be visited by a Pakistani to three as before. Refusal to grant extension on tourist visas is also being considered."

The Minister said that all "unilateral concessions" granted by India were being reviewed and steps taken to restrict many of them.

The new approach also reflected the Government's concern over growing threat to national security.

Giving a State-wise break-up of the Pakistanis who were either missing or could not be traced, he said that 1,707 persons were untraceable in Maharashtra, 946 in Madhya Pradesh, 988 in Uttar Pradesh and 634 in West Bengal.

He said the practice of "100 per cent pre-verification" of Pakistanis seeking Indian visas would be resumed and circulars had been issued to the State Governments concerned to verify the antecedents of their local sponsors.

There were cases of aged persons who had crossed over from Pakistan during the 1965 and 1971 wars and remained here since then, especially in Rajasthan and Gujarat, for whom grant of citizenship was being considered, he said. There were 4,978 such persons, mostly Hindus, in Rajasthan.

Asked if amendments to the Foreigners Act, 1946, or the Indian Passports Act, 1920, were required, Mr. Rao said the Government orders would be sufficient for the purpose.

Musharraf rakes up Gujarat violence with Khatami

11-12 25/12
Gujarat, Mr Khatami said he
condemned atrocities not
only against Muslims but
against all human beings.
"We are against any kind of
brutalities and atrocities
against human beings any-
where in the world especially
when it happens against Mus-
lims. No matter where they
are, whether it is Palestine,
India or anywhere," he said,
adding in his view sectarian
violence was the biggest prob-
lem that faced the region.
At a banquet hosted for Mr
Khatami on Monday night,
Gen. Musharraf accused the
BJP government of "cynical-
ly encouraging" communal
riots and said "what has hap-
pened in Gujarat has finally
exposed the myth of Indian
secularism." PTI

Islamabad: As President Pervez Musharraf once again raked up Gujarat violence, Iranian President Syed Muhammad Khatami on Tuesday reminded Pakistan of the sectarian strife in the country involving majority Shia and Sunni, saying such violence and differences were the major problems facing the region.

Mr Khatami, who is on a three-day visit here, also asked India and Pakistan to sort out their differences in the interest of regional economic development.

Asked at a joint press conference here with Pakistan premier Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali what Iran proposed to do to stop the communal attacks on Muslims in

25 DEC 2002

India, Pakistan officials meet

XD-11
29/12

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, DEC. 23. The Joint Secretary (Pakistan), Arun Singh, conveyed India's concerns about the upkeep of Sikh "gurdwaras" in Pakistan to Islamabad's Charge d'Affaires, Jalil Abbas Jilani, today.

The Foreign Office spokesman told presspersons after the meeting that the issue of poor maintenance of the "gurdwaras" was brought to the Government's attention by Sikh pilgrims who had gone to Pakistan for Guru Nanak's birthday in November. Asked if other issues had been discussed, he

said "house-keeping" matters such as visas and detention of fishermen also figured.

There was some discussion on the exchange of fishermen, who were routinely detained by both Pakistan and India when they strayed into the territorial waters of the other country. Many of them had to spend years in detention even after they were released for travelling without proper documents. Given the fact that Indian and Pakistani "contact" in recent times was in the nature of "summons" by one side or the other, a "normal discussion" at diplomatic levels is a welcome development.

24 DEC 2002

THE HINDU

No SAARC dates till we know India's mind: Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, DECEMBER 22

PAKISTAN would fix fresh dates for the SAARC Summit after making sure that India would attend it. "India has been changing its stance on the issue and we will announce fresh dates only once we are sure that the Indians would be coming for the summit," Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali said in Lahore last night.

Jamali also said that he would continue with the Kashmir policy pursued by General Pervez Musharraf and all other policies that "suit Pakistan". "We would allow all policies, including those on defence and foreign affairs, which are in the interests of Pakistan," he said. Expressing confidence that his government would win the vote of confidence on December 30, Jamali said he was in



Pakistan PM Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali with Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan in Lahore on Saturday. Reuters

touch with all the political parties in this regard and was optimistic that they would vote for him for continuation of democracy. "I am requesting all the political parties to contribute their bit towards progress and prosperity of the country and this can be done by giving my government the vote of confidence," he said. Jamali's government at present has a two-vote majority in the 342 member National Assembly. Since November 24, when he was elected by one vote majority, Jamali's strength has gone up from 172 to 173 with another elected member of the Pakistan People's Party joining the ranks of 10 defectors.

However, Jamali avoided answers to the questions relat-

ing to Musharraf's decision to retain the post of President as well as the Army Chief — a point on which several Opposition parties have refused to support him.

He denied that FBI was involved in the operations that led to the arrest Dr Ahmad Khwaja and his family members in Lahore three days ago on suspicion that they had links with Al Qaeda. "The operation was conducted by Pakistani law enforcement agencies," he said, adding that a probe was being conducted into the arrests and would soon be made public. "We will ensure that such incidents are not repeated in future. If the action proved unjustified, we will compensate for the mistake," he noted.

23 DEC 2002

INDIAN EXPRESS

Miffed India turns terror heat on Pak

PRANAY SHARMA

jailed for a year without trial.

New Delhi, Dec. 14: Upset over the release of Anees Ibrahim by the United Arab Emirates, India today turned its anger on Pakistan, where the Bombay blasts accused is suspected to have fled and Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar was set free.

Anees figures on India's list of 20 that was handed to Pakistan about a year ago. Delhi had sought his extradition.

Anees, who had arrived in Dubai on a Pakistani passport, is reported to have gone to Karachi after his release on bail. "This clearly shows Pakistan has now become a safe haven for all terrorists," foreign ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said.

India took the opportunity to express its disappointment with the US for its continued support to Pakistan. Without naming the country, the spokesman said any serious strategy to fight global terrorism cannot be selective.

The Jaish had reportedly executed the terrorist attack on Parliament last year.

So the Centre did not miss the import of Islamabad's pointed decision to release Masood, barely 24 hours after the December 13 attack's first anniversary.

During the memorial service in Delhi, India had reaffirmed its resolve to fight terrorism.

"Masood Azhar has been released following the court order in Lahore," Maulana Tahir Ashrafi, the Punjab (in Pakistan) government's adviser on religious affairs, was quoted as saying. He said the high court had rejected a Pakistan government request to extend Masood's detention.

India, however, is not impressed. It knows that according to the new law the Musharraf regime has brought in, terrorist leaders such as Masood can be

Sarna called Pakistan the "epicentre" of world terrorism and said: "There can be no good terrorist and bad terrorist." India, he said, was against any country that used double standards to fight terrorism.

"It is quite clear that Pakistan is continuing with the policy of terrorism as an instrument of state policy, in violation of international law and its publicly declared commitments," he said.

He doubted Pakistan's seriousness in investigating the charges against Masood. When Masood was picked up in Pakistan, he was allowed to remain in touch with his cadre. He was detained in his own home and Pakistan paid for his family's maintenance, Sarna said.

"Though both the outfits (Jaish and Lashkar-e-Toiba) have been banned in Pakistan, they are allowed to continue their activities in another name, hold conventions and bring out proscribed publications," he said.

India was as bitter about Anees' release but the anger was directed more at Pakistan than Dubai. Sarna said Musharraf had said earlier that no Indian national would be allowed to hide in Pakistan. Yet his government, Sarna said, was helping Anees and Dawood Ibrahim to stay on in Pakistan. They have been given Pakistani passports.

He emphasised the point when he referred to a Sikh *jatha* from India that recently visited Pakistan and saw there at least three Khalistani militants who figure on the list of 20. "Whether Pakistan has an unvarnished military dictatorship or an electoral varnish has been put on it, their mindset and policies, as evidenced by the putting back in circulation of Masood Azhar, remain unchanged," Sarna said.

THE TELEGRAPH

15 DEC 2002

Include Pak. in 'axis of evil': Sinha

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, DEC. 12. In what is seen here as a sign of further hardening of Indian stand towards Pakistan, the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, has called for Islamabad to be included in America's "axis of evil" because of its continuing support to terrorists.

Mr. Sinha, who stopped over in London on Wednesday on his way to Cape Town to attend a Non-Aligned Movement Foreign Ministers' conference, told *The Independent* that "while (President) Bush may have the idea that there are three members of the axis of evil, one may conclude that one has been left out: Pakistan."

Calling Pakistan a "sham democracy," he said it continued to support cross-border terrorism into India. "Pakistan is a difficult country and we will have to deal with them."

Earlier, Mr. Sinha told a television channel that there could be no "worthwhile" dialogue with

Pakistan unless it stopped supporting anti-India activities.

Mr. Sinha, who met his British counterpart, Jack Straw, here, said that India stood for peaceful resolution of all outstanding issues, including Kashmir, but it was Pakistan's "recalcitrance" which was preventing this.

Citing the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee's bus-ride to Lahore and the Agra summit as examples of India's peace initiatives, he said that on both the occasions it was "rebuffed."

"We have told Pakistan clearly that they must stop supporting cross-border terrorism before a dialogue can begin. You can't have a worthwhile dialogue while someone is holding a gun to your head," he told Sky TV.

A spokesman of the Indian High Commission said Mr. Sinha's meeting with Mr. Straw provided an "opportunity" to the two leaders to discuss several issues of "current interest," including Iraq and the situation on the Indian subcontinent.

NEW DELHI REJECTS CHARGE

Pak puts off Saarc summit, blames India

9/12/12
Sri S

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Dec. 9. — Pakistan today indefinitely postponed the Saarc summit, scheduled for the second week of January, because India had not confirmed its participation. But India refused to accept the blame for the summit being called off, and instead accused Pakistan of consistently sabotaging any meaningful progress on economic and other issues.

According to the terms of the Saarc charter, if even one of the seven countries is unable to attend, the summit cannot be held. "In view of the little time left to make proper preparations and in the face of the continued Indian refusal to confirm its participation the government of Pakistan is regrettably left with no alternative but to postpone the Saarc summit," a Pakistani foreign ministry statement said.

But India's foreign ministry spokesman Mr Navtej Sarna said: "Now that Pakistan has announced postponement of the summit, then it is a choice they have made."

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka make up Saarc, a region-specific group that came together in 1985, primarily to remove poverty through intensive trade

promotion and economic cooperation. "India has always been committed to the Saarc process," Mr Sarna said. "It was precisely because of this commitment that we had suggested that substantive progress should take place on various trade and economic issues that were being discussed."

Rejecting suggestions that India was responsible for placing conditions, the spokesman said: "How can India be blamed for bringing in economic issues into a forum of regional cooperation which is meant for the economic betterment of the people of all the countries involved?"

"A strange situation had been reached," he said, "when every meaningful proposal for economic cooperation was being systematically sabotaged by Pakistan."

Of a total of 685 items that Pakistan offered India to trade, 253 items were placed on the table in the last round of Sapta (South Asia Preferential Trade Agreement) talks in November, out of which 146 items were on the negative list, indicating "a complete lack of any seriousness," an official said.

Till November, no progress, even in terms of pre-summit meetings due, had not been held.

'TERRORISTS MAY TARGET MORE TEMPLES'

Pak. not ready to change policy on terrorism: PM

By Kanwar Yogendra

SHIMLA, DEC. 1. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, has said that Pakistan is not ready to change its policy on cross-border terrorism even after the change in political leadership there. He said he was ready to attend the SAARC summit if the neighbouring country stopped all type of infiltration but unfortunately Pakistan did not want to initiate the peace process.

The Prime Minister, who was addressing presspersons here in Barnes Courts where the historic Shimla agreement was signed, said "Pakistan should abide by the Shimla agreement and stop all terrorist activities in India."

Addressing a public rally earlier, he said "we are fighting and taking on the challenges from across the border, but we will not bend in any case and none can shake our faith or confidence by these attacks." He also

cautioned that terrorists might target other religious places the way they had attacked the Akshardham and Raghunath temples.



Mr. Vajpayee, who had come to lay the foundation for the Rs.100-crore Mohan Shakti National Heritage Park in Solan, announced a special package for the backward districts of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The Union Cabinet would shortly finalise the details and there would be exemption from

excise duty and income tax to industries coming up in the backward areas.

On the Gujarat elections, Mr. Vajpayee said the BJP never wanted to raise the Godhra issue and it was not mentioned in its manifesto. But the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, was compelled to raise the issue by the Congress which was seeking a white paper on it. He said the parties should have a common opinion on maintaining communal ties, and tensions should not be created for electoral gains.

Mr. Vajpayee suggested that a screening committee be set up in Jammu and Kashmir for scrutinising the release of terrorists and assured help from the NDA Government at the Centre to the PDP-Congress Govt. He said he did not want to join the debate on 'Hindu rashtra', but the country needed reconstruction and oneness in its being. He denied that there was any pressure from the VHP or the RSS on the

NDA Government.

He refused to react to the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani's comment on a fourth direct war with Pakistan.

Relations with Russia were improving and since the two countries shared a common opinion on terrorism, economic and defence relations were being strengthened. On a possible Russia-China-India axis, Mr. Vajpayee said that nothing had come about except a meeting.

He said concrete steps had been taken for fighting drought conditions in 14 States and there was no dearth of food-grains. The foreign exchange reserves had touched record proportions.

PTI reports:

Mr. Vajpayee said the previous Governments at the Centre had "neglected" defence because of world pressure, adding that the international community tried to pressure his Government also in 1998 when preparations were being made for the Pokhran nuclear tests.

"They said there is no need for our nuclear tests as they were there for our protection." But the Government went ahead with its plan, arguing "if they don't come to our defence in the time of need, what will happen?"

He said the country's security must be ensured and development works must also go on. "We will increase our economic development and industrialisation will grow."

When the world, particularly the South-East Asian countries, were witnessing economic recession, India was "moving ahead".

Mr. Vajpayee assured that no step based on the Kelkar Committee on tax reforms would be taken which would hit the common man.

Ostracise terrorist states: Advani

NEW DELHI, DEC. 1. A day after daring Pakistan for a fourth war, the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, today stepped up his offensive against Islamabad and asked the international community to "ostracise terrorist states".

Without directly referring to Pakistan, he said "terrorist organisations are dangerous but terror states are far more dangerous. The international community should ostracise such terror states in the interest of democracy, civilisation and humanity". Addressing the 37th Raising Day parade of the Border Security Force at the force's Chhawla campus on the outskirts of the national capital, Mr. Advani said that though the neighbouring country had banned some terrorist outfits "under international pressure", it continued to provide protection and refuge to such elements.

Paying homage to 107 BSF jawans martyred during the year, most of them in Jammu and Kashmir fighting terrorism, he said Pakistan, having been defeated thrice in war and having realised it could never win a direct confrontation with India, had resorted to terrorism.

"Innocent civilians, women and children are being made targets. This poses a grave threat not only to the common man but also to democracy, civilisation and humanity. The earlier the world realises it, the better it would be for humanity," the Deputy Premier said.

Addressing an election rally in Bhuj town of Gujarat yesterday, Mr. Advani had dared Pakistan to fight a fourth direct war with India instead of engaging in proxy war targeting temples and innocent civilians. — PTI

'It is war-mongering': Page 11

2 DEC 2002

THE HINDU

No change in Kashmir policy: Musharraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 28. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has said that the new Government headed by Mir Zafrullah Khan Jamali will continue the Kashmir policy of Pakistan "without any alteration."

Gen. Musharraf spelt out the new Government's Kashmir policy when the President of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Muhammad Anwar Khan, called on him on Wednesday evening at the military General Headquarters in Rawalpindi.

Though Gen. Musharraf's observations are routine, they negate what he himself had promised with respect to transfer of power to a civilian set-up. Gen. Musharraf had gone on record on more than one occasion that the new government would have the freedom to formulate its foreign policy and had specifically referred to Kashmir, as an example.

"Kashmir is an international dispute that requires the immediate attention of the United Nations and other world powers," he told Lt. Gen. (retd.) Anwar Khan, while renewing his

pledge to continue his "unflinching support" to the Kashmir cause.

Pakistan would press for the implementation of the U.N. resolutions, he said and urged the international community to exert pressure on India to start

"meaningful" talks. "A durable and just solution" to the Kashmir problem was vital to peace and stability in South Asia. Pakistan would play its role in resolving the problem and bringing back "normalcy" to the region. Gen. Musharraf

claimed that Kashmiris were struggling for their "right to self-determination" and the United Nations had accepted it. Pakistan would continue its "political, moral and diplomatic" support for Kashmiri people and the "freedom struggle."

29 NOV 2002

THE HINDU

War of words between India, Pak. escalates

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 27. There has been a spurt in the war of words between India and Pakistan since the assumption of office by the civilian setup led by the Prime Minister, Mir Zafrullah Khan Jamali, on November 23.

The ray of hope of improvement in relations between the two countries, generated by the new Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri, that normalisation of ties with New Delhi was a priority for the Jamali Government here, proved to be shortlived.

Comments made by the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, in the course of his 'Hard Talk' interview with BBC, against Pakistan has evoked a sharp reaction here. Mr. Sinha's

appeal to the international community to impose sanctions against Pakistan for its "failure to curb terrorism" provoked the Pakistan Foreign Office to charge New Delhi with practising a policy of "coercive diplomacy".

Today, the Pakistan Foreign Ministry took exception to what were termed as "anti-Pakistan" observations made by the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, in the Lok Sabha. "Mr. Advani has engaged in his usual, and by now familiar, tirade against Pakistan. The spokesman rejected the charges levelled by Mr. Advani as baseless and motivated," a statement said.

A spokesman of the Pakistan Foreign Office alleged that it had been India's constant effort to portray the "Kashmiri free-

dom struggle" as "foreign inspired".

"This diabolical twin objective of the Government of India has led its security forces to engage in extra-judicial killings through stage-managed operations and then to present those murdered as terrorists killed in action," the statement alleged.

"The latest manifestation of this strategy was the recent killing of two individuals at Ansa Plaza in New Delhi.

Though the Indian Deputy Prime Minister had lashed out against Pakistan immediately after the incident, there is sufficient evidence now to confirm that the operation was planned and executed by the Indian security agencies in pursuit of their nefarious designs," it alleged.

PM message mixes pat and punch

PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Nov. 26: Mixing restraint with civility, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee today sent a letter of felicitation to his Pakistani counterpart, three days after his "appointment". But implicit in the message was India's signal that normal relations between the countries could be restored only if Pakistan matched words with action.

"I would like to convey, on behalf of my government and on my own behalf, our felicitations and best wishes to you on your appointment as Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," Vajpayee said in the message. He added: "Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest considerations."

A similar letter was sent by foreign minister Yashwant Sinha to his Pakistani counterpart Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri.

Both the messages made no attempt at referring to any other issue — not even India's commitment to "good neighbourly" relations with Pakistan.

Vajpayee's choice of the word "appointment" is significant as an attempt to tell Islamabad that Delhi is aware of the fact that despite the new government, it is President Pervez Musharraf who will continue to call the shots and have the final say in policies concerning India.

What Vajpayee and Sinha suggested but did not say was left to foreign ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna to explain. "India has always been in favour of dialogue with Pakistan, and for resolution of differences through bilateral discussions. In fact, India has in recent years, taken several initiatives in this direction," Sarna said.

He added: "It is well known that the Pakistani military and related establishment has time and again scuttled attempts at productive dialogue. Sponsorship of terrorism directed against India has been a part of

this attempt."

Sarna was responding to questions on the new Pakistani foreign minister's assertion that "normalising relations with India will be his top priority".

"We will naturally need to wait and see its reflection on the ground," the spokesman added.

Raising questions about Islamabad's sincerity, Sarna said during the visit of the Sikh *jatha* to Pakistan's Nankana Sahib on Guru Nanak's birth anniversary, attempts were made by the intelligence agencies there to encourage "Khalistani elements" who had come from other countries and were known for their anti-India stand.

"The Sikh *jatha* from India was compelled to walk out from a function and General Musharraf had met a select group, once again of those known for their anti-Indian activities," he said.

India's scepticism about the recent Pakistani overtures stems from the fact that there has been little or no change on the ground reality, especially as far as infiltration across the Line of Control and violence in Jammu and Kashmir is concerned.

According to sources, the figures of both infiltration and terrorist incidents in the Valley have reached almost the same level as that on May 27 this year when Musharraf gave an assurance to the US of stopping infiltration permanently.

Figures with Indian officials indicate that while there were 1,403 incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir five months before the Pakistani President made the commitment, five months later it was 1,624. There have been 857 attacks on security forces in the past five months and 442 civilians have been killed.

South Block officials said the figures show a pattern of cyclic rise and fall in terrorist attacks and infiltration making it amply clear that they were being conducted with active co-operation from the Pakistani government.

Advani sees Pakistan's hand in Jammu attack

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Even as both houses of parliament on Monday pledged to stand united in the country's battle against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, the prevailing consensus fell apart when deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani told the Lok Sabha that the Jammu and Kashmir government had not consulted the Centre before releasing militants in its police custody.

Mr Advani disclosed this while replying to members' queries in the lower house. Since the state government had acted unilaterally, he said, the Union home secretary had even written to the new administration in J&K asking that such decisions, which have a bearing on the country's battle against terrorism, be taken after consulting the Centre.

Mr Advani's revelation clearly discomfited the Congress since it is a partner in the coalition government in J&K. Congress deputy leader Shivraj Patil sought to put the record straight, saying that intelligence agencies had been consulted before releasing the militants. But Mr Advani pointed out that these agencies are generally not involved in such matters.

The two houses later passed separate formal resolutions of outrage at Sunday's terrorist attacks at Jammu's Raghunath temple and thanks to the security forces for killing the perpetrators, after the deputy PM gave a detailed account of the incident for which he held Pakistan responsible.

Sunday's attacks, and a similar one in March, were part of a "deliberate design to create a communal divide in J&K", Mr Advani told the MPs. These terrorists, he said, had demonstrated their total lack of concern for the overwhelming yearning for peace shown in the recent assembly elections.

Referring to the series of attacks by suicide squads of terrorists in the state over the last three days, Mr Advani noted that these followed the release by the Pakistan government of the Lashkar-e-Toiba chief, Hafiz Mohammed Sayeed, and his subsequent publicised vow to continue the jihad in J&K.

"Monitoring of the communication network of the terrorists indicates that the Jammu attack is the handiwork of Al Mansooran, a cover organisation of the Lashkar-e-Toiba," Mr Advani said.

Third terrorist killed, security operation ends

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Jammu: Security forces on Monday morning gunned down a third militant, winding up the operation to clear the Raghunath temple and nearby shrines of the militants who had stormed the places of worship on Sunday evening.

The militant was found at about 8.30 a.m., hiding in a house in the vicinity of the Panjbakhtar temple, and killed at about 10 a.m. An assistant sub-inspector of police also died in the encounter.

Meanwhile, the Al Umar Mujahideen has called for a general strike in the Valley on Tuesday and Wednesday to protest the arrest of its chief commander, Mushtaq Ahmad Zargar alias Latram, in Pakistan for training militants in Kashmir and goading them to blast the party office of separatist leader Shabir Shah in Srinagar.

Latram was among the four militants freed by India following the Kandahar hijack.

The statements followed a disruption of question hour, the first item on parliament's agenda, by agitated MPs demanding a discussion on the killings. Calm was restored after about 10 minutes only, with the promise of a statement by Mr Advani and clarifications thereafter.

Later in the day, the Congress claimed that chief minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed had released Yasin Malik and eight other militant leaders only after consultations with central agencies.

"How did the Akshardham temple attack take place with Narendra Modi as chief minister of Gujarat? Is Modi a softer CM than the Mufti? Why are there two standards?" asked Congress spokesman Jaipal Reddy, implying that Mr Advani had never been blamed for breaches of security during the attack on parliament or in terrorist actions in J&K earlier.

● See Edit: Terror Designs, Page 14

Graphic: Neelabh



PAK INFILTRATION OCCURRED 800 M INTO BORDER

India admits operation in Aug to evict Pak intruders

New Delhi
21 NOVEMBER

AFTER months of denial, India, on Thursday, officially admitted that it had carried out an operation in August in Jammu and Kashmir to evict Pakistani "intruders" who had occupied a feature along the Line of Control (LoC).

The defence ministry and the Indian Air Force (IAF) had previously denied that the operation — referred to as Kargil-II in security circles — had been conducted. Defence minister George Fernandes said on Thursday that

there had been a "minor Pakistani intrusion, approximately 800 metres on our side of the LoC in the area of Point 3260, a relatively low feature having little tactical significance."

The intrusion occurred in the last week of July and the intruders were "evicted by appropriate action of ground troops and air force on August 2," Fernandes said in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha.

As recently as November 13, the IAF spokesman had denied such an operation after media reports quoted senior Air Force officials as saying that frontline Mi-

rage 2000 strike jets had been used in attacks against the Pakistani intruders.

Fernandes said: "No loss of life was suffered by Indian troops during the conduct of this operation. Casualties to Pakistan troops are not known." But military sources had told IANS in August that the Pakistani intrusion had left at least 11 Indian soldiers dead. The soldiers, mostly from the Ladakh Scouts, were killed in a massive operation launched in the last week of July to evict Pakistani forces who were trying to construct fortified structures on Point 3260.

—PTI/

The Economic Times

22 NOV 2002

And miles to go before we meet...

That Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee may not attend the forthcoming South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit — to be held in Islamabad tentatively in January, 2003 — bodes ill for the organisation in general and Indo-Pakistani ties in particular. Relations between the two countries could never have been gloomier since an Indian Foreign Office spokesperson disclosed on 30 October after official level talks in Kathmandu that "Vajpayee's attendance at the summit has become uncertain". The reasons for this, as stated by the Indian Foreign Office, were:

* Pakistan is reluctant to grant "Most Favoured Nation" status to India although India already granted Pakistan such status in 1993;

* The Free Trade Agreement promised at the last summit in Kathmandu — the draft of which should be adopted by December this year — has been undermined by Pakistan. Pakistan has already shelved the plan to hold a meeting on the South Asian Free Trade Area before the Saarc summit, thus upsetting the process of advancing a flexible and liberal trade regime among South Asian nations, particularly between India and Pakistan;

* Pakistan has not come up with a proper list of tariff concessions. Of the 250 concessions offered by Pakistan, 146 are in the banned or negative list;

* Pakistan's intention of raising bilateral issue like Kashmir in the Saarc forum shows its neurotic fixation. Under these circumstances, according to the Indian Foreign Office spokesperson, "what is the point in talking if there is so much insincerity?" Pakistan's attitude, he adds, poses a "stumbling block to regional economic cooperation".

What is unfortunate in this context is that the standoff between India and Pakistan has kept both countries from engaging in meaningful cooperation. The overdose of acrimony marking their relationship has not allowed them to look beyond contentious political issues, particularly Kashmir. Any summit between the two can, therefore, best be described as political strategy.

With economic globalisation, several regional groups have been formed to pursue a closer economic integration at the regional level, the objectives being to increase market access, expanded exports and strengthened political cohesion among members. There is no reason why Saarc nations cannot strengthen and enrich each other to account for much more in the global economy, the only impediment being Indo-Pakistani relations. Which is why the Saarc summit is doomed to be a non-event.

When India's proposal to transform Saarc into Safta by 2001 was accepted at the Male summit, we knew it was palpably in the interest of member-nations. The motive: to advance a flexible and liberal trade regime among South Asian nations, particularly between India and Pakistan. The only precondition was depoliticisation of intra-South Asian economic relations. Our expectations from then Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, himself a businessman of repute, was high. He was in a position to realise the unfinished agenda of political issues had always inhibited economic cooperation between his country and India, leading to both foregoing economic opportunities and potentially huge gains from liberalisation.

Although we also feared the military and hardliners in Pakistan wouldn't allow Mr Sharif to show any flexibility on the Kashmir issue, there was hope that he would favour substantive cooperation, even keeping Kashmir as the core issue, in trade to avoid future strife for vested economic interests. After all, it was he who told the Male Saarc summit that Pakistan would be willing to look beyond contentious political issues and legalise commerce as well as upgrade trade relations with India.

To effectively advance a flexible and liberal trade regime and lower the high rate of protection, India then offered to free 25 per cent of a total 5,500 products from tariff barriers every year. For decades, however, Pakistan hadn't added a single item to the list of 573 Indian items to be imported. After some time, Pakistan agreed to consider identifying 100 more items, but before any final decision regarding a trade policy vis-a-vis India, Pakistan's political establishment began pulling to pieces every effort to upgrade its trade ties with India. The *Pakistan Observer*, a leading daily, attacked the policy in an editorial thus: "It is therefore evident that the government is gradually trying to increase the volume of trade with India despite rhetoric to the contrary.

^{5/11 19/11} The upcoming Saarc summit will be a non-event, argues SK SADAR NAYEEM, because Pakistan cannot keep its commitments with India on trade issues



LOTS OF HOT AIR: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee meets Pervez Musharraf at the last Saarc summit in Kathmandu.

And this is being done in complete disregard to the threatening Indian posture against the very existence of Pakistan."

Federal ministers of the Nawaz Sharif government also held the same view, obviously to gain political mileage at home. Then Pakistani finance minister Sartaj Ajiz told a visiting delegation that "economic relations cannot countermand political issues. The direction of development in both the political and economic areas should be the same. Trade and economic relations with India cannot improve unless political issues are resolved." The military and the hardliners in Pakistan continued to favour an arms race and military pacts, thus undermining the necessity, or rather compulsion, of economic and trade cooperation in the post-Cold War era.

Before Mr Sharif, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto had promised to extend MFN status to India. The step was long overdue. India had accorded MFN status to Pakistan in 1993 since it was obligatory to accord this status to each other under the terms set by World Trade Organisation, to which both countries belong. There was a vital reason for our optimism. A very crucial round of the inter-governmental group (IGG) of Saarc meet was then scheduled to be held in Islamabad. And for the first time, it was then expected that the economic content of the Saarc movement was going to be strengthened by the outcome of Ms Bhutto's decision.

But immediately after Ms Bhutto's perfunctory announcement, Pakistan began to drag its feet in granting MFN status to India. This became evident at the conference of the inter-governmental group (IGG) of Saarc countries held in Islamabad in August

1996. Pakistan did not bulge an inch from its 1994 position when the idea of the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (Sapta) had been pushed through at India's initiative in Dhaka and Pakistan had not shown any interest.

Then Ms Bhutto lost elections in Pakistan and later developments on the political front proved that our optimism was grossly misplaced. As usual, Pakistani leaders did not assess the cost of economic opportunities Pakistan had been frittering away for several years. This was proved by a study 'Pakistan-India Trade-Transition to the Gatt regime' which then showed that Indian goods worth several billion dollars were entering the Pakistani market via a third country every year. And if one took into account the value of smuggled goods entering Pakistan then its total custom revenue loss every year was something between three-four billion dollars. Unfortunately, Pakistan had been foregoing these economic opportunities and potentially huge gains from liberalisation only for the sake of political rhetoric vis a vis India.

Nawaz Sharif's commitment to bilateral trade also proved to be a merely customary pronouncements. He too called for a "meaningful dialogue" with India and appeared to be serious to look beyond the contentious political issues at the Saarc summit at Male in 1997. But back home, Mr Sharif also followed this up with the predictable refrain: "after the settlement of Kashmir dispute". Then a tea delegation from India seeking resumption of tea export to Pakistan had to wait for more than six months for a Pakistani visa. After 1948, Pakistan, the second-largest tea consuming country, had been importing tea from

Kenya and Sri Lanka. A tyre delegation from India also visited Pakistan during the Sharif regime on the Pakistani assurance of opening up of tyre export from India for the first time, underwent a bitter experience in Pakistan. A move to set up a Joint Indo-Pa Chamber of Commerce was bitterly denounced by the *Pakistan Observer*, saying "Pakistan cannot and should not overlook its obligations towards the Kashmiris for the sake of trade relations with India".

Since there was a general consensus among the Saarc members at Male to eventually convert it into South Asia Free Trade Area by 2001, the summit should have clearly outlined its ways and means to which it would like to accomplish its goal. But due to Pakistani hostility it could not. Pakistan did not leave anything from the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit of 1995. The Osaka summit of Apec within two years of its formation not only announced that it would make the Pacific rim free for all trade and investment by 2020 but also outlined its ways and means. In order to effectively advance flexible and liberal trade regime, the member countries of Apec offered tariff cuts on a significant number of items. China slashed tariffs an 4,000 item Malaysia on 1,300 items and Australia on 1,500 items. Whereas, among the members of the Saarc countries India offered tariff cuts on 106 items followed by Pakistan and Sri Lanka on 35 and 31 items respectively. These difference alone reflected the utter cynicism of the Saarc countries.

Besides, the smaller Saarc partners had some genuine grievances. India's confidence evident from its offer of trade concessions on higher percentage items was bound to make countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka feel uncomfortable over the fact that their maximum tariffs were 20 to 25 per cent and 20 to 23 per cent respectively. Whereas India's maximum tariff was 50 per cent which more or less could only be matched by Pakistan's 65 per cent. Such apprehensions of the smaller partners arising out of the aforesaid facts perhaps pushed these countries to become more inward looking and take the import substitution course.

Sometimes India's over-reaction to Pakistani hostility also made Saarc suffer. By the regional arrangement, member countries could have improved the marketability of their products and increased productive and allocative efficiency at home and their competitiveness abroad. In the international market both India and Pakistan were trade rivals. Both countries then were trying to fight it out for market share in similar markets. The problem arose when India fell in the exchange of Indian rupee, Indian exports became cheaper. As a result, the demand for Pakistani products went down. Put in a difficult spot Pakistan devalued its currency in order to keep exports afloat in the international market. Even in the absence of such devaluation, exporters from both countries were left with no alternative than undercut each other's prices, thereby lowering their export earnings. Then Pakistan proposed a Saarc export cartel to fix price floors for world markets but India did not respond to it.

On the concluding day on 9 November, 1998 at the nine-day round of composite dialogue of identified issues between India and Pakistan in New Delhi completely fell through, Pakistan put all blame on India for its allegedly "inflexible and rigid stand". But the fact was that it was Pakistan which stalled the talks on economic and commercial cooperation by "linking the progress of the dialogue to resolution of the Kashmir issue".

India's stand in the present circumstances therefore, completely justified that Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee will attend the 2003 Saarc summit to be held in Islamabad only if Pakistan agrees to extend MFN status to India. Otherwise, there is no point in talking. Gone are the days when both countries tried to introduce notes of optimism in otherwise bleak picture by renewing the pledge "to down and talk" again to resolve all bilateral issues in a "peaceful manner".

Both India and Pakistan are aware that the Kashmir problem will not be resolved the way they want; solution to the problem is not expected soon. So do not set a pre-condition to shelve Kashmir for the time being first and then start a dialogue to resolve other bilateral issues? This is the only solution that we help both countries to avoid strife and make progress in areas of common economic interest.

(The author is a freelance writer.)

/net.news/

Newsbatch for kids

HAPPY Children's Day. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, whose birth anniversary we celebrate on this day would have beamed with delight at the aims and content of this site.

www.newsbatch.com is worth book-marking, and since it last found mention in these columns, this site has done well to update and fine-tune itself. This is a very welcome site as it attempts to fill the void in children's understanding of contemporary political and policy issues. The year-old site by California attorney Patrick Coony provides excellent summaries on important policy matters. Undoubtedly the site and the content are American. But it is of great use to us considering that there are several issues of common interest and concern like — sexuality and public policy, drug policy, environment, globalisation, health care, stem cell research among others.

The site also addresses contemporary issues in international affairs like the India-Pakistan and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, the impending war against Saddam Hussein and the global war on terrorism. There are links to other sites and news reports that are certain to provide an added perspective to each of the issues discussed.

National Inquirer

THIS site houses a journal, *National Inquirer*, specifically for middle-school children — class five and up — which features research articles by American scientists. The presentation of its subjects are impressive, being backed with graphs, tables and charts, as is typically seen in scientific journals.

Most of the site deals with natural life, with a separate link to Forest Service. Sections marked 'Meet the Scientists' introduce students to the working of scientific research and poses provocative questions on the subject. Further each article has a FACTivity, which is a hands-on experiment for students to test their hypothesis. It teaches them to observe results and record their observations in the course of their experiment.

www.naturalinquirer.usda.gov also provides additional material for teachers who would want to use *National Inquirer* to help their students to scientific methods.

If you have interesting insights into the Net, or have discovered a great new site, e-mail the details to thestatestman@csn1.com

Reviving Indo-Pak. talks

By C. Raja Mohan

India needs to outline a road map towards resumption of a dialogue with Pakistan... Merely parroting the mantra that there will be no talks until cross-border terrorism ends will put India increasingly on the diplomatic defensive.

NDIA, PAKISTAN and the United States are in danger of losing an important opportunity to initiate a peace process in the Subcontinent that has arisen from the recent decision in New Delhi to de-escalate the ten-month-long military confrontation with Islamabad. Unless all three take steps quickly, the current political window for a renewed political engagement between India and Pakistan could shut amidst a potential rise in terrorist activity from across the border.

Six months ago, at the height of the military tensions between the subcontinental rivals, few could have imagined the confluence of positive circumstances in place today. India which launched the biggest military mobilisation in its history has unilaterally decided to scale it down. India has also succeeded in holding credible elections in Jammu and Kashmir, widely acknowledged by the international community as free and fair. The people of the State have spoken, there is a new Government in charge and prospects have never looked better for a productive dialogue between New Delhi and Srinagar. Meanwhile, the elections to the National Assembly in Pakistan, despite the pre-rigging by Pervez Musharraf, have produced an unexpected political dynamism in Islamabad.

The developments over the last few weeks have loosened, if only a wee bit, the political knot in the Subcontinent that had tightened since the December 13 attack on India's Parliament. From a situation of near-war that could have turned nuclear, India and Pakistan have moved towards a situation of no-war. But a peace process that can be structured from the present situation remains elusive. Continuing political drift in New Delhi, Islamabad and Washington could easily allow the present opportunity to slip by. Small political steps from all the three in the next few days could, however, create the basis for a resumption of an India-Pakistan dialogue in the not-too-distant future.

The U.S., which played a key role in defusing the military tensions between India and Pakistan last sum-

mer, has emerged as the principal channel of communication between the two countries. At a time when all political dialogue between India and Pakistan was suspended after the Agra summit in July 2001, the Bush Administration has become the natural facilitator of crisis management in the Subcontinent.

With the U.S. attention now shifting to the impending war against Iraq, it is not clear whether Washington has the political energy to stay with what it started in the Subcontinent. Although high-level visitors from the U.S. continue to pour into the Subcontinent, it remains to be seen if the Bush Administration is mentally prepared to exercise what it takes to move the region from crisis management to a peace process that could help resolve the political conflict between India and Pakistan and normalise bilateral relations.

Even if the U.S. decides to stay the course, its attempts to promote a process of reconciliation in the region will not succeed unless it retains its focus on ending terrorism. Washington will not be able to conjure up a dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad by just urging for one.

For an India-Pakistan dialogue to start and succeed, Washington must deliver on the promises it made to India last summer. It was the assurance from the Bush Administration (based on Gen. Musharraf's word in June) that Pakistan will end cross-border infiltration on a permanent basis that led to the first Indian steps towards de-escalation.

That promise remains unfulfilled. More damaging has been the loss of American political credibility in New Delhi. No one in the Government now even expects the Bush Administration to maintain pressure on Islamabad to keep its word. Nor is

anyone in New Delhi raising the issue with the American interlocutors. Having given up on the U.S., India has taken a tough line on the resumption of a dialogue with Pakistan by linking it to a cessation of cross-border terrorism.

The principal objective of the Bush Administration in devoting a high level of diplomatic energy towards the Subcontinent has been the avoidance of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan. But the U.S. should know more than anyone else that nuclear stability in the region and cross-border terrorism do not go together. It might be politically convenient for Washington today to forget about the promises that Gen. Musharraf made in June. But the continued stoking of terrorism by Pakistan can bring the region back to the brink of war within no time.

The American proposals for a renewed dialogue between India and Pakistan will have few takers in New Delhi unless Washington visibly pressures Islamabad to end cross-border terrorism. Until recently, the U.S. was arguing that an India-Pakistan dialogue must follow the cessation of cross-border infiltration by Pakistan and military de-escalation by India. But now India has unilaterally begun to de-escalate. Washington cannot expect New Delhi to take steps towards a dialogue while Islamabad continues with its sponsorship of terrorism in India.

While India is right to keep its political focus riveted on ending cross-border terrorism, it risks the danger of losing the political initiative in shaping the triangular diplomacy with the U.S. and Pakistan. To retain the upper hand, India needs to outline a road map towards resumption of a dialogue with Pakistan. There have been occasional hints from the

Government of a sequence of actions it could take in response to specific actions from across the border. New Delhi needs to go public with a checklist of actions from Pakistan and the Indian response to them. Merely parroting the mantra that there will be no talks until cross-border terrorism ends will put India increasingly on the diplomatic defensive.

A new Government in Pakistan is expected to be sworn in shortly. Despite all its obvious limitations of operating in the shadow of Gen. Musharraf, the revival of the post of Prime Minister in Pakistan has its own political consequences. India would inevitably debate the prospect of doing business with the new Government in Pakistan. But a favourable political decision in New Delhi would depend on the expressed commitment of the new Prime Minister that he abides by the promises of Gen. Musharraf on January 12 that Pakistani soil will not be used to promote terrorism anywhere in the world, and that of early June that infiltration will permanently end. That is the least New Delhi would expect from the new Government in Islamabad.

If the new civilian Government of Pakistan takes a step further down the road and agrees to normal trading relations with India, the prospect for an early India-Pakistan dialogue could brighten quickly. New Delhi has hinted in recent days that the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, could travel to Islamabad to attend a regional summit if Pakistan ends its self-defeating policy of no-trade with India.

There can be no sensible strategy for economic renewal in Pakistan that does not include expanded trade with India, the largest market in the region.

If the new Government in Pakistan recognises this economic self-interest, or the international community which is pouring billions of dollars of aid into Pakistan persuades it to do so, renewed political contact between New Delhi and Islamabad might be at hand. And that could set the stage for a resumption of India-Pakistan dialogue.

Pak. to raise Kashmir issue in U.N. at 'appropriate time'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 29. Elated over its election as a non-permanent member to the United Nations Security Council for two years beginning January, Pakistan has said that Kashmir is on top of its agenda, which it will raise at the "appropriate time."

Pakistan's Permanent Envoy to the United Nations, Munir Akram, told the Pakistan-based news agency, NNI, in New York that "the Kashmir issue must be raised at the Security Council at an appropriate time and in a way that could result in success." Kashmir was there on the U.N. agenda. "It is our top priority, and we got to handle it in a way that we do not damage its cause. We have to take it up at the right time, in a right way."

The envoy was quoted as saying that it was important for Pakistan to ensure that its "security and sovereignty" were not threatened. "We will be able to utilise the Security Council to ensure that the world is aware of our problem, and that it acts on our problems as soon as possible."

He was responding to a question on whether Pakistan would revoke the 1996 order and bring the Kashmir issue as a permanent agenda item of the Security Council.

Our selection to the Security Council will enable us to participate in the consideration and decisions relating to major issues of peace and security in the current international situation."

Mr. Akram told the agency that "our say in the world and our leverage with major players of the international field will increase." He, however, evaded a reply on whether Pakistan would support the U.S. bid to attack Iraq at the Council level. "We are still three months away, we will be member of the UNSC in January 2003, so the situation is likely to develop quite a lot until the end of three months," he said.

On Friday, Pakistan was elected to the Security Council for a two-year term from January 2003. It secured 172 out of the 182 votes cast, while the required two-third majority was 123 votes. The other countries which were elected to the Council were Germany, Spain, Angola and Chile. Pakistan replaced Singapore from the Asian region.

The Pakistan Foreign Office said that getting into the Security Council at this juncture provided Islamabad with an opportunity to play a "unique and historic role." And claimed that its election to the Council

with such "overwhelming support" was a tribute to the "pragmatic, constructive and far-sighted internal and foreign policies" pursued by the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf. The success "is a reflection of world support for Pakistan's principled position on all major global issues."

In keeping with its "principled policies and high ideals," Pakistan would strive for advancing the time-tested principles enshrined in the U.N. Charter.

These related to the maintenance of peace and security and the peaceful resolution of disputes. "In constructive collaboration with the rest of the Security Council membership, Pakistan will work for the implementation of the U.N. resolutions, and the achievement of the targets set in the Millennium Declaration, towards a better and more peaceful world. The people of Pakistan can be rightfully proud of this significant international recognition and achievement," the statement said.

This is the sixth time that Pakistan has been elected to the 15-member Security Council. Earlier, Pakistan had served on the Council for the terms 1993-94, 1983-84, 1976-77, 1968-69 and 1952-53.

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Musharraf warns India against 'pre-emptive' move

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, SEPT. 29. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has vowed to "rid" the country of terrorists and denied allegations that his secret intelligence service, ISI, is helping the Al-Qaeda activists find refuge in Pakistan.

In an interview to *The Sunday Times*, he warned India against emulating the American doctrine of pre-emptive action. The doctrine, he said, did not apply to India and Pakistan. "If India ever thinks it applies, it is sadly mistaken. It must never undertake this adventure," he said.

Responding to international concerns about the continuing terrorist presence in Pakistan, particularly in Karachi, Gen. Musharraf said: "I can assure you that we are going to rid not just Karachi but the whole of Pakistan of this menace. That is my promise."

But he added that given the size of the country and the terrain, it was not possible to plug every point across the Afghan border.

About the fate of Osama bin Laden, Gen. Musharraf first suggested that he might be "hiding" in some remote tribal area of Pakistan ("It's possible that a few sympathetic individuals may be hiding him"), but then asserted that there was no question of his being in Pakistan. "Here you've got the army deployed. Would he risk coming here? Maybe, he would like to escape to Chechnya or Somalia, but not to Pakistan.

"Or he may be in Pakistan," he said.

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Pak zealots favour Simla Agreement

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, Oct. 29. — In an apparent policy shift, an alliance of six hardline religious parties in Pakistan said it prefers the settlement of Kashmir and other disputes with India under the ambit of the Simla Agreement.

The alliance allayed fears that militants would step up operations in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of the Islamists' resurgence.

The alliance — Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal's — has resolved that the Kashmir issue should be settled through bilateral approach outlined by the Simla Agreement, Moulana Fazlur Rehman, MMA's nominee to the post of Prime Minister, said. The MMA believe that the policy to resolve all disputes with India through Simla Agreement should be continued until Pakistan Parliament decides otherwise, Mr Rehman, who heads the pro-Taliban Jamat Ulema Islami said. He also tried to play down fears that resurgence of MMA would strengthen the Pakistan-based militant groups and step up their operations in J&K. His comments were in contradiction to Gen. Musharraf's policy that the Kashmir issue should be resolved through a third party mediation.

Mr Rehman said: "We want good relations with the western countries and the world community. We will fully combat terrorism in the country (Pakistan). We will not let allow such activities on our soil and also in any other country." He said: "We want good relations with the western countries and the world community. We will fully combat terrorism in the country (Pakistan). We will not let allow such activities on our soil and also in any other country."

Kidnap drama

Mr Siddiqui Farooq, a close aide of deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was kidnapped and released four hours later by unidentified gunmen, sources said.

The chief organiser of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, Mr Ahsan Iqbal, said Mr Farooq was kidnapped because he had accused the railways and communications minister, retired Lt. Gen. Javed Ashraf Qazi, of corruption, adds AFP.

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THE NEWSPAPER

Islamabad holding Saarc hostage: PM

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, October 26

A DAY after he said Pakistan was emerging as a terrorist State, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Saturday raised doubts about the success of the Saarc Summit in Islamabad, charging Pakistan with violating the Saarc charter. Addressing the Combined Commanders' Conference here, Vajpayee accused Pakistan of holding Saarc hostage by blocking "substantive content" for the Summit and constantly raising bilateral issues.

Dismissing the Pakistani accusation that India was dragging its feet on the dates of the Sum-

mit, the Prime Minister said, "We've reached a strange situation, where every worthwhile proposal for economic cooperation is being systematically sabotaged on irrational fears and political considerations."

"It has always been India's position that regional cooperation in South Asia should not be held hostage by bilateral political differences between member countries," Vajpayee said. India, he said, had "consistently advocated economic cooperation and cultural exchanges as a means of preparing a climate conducive for political reconciliation".

Vajpayee said Saarc has a potentially historic role to fulfil in the equitable development of the

1.5 billion people of the sub-continent, and directly blaming Pakistan for sabotaging the Saarc charter. "We don't want to trivialise the Association through a Summit without substantive content. Let us, therefore, first talk of substance before we start focussing on dates," the Prime Minister said.

Charging Pakistan with not budging from the path of using terrorism as an instrument of state policy, Vajpayee said, "We don't see any hint of a genuine desire on the part of Pakistan to substitute terrorism with dialogue."

Referring to the continuance of Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism, he said the physi-

cal threat to voters and candidates during the poll process in Jammu and Kashmir had now transformed into death threats against elected representatives. The targets of terrorists are varied, but the threat is the same for virtually all democratic countries, Vajpayee said.

In the background of the Moscow theatre hostage crisis and the bombing of a nightclub in Bali, the Prime Minister asked the security forces to keep alert for "unexpected targets and tactics" by terrorists.

LK Advani, George Fernandes and Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha also addressed the top military commanders from the three Services.

✓ Saarc hostage: PM

27 OCT 2002

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

World must declare Pak a terrorist state: Atal

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, October 25

ATL BIHARI Vajpayee today criticised the world community for not declaring Pakistan a terrorist state. The Prime Minister accused the country of "posing" to fight terrorism globally while sending suicide squads into India to kill innocent people.

"It is regrettable that the international community is unable to differentiate between terrorism and a terrorist state. Pakistan is today playing the role of a terrorist nation," Vajpayee said at a NDA rally held in the capital to mark the coalition government's completion of three years.

Referring to the terrorist

strike on the World Trade Centre, he observed that India's struggle against the menace for the past two decades had gone unheeded by the world community.

The fight against terrorism was a long-drawn affair, which may not yield quick results, the Prime Minister said. "This demon has to be eliminated. We have to prepare ourselves mentally to face this new kind of challenge," he said.

Vajpayee also asserted that India's defence preparedness had become stronger under the NDA rule. During his 20-minute speech, Vajpayee touched upon a variety of issues including the country's foodgrains position, checking of inflation, economic situation and coalition politics.

In an oblique reference to the Cauvery water dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, he regretted that no attempt had been made to explore the prospects of linking the major river basins to solve the water shortage problem of states.

Several states are now involved in water disputes and the court too has been dragged into the matter, Vajpayee noted while wondering if it was not possible to solve these issues sitting across the table.

Responding to the Indian Prime Minister and Deputy PM's diatribe, Pakistan said the Indian leadership was living in a world of make-belief and was not in touch with reality.

Dialogue real measure of reducing tension: Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy 110-11

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 21. Pakistan on Monday hoped that the withdrawal of troops would lead to resumption of dialogue between Islamabad and New Delhi.

The Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan, maintained that the return to the negotiation table is the real measure of "tension subsiding" in the region. It was the first Foreign Office briefing since the October 10 election. To a question whether he expected any changes in foreign policy, Mr. Khan said though he could not predict what the new government would do, Pakistan's foreign policy has remained unchanged for several decades.

He claimed that Pakistan's stand had been vindicated by the Indian decision to withdraw its troops and hoped "good sense will prevail and it will (also) come to the negotiating table for dialogue".

"We hope so," he said when asked whether the withdrawal of troops would lead to resumption of dialogue between the two countries.

The real measure of reducing tension would be to resume the dialogue, he said.

"We hope as the troops withdraw, tension would subside but the real measure of tension-subside would be to sit across the negotiating table and start talking to each other." Pakistan, he said, wanted good relations with all its neighbours.

Mr. Khan said Pakistan was forced to deploy its troops in the defensive posture, after India massed its army on the border in offensive position. Pakistan had since been calling for de-escalation and withdrawal of troops to peacetime location.

The resolution of all disputes including the "core Kashmir issue" was possible only if India came to the negotiating table.

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Responding to a question, he said Pakistan had welcomed reports that the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, would attend the summit meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). "Participation of all members is important for the smooth functioning of SAARC". Pakistan was looking forward to holding the next SAARC meeting early next year, he added.

Asked about the re-appointment of Ambassadors, he said Pakistan had not received any intimation in this regard.

It was India which made the move. On the Indian decision to allow civilian aircraft to overfly its territory, he said the matter was "under consideration".

He dismissed as "baseless and tendentious" reports about Pakistan providing nuclear know-how to North Korea. "Pakistan has never supplied any nuclear material or technology to any country, including North Korea," he said and maintained that Pakistan was a responsible country and its nuclear programme was under strict safeguard.

To a question, Mr. Khan said reports of the Coalition forces vacating bases in Pakistan was with regard to the functioning of the International Security Force (ISAF) which was using the airports on commercial basis for supply of equipment. Pakistan would continue to provide "logistic support" to the International Coalition.

To another question, he said the constituents of the Mutthida Majlis-e-Amal had always been 'mainstream' parties taking part in all previous elections.

He told a journalist that he did not agree with his description of some parties in the MMA as "religious extremists". One of the MMA parties had headed a provincial government in 1972 and they all had been part and parcel of the Pakistan politics, he added.

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27 OCT 2012

Pak returns the compliment, ^{H.F. 1} orders pullback ^{18/10/02} Atal Islamabad trip cleared

Udayan Namboodiri &
Mubashir Zaidi
New Delhi/Islamabad, Oct 17

IN MAJOR moves towards easing tensions, Pakistan today reciprocated to troops pullback in kind while an Indian foreign office source confirmed that Atal Bihari Vajpayee will go to Islamabad for the next Saarc Summit.

But it's too early to speculate on the possibility of a Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting on the sidelines of the Summit. It's understood that the Cabinet Committee on Security meeting yesterday agreed on the Prime Minister's trip to Pakistan, but not on his meeting the Pakistan President.

A repeat of the Kathmandu summit handshake is possible in the Islamabad summit — scheduled for January — but it's unlikely that there'll be any substantial talks between India and Pakistan as Delhi is likely to insist that Islamabad first end support to cross-border terrorism.

Today, a statement issued by the Pakistan Foreign Office, said the Government had decided to withdraw troops from the border with India. "The Government of Pakistan has decided to withdraw its forces from the Pakistan-India border to their peace-time locations. The pullback will commence shortly."

A military source said the withdrawal would begin as early as Monday. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting of the Army chaired by Musharraf in Islamabad today. It was attended by all the service chiefs, corps commanders, governors, foreign and interior ministers. It's learnt that orders were issued today by the military high command to forward formations to start the re-

location from Monday.

Musharraf said India's pullback decision vindicated Islamabad's stance that coercion and belligerence wouldn't lead to any solution of the Kashmir dispute.

"It only proves that the only solution to the issues confronting us is through dialogue and not coercion, belligerence or sabre-rattling," he said at the meeting.

The Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman said Islamabad's pullback would prove that the country stands for normal relations with India. "Pakistan regards India's decision of a phased withdrawal of its armed forces from the Pakistan-India border as a step in the right direction. That's why the Government of Pakistan has responded positively."

He added that Pakistan wants to resolve the Kashmir dispute as well as all other differences with India on the basis of sovereign equality, justice, international norms and the principles of UN Charter through a sustained and purposeful dialogue.

The spokesman said Pakistan had responded positively without even waiting for the ground implementation of India's pullback only for the sake of de-escalation of tension in the region. He said Pakistan expects India to lift all travel restrictions to further ease the situation.

Islamabad's decision has been hailed by various foreign policy experts in Pakistan who believe that Pakistan has again proved that it wants immediate resumption of talks with India on all issues. Religious parties, which otherwise favour tough policy towards India, surprisingly hailed the decision.

Govt denies going soft on Pakistan

New Delhi hedges on Vajpayee's Saarc visit

By Anuhita Mojumdar
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Army's demobilisation will run into crores

By Rajat Pandit
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Concerned at the perception that it was de-escalating tensions with Pakistan too quickly, the government on Thursday scrambled to stem speculation that a final decision had been taken on the Prime Minister attending the January 2003 Saarc summit in Islamabad.

On Thursday morning, a TV channel had quoted minister of state for external affairs Digvijay Singh as saying that Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee would definitely travel to Islamabad for the summit although "not for any bilateral process".

Coming in the wake of the decision to withdraw troops from the border, Mr Singh's comment seemed to suggest a further softening of the Indian stand, a suggestion the government is keen to avoid.

The announcement from Pakistan that it too would be withdrawing its troops from the border added to the speculation that a calibrated strategy of phased de-escalation has begun.

Moving quickly to correct this impression, the government clarified that there was a "large gap between the possibility and the reality". Since the MEA could not contradict Mr Singh's remarks on the Saarc summit, it reinterpreted them, focusing largely on the conditions attached to such an event.

The Prime Minister, MEA officials said, would travel to Islamabad only if the summit was held, which in turn would depend on there being a "purpose" to it. And since the dates for the summit were still to be finalised, it made no sense to speak of a visit to Pakistan by Mr Vajpayee at this stage.

While external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha said on Thursday afternoon that the PM would travel to Islamabad "if" there was a summit, the MEA spokesperson said, "The dates of the summit are not yet finalised. Once the dates are finalised, we will consider it."

The spokesperson further made it clear that the government was not considering the resumption of a dialogue in the near future, saying, "What is needed to start a dialogue with Pakistan is a complete and visible end to cross-border terrorism."

New Delhi: The pull-back of more than four lakh troops along with heavy armoured and artillery formations from forward positions along the international border (IB) with Pakistan will be an enormous logistical exercise, with the cost running into hundreds of crores of rupees.

But the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Security to "redeploy" forward deployed forces, say army officers, has come not a day too soon. "You can't leave troops hanging on at the border in combat readiness for ten months. It's criminal that a decision, one way or the other, was not taken sooner," said an officer.

In the initial days after Operation Parakram began in the wake of the December 13 parliament attack, the mobilised troops were gung-ho about "going in to teach (Pakistan) a lesson". "But their morale started ebbing once the realisation sank in that the promised engagement would probably not take place. Moreover, the harsh weather and terrain took a heavy toll on both the men and their equipment," said another officer.

The general feeling, in hindsight, is that the mobilisation of more than a half-a-million troops should not have been a "knee-jerk reaction" in the first instance itself. "It should have been a calibrated build-up," said the officer.

The top brass of the armed forces held a series of meetings on Thursday to chalk out the withdrawal from the IB.

The "demobilisation" is likely to begin from Punjab, followed by Rajasthan, Gujarat and the Jammu sector. The combined commanders' conference on October 23 is likely to finetune these plans.

The pull-back is certainly going to cost a lot, with hundreds of trains and aircraft being requisitioned, but the government is extremely cagey about disclosing any figures.

The cost, as per some estimates, for just the initial mobilisation, is well over Rs 2,000 crore. While it took 28 days for the initial mobilisation, the pull-back is expected to take slightly longer.



● See Edit: Warless Games, Page 16

INDIA'S DECISION ON PULLBACK HAILED

H0-1 18/10

Pak. to withdraw troops to peacetime locations

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 17. Following New Delhi's decision on Wednesday to pull back its troops from the International Border, Islamabad today announced the withdrawal of its forces from the Pakistan-India border to their peacetime locations, and said the process would commence shortly.

It urged India to begin a dialogue for resolution of all differences, including Kashmir.

The Musharraf Government's response came after consultations on the pros and cons of the Indian move at the highest level, and there were indications of an extensive debate within the military top brass on how exactly the Government should formulate its reaction.

It was around 2.30 p.m. (IST) that the Musharraf regime took the view that the Indian decision to pull back its troops from the IB was a "step in the right direction" and that a "positive and timely" response could be expected from Islamabad.

A little later, the Pakistan Foreign Office came out with another statement announcing the country's decision to recall the troops on the IB to their peacetime locations. The decision had been taken at a high-power meeting chaired by the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, it said.

It was not clear if the reference was to the Special Corps Commanders meet convened by Gen. Musharraf at short notice to take stock of the situation arising out of the Indian troop pullout.

For Pakistan, the mobilisation of Indian troops could not have come at a more inopportune time as it faced pressure from the United States-led coalition to step up deployment and vigil on the Afghan borders to halt the possible infiltration of the remnants of the Al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

The Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman said that since the escalation of tensions between the two countries in December last, Islamabad had emphasised

the importance of withdrawing the forces and resumption of dialogue, for the resolution of all outstanding issues.

Pakistan had always stood for normal relations with India and the resolution of the Kashmir dispute and all other differences on the basis of sovereign equality, justice, international norms and the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter through a sustained and purposeful dialogue.

"Pakistan has consistently called for de-escalation, withdrawal by India of its forces to peace-time locations and the resumption of a dialogue for the resolution of all outstanding issues, including the core issue of Kashmir," the spokesman said.

At the meeting of the Corps Commanders, Gen. Musharraf did claim that the Indian announcement on troop withdrawal had vindicated Pakistan's stance that the "only solution... was through dialogue and not coercion, belligerence and sabre-rattling."

THE HINDU

1 8 OCT 2002

Troops to be pulled back from border

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Oct. 16. — India has decided to move troops back from frontline positions along the border but will keep an eye on the Pakistani army's movements. But there won't be any reduction in troop presence in Jammu and Kashmir because of the security situation in the state.

Speaking after a Cabinet Committee on Security meeting chaired by the Prime Minister, Mr George Fernandes today said troops will be "asked to re-deploy from positions on the international border without impairing their capacity to respond to any emergency". But "there will be no lowering of vigil in J&K", he insisted. The defence minister repeatedly denied it was a "withdrawal" and insisted that it was "a redeployment", though some troops would go back to peace-time locations. Eventually, 200,000 to 300,000 troops could head home from forward posts.

Asked about the kind of redeployment, Mr Fernandes said "A graded calibration" was necessary. "We have to look at the other side," he added, referring to Pakistan's reactions, saying it "takes time to redeploy."

India would initially move back some troops but deploy others in a way so that "emergencies" can be dealt with, Army and Air Force officials said. Clearly, all 700,000 men along the border and the LoC wouldn't be moved at once. Moving even 100,000 men and their equipment is not an easy logistical task. Mr Fernandes said it

was up to the three service chiefs to decide on the time-schedule of the re-deployment.

If the Army decides to move the armoured divisions from strike positions (they are part of the I, II and XXI strike corps), it would take a while. Moving the heavy artillery could also be time consuming. But clearly, the Pakistani response would not go unnoticed.

Asked about the possibility of a diplomatic

engagement with Pakistan, he said: "There was no question of discussing that issue" for cross-border terrorism is yet to end. Mr Fernandes felt the armed forces had achieved the objective of securing frontiers and "done their job". Referring to the successful polls in J&K, he denied that US pressure was responsible for holding the polls. He did not speak about the costs, but officials said it could be over Rs 2,000 crore.

The decision was taken after today's meeting of the National Security Advisory Board of the National Security Council, presided over by Mr Vajpayee. The

members, including retired generals or their equivalents, retired bureaucrats and top officials, recommended a phased withdrawal from the border but felt that troops should continue to remain in strength in J&K.

Pak reaction: Pakistan declined to react to India's decision to withdraw troops from the border, saying it would prefer to wait till it gets details. "India announced this only now. We will react tomorrow," said a foreign office spokesman, adds PTI from Islamabad.

● **At the height of tension, India had an estimated 700,000 soldiers along the LoC or in J&K. They included troops already in the state and those moved after the Parliament attack. The Army was on full alert**

● **Three strike corps, offensive units and several thousand tanks and artillery pieces were stationed on forward lines. Western and Central commands had moved to operational HQs**

● **IAF and Navy too had moved planes and ships to forward positions.**

India wants Pak to reciprocate, page 4

1 7 2002

THE STATESMAN

India in a bind over resumption of dialogue with Pakistan

By Amit Baruah

HD-11
16/10

NEW DELHI, OCT. 15. India finds itself in a bind as far as resuming dialogue with Pakistan is concerned. With international pressure mounting, the only public response from New Delhi is a loud "no" to talks with Pakistan.

This was conveyed to the National Security Adviser to the United States President, Condoleeza Rice, by her Indian counterpart, Brajesh Mishra, when she telephoned him last week in Copenhagen. Ms. Rice reportedly told him that with the elections in Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir now over, India should resume talks with Pakistan.

Senior Government sources told this correspondent recently that "people" would not accept talks with Pakistan at a time when the BJP-led coalition itself had raised the ante against Islamabad. As New Delhi took a strident position against dialogue at the India-European Union summit in Copenhagen, the limits of "non-engagement" were exposed. In fact, the stridency of the Indian position extended to intrusive comments on Pakistan's internal affairs — an action that can only elicit harsh responses from Islamabad. While India had every right to comment on Pakistani affairs, it was evident that New Delhi's position was dictated by the Pakistani President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf's comments on the killings in Gujarat and the BJP's role in them.

There is an inherent danger in the esca-

tion of rhetoric; all internal affairs could become fair game for public comments between the two countries. The only defence New Delhi may have is: "they started it first". India, which has borne the brunt of terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir since 1990 at the least, has legitimate concerns on what Islamabad and the Pakistani intelligence establishment have been engineering. But the problem it faces is that the U.S.-led international community sees the Kashmir and Pakistani elections as an advance in the path to dialogue to reduce tensions between the two South Asian neighbours.

Pressure to resume talks

In Copenhagen, the pressure mounted on India to exercise restraint, de-escalate and resume talks was intense. But New Delhi managed to make its point strongly. Given the fact that similar but separate comments have been made by the Americans, it would hardly be surprising if Washington and the European Union have been coordinating their positions as far as India is concerned.

If not dialogue, India and Pakistan must begin to end the current state of tension between them by permitting the return of the High Commissioners, withdrawing their troops and resuming all transport links snapped in December last.

India, which has legitimate reservations on holding talks with Pakistan because of continuing terrorist attacks, can reduce the

pressure on it by resuming some contacts. The current state of 'no-contact' cannot continue indefinitely. There may be sections of the Government which are keen on relaxing the tough posture, but feel that the pressure of public opinion from the "people" will be too much.

In a sense, the international community, too, needs to focus on the resumption of contacts between the two countries, which, in the current scenario, could help in the process of confidence-building. All this, however, does not mean that India should stop stressing on Pakistani sponsorship on terrorism. In fact, India needs to build a solid dossier on the Pakistani role in Kashmir and others and present it to principal interlocutors.

As New Delhi struggles with its Pakistan dilemma, the parliamentary strength demonstrated by the Islamist parties in Pakistan needs to be considered very seriously. If the "jehadi mindset" begins to dominate the Pakistani establishment even more, then India needs to think quickly about the timing of talks with Pakistan. And, after suggesting a "band" of dates for the SAARC summit in Islamabad in January, New Delhi must go ahead with the visit of the Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee, to Pakistan. At the August meeting of Foreign Ministers in Kathmandu, India correctly said the SAARC process would go on irrespective of differences with Islamabad. The Prime Minister must travel to Islamabad. It is the least that can be done for South Asia.

7 5 OCT 2002

AM BARUAH

India may insist on bilateral pull-back of troops

Srinjoy Chowdhury
in New Delhi

Oct. 14. - India may decide to withdraw troops from the border, but it will expect Pakistan to pull back troops either simultaneously or immediately after the Indian withdrawal begins.

Senior defence sources said that the decision, if the government goes through with even a token pull-back initially, after various meetings later this week, would be because of the successful conclusion of the Jammu and Kashmir elections. Infiltration and terrorist-sponsored violence in the state was unacceptably high during the elections and before it.

The bilateral pull-back issue is a tricky one. Even sometime ago, the Centre's stand was "pull-back on both sides after bilateral discussions". Now, officials said that while India could announce a pull-back of sorts, it would expect Pakistan to do so soon after.

"There may not be formal talks though informal discussions could happen. We expect them to reciprocate. For they (Pakistan) have been telling the world that the build-up is a threat to peace in the sub-continent," he said.

There are several reasons for thinking of a pull-back. There are 700,000 troops on the border - a small number could go back initially. Pakistan has about 400,000 men facing the Indian army.

■ First, the success in J&K may be an opening to pull back some troops. But, officials said, infiltration after a 'good' June and July is worse than normal. There was a big jump after August and the violence levels in the state are similar to the previous years. Officials pointed out that hard-line Islamic parties have done well in the recent polls in Pakistan and this could lead to an increase in border tensions.

■ Secondly, there is a feeling that the threat of having virtually the entire army on the borders could be wearing

off. "There has to be something. Otherwise, the enemy will stop taking the build-up seriously. They will know that we will not do anything. The troops have been on the border for 10 months now," the official said.

■ The winter months are here and the passes in Northern Kashmir are closed. It is possible to thin out troops in the area but keep the army and Rashtriya Rifles for anti-militancy operations in the interiors.

■ There is also the possibility of friendly persuasion by Western powers like the USA and the European Union to de-escalate. Internationally, India could look good if it speaks of even a token pull-back.

How the pull-back will happen is yet to be decided. It is logical that initially, there will be token withdrawals. If they succeed, then the aggressive components like the strike corps on both sides (1,2 and 21 for India) could be moved back.

'PAK. MUST STOP INFILTRATION FOR DIALOGUE'

Decision on withdrawal of troops on Oct. 16: Advani

By Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI, OCT. 13. A decision on a phased withdrawal of some seven lakh troops posted along the border with Pakistan is to be taken on October 16 when the National Security Advisory Board and the Cabinet Committee on Security will meet, the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, hinted today.

If this decision is taken, it will surely be seen as a major step towards de-escalation of tensions with Pakistan, but Mr. Advani warned that any dialogue with Pakistan would necessarily be pegged on the condition that all cross-border terrorism should stop. Several key Western powers have been emphasising that since elections in Jammu and Kashmir have been completed, an India-Pakistan dialogue must be started.

He dispelled speculation that in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, would not be the prime ministerial candidate of the National Democratic Alliance. "The road test of the NDA will be in 2004 when we will contest the elections under Mr. Vajpayee's leadership on the basis of the performance of the NDA Government. Mr. Vajpayee will be our prime ministerial candidate," he asserted to counter the notion that has

gained ground since he was elevated as Deputy Prime Minister that Mr. Vajpayee was on his way out and Mr. Advani would be the new NDA mascot.

Mr. Advani did not think that the establishment of civilian rule in Pakistan would be more favourable to an India-Pakistan dialogue. He stated bluntly that the kind of government in Pakistan was not a hurdle — after all an invitation for the Agra Summit was given to the head of a non-civilian government — but what was certain is that "cross-border terrorism and a dialogue cannot go together". That Summit had collapsed be-

cause Pakistan had refused to acknowledge cross-border terrorism and it had even justified deaths of innocent civilians as part of a "freedom struggle".

He said an in-depth analysis of the situation relating to cross-border terrorism and the impact of the recent elections in Pakistan on the ongoing proxy war unleashed by the neighbour on the western front would also be made at the Security Board meeting. The political gains made by religious extremist groups in Pakistan in the recently-concluded elections were "worrying", he admitted. The October 16 meeting would

look at all related issues and arrive at some decisions. The CCS meeting, held just before the Prime Minister left for Nicosia, Denmark and London had considered the troop withdrawal issue, but decided to defer the matter till his return, Mr. Advani said. He was very optimistic that the successful completion of elections in Jammu and Kashmir would be a "turning point" in India's efforts to eliminate terrorism. The Government was committed to resuming the dialogue with the elected representatives to explore a solution to the Kashmir issue.

Mr. Advani asserted "with full responsibility" that with the "active support of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, we shall overcome cross-border terrorism" as decisively as militancy had been ended in Punjab.

Responding to a question, Mr. Advani said it was for the Prime Minister to decide whether or not he would attend the next SAARC meeting in Islamabad. He himself was leaving in a few days for a visit to Russia ahead of the Russian President, Vladimir Putin's visit here in December, he said. He recalled that his last visit to Russia was in 1977 when he was Minister of Information and Broadcasting in the Janata Party Government.

'Vajpayee will be Prime Ministerial candidate': Page 11

'No law to bar foreigners'

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, OCT. 13. The Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, today virtually ruled out legislation debarring citizens of foreign origin from entering high public offices such as those of President and Prime Minister. He was addressing a press conference here to mark the completion of three years in office by the National Democratic Alliance Government at the Centre.

The controversy was recently raised again when the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Jayalithaa, had suggested that the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, was a foreigner who could not be accepted as India's Prime Minister.

"If the (Venkatchalaiah) Commission had made such a recommendation, the Government could have considered it, but this was not the case. There is no obligation for us to follow this," Mr. Advani said.

14 OCT 2002

Counter punch

5/16 Why isn't Vajpayee like this always? 10/10

After the polls in Kashmir and Pakistan, there will be pressure on both India and Pakistan to lower tensions on the border by demobilising troops and by talking to each other. Indian troops have been poised on the border for close to a year now which has led to hundreds of casualties and is telling on morale. General Musharraf has been using every international forum possible to launch strident attacks on India, and it is imperative that New Delhi position itself early to let its core concern — the cessation of Pakistani-sponsored terrorism in Kashmir — be known. While Musharraf is pleased to hog the microphone, Indian leaders are notoriously press and camera-shy when it comes to articulating the Indian view. This goes with a certain theory current in South Block that maintaining an Olympian silence best serves India's interests. Prime Minister Vajpayee, therefore, did well to issue a forthright condemnation of Pakistan's use of terrorism on his current tour of Cyprus, which he followed up with an interview to London's *The Financial Times*, although more of the same should be coming from the foreign policy establishment.

Why are our normally voluble politicians struck dumb when it comes to addressing media on foreign policy? One constraint may be that any statement on foreign policy is liable to be attacked by opposition politicians at home. In the US there tends to be a bipartisan consensus on these matters while Musharraf, of course, doesn't have to worry about opposition at all. By contrast, the importance of foreign policy is generally not recognised in India, and opposition politicians think nothing of lambasting foreign policy moves they would themselves undertake when in power. New Delhi is also relatively new to what works today — a combination of cheque-book diplomacy and coercive diplomacy — while what rules the roost in South Block is mostly the jaw-jaw school of diplomacy epitomised by foreign tours and palaver about lofty but unattainable ideals. But that New Delhi is learning the ropes is demonstrated by Vajpayee's hardselling of India's disinvestment and reform programme. One can only hope that his efforts on behalf of a higher growth path for the economy are backed by action.

THE STATESMAN

10 OCT 2002

SHARP ATTACK ON GEN. MUSHARRAF

Kashmiris want to live with India, says PM

H-10-1
8/10

Ind.
Pak

By Amit Baruah

NICOSIA (CYPRUS), OCT. 7. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, said here today that there was no question of India handing over Kashmir to Pakistan. Kashmir was not a Hindu-Muslim issue and India could not accept the logic of partition, which Pakistan applied to Kashmir.

Addressing a cheering crowd of young Indian professionals, Mr. Vajpayee said the people of Kashmir had given a clear answer that they wanted to live with India. Candidates and activists belonging to the National Conference had been the target of violence during the polls.

Launching a sharp attack on Pakistan and its President, Pervez Musharraf, he said Pakistan did not have democracy and did not care about it. Its leaders like Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif had not been allowed to participate in the elections.

The world had not seen a dictatorship like the one in Pakistan. "Apne haathon se mukut pehna liya" (he anointed himself the leader), the Prime Minister said in Hindi about the General.

"This will not last long," Mr. Vajpayee said about the current state of affairs in Pakistan. He had got on to a bus and gone to Lahore in 1999, but the bus got "punctured". There was precious little he could do once the bus was punctured.



The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, with the Cyprus Foreign Minister, Yiannakis Cassoulides, on arrival at the Larnaca airport in Nicosia on Monday. — AP

When he was travelling to Lahore, Gen. Musharraf as the Army Chief was plotting to attack India, Mr. Vajpayee said, making it clear that trusting the General would be a tall order for him. This was a big betrayal, at a time when he had carried a message of cooperation.

After Lahore failed, he even invited the General to Agra hoping that the Taj — the monument to love — would move the Pakistani leader. Gen. Musharraf, however, insisted that what was going on in Kashmir was a "freedom struggle" and not terrorism and on account of this the dialogue at Agra failed.

Pakistan had made all possible efforts to ensure that polls did not take place in Kashmir. There had been no elections in Pakistan, but it was demanding that the will of the people in Kashmir should be exercised (in the form of a plebiscite).

Turning to other issues, the Prime Minister said that it was a "miracle" that a 24-party coalition Government was working in New Delhi. He had been told that such a coalition could not be run but his response was that "you need the right people to run a coalition."

The coalition would not break until they (the BJP) broke

it. The Congress was a platform not a party and he, too, had been arrested during the Quit India movement in 1942. Referring to the communists, he said they were in a poor shape and were confined to West Bengal and Kerala.

In an interview to *Politis*, a Cypriot newspaper, Mr. Vajpayee said that if Pakistan ended its sponsorship of cross-border terrorism, then India was willing to resume a dialogue on all issues, including Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan, he said, had to understand that there could not be double standards on terrorism — it could not fight terrorism to its west and sponsor it to its east. "Its (Pakistan's) membership in the international coalition against terrorism cannot be used as a cover for terrorist activities directed against India."

On the Cyprus issue, Mr. Vajpayee made it clear that India's supported the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Cyprus.

"Our position remains unchanged that a solution to the Cyprus problem has to be in conformity with the U.N. resolutions and in the best interests of the Cypriot people. We are also aware that Cyprus is now very close to fulfilling its aspirations to join the European Union, and our best wishes are with you in this endeavour."

'Commendable voter turnout': Page 11

'Pak. failed all tests to end cross-border terrorism'

By Amit Baruah

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49-1 5/10

NEW DELHI, OCT. 4. India today said it continued to hope that Pakistan would "accept" the results of the successful elections in Jammu and Kashmir even as the Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal, said that Islamabad had failed "all tests" to end cross-border terrorism.

Mr. Sibal said Pakistan continued to "ignite" terrorism and violence in India. Using harsh words against Pakistan and its President, Pervez Musharraf, he said Islamabad hoped to continue with its policy of "sustainable terrorism". Referring to Gen. Musharraf's comments on Gujarat, Mr. Sibal accused him of indirectly "inciting internal violence" in India.

Lauding the people of Jammu and Kashmir for braving the bullet to exercise their ballot, Mr. Sibal pointed out that the polling percentages in the three phases of the poll were "quite close to the kind of averages" Western nations had. In fact, these countries had an even lower turnout and did not have to face the kind of threats encountered by the people of Kashmir.

He said the people who had gone from "outside" (diplomats) did not see any particular irregularity or coercion and felt that the elections seemed to be free and fair. They were extremely complimentary about the manner in which the Election Commission had conducted the elections.

Stating that the elections had had a positive impact, Mr. Sibal said India had to wait and see how Pakistan reacted to the polls. About the higher degree of violence in the third phase, he felt that this was a sign of Pakistan's "frustration". All the indications from Pakistan, he said, demonstrated that Islamabad was as yet unwilling to draw the "right lessons" from the elections. If Pakistan still saw reason and ended cross-border

terrorism, then the way could be opened to resume a dialogue.

Asked about the likely pressure from the international community after the polls in Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan to begin talks with Pakistan, Mr. Sibal posed a counter-question — on what basis could they ask for the resumption of talks? Had Pakistan fulfilled its commitments to the international community to end cross-border terrorism? Replying to his own question, Mr. Sibal said Gen. Musharraf had done nothing on that front. Pressure, he said, would mean that India was being unreasonable in some way and had to be pressed. First, the international community would have to tell us that Pakistan was being convincingly reasonable based on hard evidence.

Asked if India had broached the question of the two Pakistani nationals reportedly responsible for the Akshardham massacre with Islamabad, the Foreign Secretary said Pakistan had done nothing about the list of 20 terrorists presented to it. This was despite the fact that Interpol had issued "red corner" notices for all the 20 persons wanted by India, adding there had been no cooperation from Pakistan on the issue.

On the coming general elections under military rule in Pakistan, Mr. Sibal said that while the judgment of the international observers there was awaited, the purpose and end results of the process had already been compromised by the President acquiring all kinds of powers.

The Foreign Secretary said the formation of the National Security Council and the constitutional amendments introduced by Gen. Musharraf showed that the NSC would be the real power. Whatever (Government) emerged after the elections would not be the result of a free and fair process, he argued. The polls, he said, could be "free and fair within an overall unfree and unfair framework".

1 5 OCT 2002

HINDU

'Musharraf statements on Akshardham unacceptable'

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30. India today said it "could not accept" the recent statements by the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, placing the Akshardham attack in the context of the killings of Muslims earlier this year in Gujarat.

Asked to comment on the recent statements made by the Gen. Musharraf, the Foreign Office spokesperson, Nirupama Rao, said Islamabad should set its house in order rather than commenting on matters that did not concern it.

"What happened in Gujarat (the Akshardham attack) was an unadulterated act of terrorism," she said, adding that you could not have "good and bad terrorists". In response to other questions relating to internal affairs in Pakistan, she maintained that the concept of "sustainable democracy" being promoted by Pakistan's military ruler was not recognised by other countries.

Pakistan, she said, tried to project itself as the "gold standard" while commenting on the "fully free and fair" elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

Separately, official sources, when asked about a \$300 million payment to Pakistan by the U.S., said in the past New Delhi had seen Islamabad using economic assistance to intensify conflict in the region and support a military build-up.

In another development, the third round of the India-China "security dialogue", which took place in Beijing yesterday, discussed the international security situation, including the campaign against terrorism. There was also an "introduction" of each other's national defence policies and a review of the international disarmament agenda, an official statement said.

Issues relating to regional security cooperation, the situation in the neighbourhood, relations with ASEAN and the situation in the Korean peninsula came up for discussion as well.

"The first round of (the) bilateral security dialogue was held in Beijing in March 2000 and the second round in New Delhi in February 2001. The third round is part of the ongoing process, which was established during discussions with our then External Affairs Minister and the Chinese Foreign Minister in June 1999.

"The security dialogue between India and China is intended to facilitate better mutual perceptions of security and concerns (bilateral, regional and international) of the two sides, to expand commonalities in their approach to security issues and to address and resolve differences where possible. Both sides adopted a forward-looking approach to the dialogue," the statement added.

Pakistan refutes Vajpayee's charges

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 30. Hours after he Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, maintained in New Delhi that Pakistan should be made accountable for continuing to sponsor terrorism in India, Islamabad vehemently denied the charge.

The Pakistan Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Inam-ul-Haq, maintained at a news conference here today that 'Pakistan is not sponsoring, encouraging and allowing any terrorism anywhere'. He reiterated Pakistan's stand that it condemned terrorism anywhere.

Mr. Haq characterised Mr. Vajpayee's charge as "totally incorrect and wrong". Flanked by Riaz Khokar, the newly appointed Foreign Secretary, Mr. Haq said Pakistan was a peace-loving country and wished to live in peace with its neighbours and normalise relations with India.

The tone and tenor of Mr. Haq's responses to questions on India were soft. For instance, when asked if it was correct that New Delhi was trying to sabotage the SAARC Summit scheduled in Islamabad in January, he politely reprimanded the correspondent saying, "Don't pre-judge. It is not correct".

"Let us not prejudice the issue. We have proposed January 11 to 13 as the dates for the SAARC Summit. We are expecting replies from the member-states. Some have already replied. We hope to get a positive response from all countries very soon. Therefore I will not agree with you that India is going to sabotage the SAARC summit. We can only look at that issue only if India says these dates are not acceptable or some other reasons are advanced to postpone the summit," he said.

Prospects for talks

On the prospects of a resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan after the October elections in Kashmir and Pakistan, Mr. Haq said, "Collin Powell has expressed the hope that both sides will resume a dialogue

after the elections. We have seen some statements from Indian leaders that perhaps dialogue would not be resumed even after the elections in Jammu and Kashmir particularly.

"We are watching the situation. We have brought these statements to the attention of the U.S. Government. We will see how the situation develops," he said.

Mr. Haq, who has returned after a two-week-long stay in the U.S., said he had conveyed Pakistan's reservations over the recent remarks made by the U.S. Ambassador to New Delhi, Robert Blackwill, that the level of infiltration had gone up at the LOC. Pakistan had given a demarche to the U.S. over Mr. Blackwill's observations.

Election to U.N. Council

Asked whether Pakistan would take advantage of its election to the U.N. Security Council as a non-permanent member (for a two-year period beginning January 2003) and raise the Kashmir issue, he gave a diplomatic answer...

"Pakistan being a member in the Security Council does not mean automatically that we will raise or not raise certain issues.

"Any member of the U.N. is free to raise any issue before the Security Council. We will

assess the situation as we go by and we will take decisions in the best national interest."

About the Indian Finance Minister, Jaswant Singh's assertions that India had the right to go for a pre-emptive strike under Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, in self-defence, Mr. Haq quoted Mr. Singh as having said that it was an "academic" opinion.

"Pakistan's position on Article 51 of the U.N. is clear. It provides the right of self-defence in case of aggression against any country. Pakistan also believes that unilateral action by any one country against another country would create a situation that would be problematic because justification for pre-emptive strikes will be different from one country to another. Any action should be under the umbrella of the UNSC resolutions," he said.

In response to a question on reports of India preparing for "pre-emptive strikes", he said he was not aware of India re-deploying its forces.

"Their forces are already on our borders. There was some lessening of tensions during the last few months they have allowed leave for Indian soldiers and some de-alert processes have been started. We have seen those processes were being reversed. We are keeping a close watch," he said.

We'll pay back India in the same coin: Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 30. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has said that Islamabad would pay New Delhi in the 'same coin' if the later continued with its aggressive postures.

In a response to a question on the remarks of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, at the annual conference of senior police officers in New Delhi, Gen. Musharraf told journalists at a function to raise the height of the Mangla Dam in the Pak-Occupied Kashmir that Pakistan believed in reciprocal actions.

"If someone is aggressive to us, then we are also aggressive. If someone talks peace to us, we also talk peace," the state-controlled news agency Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) quoted him as saying.

PM appeals to world against Pak terror

Statesman News Service 11/10

NEW DELHI, Sept. 30. — Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee today urged the global community to hold Pakistan responsible for sponsoring cross-border terrorism against India.

Speaking at an annual conference of DGPs, heads of Intelligence and Central police forces, the Prime Minister said Jammu and Kashmir was on the verge of returning to peace.

"Terrorist groups backed by Pakistan are creating a fear psychosis in J&K. Candidates were killed, voters intimidated and a call given for boycotting the polls. But the people showed that the bullet cannot defeat the ballot in a democracy. This will, however, not end jihadi terrorism in the state. We will intensify our diplomatic initiatives to remind the... international coalition against terrorism that they must redeem their pledge to fight terrorism everywhere... Which means that Pakistan must be held accountable for its continued sponsorship of terrorism against India," he said.

The Prime Minister held a meeting with top officials of Intelligence agencies and Central paramilitary forces to review security. A 45-minute "interactive session", which took place before Mr Vajpayee addressed the police chiefs' meet, was attended by Mr LK Advani and ministers of state for home Mr ID Swami

Vajpayee, Blair to discuss terrorism

LONDON, Sept. 30. — The fight against terrorism, including the issue of cross-border terrorism, will figure prominently in talks between Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and his British counterpart Mr Tony Blair on 12 October here, official sources said today.

This will be the fourth meeting between the two leaders in one year, a significant pointer to growing relations between the two countries. The Prime Minister will arrive here on 11 October after attending the India-European Union Summit at Copenhagen.

Sources said several issues including bilateral, regional and international issues are expected to figure during the talks. — PTI

and Mr Vidyasagar Rao.

The security agencies sought "guidance" from Mr Vajpayee while dealing with security issues in a "real time-frame" and formulating a policy on long-pending demands of the police.

Mr Vajpayee also expressed "disappointment" over the poor utilisation of funds for police modernisation by states. He said the home ministry could review the modernisation scheme to identify the bottlenecks.

THE STATESMAN

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HELP OF LOCALS NOT RULED OUT: DGP

'Akshardham temple attackers were from Pakistan'

By Manas Dasgupta

GANDHINAGAR, SEPT. 27. The Gujarat police may have achieved an important breakthrough in the investigations into the attack on the Akshardham temple by identifying the driver of the taxi in which two terrorists are believed to have travelled from the Ahmedabad railway station.

The Director-General of Police, K. Chakravarthi, said here today that the police were yet to confirm and corroborate the information given by the driver on the two terrorists. He denied that the driver, Rajubhai Thakore, and the owner of the taxi, Mansukh Acharya, had been arrested and said that several other taxi drivers too had been picked up for questioning.

The two terrorists came out of the railway station around 2.45 p.m., carrying a huge bag and hired the taxi. During the entire 50-km journey they did not speak except at the Koba-

Gandhinagar circle where they asked the driver in Hindi to stop for a while so that they could drink water. They bought a bottle of water from a hotel and then went to Akshardham.

The driver had identified the bodies of the two terrorists to be those of the same persons who travelled in his taxi. Apparently, the terrorists were carrying their arms and ammunition in their bag. The bag, as revealed later, contained a couple of bedrolls in which the arms were hidden.

It was not clear by which train the duo had arrived. It could be any of the five that arrive at the Ahmedabad station around that time, including the Jammu-Tawi Express and the Howrah-Ahmedabad Express.

The anti-terrorist squad of the State police has obtained the reservation charts of all the trains to ascertain from where the duo might have boarded the train.

A report received here said

that both the terrorists were Pakistani nationals, one a resident of Lahore and the other of Peshawar. However, the DGP did not confirm their identity.

Mr. Chakravarthi said that prima facie it did not seem that the taxi driver or its owner was part of the terrorist gang. Rajubhai Thakore, who worked for Mansukh Acharya, has been driving the same taxi for the last five years and had always been operating from the railway station.

He dropped the duo near gate number three of Akshardham and left. After about 30 minutes, the random shooting began. The DGP said the police had received "several leads and information" and were collecting "evidences".

While ruling out that the two terrorists could be "locals" and that the attack was for taking "revenge" against the Gujarat killings — as the unsigned letters found on the terrorists' bodies indicated — Mr. Chakra-

varthi said the "support" of some local people could not be ruled out.

It was not possible for any outsider to launch an attack on the Akshardham temple without having an intricate knowledge of the complex.

It was likely that the terrorists had visited the complex earlier, and were possibly helped by some local people, before launching the attack.

It was clear that the two were "highly motivated and well-trained".

Mr. Chakravarthi said there were "hundreds of soft targets" like the Akshardham.

The State Government had requested the Centre to station for some more time the 12 columns of Army, deployed in Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Godhra, Dahod and some other sensitive towns during the bandh on Tuesday, besides the 12 companies of the CRPF and four companies of the BSF.

A fallout of Gujarat riots: Musharraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 27. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, today asserted that the terrorist attack on the Akshardham temple in Gandhinagar on Tuesday was a "fallout" of the killings of thousands of Muslims in the Gujarat riots, even as the Pakistan Foreign Office dubbed the charges of Pakistani involvement in the attack as a "bunch of lies".

In an informal talk with reporters here after a function, Gen. Musharraf said India should "put its own house in order" before pointing fingers at others for the terrorist attacks in the country.

On the reported decision of the Indian armed forces to cancel the leave of officers, Gen. Musharraf said he did not foresee a war with India. However, he asserted that the Pakistani forces were prepared for any eventuality.

To a question on the Indian allegations about Pakistan's involvement in the temple attack, he said that "it is a misperception. They should not blame us because what is happening in Gujarat is the fallout of killing of thousands of Muslims there. India should put its own house in order instead of mudslinging and blaming Pakistan. Their internal affairs are not in order and need to

be corrected".

On the execution of seven Christians working for a charity in Karachi on Wednesday, he said the Government was investigating the matter.

He did not rule out the hand of Indian intelligence agencies in the attack, but at the same time maintained that Pakistan, unlike India, would not jump to conclusions without proof.

Condemning the execution of the Christian workers, Gen. Musharraf said it was difficult to make any guess about who could be behind it at this juncture. "I could not say who could be behind it. It could be the Al-Qaeda, it could be sectarian elements or the RAW. We are examining it." So far, no arrests had been made in connection with the incident, he added.

Gen. Musharraf said he could not understand why such brutal acts were being committed against Christians. "It is madness if any Muslim thinks that it is a way of promoting Islam. Allah never pardons such acts."

He said whoever was behind such acts was trying to "defame and malign" Pakistan. Such acts had caused great damage to Pakistan's image. "Such ghastly tactics must never succeed and those involved must be brought to book and punished," he

said.

In a related development, the Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan, termed as a "bunch of lies", reports from India that all indicators pointed to the involvement of Pakistanis in the Gandhinagar temple attack.

He said that without even bothering to wait for the preliminary inquiry, India always tended to blame Pakistan for every incident in the country.

Mr. Khan wondered why those who were alleged to be Pakistanis in such incidents were never caught alive.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Interior Minister, Moinuddin Haider, said that the Government was investigating the killings of innocent Christians in Karachi along two lines. To apprehend the murderers and to 'unearth a foreign hand' behind these terrorist acts that could not be ruled out.

He said Indian involvement could not be ruled out in the recent wave of terrorism in Pakistan and attacks on the Church showed that the perpetrators wanted to defame the country.

"We are investigating to get sound evidence of Indian involvement in acts of terrorism and would expose them at the international level," he told the reporters.

28 SEP 2003

THE HINDI

Let Pak. admit it cannot check infiltration: Sinha

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, AUG. 26. The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, indicated today that India wanted Pakistan to cooperate with New Delhi on the terrorism issue, just as Islamabad was helping to tackle terrorism on the Afghan-Pakistan border.

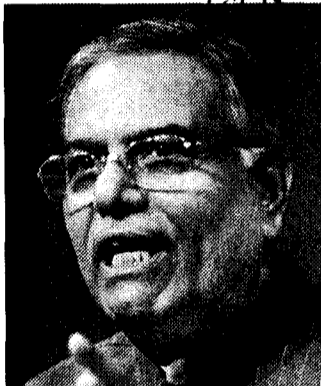
Amplifying a point he had made last week in Kathmandu, Mr. Sinha said at a press conference here that Pakistan should come out and say openly that the terrorist elements crossing the Line of Control (LoC) were beyond its control.

Maintaining that he was not making a public offer of resuming dialogue with Pakistan, he said if Pakistan showed any seriousness in discussing the Indian proposal of joint patrolling, then further discussions — at whatever level — could take place.

However, when asked if this statement amounted to an offer of dialogue with Pakistan, Mr. Sinha claimed he was not making any suggestion for talks with Islamabad. He reiterated India's stand that talks were not possible till cross-border terrorism came to an end.

Mr. Sinha, who will be in Washington on a bilateral visit to the United States on September 9-10, said Pakistan had to come out and say that it was trying to do its best to tackle terrorist elements crossing into Indian territory, but they were beyond its control.

The Minister said if Pakistan's statement on this issue was found to be "credible" then India could "look" at it. "After all, he (the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf) is cooperating with the Americans and others as far as terrorism within Pakistan is concerned, or terror-



ism within Afghanistan is concerned... but there is no such cooperation in evidence here..."

"Now what will that (cooperation with India) entail? It will entail an honest appraisal of the situation, admission of the facts — a clear indication that despite his (Gen. Musharraf's) best efforts, he is not able to control the problem..." he said.

India, it would appear, wants "something" from the General, before moving on to talk substance, say, on possible joint patrolling of the LoC. It appears that India is conveying some "public messages" to Pakistan about what it should say. Whether or not Pakistan will rise to the Indian bait remains an open question.

Pakistan should admit "failure", accept that it can't do anything to deal with the problem of terrorism and then India and Pakistan could get down to tackling the problem jointly.

Mr. Sinha, in an opening statement, stressed the importance of India's relations with its neighbours. Referring to his visits, he said: "I am of the view that these visits have enabled us to infuse further strength and substance to our relations with countries in the region based on

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trust and the principles of mutual equality and sensitivity to each other's concerns, our common commitment to fight terrorism and not to allow the territory of any country to be used against the interests of other countries, non-interference in internal affairs, respect for territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty, and the settlement of outstanding issues."

Asked whether Indo-U.S. relations were taking a bit of a backseat, Mr. Sinha again stressed on the importance of the bilateral component of the relationship.

He said that during the July visit of the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, a number of bilateral issues came up for discussion but unfortunately, "this part" does not get reflected in media reports. "India's relations with other countries, including our neighbours, is not hostage to the India-Pakistan relationship," Mr. Sinha stressed in the context of his upcoming visit to Washington. While admitting that the "latest situation" between India and Pakistan would come up for discussion in Washington, the basic purpose of his visit would be to promote bilateral relations. Asked about his assessment of the current level of India-Pakistan tensions, Mr. Sinha said everyone had to come to their own conclusions and referred to the fact that the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, had made his own assessment. The "basic understanding" about the danger of an immediate conflict between India and Pakistan was flawed, Mr. Sinha said adding that India's mobilisation of troops was "defensive" — an effort to thwart aggression.

Sinha rules out talks with Pak.

By P. S. Suryanarayana

MO-11

KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT. 26. The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, today ruled out the possibility of resumption of dialogue with Pakistan as a direct consequence of the completion of the ongoing process of elections in Jammu and Kashmir to India's satisfaction.

While this nuanced aspect flies in the face of expectations in some U.S.-led international circles to the contrary, Mr. Sinha asserted here that "our problem with Pakistan is not the elections in Jammu and Kashmir alone". The crux of the issue was that Pakistan should "stop cross-border terrorism against India" and "dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism so as to create a conducive atmosphere for the resumption of bilateral dialogue".

Noting that India was "very happy" over the two rounds of elections in Jammu and Kashmir so far, Mr. Sinha said that the feedback from the foreign diplomats, who had currently "watched" the process, was "by and large, positive". He was responding to questions after meeting the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

On the terrorist attack on the Akshardham temple in Gujarat, Mr. Sinha said investigations were under way while the "suspicions" of Pakistan's instigation or involvement were very much in focus. While India was not dependent on either the U.S. or any other country to address the Pakistan challenge, it was becoming increasingly clear that "many countries are putting pressure on

Pakistan" to end cross-border terrorism.

On Iraq, Mr. Sinha said the U.S. was in touch with India and he was aware that a new U.N. Security Council resolution was "on the cards".

Issues like the new terrorist massacre in Gujarat and the current poll process in Jammu and Kashmir did not figure in Mr. Sinha's talks with Mr. Badawi. The External Affairs Minister said that they discussed bilateral cooperation as a follow-up in the context of the Prime Minister,

Atal Behari Vajpayee's visit to Malaysia in May 2001. Topping the list were the infrastructure projects in each other's territory.

Mr. Sinha was assisted at the talks by R.M. Abhyankar, Secretary in the External Affairs

Ministry, and Veena Sikri, India's High Commissioner to Malaysia, besides Vinay Bansal, Additional Secretary (Commerce). He also held talks with Samy Vellu, Malaysian Public Works Minister.

'India will maintain restraint'

Reassuring the international community about India's intention to exercise restraint in the face of the latest terrorist attack on the Akshardham temple in Gujarat, Mr. Sinha, affirmed that "neither Kargil nor September 11 nor the incident two days ago" would discourage New Delhi from staying steady on its foreign policy course without effecting any paradigm shift from the mascot of a "responsible" power.

Projecting India's credentials and without citing Pakistan by name in this particular context, Mr. Sinha sought to paint the contrast between the two estranged neighbours by pointing out that "the world is keeping quiet" as regards some "not so responsible states" which were prone to threaten the use of nuclear weapons or indulge in "blatant nuclear terrorism" and "blackmail" of the same kind. Turning the spotlight on "the latest in the series of terrorist attacks" in India, he said: "Our patience has been sorely tested but we have acted with the utmost restraint."

Mr. Sinha, who was addressing the Institute of Strategic and International Studies here, suggested that New Delhi and Islamabad could adopt a *de novo* approach by adopting the Sino-India model of settling differences. He did not, however, unveil any new initiative to address New Delhi's concerns about cross-border terrorism and other aspects of the irritants on the India-Pakistan front.

Pointing out that the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, both based in Pakistan, had been identified as the masterminds behind the earlier terrorist strikes, Mr. Sinha said the telltale evidence relating

to the latest carnage at a place of worship was still being investigated.

Outlining India's foreign policy in the new millennium as seen from a contemporary standpoint, Mr. Sinha, who fielded a volley of questions following his address, disputed the suggestion that the Vajpayee administration was now eager to reduce itself to the status of a strategic appendage of the U.S. and look to Washington for solutions to India's external problems. The delayed process of "improving" the relationship between the world's largest democracy and "the most powerful democracy" could not be scoffed at as an attempt by New Delhi to "tag" itself to or kowtow Washington's line.

After years of underlining their differences, the U.S. and India were at present "discussing" their "commonalities". India's interactions with China, too, were on the upswing mainly on account of their shared political will that translated into a very good model for solving bilateral problems. Despite the "military skirmish" of 1962, India and China had learnt to "put it (the border dispute) in a separate box to be dealt with at leisure on the basis of friendship and cordiality".

This model of "not keeping other issues hostage to this (border) issue" could be considered as a possible framework for the India-Pakistan tensions too, he hinted at in the manner of an obvious loud thinking. In fact, India continued to extend the "most favoured nation status to Pakistan without reciprocity".

All that India wanted of Pakistan was a "simple point". If only Pakistan would "remove this gun from our head, we are prepared to talk."

Constrained by the clouded crystal ball of the present times, when "globalisation has magnified the risks of terrorism by coupling it with the heightened dangers of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction", Mr. Sinha identified nuclear disarmament, not nuclear deterrence, and a new Magna Carta of a "democratic" international order as the goals that India would strive for in the years to come.

27 SEP 2001

'Pak. has allowed limited infiltrations'

By David Rohde

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 21. Officials from three Pakistani militant groups said in interviews last week that the Pakistan Government had allowed Islamic guerrillas to resume small-scale infiltrations across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. India has repeatedly demanded that Pakistan halt the practice, which brought the two nuclear-armed rivals to the brink of war this spring.

Under intense pressure from the United States, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, promised in May that his Government would do all it could to stop the infiltrations. In a speech on Thursday, Gen. Musharraf repeated the promise. "I want to categorically state that the Government of

Pakistan is neither allowing, nor sponsoring, nor encouraging any kind of movement across the Line of Control," he said. Any claim to the contrary was "motivated and false."

In an interview in New Delhi on Thursday, the U.S. ambassador to India, Robert Blackwill, told Indian journalists that American officials believed infiltrations in Kashmir had increased recently.

The Pakistan Government spokesman, Maj. Gen. Rashid Qureshi, however, denied the claims of the militants and the American ambassador. He suggested that unknown persons in Pakistan could be posing as militants to undermine the Government and insisted that Pakistan was neither aiding

nor even tacitly encouraging

border crossings.

But members of the three militant groups said in separate interviews that while Islamabad had halted all infiltrations in May, it had signalled in late July that small-scale infiltrations could resume. They said Pakistan continued to finance their groups and allowed them to buy weapons. "There was a green signal from the authorities," said an official from a militant group. "Because of that the groups took the initiative."

Ershad Mahmud, an expert on Kashmir at the Institute of Policy Studies, a research organisation in Islamabad, said he could not confirm that the Pakistani Government was still financing the groups. But he said that small-scale infiltrations had resumed, and that Gen. Musharraf was "under intense domestic political pressure" to allow them to continue.

In June and July, Gen. Musharraf was seen in Pakistan as having made a major concession to India by halting infiltrations, he said, but he had received nothing in return from New Delhi. With the approach of parliamentary elections, scheduled for October, Gen. Musharraf might be trying to outflank nationalist and religious parties, which could accuse him of being soft on Kashmir. "He is gradually changing his position," Mr. Mahmud said. "There is limited infiltration."

For months, India and Pakistan have been locked in a stand-off along their border, where both sides have massed more than a million troops. At the

centre of the tension is a dispute over whether Pakistan is actively aiding a 13-year-old Islamic insurgency in Kashmir.

Tensions flared last week at the United Nations General Assembly when Gen. Musharraf demanded that the Kashmiris be allowed to hold a U.N.-mandated referendum on independence. He has denied that Pakistan is aiding the militant groups in Kashmir, but he often refers to the separatist drive there as a "freedom struggle."

The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, responded by again accusing Pakistan of financing, arming and training militants.

He also accused Pakistani intelligence agents of assassinating candidates in the elections to the Kashmir Assembly.

In the interviews, an official from one of the militant groups, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, the largest Kashmiri group, spoke on the condition of anonymity but said that his organisation could be identified.

Officials from the three other groups asked that their organisations not be

identified. Two interviews were conducted by a *New York Times* correspondent and two by a Pakistani journalist working for *The Times*.

An official from one militant group said that in the past, Government officials had provided money, issued weapons and led groups of 10 to 15 guerrillas to points along the border where they could cross into Kashmir. The Pakistani officials had told his group in May that in response to intense international

pressure, Pakistan was temporarily halting incursions. "We were assured it was on a temporary basis," the official said.

After May, the money the group received from the Government increased, he said. "In a sense, it was a bribe," a way of keeping them happy. But camps and communication points in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir were closed and his group was barred from publicly raising money.

"For the previous two or three months they were totally shocked and dispirited by the decision," the official said, referring to members of his group. "But now they think that the Government of Pakistan is returning to its previous position."

In late July, Pakistani officials signalled that infiltrations could resume, he said. His organisation

established new communication posts and began sending small groups of three to five cadres over the border.

Officials from the Hizb and another large militant group said in interviews with the Pakistani

journalist that Islamabad had signalled to them that small-scale infiltrations could resume. They also said their organisations continued to receive Government financing.

But the representative of the fourth group insisted that the crackdown on infiltration was continuing.

And that his group was receiving no Government aid. — *New York Times*

22 SEP 2002

THE HINDU

Musharraf seeks shield against Big Brother

IRREES BAKHTIAR

Islamabad, Sept. 19: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf today criticised India's "extraordinary doctrine of bilateralism" and called for multilateral or Saarc-based initiatives to resolve disputes between India and its neighbours.

India's "extraordinary bilateralism" seeks to bind its neighbours to a one-to-one relationship with New Delhi and to the resolution of differences exclusively through bilateral negotiations, Musharraf said. India unabashedly leverages its superiority in size and strength over its smaller neighbours through this high-sounding and ostensibly reasonable mechanism, he added.

India has unresolved bilateral differences with practically all its neighbours, Musharraf said. "Its desire to mould the South Asian international relations to suit its own great power ambitions has all along served to vitiate the security environment in the region," he added.

He said while issues of peace and security concerned all the South Asian states, "it cannot be denied that normalisation of relations between Pakistan and India is a pre-requisite to the realisation of the vision of a peaceful and prosperous South Asia."

Musharraf, who was addressing the inauguration of the two-day international conference on Peace and Security in South

Asia here, made it amply clear that the "key to normalisation of relations between Pakistan and India lies in progress towards a resolution of the core Kashmir issue. A principled resolution of the dispute, that takes into account the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, will unlock the door to normalisation".

Britain on Pak

Mumbai, Sept. 19: British deputy Prime Minister John Prescott today rejected the idea of isolating Pakistan in the international coalition's fight against terrorism, citing the "recent arrests of al Qaida activists by Pakistan" to buttress his support for President Pervez Musharraf, reports our correspondent.

"The arrests just show that different nations can make substantial contributions in fighting the menace (of terrorism)," Prescott said at an award function. "Talking of isolating a country is too much."

Prescott, however, was quick to add that his one-to-one discussion with Advani was "very fruitful". He also expressed "Britain's happiness" at the election process in Kashmir.

In India for the first time, Prescott dodged questions on whether Advani had broached the issue of extraditing Ayub Thakur, a supporter in Britain of Kashmiri militancy.

Musharraf said the massing of Indian troops along Pakistan's border entailed grave security risks for the region and warned against applying the "doctrine of pre-emption" in the context of the two South Asian nuclear rivals. "Deployment of Indian forces in forward and strike locations against Pakistan entails a grave security risk for the entire region," he said.

"Brinkmanship and sabre-rattling will not solve any problem," Musharraf said and stressed the need to sit across the table to thrash out differences. "This is also the position of the rest of the world." Pakistan made major commitments and has taken significant steps to ease the current tension, he said. "In doing so, we have not flinched from taking considerable risks."

But there will be no more concessions from Pakistan and India's continued intransigence in hopes of getting further concession from Pakistan was "highly misplaced", the President said. "India must take substantive steps if it is serious in its declared intention of walking the high road to peace," he added.

Musharraf said the "doctrine of pre-emption" could be applied between unequal opponents and adversaries, which would attract international diplomatic condemnation. But in the case of equal adversaries and opponents, he warned that application of this doctrine would lead to war.

Tea and teapot!

gives fact Musharraf at Asia Society *5/8/79*

The Asia Society in New York is a prestigious institution and it was to be expected that Pervez Musharraf would have chosen his words very carefully when he addressed them. His confession that he could not give up Kashmir as a core issue and survive may quite simply be a statement of fact but the answer to him is that no one other than himself and perhaps his predecessors are to blame. The fault line was laid in 1947 when one country and one wondrous mosaic of culture were thought to be distinct and separate and power hungry politicians on both sides came to the conclusion that to be able to do as they pleased with less than the whole was preferable to trying to see the other point of view and remove the causes of misunderstanding and distrust. The Mahatma favoured the latter but this was too difficult for both his followers in the Congress and those in the Muslim League who had persuaded themselves that partition was the only answer. A viral infection of the century gone by.

India has a bigger stake in continuing to reject the two-nation theory. It had already led Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan to lament that he had received a moth-eaten Pakistan but it was too late. It must never be forgotten that India has more Muslims than Pakistan and their welfare is very much India's concern, aberrations like Gujarat notwithstanding. To concede that Pakistan has a claim on Kashmir is to accept that Muslims in the rest of the country must immediately reduce themselves to a status less than citizen and this is unacceptable.

Instead of grasping this basic fact Musharraf confesses that no leader, no government of Pakistan can ever sidestep the Kashmir issue *because the people of Pakistan are involved in it.* The question arises who got them involved in it and when? The struggle for Pakistan was waged largely by the Muslims of Uttar Pradesh of Bengal and of Bombay where Jinnah worked, not by the Muslims of the rest of the country. When partition came Muslims in what is now Pakistan became its citizens for no better reason than that they were concentrated on one side of the divide; certainly there was no presence of the Muslim League in Kashmir. In fact, it is a surviving irony that the Muslims of central India who chose to migrate to Pakistan were looked down upon, branded as mohajirs and their plight defies all claims that Muslims constitute a separate group, let alone a separate nation.

The struggle for partition was a political struggle, the opposition to it was also political, ordinary people have had nothing to do with it, the people of Pakistan included. Musharraf is making a basic and fundamental error if he thinks that political compulsions apply only to his country. It may apply to a larger extent to his country because there is no second justification for partition that has been manufactured these past fifty years. If no government of Pakistan can budge an inch and survive, for India a secular democracy is part of our being on which there can be no compromise.

To take Musharraf's comments at face value, what he is really saying is that Pakistan has no option but to continue to foment terrorism in Kashmir as an instrument of policy. His friend Bush had better put that in his tea pot and drink it!

17 SEP 2001

Musharraf does not need any provocation to attack India: PM

By Amit Baruah

NEW YORK, SEPT. 16. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, has taken exception to mediapersons drawing a link between the Gujarat events and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's criticism of India at the United Nations Security Council.

Mr. Vajpayee, who was speaking to the Indian press corps at the end of his visit to New York on Saturday evening, was asked whether the events in Gujarat had not provided an excuse for Musharraf, to attack India at the U.N. Security Council. There was no connection between the two, he claimed.

"Musharraf ko Bharat ke khilaf bolne ke liye kisi Gujarat ki aavashyakta nahin hai" (Musharraf doesn't need a Gujarat to attack India), he said, adding that the General had made out that all minorities in India were being targeted. That was not the case. He said the incidents in Gujarat had been criticised and steps were being taken to ensure that such unfortunate incidents did not recur. The Prime Minister, however, was clear that Gen. Musharraf did not need any "provocation" to attack India.

In response to questions on Indo-U.S. relations, Mr. Vajpayee said these were usually seen in the context of the India-U.S.-Pakistan equation. This, he said, was not correct — India's bilateral relations with the U.S. had its own importance. Several decisions to further cooper-

ation between the two countries had been taken, he said.

The Prime Minister, however, was concerned that there were delays in the implementation of the decisions that had already been taken and mentioned the hi-tech area as one example where there had been time lags between decisions and their implementation.

Referring to his meeting with the U.S. President, George W Bush, the Prime Minister said, "It was for the first time that he did not reiterate the need for a dialogue with Pakistan."

Saying that the U.S. accepted India's concerns on cross-border terrorism, he said the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir would improve the environment. Mr. Bush was told that killings were taking place in Kashmir regularly and even election meetings could not be held. The Prime Minister said an improvement in the environment after the elections could pave the way for dialogue on Kashmir.

In response to a question, Mr. Vajpayee categorically denied that there had been any discussions with Mr. Bush on turning the Line of Control (LoC) into an international border. There was, he said, no question of India agreeing to such a proposal. He reiterated that the international community should not get sidetracked and continue with the war against terrorism — a point he made at a public meeting on Saturday evening as well.

See also Pages 11, 12

People coerced and forced to vote, says Pak. *9/17/03*

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 16. Pakistan today alleged that the people in Jammu and Kashmir were "coerced and forced" by the military and para-military forces to vote in the first phase of the Assembly elections in that State.

The Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan, who quoted the Kashmir Media Service (KMS), in support of his contention, however hastened to add that a clear picture on the actual polling in the first phase would be known soon.

In response to a specific question, he asserted that the election would be a sham as the All-Party Hurriyat Conference had given a call for boycotting the polls. To-

day's polling received a great deal of attention in the Pakistan official media, including the television and the radio. News bulletins on both the TV and radio maintained that the people in Jammu and Kashmir observed "complete strike" in response to the Hurriyat's call.

The United Jehadi Council Chairman and chief of the Hizbul Mujahideen, Syed Salahuddin, in a statement "congratulated" the people of the State for the "total boycott of the sham election".

Mr. Salahuddin said the voter turnout in the first phase should be an "eye opener" for the Indian Government and it should allow the people to exercise their "right to self-determination rather than

fool the world". He claimed that the boycott was a 'referendum' against the "repressive and oppressive" Indian regime in the valley and said the international community should step up its campaign to pressure New Delhi to fulfil its promise of letting the people in Kashmir decide their own future. In a related development, the Jammu and Kashmir People's League organised a rally at Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistan occupied Kashmir, to reject and condemn the "so-called Assembly election in Kashmir".

The Chairman of the party, Muhammad Farooq Rehmani, in a statement claimed that the election in the valley was misleading and contrary to the United Nations resolutions.

Pak. not fulfilling commitments: PM

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

NEW YORK, SEPT. 15. The Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee, has said that while the international coalition has made considerable headway in Afghanistan, a lot more needs to be done "further East".

Mr. Vajpayee made this remark during a meeting of Congressional leaders from the Tri-State area. India is convinced that only a global and comprehensive effort can counter terrorism, he said. Briefing mediapersons on the meeting, the spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Nirupama Rao, said that Mr. Vajpayee told lawmakers that if tension in South Asia persisted, it was on account of Pakistan not fulfilling its commitments.

The Prime Minister pointed out that infiltration had increased and every effort was being made by Pakistan to sabotage the elections in Jammu and Kashmir by intimidating voters and threatening candidates.

India would find every way to ensure free and fair and peaceful election even in the face of mounting terrorist attacks orchestrated by Pakistan's ISI, he maintained. Mr. Vajpayee was asked as to why people in Jammu and Kashmir were afraid to contest the elections. He responded by saying that it was on account of intimidation and

violence. "Even so, people are enthusiastic. And we hope there will be heavy polling in the election," he is said to have remarked.

Mr. Vajpayee told members of Congress that if the international community was unable to restrain Pakistan, India would have to find its own ways

of achieving this objective; and that India was as determined to secure itself against terrorism as the United States had been since the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.

He also spoke about his meeting with the U.S. President, George W. Bush, this week and said that the two leaders agreed

on the need for a long-term bilateral relationship based on "trust".

Welcoming the progress made in the bilateral relationship, Mr. Vajpayee said that he and Mr. Bush would work together to deepen the relationship.

He pointed to the cooperation between the United States and India in the realm of civil and developmental applications of nuclear energy and space and said defence cooperation, which was proceeding well, could be intensified further.

He expressed the hope that the evolution of U.S. laws and regulations would reflect an awareness of a strategic perspective of India-U.S. relations; and it did not befit the bilateral relationship in the post-Cold War era for the U.S. to look at India in a narrow South Asia context.

Law makers — Gary Ackerman, Joseph Crowley, Caroline Maloney and Nita Lowey — told Mr. Vajpayee a number of things, including wishing India well in the upcoming elections in Kashmir, condemning the violent incidents and said that India was an example of what democracy brings to people.

"Every nation with a sky above it is a borderline state in the war against terror," Mr. Crowley is said to have remarked.

War on terrorism not over: PM

By Amit Baruah

NEW YORK, SEPT. 15. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, today cautioning the international community against slowing down the war against terrorism.

Addressing a public meeting here on Saturday night, Mr. Vajpayee said he was worried that those who hatched the September 11 conspiracy were in Pakistan.

"The war against terrorism is not over," he said, adding that this menace had to be destroyed from its roots.

Even before September 11, innocent people were being killed in India. Terrorists, he said, could strike anywhere, at any time.

There was no bigger issue in the world than terrorism, he said, and said the problem had spread all over the world.

He debunked the claim that Kashmir was about 'freedom' — for whose freedom, where is the question of freedom there, he asked.

It was an effort to confuse the world, but this had not met with much success, he added.

Mr. Vajpayee was speaking at the meeting after releasing a book in commemoration of the 100th death anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.

The book release function was organised by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Referring to the Bhavan founder, K.M. Munshi, the Prime Minister said he had two achievements to his credit — one was the setting up of the Bhavan and the other was the Somnath temple.

9:50 PM

HP-11
16/9

16 SEP 2002

THE HINDU

Musharraf has crossed threshold of lies: PM

By Amit Baruah

NEW YORK, SEPT. 15. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, launched a scathing attack on the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, at a public meeting on Saturday night, saying that he had crossed the "threshold of lies". Referring to the General's September 12 speech at the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Vajpayee said, "Unhone kitni ghalat baten kahin. Jhoot bolne ke bhi had hoti hai." (He said such false things. There is a limit to telling lies.)

The Prime Minister, who warned the international community against flagging in the war against terrorism, said it was a "good thing" that the country's highest court (the Supreme Court) had ended the controversy regarding the "saffronisation of education".

Stating that the court had held that "no saffronisation was going on", he said amid cheers from the audience: "Aur agar bhaguakaran ho bhi raha hai to kya aapati hai" (And if saffronisation is going on, then what is the objection).

After a long pause, Mr. Vajpayee extolled the virtues of other "colours" — including red and black. "Hamari shiksha agar hamari sanskriti se alag ho jaaye to shiksha ka kya labh hai?" (If our education is divorced from our culture, then what use is this education?)

Mr. Vajpayee, who released a book in honour of Swami Vivekananda at a function organised by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,

later addressed the public meeting at the same venue.

The meeting was organised by the Overseas Friends of the BJP and sponsored by a host of other groups, including the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, the overseas version of the RSS.

The Prime Minister dwelt at length on the meaning of the word secular — "fatwas" were issued to say who was secular or not secular. A fight could develop over whether or not a political party believed in "secularism" or not and several meanings could be attached to the word "secular".

"We really believe in sarva dharma sambhav (respect for all religions), but we are called

communal. Who can call Vivekananda communal," he asked.

Speaking in the broad context of the December 13 attack by Pakistan-based terrorists on the Parliament House Complex, he said they (the terrorists) claimed that they were fighting for freedom (azadi).

"Jab azadi ki larai chal rahi thi tab to inke purkhon ne kaam nahin diya. Tab to hissa nahin liya. Muslim League ne azadi ki larai nahin lari. Us samay bhi usne dange kiye," (when the freedom struggle was going on, their ancestors did not take part in it. The Muslim League did not take part. At that time, too, they organised riots) he said.

See also Page 11

Vajpayee faces protests in New York

NEW YORK, SEPT. 15. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, today faced half a dozen youths raising slogans and waving placards on alleged atrocities in Kashmir, when he and members of the Indo-American community were coming out after attending a function organised here by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. The incident took place outside the Fashion Institute Auditorium, where Mr. Vajpayee had come to attend the commemoration of Swami Vivekananda's 100th death anniversary. Mr. Vajpayee released a souvenir 'Vivekananda: Prophet of India', on the occasion.

The youths, holding placards with slogans saying "80,000 Muslims have been killed in Kashmir," and "Indian occupation in Kashmir must end", rushed towards the members of the Indo-American community. In response to the unexpected sloganeering, some members of the community shouted "Vande Matram," and the verbal duel continued for over five minutes. The situation was swiftly contained by the New York Police Department. — UNI

1 6 SEP 2002

Vajpayee talks tough on Pak

Gr-1 *Joshi Pak* *16/9*
'If international community fails, India will end terror on its own'

New York: Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee has said if the international community fails to persuade Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism, India will have to find its own way to achieve its objective.

Addressing members of the Congress from New York, New Jersey and Connecticut on Saturday night, he said India was as determined as the US had been since September 11 last year to secure itself against Pakistani and Pakistan-backed terrorism in Kashmir.

He expressed the hope that voices of reason in the international community would help persuade Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism.

"If the international community is unable to persuade Pakistan, India will

have to find its own ways to achieve its objective," he said. India, Mr Vajpayee pointed out, had joined the international coalition against terrorism in the conviction that only a global and comprehensive effort would help eliminate this menace and counter the forces of international terrorism.

The coalition, he said, had made considerable headway in Afghanistan but "a lot more needs to be done further east." Mr Vajpayee said tension in South Asia continued because Pakistan had not lived up to the commitments made by Gen Musharraf.

Infiltration across India's borders had increased and, most important, every effort was being made to sabotage the forthcoming elections in Jammu

and Kashmir by intimidating voters and threatening candidates, he said.

India, he said, attached the greatest importance to free, fair and peaceful elections in Jammu and Kashmir and was taking every possible measure to ensure this even in the face of terrorist attacks orchestrated by Pakistan's ISI.

He pointed out that representatives of the international media and diplomats of foreign missions had been frequently visiting the state in recent months to see this for themselves.

Referring to his meeting with President George W. Bush on September 12, Mr Vajpayee said Mr Bush and he shared their commitment to establish long-term bilateral relations between India and the U.S. based on trust. PTI

16 SEP 2002

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Mirwaiz asks U.S. to facilitate Indo-Pak. dialogue

By Our Staff Reporter

JAMMU, SEPT. 14. The former chairman of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, has asked the United States to make efforts for facilitating a purposeful dialogue between India and Pakistan on all issues, including Jammu and Kashmir.

In his address at a Kashmir contact meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at New York, the Mirwaiz said "we place the trust in the statesmanship of the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, that he will not countenance any attempt to ignore the wishes of the people of Kashmir and bypass the expression of those wishes." Asking the Americans to be focussed in their efforts he said, "the effort will be far more constructive if its focus would be on putting the Kashmir dispute on the road to a settlement rather than merely obtaining a reprieve in situation of tension."

The conglomerate was open to the "genuine gesture of goodwill," Mirwaiz Farooq said adding that "we are prepared to cooperate in a credible effort to achieve a just and durable settlement of

the dispute concerning our life and future..." That was the reason why the Hurriyat had agreed to start a peace process with a Kashmir Committee headed by the former Union Law Minister, Ram Jethmalani.

Urging New Delhi to be flexible in its dealings on Jammu and Kashmir, the Mirwaiz said "any resolve will be of little avail if the Government continues to follow a course which is as purblind as it is fraught with dangerous consequences, not least for India's own welfare and influence."

He expressed the Kashmiris' "gratitude" to the OIC for the "moral support" extended to them. "The people of Kashmir feel fortified by the sympathy spontaneously expressed by the governments of OIC and the fraternal peoples that they represent."

Mirwaiz Farooq also extended a formal invitation to the Secretary-General of OIC to visit Kashmir. It is also learnt that he had a 40-minute meeting with the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, who is in New York. He also met its Foreign Minister, Inamul Haq. The meeting lasted three hours and was focussed on the Kashmir issue.

1 5 SEP 2001

THE HINDU

'SELF-DETERMINATION LOGIC BIZARRE'

PM accuses Pervez of nuclear blackmail

Desikan Thirunarayanapuram & PTI

UNHQ, Sept. 13. — Prime Minister Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee today hit back at Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf, accusing him of indulging in "nuclear blackmail" and using terror as an instrument of state policy against India. In a hard-hitting address to the UN General Assembly, Mr Vajpayee told the global coalition not to condone Pakistan-directed killings in J&K.

Mr Vajpayee did not mince words while attacking what he called Gen. Musharraf's "self-serving" comments on Kashmir and Gujarat. In a sharp rejoinder, Mr Vajpayee posed a blunt question to the US-led coalition: how can it condone Pakistan-directed killings to promote a "bizarre version of self-determination"? The remarks come a day after Gen. Musharraf's vitriolic attack on India in his address to the Assembly in which he raked up the violence in Gujarat and ridiculed the elections in J&K.

The Prime Minister did not respond to the general's call for mutual de-escalation of troops and resumption of dialogue as part of conflict resolution. In a point-by-point rebuttal of the Pakistan leader's speech yesterday, he debunked the criticism of elections in J&K. "Those who had to 'adjust' voting and counting procedures to win a referendum and achieved Constitutional authority by the simple expedient of writing their own Constitution are ill-placed to lecture others on freedom and democracy," he told delegates attending the world body's 57th session.

Calling the general's statement that the murder of innocent civilians in J&K by militants was actually a "freedom struggle" an "extraordinary claim", Mr Vajpayee said it required an effort

of "logical acrobatics" to believe that carnage of innocents is an instrument of freedom and elections a symbol of repression and deception.

Earlier in a 35-minute meeting in New York yesterday, Mr George Bush and Mr Vajpayee discussed ways to strengthen defence and economic ties between the US and India. Mr Vajpayee was accompanied by external affairs minister Mr Yashwant Sinha and national security adviser Mr Brajesh Mishra at the meeting.

Mr Bush was joined by Secretary of State Gen. Colin Powell and Ms Condoleezza Rice.

A US official said Mr Bush and the Prime Minister noted "the positive developments" in counter-terrorism and defence cooperation and emphasised the "deepening" of economic dialogue and the "strengthening of the new framework of relations".

At the UN today, recalling that the international community had taken some collective decisions in the global effort to combat terrorism and to choke off its lifelines, Mr Vajpayee asked the UN Counter Terrorism Committee to enforce compliance of the Security Council Resolution #1373 "by states known to be sponsoring, sheltering, funding, arming and training terrorists".

Mr Vajpayee said "nuclear blackmail has emerged over the last few months as a new arrow in the quiver of state-sponsored terrorism: "To succumb to such

blatant nuclear terrorism would mean forgetting the bitter lessons of September 11 ... No one in India wants a war. Nor do we seek territory."

Later, the Prime Minister unveiled a four-point agenda to address concerns of world's poor, accusing industrialised nations of lack of political will to address the needs of developing countries.

Musharraf speak

UNHQ, Sept. 13. — Gen. Musharraf, who himself stormed to power in a coup in '99, says he would not like to be in the shoes of President Dr Abdul Kalam, sarcastically suggesting that he does not believe in being a "rubber-stamp" chief executive.

The general had yesterday called the Gujarat violence as a "massacre of Muslims". Today, he was told India now has a third Muslim President. The issue cropped up at his press meet when he was told he could have become India's President if his family had not migrated to Pakistan when he was four. "Thanks for the offer... At the same time, let me add I do not believe to be a rubber-stamp President," he replied. — PTI

Editorial: Bush at the UN, page 6

14 SEP 2002

THE HINDU

India, Pakistan spar in US

S Rajagopalan
New York, September 12

NOW THE Indo-Pak battle has begun on American soil. Ahead of the UN General Assembly session, India and Pakistan have launched a war of words.

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf in Chicago and External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha in Washington led the verbal attacks.

Musharraf accused India of stockpiling weapons worth billions of dollars, thereby creating a dangerous situation for Pakistan. As he put it, India has deployed 90 per cent of its military might against Pakistan even while claiming its security concerns went beyond Pakistan.

Sinha, speaking in Washington, obliquely hit out at Pakistan for its cross-border terrorism that has claimed over 50,000 lives first in Punjab, then in Jammu and Kashmir over the last two decades.

In remarks made a day before the terrorists gunned down nine people in Poonch and killed Jammu and Kashmir Law Minister Mushtaq Ahmad Lone in Kupwara, Sinha



Atal Bihari Vajpayee with Afghan President Hamid Karzai in New York on Wednesday.

said: "India has been a victim of clandestine warfare of state-sponsored cross-border terrorism carried out in the name of religion."

With an underlying message for the US, Sinha told his audience at Brookings Institute, Washington: "What the terrorists seek to destroy are the val-

ues and principles that democracies cherish. India and the United States therefore have a vital stake in defeating the forces of terror."

Musharraf, who is expected to harp on Pakistan's Kashmir position in the United Nations as he did last year, concentrated his attack on India's "stockpiling of conventional weapons". India is now importing hi-tech weapons worth US \$ 4.5 billion annually.

He claimed that while Pakistan's defence budget remained constant, India's has gone up by 50 per cent in the last three years. India will soon be the biggest arms purchasers in the world, he said and indicated that he will express concerns on this issue during his coming meeting with President Bush.

Musharraf's new focus comes close on the heels of India and the US agreeing to revive and strengthen co-operation in hi-tech areas, space technology and nuclear technology. Sinha and Secretary of State Colin Powell reached an agreement on this on Monday as they finalised the agenda for the Bush-Vajpayee meeting on Thursday.

Musharraf rakes up Gujarat killings

By Amit Baruah

NEW YORK, SEPT. 12. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, today targeted "Hindu fanaticism" at the United Nations General Assembly and called on the international community to hold accountable those responsible for the murder of 2,000 Muslims in Gujarat.

Leaving no window of an opportunity for reconciliation between India and Pakistan, Gen. Musharraf used the General Assembly to put forward most of his old arguments against New Delhi, but significantly added Gujarat to his long list. "Last February, an estimated 2,000 innocent Muslims were massacred in Gujarat with the complicity of BJP State leaders... The international community must act to oppose extremism with the same determination it displayed in combating terrorism, religious bigotry, ethnic cleansing and fascist tendencies elsewhere in the world," he said.

Empty noises: India

In an immediate response, the Indian Foreign Office spokesperson, Nirupama Rao, said that this attempt to "defame In-



The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, addressing the 57th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Thursday. — AFP

dia will misfire on Pakistan". She said that a country which had abandoned democracy was making "empty noises" about freedom and self-determination. Pakistan, she said, was conjuring up external threats to "wish away the rot that engulfs the Pakistani polity".

Claiming that Islamabad was "determined" not to allow anyone to use its soil for terrorist

acts inside or outside Pakistan, Gen. Musharraf said that misusing the rationale of the war against terrorism, India had sought to delegitimise the Kashmiri "freedom struggle", tarnish Pakistan with the brush of terrorism and "drive a wedge between it and its coalition partners".

India's "threatening posture" on the border would not frighten Pakistan into "compromising" its principled position on Kashmir. Stating that the "conflict" in Kashmir was being waged by the Kashmiris, the General alleged that India's "planned elections" in Kashmir would once again be rigged.

"Such elections, under Indian occupation, will not help peace; they may set it back. The people of Jammu and Kashmir must be allowed to determine their own future in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the U.N. Security Council," he maintained, restating Pakistan's traditional position.

According to him, peace in South Asia was hostage to one accident, one act of terrorism, one strategic miscalculation by India. "In this dangerous situation, crisis management should

not be allowed to become a substitute for conflict resolution". Almost as an afterthought, Gen. Musharraf called for the mutual withdrawal of the forward deployed forces by India and Pakistan, observance of a ceasefire along the Line of Control and "cessation of India's state terrorism against the Kashmiri people". "Simultaneously, a dialogue must be resumed between India and Pakistan. The structure for such a dialogue was agreed between Prime Minister Vajpayee and myself at Agra. The Kashmiris should be fully associated with the dialogue on Kashmir and should be allowed to freely travel to Pakistan and Azad Kashmir," he said.

"To ensure sustainable peace and stability in South Asia, a Kashmir solution should be accompanied by agreed measures for nuclear restraint and a conventional arms balance between India and Pakistan. India's ongoing massive military build-up reflects its desire for domination over South Asia and the Indian Ocean. In the interest of regional and global stability, this must be discouraged," he said.

10-11
Pak. wary of
Jethmalani
Committee 9/9

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 8. The Pakistan Government has been wary of the Jethmalani Committee ever since it came into the picture after the announcement of the elections in Jammu and Kashmir Assembly.

The Pakistan Foreign Office had declined to comment on the Kashmir Committee on the plea that its status was ambiguous, despite the fact that the former Law Minister, Ram Jethmalani, invoked the name of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani. He went to the extent of claiming that the Committee had the 'blessings' of both of them.

So far, a few days, Pakistan was closely monitoring all developments regarding the Jethmalani Committee. But after the Vajpayee Government chose to either reject or ignore all its recommendations, the element of suspense or ambiguity about the panel was lost.

This is what explains the cautious reaction of the former Minister of PoK, Sardar Qayyum. He described the talks between the Hurriyat leaders and Jethmalani Committee as a positive development and said, "it is very good to see them talking. But everything depends on the outcome".

He said the talks between the Hurriyat and the Committee were being held at a crucial juncture and something had to emerge before the Assembly elections in J&K.

India is open to LoC as international border

By Mohua Chatterjee
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

9/20 p.m.

New Delhi: A fresh move to turn the Line of Control (LoC) into the international border has been initiated to end the Indo-Pak conflict. Official sources say that the Vajpayee government has softened its earlier stand and is agreeable to accepting the LoC as the international border provided certain conditions are met with by Pakistan.

The conditions are that Pakistan will not claim or demand any more land in Kashmir after the agreement, and that it will stop the proxy war and terrorism in India.

Gen Pervez Musharraf, however, is still not ready to accept this proposal, the sources add. Nevertheless, the US is putting pressure on him to mention the proposal in his forthcoming UN speech next week. It is also believed that Pakistan is unlikely to accept the proposal without demanding its pound of flesh from the deal, which could come in the form of sops for Kashmir.

8/9 TG

The US and the UK have been putting pressure on both India and Pakistan to resolve the stand-off as soon as possible. They feel the resolution should be charted out on the basis of the key border premise. They are keen that bilateral talks between Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Gen Musharraf begin on the issue during the visit of the two heads of state to the US next week. But India would like to hold talks with Pakistan only after the J&K have been peacefully concluded.

A step-by-step strategy has been chalked out in case the matter makes headway.

Step 1: High commissioner Harsh Bhasin will be sent back to Islamabad.

Step 2: If the J&K polls pass off peacefully, non-official-level bilateral talks will begin.

Step 3: The armies of both countries will withdraw from the border simultaneously.

Step 4: A bilateral decision to turn the LoC into the international border.

The proposal has been discussed by

US Secretary of State Colin Powell, defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld and British foreign secretary Jack Straw with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani and defence minister George Fernandes during their respective visits to New Delhi this year.

The cabinet committee on security (CCS) has also discussed the proposal at length and most of the CCS members have endorsed it as "realistic". J&K chief minister Farooq Abdullah, a long-time advocate of this, has expressed his full support to the PM and Mr Advani.

The Vajpayee government has told Mr Powell and Mr Straw that India can accept this proposal provided Pakistan accepts it and is willing to fulfil India's demands of giving up any further claims to Kashmir and putting an end to the proxy war against India. Once the agreement is signed, the border will be properly demarcated and delineated.

India's softened stand would mean that it gives up its claim on Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

'Flexible' Pervez wants talks

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, Sept 5. — General Pervez Musharraf has said the Kashmir problem could be solved only if India and Pakistan displayed "pragmatism" and "flexibility", as the USA snubbed Islamabad on its statement on the "futility" of J&K polls by terming them as "an expression of the will of the Kashmiris".

In an interview to BBC's *Question Time Pakistan* programme, Gen. Musharraf said he was ready to be flexible with India to resolve the Kashmir issue. "I think if there is pragmatism and flexibility, there are solutions which can be acceptable to both."

How flexible could he be on this issue? Gen. Musharraf said: "I can't really measure..., but all I can say one needs to be flexible, in discussions." Details of the interview, to be telecast tomorrow, were circulated by the BBC here today.

Refusing to outline any specific solution, Gen. Musharraf said he had proposed a four-pronged approach to resolve the Kashmir issue at the Agra Summit last year and the approach still remained relevant. "We are not getting involved into a discussion of solutions. What our stand is... let us first start talking," he said.

The first step of the four-pronged approach, Gen. Musharraf said, is resumption talks by accepting Kashmir as the "central issue". "The two countries should eliminate the solutions unacceptable to both and concentrate on proposals that are acceptable... these are the steps we need to take when we start discussing the solution-issues right away."

Mr Richard Armitage said in Washington yesterday that the "the USA feels free and fair elections in Kashmir would be an expression of the will of people and may help a movement forward. It has to be seen whether it gets broader participation".

HD-12
7/9

'No shift in Pak.'s Kashmir policy'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 6. On the eve of the visit of the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, to the United States to take part in a function to commemorate the September 11 terror strikes on American cities, the Minister in-charge of Pak. Occupied Kashmir (PoK), Nisar A. Memon, has asserted that there was no shift in Pakistan's Kashmir policy.

The categorical tone of the Minister, while presiding over a meeting of elected members of the PoK Council here, assumes significance in the wake of debate within Pakistan on the subject after a newspaper asserted that during his visit to New York, Gen. Musharraf would announce a paradigm shift in the Kashmir policy. After addressing the United Nations General Assembly on September 12, Gen. Musharraf is scheduled to hold talks with the U.S. President, George W. Bush.

Mr. Memon was assigned last week additional charge of the portfolio of Kashmir affairs after his predecessor, Abbas Sarfaraz Khan, quit office to contest the October general elections.

Though the Pakistan Foreign Office has dismissed the newspaper report as 'totally baseless', Pakistan-based Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front

(JKLF) has warned the Musharraf Government of 'dire consequences' if it were to agree for conversion of Line of Control (LoC) as a permanent border.

Mr. Memon told the newly-elected members of the PoK Council that not only Pakistan's stand on the Kashmir issue remained unchanged but also its 'diplomatic position' on the Kashmir issue has improved due to which 'India is feeling depressed'. He has asserted that international pressure on India has increased for resolution of the Kashmir issue.

The Minister welcomed the statement by the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, to a group of visiting Pakistani journalists that Kashmir was on international agenda the way it has never been before and that there was a lot of concern in the international community to resolve the issue.

The meeting also offered prayers for those killed in the 'freedom struggle' in the Kashmir and those who died due to Indian shelling in PoK. The Minister was informed that the PoK Council, which is headed by the chief executive of Pakistan, came into being in 1975 under the PoK Interim Constitution Act, 1974. The Council works as a 'bridge' between the Government of Pakistan and the PoK Government.

Joint efforts by U.S., China to reduce Indo-Pak. tensions

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, AUG. 27. The United States has co-opted China for close consultations on ways to reduce the current wave of India-Pakistan tensions. This was signalled by the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, following his talks with the Chinese leaders in Beijing on Monday.

Mr. Armitage reached Tokyo today on the final leg of his Asian tour, and his extensive discussions there, too, are understood to have covered the South Asian scene, although the actual substance of this aspect of the U.S.-Japan dialogue was not immediately clear.

Addressing the international media after his talks in Beijing, Mr. Armitage said the Indo-Pak. crisis was discussed by him in great detail with both the Chinese Vice-President, Hu Jintao, and the Vice-Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing.

Summing up his exchanges,

he said: "I do not think there is any difference of opinion on the absolute need to contain the tensions and to try to bring about a better situation".

Mr. Armitage portrayed the Sino-American engagement on the India-Pakistan equation as a dynamic aspect of a growing international discourse and of backstage diplomacy on steps to avert a dangerous escalation of tensions in South Asia.

"For our part, he said, "we are going to continue to consult closely with the Chinese as we move forward and continue our involvement surrounding the tensions in South Asia".

He said he had thanked his Chinese interlocutors for "the strenuous efforts of President Jiang Zemin, at Almaty, a couple of months ago, to try to lower the temperatures (and to do so) along with the efforts of President (Vladimir) Putin" of Russia.

He also stressed on the need to continue the joint efforts to

"contain the difficulties and lower the tensions" to "promote peace and stability in that very important (South Asian) region".

Pak. collecting 'evidence' of attack

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 27. Pakistan today claimed that it was in the process of "getting evidence" about the alleged attack by Indian forces on a Pakistani military post in Pak-Occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The Press Secretary to the Pakistan President, Rashid Qureshi, told *The Hindu* that "we have evidence about the attack. We are in the process of putting it together. It might take 10 to 15 days."

'No bilateral meeting with Pakistan as of now'

90-3
Pak
110-11

28/8

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, AUG. 27. India has ruled out, "as of now", any bilateral meeting between the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York next month.

This view, according to sources, is based on the fact that Pakistani backing for terrorist groups operating in Kashmir continues and all of Gen. Musharraf's moves are "tactical" in nature.

Conceding that there had been a decline in the levels of infiltration across the Line of Control, the sources made it clear that India was not about to make an effort to resume the dialogue with Pakistan. They were also not in agreement with the statement made by the United States Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, that "no one, whether here in Pakistan or in India, feels that the Government of Pakistan is solely and completely responsible for activities across the border".

Thanking Gen. Musharraf "again" for the "splendid job" his forces were doing to tackle the Al-Qaeda elements in Pakistan's tribal areas, Mr. Armitage said in Islamabad on August 24: "On the question of infiltration, I can say that nothing has changed from the assurances I was given this past June when I (was) here. There is some obvious infiltration across the Line of Control, but our friends here in Pakistan assured me that this was not something sponsored by the Government of Pakistan."

This, the sources said, was not the view of the Government of India, which believes that the infiltrators continue to enjoy the support of the Pakistani establishment. If the General cannot control

the terrorist groups, then he should begin cooperating with India in dealing with such elements.

They felt that the August 14 speech by the President was a clear effort to undermine the Jammu and Kashmir elections.

It was, the sources claimed, a signal to the terrorist organisations that there was no change in Pakistan's traditional position on Kashmir.

According to the sources, the Pakistan-based United Jihad Council, a conglomerate of terrorist outfits, has been issuing threats to the All-Party Hurriyat Conference to intensify its anti-election campaign. Reports suggest that there is an ongoing anti-polls poster campaign in the State.

Also, there are suggestions that there is a change in the pattern of infiltration — from the Kashmir Valley it is moving to the Jammu and Poonch areas. There has also been an intensification of political killings in Kashmir. While 42 political activists had been murdered till date this year, the figure from January 1 to August 19 last year stood at 29. It was evident that political cadres had become the target of attack in the run-up to the coming elections in Jammu and Kashmir, the sources said.

While India is unlikely to involve the U.N. in any way, it was "clear" that Pakistan was not conforming to the U.N. Resolution 1373 under which countries could not provide safe haven to terrorist elements. India had made public statements to this effect which needed to be noted by the international community.

New Delhi, the sources said, also understood the "strategic compulsions" of the U.S. vis-a-vis Pakistan given the fact that Al-Qaeda elements have taken refuge in Pakistan. Top U.S. military officials have referred to the presence of the Al-Qaeda in Pakistan.

TOWARDS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING

INDIA, PAKISTAN AND the U.S. administration appear to be moving towards a common understanding of the elements that constitute the phenomenon of cross-border terrorism in the current context. The outlines of this common understanding were brought out (albeit in a semantically negative form) by the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, who said while in Islamabad that no one, either there or in India, "thinks that the Pakistan Government is solely responsible for the infiltration". The Minister for External Affairs, Yashwant Sinha, had implied as much in the remarks he made in Kathmandu to the effect that the Pakistan Government should acknowledge the limits of its ability to prevent the exfiltration of terrorists from its side of the LoC. Prior to that, Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf, too had said on record that while cross-border movement might still be taking place this was without the support, encouragement or permission of his Government. All said, New Delhi now appears to have taken on board the perspective that terrorism emanating from the Pakistan side of the LoC is not solely a state-sponsored affair. While it is absolutely necessary that Pakistan, or any other state for that matter, be made to end official sponsorship of terrorism, it is also important to factor in the recognition that terrorism as a phenomenon has a multi-faceted nature and diverse origins.

India's current readiness to look at terrorism in its broader aspects, and not solely as a state-sponsored affair, opens the avenue for the deployment of more creative mechanisms to deal with the phenomenon. While Pakistan has tended to regard Mr. Sinha's proposal for joint patrolling of the LoC as premature, it was noteworthy that Pakistan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Inam-ul-Haq did not reject it outright and instead indicated a preparedness to consider it if certain conditions were met. From Mr. Haq's presentation, it was clear

that Pakistan has not abandoned its position that a reduction of tension and the commencement of a dialogue must necessarily form the next stage in the interaction between the two countries. It is also highly probable that even in the course of this particular exchange of views both countries were trying to outmanoeuvre each other and that they will continue to do so. Therefore, the hope that they will not miss out on opportunities to arrive at a common understanding and devise a common approach must remain tentative for the moment.

Even so, the current preparedness to take a more positive approach towards Pakistan makes for a welcome contrast to an attitude more in evidence till recently wherein the main policy goal appeared to be that of establishing Islamabad's guilt for crimes committed rather than that of finding solutions to problems. This shift in emphasis on the nuances has not occurred without a sense of dissonance since a tendency within the Indian foreign policy establishment has hinted at its disappointment that Mr. Armitage would not convey a stronger message to Islamabad. However, a more realistic assessment would be that the U.S. administration can, or is willing, to pressure Islamabad only to a limited extent especially in a context where Washington requires Pakistan's assistance in the fight against the remnants of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. The approach taken thus far of relying on Washington to press India's demands on and derive promises from Pakistan has clearly run its course. A revival of the bilateral route to resolving the outstanding disputes between India and Pakistan can, realistically speaking, occur only after the elections to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly have been got over with. However, the revival of the bilateral dialogue is not only intrinsically necessary but it will also ensure that initiatives for peace originate from within the subcontinent.

27 AUG 2002

Pak springs a surprise across LoC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK
AND AGENCIES

New Delhi: Even as defence minister George Fernandes termed as baseless reports from Islamabad that Indian soldiers had been killed during an attack on a Pakistani post across the Line of Control, army chief Gen S. Padamabhan flew to Srinagar on Friday for an on-the-spot assessment of the situation in the border areas of the Kashmir Valley.

Earlier in the day, Pakistan had accused India of sending in troops and planes to attack a mountain outpost in Gultari, opposite the Drass sector in J&K, in a "highly irresponsible and escalatory act".

According to army intelligence reports, the Gultari area is the region where about 500 Al Qaida operatives, who escaped from Afghanistan, are amassed. These Al Qaida operatives, the reports say, are in close touch with the 1,500-2,000 Lashkar, Jaish and Hizb militants stationed at 'launch pads' along the LoC.

Pakistani military spokesperson Maj-Gen Rashid Qureshi told a press briefing in Islamabad, to which Indian journalists were not invited, that their troops had killed "dozens of Indian soldiers who had launched an unprovoked attack". He claimed that India had even used aircraft to bomb Pakistani posts.

A Pakistani army statement alleged that India sent warplanes to bomb the military post after its attacking forces were trapped in the area. It claimed that despite "desperate efforts", Indian forces had been pinned down and rendered unable to move or extricate casualties.

Indian officials rubbished these claims. "The Pakistani allegation that Indian armed forces launched an attack on their posts, employing ar-

tillery and air power, is false and baseless," said defence secretary Subir Dutta. "It is reiterated that Indian forces have neither crossed the LoC nor attacked any place whatsoever," he said.

While an army spokesperson denied any casualties on the Indian side, an external affairs ministry statement said the story had evidently been spread at a time when US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage was visiting India to detract attention from "the absence of translation" of Gen Pervez Musharraf's commitment to end cross-border terrorism permanently. Be that as it may, the situation along the 740-km-long LoC has certainly become "hot" once again, with fiery exchanges of artillery and mortar fire between the Indian and Pakistani forces in several sectors, including Drass. The defence minister will be visiting the forward areas in J&K on Saturday to review the situation.

Defence sources said the army had once again stepped up the application of "military pressure" along the border to dissuade the Pakistani army from launching any "misadventure" like the one it had tried in the Gurez-Machal sector in the last week of July. Although army authorities continue to remain very tight-lipped about this incident, sources said a couple of platoons of Pakistani special forces had "intruded" into Indian territory and "occupied a hill feature" overlooking the Neelam Valley around July 25-26. The 11 Sikh Light Infantry which is deployed in the area was unable to detect the "foreign presence" for two to three days.

"By then, the Pakistani infiltrators had constructed bunkers on the hill feature. It took targeted artillery barrages, coupled with air power, over 48 hours finally to dislodge them," said a source.

24 AUG 2002

Islamabad claim a malicious propaganda: New Delhi

By Sandeep Dikshit

19
24/8

NEW DELHI, AUG. 23. India today dismissed as "malicious" Pakistani claims that its armed forces had attacked a Pakistani post across the Line of Control on Thursday employing artillery and air power.

The Ministries of External Affairs and Defence pointed out that such claims being made during a top U.S. official's ongoing visit are intended to divert attention from Pakistan's continuing abetment of cross-border terrorism into Jammu and Kashmir. In a terse statement, the Defence Ministry said, "the Pakistani allegations are apparently an effort at spreading disinformation and malicious propaganda to malign India internationally".

It reiterated the Foreign Office's claims that the Indian armed forces have neither crossed the LoC or any border anywhere. Sources said Pakistan had initiated artillery fire and the Indian forces had retaliated. No reports of casualties had been received so far, they claimed.

Meanwhile, Defence Ministry sources said that while infiltration had indeed gone down last month, latest data from frontline formations had indicated a "sharp" increase in the ingress of terrorists during the current month. The army had detected 10 appreciable cases of infiltration of which eight took place in northern Kashmir. Terming this as a "major reversal of trend", sources expected the trend to increase in view of the Assembly elections in the State.

The sources said another noteworthy trend was that most of the terrorists apprehended or killed in the past couple of months owed allegiance to pro-Pak. outfits like the Lashkar-e-Taiba, while confusion in the ranks of the Hizb-ul-Mujahiddin could have led to their cadres becoming inactive.

Although infiltration had increased in the last fortnight, analysts said the trend should be seen over a wider time frame. If the trend continued for another month, only then would it reflect Pakistan's continued support to Jehadi outfits and its desire to disrupt the elections.

24 AUG 2002

Advani Accuses Pak Of Sabotaging J&K Elections

India considers itself 'at war' with Pakistan

London
22 AUGUST

INDIA considers itself "at war" with Pakistan over Kashmir, though there is no formal declaration of hostilities, deputy prime minister L.K. Advani said here. "When people ask me 'will there be a war between India and Pakistan?' they are obviously referring to a declared war like that which happened in 1971 or 1965. But for India, we are at war," he told UK's Channel Four television.

He said there was no point in resuming talks with Pakistan until cross-border terrorism was put to an end. Advani, who is on a three-day visit to the UK, said cross-border terrorism "is still considerable, although there has been some reduction in infiltration because of international pressure on Pakistan.

"However, infiltration is only one aspect of cross-border terrorism. There are other components of cross-border terrorism — training of terrorists, financing them, providing arms to them, letting terrorist camps to continue to function on Pakistani soil." Advani also observed that Pakistan has been under "great pressure," both internationally and internally.

"Having promoted fundamentalism to harass India, it is facing harassment to some extent," he said. Advani accused Pakistan of sabotaging the forthcoming elections in Jammu and Kashmir by creating an atmosphere of fear in the state but affirmed that the election in the state would be held on schedule and would be fully fair and free. Advani met a delegation of leaders of the Gujarat Muslim community in the UK at the high commissioner's residence where a reception was held on Wednesday night and heard their concerns about the safety and well-being of their kith and kin in Gujarat.

The deputy prime minister assured them that the Gujarat situation was now fully under control and rehabilitation near complete. The delegation said they felt relieved to learn that the communal disturbance remained localised in Gujarat. The council of Indian Muslims had boycotted the reception accusing Mr Advani of "protecting" the Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi.

— PTI

23 AUG 2002

Pak. not averse to joint patrolling

1107
20/8
By Amit Baruah *Am Bar*

KATHMANDU, AUG. 22. While favouring neutral monitoring of the Line of Control, Pakistan is not averse to considering the Indian proposal of joint patrolling of the LoC if tensions come down and confidence is built between the two countries.

Addressing a largely Indian press corps, the Pakistani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Inam-ul-Haq, went out of his way to call for the resumption of talks, saying that the two countries must build up an atmosphere of trust and confidence.

Pakistan, which had rejected the idea of joint patrolling when put forward by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, at Almaty on June 5, saw more merit in the proposal today even as Mr. Haq said there was some confusion about the Indian suggestion.

"The Indian Prime Minister did propose that. The same day, we saw a statement from Mr. (George) Fernandes saying that there was no way a joint patrolling mechanism could be established... In a situation where more than a million men are staring at each other across the LoC, it is rather difficult to imagine a situation where they will have sufficient confidence in each other to start joint patrolling," he said.

"And, we don't really see why the LoC should not be monitored by a neutral mechanism because there has to be a climate of confidence between the two countries, a situation of normalcy before such proposals can be seriously addressed... Let us create a climate where the two countries are talking to each other. Such proposals can be examined once tensions go down

and confidence is built in both countries..." Mr. Haq said. The measured, reasonable Mr. Haq answered all questions from the Indian press with due deliberation. At the back of his mind, he was probably aware that the United States Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, will arrive in New Delhi tomorrow and then go to Islamabad.

See also Page 11

SAARC is different: Sinha

By Amit Baruah

KATHMANDU, AUG. 22. The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, today said that he would not speak on India-Pakistan relations on Nepalese soil and repeatedly stressed that ties between New Delhi and Islamabad should not hamper the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) process.

Disclosing that an Indian proposal to have annual SAARC summits in January had been agreed upon, Mr. Sinha said that for the next summit in Islamabad, New Delhi had proposed that the meeting be held anytime between January 5 and 20. The exact dates would be worked

out through diplomatic channels. Instead of having a debate on dates every year, the SAARC Council of Ministers had agreed to recommend to the next summit that the Heads of State/Government meet, say, from the second Monday or second Saturday of January every year.

Asked if the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, would travel to Pakistan if cross-border terrorism continued, Mr. Sinha said that one should be able to distinguish between SAARC and India-Pakistan issues. "You keep India-Pakistan out of it," he said at the end of the two-day meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers.

23 AUG 2002

Let's not cloud SAARC process; Sinha

By Amit Baruah

KATHMANDU, AUG. 22. The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha — here to attend the two-day meeting of the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Council of Ministers — today declined to comment on India-Pakistan issues, saying that it had been India's endeavour not to allow bilateral issues to thwart or cloud the SAARC process.

When repeatedly plied with questions on Indo-Pak. issues, he pleaded with the press corps to change their mindset and not allow this matter to cloud the SAARC process. And on why he had not met his Pakistani counterpart, Mr. Sinha said bilateral meetings took place on the margins and it was not necessary that all the Foreign Ministers should meet on the sidelines.

Dispelling the impression

that India was out to obstruct the SAARC process, Mr. Sinha said New Delhi was fully committed to the regional organisation and wanted it to become a "powerful instrument" of cooperation. Both the meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers as well as the Foreign Secretary-level discussions had taken place in a cordial atmosphere and no contentious issues were raised.

India's proposal that SAARC organise a Ministerial meeting on terrorism had been agreed upon. A Pakistani proposal to have a meeting of senior officials along with legal advisers to draft an additional protocol to the 1987 SAARC Convention on Terrorism had also been agreed upon. And the Ministerial meeting would discuss the draft of the additional protocol.

Mr. Sinha said that the issue of terrorism was dealt with

comprehensively by the SAARC Council of Ministers. Asked about the delay in the implementation of the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement and agreeing upon the draft text of the South Asian Free Trade Agreement, he said India had called for a speedy agreement on both the issues. These were the bedrock of cooperation as far as the SAARC nations were concerned. Mr. Sinha, who begins a bilateral visit to Nepal from tomorrow, will call on King Gyanendra, the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and hold talks with the Foreign Secretary. A banquet will be held in his honour by the Prime Minister tomorrow.

The Minister, who leaves for Dhaka on Saturday, has also been meeting with a cross-section of political leaders in Nepal. Separately, the SAARC Council of Minister received a

Nepalese suggestion to hold a meeting of senior officials immediately after a summit meeting in order to draw up an action plan on the decisions taken at the summit. A statement from Nepal, which is the current chair of SAARC, said this evening: "A concept of troika/core group at the senior officials level from the past, present and future SAARC chairs has also been put forward to ensure timely implementation and follow-up on the decision(s). Nepal has been asked to further explore the concept of troika/core group and present it to the next Council of Ministers. The proposal has also underlined the need for augmenting the institutional capacity of the SAARC Secretariat to enable it to respond adequately to the emerging challenges as regional cooperation activities gather pace."

23 AUG 2002

INAM-UL-HAQ HOPEFUL OF DIALOGUE SOON

Signs of forward movement in India-Pakistan ties

By Amit Baruah

KATHMANDU, AUG. 21. There were signs of forward movement in India-Pakistan relations as the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, and the Pakistani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Inam-ul-Haq, adopted a conciliatory approach and readily shook hands for the cameras on the sidelines of the SAARC Council of Ministers today.

Mr. Sinha said later that perhaps India and Pakistan could do "something together" if Islamabad conceded that infiltration across the Line of Control (LoC) was not in its hands. If Pakistan "came clean" on the issue, then there were possibilities such as joint patrolling of the LoC that opened up.

Mr. Haq told reporters separately that Pakistan was examining the situation following the Indian decision to lift the ban on overflights by India and would "come up with a decision". Islamabad, he said, was "always ready" for an exchange of High Commissioners as well.

"We have always been meeting," Mr. Sinha said in response to questions whether the handshake would result in a bilateral meeting with Mr. Haq. The External Affairs Minister said it was not a "secret" that he had exchanged pleasantries with the Pakistani Minister. "Civility is a sign of culture and there is no reason to depart from it..."

For his part, Mr. Haq was hopeful that a bilateral dialogue with India could begin soon though he was not willing to accept any Indian pre-conditions. However, he did say no talks were expected in Kathmandu and pointed to Mr. Sinha's statement on the issue on Tues-



The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, with the Pakistani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Inam-ul-Haq, after the opening ceremony of the SAARC Ministerial meeting, in Kathmandu on Wednesday. — AFP

day. "...We believe in sovereign equality and that all dialogue, discussions should be held without pre-conditions. Secondly, I would like to reiterate that Pakistan has, at the highest level, at the level of President Musharraf, stated that there is no movement across the LoC..."

He said what the Pakistan President had told a Western wireservice about some persons still crossing the LoC was a statement of fact. "We have always said there is no way to absolutely seal the border. Individuals, probably of divided families, even some rogue elements, some renegades might be crossing the LoC. The Pakistan Government's position is very clear — it is not sponsoring, encouraging or allowing any movement across the LoC." "That pledge has been given by President Musharraf and that

pledge has been kept. However, individual movements, as he stated in his interview to AFP, cannot be prevented because of the terrain itself... and, if some people by some means escape or try to get over the LoC, Indian forces are also in a position to interdict them."

To a question on the presence of Al-Qaeda elements in Pakistan and the internal impact on the country, he said Islamabad was a "frontline member" of the international coalition against terrorism. "(This) has had some adverse impact on Pakistan as well because terrorist organisations always try to fight back and destabilise the countries which are fighting against terrorism." "You know some of the incidents that have happened recently in Pakistan, but we are determined to eradicate all ter-

rorists from Pakistan as has been pledged by the President of Pakistan."

About the terrorist mastermind, Osama bin Laden's presence in Pakistan, Mr. Haq said nobody knew whether he was dead or alive. "I would not like to speculate on his whereabouts."

Asked about the list of 20 terrorists that India had given to Pakistan seeking extradition, Mr. Haq claimed this was a "dormant" issue. "We have stated in the first place that we are not aware of the presence of many of the people who are there because the list starts in the early 1980s and I am sure that most of the people ... listed are not in Pakistan. Secondly, we do not have sufficient information. Thirdly, there is no extradition treaty between India and Pakistan. Fourthly, no evidence or indictment has been provided to Pakistan about those people who have been asked to be extradited."

He admitted that there was a "SAARC treaty" (convention). "It requires certain pre-requisites to be fulfilled before the extradition can take place ... there have been no indictments in Indian courts which have been given to us regarding the crimes they are supposed to have been committing..." Mr. Haq, who was asked several questions by Indian reporters, left open the door for a dialogue while hinting that Pakistan could take a step in the direction of restoring transport links with India.

Interestingly, he did not take the opportunity to take potshots at India, but instead addressed all questions in a businesslike manner.

22 AUG 2002

Musharraf admits to infiltration

Nilova Roy Chaudhury in New Delhi

Aug. 20. — General Pervez Musharraf has said in Islamabad that “rogue Islamic militants” may still be infiltrating into Jammu and Kashmir. The statement vindicates India’s stand that cross-border infiltration is continuing and indicates that he is under increasing international pressure, officials said.

“The possibility is there ... it’s like the Afghan border, much worse,” Gen. Musharraf said in an interview yesterday. “Militants going across (a possibility)? Yes, sympathisers. There is a possibility of small groups crossing over ... When 700,000 Indian troops can’t block the borders, how do they expect us to block our borders?”

The Pakistan President, however, said there had been no large-scale or government-sponsored movement of militants across the border. “There’s no massive activity, no government-sponsored activity ... The possibility (of incursions by small groups) cannot be ruled out.” He expressed frustration at Delhi’s refusal to agree to talks. “We’re expecting a response... this is a step-by-step movement forward. I’m not going to take 10 steps when India doesn’t take one.” He said: “When Mr Armitage was here we spoke of a two- or three-week period during which a sign would be visible as to whether anything was happening on the LoC ... We were told the situation (on the LoC) was better. But there is still no dialogue.”

By admitting that small groups of militants may still be crossing into J&K, Gen. Musharraf has acknowledged Delhi’s position on cross-border terror, Mr Yashwant Sinha said in Kathmandu today.

Laden may be in Pakistan: Pervez, page 3

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India's hand alleged in church attacks

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 18. The Pakistan Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights, Khalid Ranjha, has surprised diplomatic and political observers here by his reported observations about 'the possibility of India's hand' behind the recent terrorist attacks on Christian schools and churches in the country.

Dr. Ranjha has been reported as saying while speaking to a panel of journalists of the Pakistan official news agency, Associated Press of Pakistan, that India was taking advantage of the situation in Pakistan and its agencies were 'active' to tarnish Pakistan's image.

The finger pointing at New Delhi by the Minister has baffled observers as neither the Interior Minister, Moinuddin Haider, nor the police authorities had in any of the places where the churches were targeted talked about the "Indian hand".

In fact, in his speech on the occasion of Independence Day on August 14, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, had claimed that the security personnel had either apprehended or killed all those who were involved in the attacks on churches.

The Law Minister has been quoted as saying that India wanted to divert the attention of the world community from its "persecution of minorities". For that purpose, Indian agencies were targeting minorities' places of worship, hospitals and schools in Pakistan.

India, he said, wanted to "paint" Pakis-

tan as a terrorist state because it was "perturbed" over its "important" role in the global coalition against terrorism.

He told the panel that Pakistan had become a "victim of terrorism" because it was extending moral, political and diplomatic support to the "just cause" of the Kashmiri people.

The Law Minister urged the Western powers to play their role in "redressing the causes of international injustices".

The Government, he said, was taking concrete steps to prevent terrorism in all its forms as it believed that terrorism was not an acceptable mode of protest.

He said that the 'religious circles' in Pakistan had disowned the terrorist attacks against Christians and the civil society also had strongly condemned them.

Clergy opposes reform plan

Meanwhile, the efforts of the Government to regulate the functioning of madrasas as part of the strategy to tackle religious and sectarian fundamentalism has had no success thanks to stiff resistance from religious parties and groups. A report in the *Daily Times* from Karachi said that only 20 out of the 4,000 seminaries had responded to the questionnaire sent to them by the Federal Ministry of Education.

While the report estimated the number of seminaries at 4,000, sources said the figure varied from 10,000 to 25,000. The questionnaire had sought details like student

enrolment from within and outside the country, the curriculum followed and the sources of their funding.

In the last week of July, yielding to pressure from the right-wingers, the Government had agreed to constitute a committee to review the provisions of a new legislation to regulate the functioning of religious schools. The proposed legislation itself came after much delay.

In his January 12 address, Gen. Musharraf had promised to introduce a legislation to regulate the mushrooming growth of madrasas, some of which were considered to be 'jihad' factories.

It was only in the third week of June that the Government proposed a draft ordinance and in the wake of stiff resistance from the right-wingers has not so far gone ahead with its promulgation.

The International Crisis Group (ICG) based in Brussels, in an in-depth report on "Pakistan: madrasas, extremism and the military", released here on July 29, had lamented that the pledges of the military government to reform the seminaries had not been backed by decisive action or a credible plan. "It is doubtful whether the military government has the intent or the will to set Pakistani society on a sustainable course that would lead to political pluralism and religious tolerance. On a key test — reform of madrasas, the Pakistani religious schools that breed extremism of many hues — the military government thus far has acted weakly."

Pak. rebuts India's charges

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 16. Pakistan has rejected the charges against it by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, of adopting "double standards" in combating terrorism and said that the allegations were a cover-up for the "reign of terror" let loose by the Indian forces in Kashmir.

In a sharp reaction to Mr. Vajpayee's observations in his Independence Day address on Thursday, a spokesperson of the Pakistan Foreign Office said that Islamabad rejected the allegation that Pakistan was sponsoring terrorism. "In the face of India's own sordid record of fomenting terrorism across South Asia during the past several decades, Mr. Vajpayee's reference to 'double standards' is hypocritical," he said.

The spokesperson also took exception to Mr. Vajpayee's assertion that Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India and argued that it was contrary to international legality as reflected in the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions. "Such statements reflect India's colonial

mindset, its disregard for morality and its intention to persist with its illegal control over the Indian-occupied Kashmir through brute force. This attitude is the principal impediment in the way of a peaceful and just settlement of the Kashmir dispute", the Foreign Office statement said.

The spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's viewpoint on the coming elections in Jammu and Kashmir as a "farce" and asserted that there could be no peace unless the Kashmir problem was resolved.

Besides the "illegitimate nature" of the exercise, all such elections had been "blatantly rigged" in the past and "rejected" by the Kashmiri people, the statement alleged and questioned the credibility of an election to be conducted in the "intimidating presence" of a 7,00,000-strong "Indian occupation force with the licence to kill". Despite the enormous Indian pressure, the All Party Hurriyat Conference had refused to take part in the "fraudulent" elections, it said.

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THE HINDU

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Speeches expose Indo-Pak. rift

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, AUG. 15. The deep chasm between the stated positions of India and Pakistan on the Jammu and Kashmir issue has been exposed in the respective Independence Day speeches by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf.

If the rhetoric was somewhat under control in the past few days, the remarks on the Kashmir elections has seen a re-discovery by New Delhi of Gen. Musharraf's non-democratic credentials. Gen. Musharraf was a "dictator" in October 1999, he remained one during the Agra summit in July 2001 and continues to retain that status today.

Mr. Vajpayee described Kashmir as India's "atoot ang" or integral part (a phrase that irritates the Pakistani establishment) but he did leave open a small window of opportunity — that India could take more de-escalatory steps if Pakistan kept its word on ending cross-border infiltration.

Whether this is seen as a positive exposition by the Pakistanis, of course, is quite another matter given the vitiated atmosphere existing between the two Governments. These remarks may also well be aimed at the international community to show that India is willing to "do more" as far as de-escalatory measures are concerned.

On the other hand, there was no "window" at all for forward movement in Gen. Musharraf's speech on Wednesday — though the two leaders made the customary references about the need to fight poverty.

In all this, the United States, too, would be looking closely at the remarks by the two leaders. During his visit to New Delhi, the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, had said he would be speaking to the Pakistani side about taking every effort to "avoid disturbing these (Kashmir) elections".

As he urged India to hold free, fair and inclusive elections, Gen. Powell had said: "We welcome India's commitment to hold free and fair elections, and we believe an inclusive election,

meeting these standards, can serve as the first step towards peace and reconciliation."

However, America's "stalwart ally" in the war against terrorism, Pakistan, does not see "inclusive elections" as any kind of first step. Gen. Musharraf made it plain that Pakistan saw these polls as a "farce"; it was yet another attempt by India to legitimise its "illegal occupation" of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan does not see the Kashmir elections as part of a broader process of promoting regional stability, but strongly believes that India's election move cuts at its own long-term strategic interests as far as Kashmir is concerned.

Gen. Musharraf's statement on the elections is unhelpful and flies in the face of the U.S. formulation that these could eventually lead to the redressal of Kashmiri grievances.

It comes as a roadblock towards moving along this broad process, as there is no agreement on what the elections mean.

While India regards these elections as part of its usual democratic process, the decision to allow individuals to observe the polls and begin some kind of a dialogue with the Hurriyat is clearly aimed at an international audience.

As far as Pakistan is concerned, there is no change in the kind of language that it has traditionally used to describe the elections. Gen. Musharraf's formulations would also go to show that the larger strategic framework in which Pakistan views the Kashmir issue remains intact.

At no stage has the Pakistani establishment ever said that it has actively engaged in sabotaging the elections in Kashmir — the Pakistani view of all this has been that militancy and terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir is an indigenous movement. There is no change in this position.

The Pakistani perception of the Jammu and Kashmir elections does pose a challenge to the recent initiatives taken by the international community. It remains to be seen whether Islamabad will just stop at words, or will use its clout to actively disrupt the poll process.

India, however, must stick to making as many people as possible to participate in the coming elections — both as candidates and voters.

Musharraf rigged referendum: India

Udayan Namboodiri
New Delhi, August 14

INDIA, FOR the first time yesterday, lashed out at Pervez Musharraf for the way in which he had ensconced himself in power. The provocation had come from the Pakistani leader, who, addressing his countrymen on the occasion of Pakistan's Independence Day, accused India of getting ready to hold "farcical" elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

Strong words flew from both capitals. What General Musharraf triggered was a series of confabulations at the highest levels in South Block aimed at formulating an appropriate response. The final statement was crafted at the Prime Minister's Office after almost 11 hours.

In his address, Musharraf had talked of a "sacred trust" compelling Pakistanis to support "the struggle for self-determination by our Kashmiri brothers". He also described the Indian resolve to hold elections in J&K as "yet another effort to give a mask of legitimacy to India's illegal occupation". In reply, India said, "The sacred trust he spoke about to the people of Pakistan should really be to establish a moderate and democratic Pakistan, free from military rule and networks of fundamentalist terrorism".

"After the rigged referen-

J&K voters fear repetition of '96

Rashid Ahmad
Srinagar, August 14

WITH SEPARATIST political forces deciding to remain away from the J&K Assembly polls, to a large section of local people, the exercise would merely be a repetition of the 1996 elections, in which only traditional mainstream parties took part.

There is a general feeling that even though a Government was formed after the elections, but situation on the ground saw little change. The people's problems were hardly addressed, and the separatist movement entered a far

more menacing phase and the level of violence also increased.

A common perception is that the participation of separatist outfits in the poll process could have given it a new meaning. The observers argue that this would have assuaged the feelings of a wide section of people and could have ensured larger participation.

Most of those who support this view hold New Delhi responsible for closing doors on the All Parties Hurriyat Conference. They maintain that the haste with which the EC announced the poll sche-

dule was more a snub to the US than the initiation of a genuine democratic exercise.

US Secretary of State Collin Powell had described the elections as a step towards resolving the Kashmir problem.

"Had India accepted American line on elections, the scenario today would have definitely been different," says Tahir Mohiuddin, editor of Urdu weekly Chattan.

"We don't think that these elections have any importance, and will lead New Delhi anywhere," says Professor Abdul Gani Bhat, chairman APHC.

dum in Pakistan and constitutional and political manipulations going on before the October elections there, one would have hoped that General Musharraf would be more restrained in his pronouncements on elections in J&K. Perhaps, he is worried by the contrast between free and fair elections within the framework of India's democracy and the national elections conducted by a military regime", New

Delhi said.

To observers, this was a clear signal New Delhi had dropped its nearly three-year-long restraint on commenting on Pakistan's internal affairs. Not even in the early days of Musharraf's career as "chief executive" had India officially commented on his "manipulations" as it did today.

India also saw in Musharraf's address to Pakistanis an indication that his

regime "intends to sabotage" the J&K elections.

In his speech Musharraf practically exhorted Kashmiris to boycott their elections.

The BJP, too, officially criticised Musharraf for describing the forthcoming polls in Jammu and Kashmir as "farcical."

BJP spokesperson Sunil Shastri said Musharraf's stand that his country not be held responsible for fail-

ure of the polls was a "challenge to the civilised world which is fighting the menace of global terrorism."

He took strong exception to Musharraf describing the terrorists acts in the state as "freedom struggle", saying "we strongly object to this remark by him and totally condemn it."

Kashmir killings

Three Armymen were killed and 19 others injured as militants attacked a bus carrying security personnel in the Shopian area of Pulwama district.

Militants detonated an improvised explosive device and followed it by firing on the troops returning from cordon and search operations at Gadapur village en route their camp at Qasdoorra last night.

Two persons were injured in a landmine blast near the Line of Control in Uri sector of Baramulla district last night.

Poll panel order

The Election Commission today directed the J&K Government to replace Deputy Commissioner of Poonch Ezaz Iqbal for not effectively implementing the commission's directives for the Assembly polls. EC sources said the commission directed the State Chief Secretary to transfer Iqbal immediately.

9/15/08

J&K elections farcical: Musharraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy 11/10

ISLAMABAD, AUG.14. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, today upped the ante on Kashmir by describing the scheduled elections in Jammu and Kashmir in September/October as "farcical" and said there could never be peace in South Asia without resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

Islamabad's perspective on the J&K elections was the dominant theme of his speech at the function to mark the 55th Independence Day celebrations of Pakistan. In a reflection of the prevailing security environment in the country in the aftermath of the September 11 incidents, the function was a scaled down event as Gen. Musharraf chose to hoist the national flag inside the highly-guarded Convention Centre in the presence of a select gathering of diplomats and senior Government functionaries.

The challenge posed by the religious and sectarian fundamentalist groups from within and outside the country, as was evident in the series of terror strikes in Pakistan in the last few months, and a promise to hold "free and fair" general elections in the country in October were the other major themes in his long televised speech.

Gen. Musharraf's sharp remarks on the J&K elections is a clear rejection by Islamabad of the international community's view that the polls could prove to be the first step towards resolution of the contentious issue. He said Pakistan would not be held responsible for the failure of the polls in the valley as the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference, a conglomerate of 23 parties, has decided to boycott them.



His observations in this context have to be viewed against the subtle and not so subtle suggestions from the Anglo-American interlocutors in recent weeks on the need for Pakistan to ensure "violence free" polls in the valley.

He reiterated his threat to take the battle into the Indian territory if attacked. He said that India should stop its provocative rhetoric and war hysteria. "It is time to give peace a chance," he said.

"Pakistan supports the principle struggle of the people of Kashmir for the right of self-determination, since long promised to them by the international community. This struggle of our Kashmiri brothers is a sacred trust with us, which can never be compromised. The announcement by India to hold elections in J&K is yet another effort to give a mask for India's illegal occupation of J&K. Pakistan position on this issue is based on the U.N. Security Council resolutions. Elections cannot be a substitute to free and impartial plebiscite under the U.N. auspices," Gen. Musharraf said.

'India, Pak. need to resumé dialogue'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 14. For the first time since the heightening of Indo-Pak. tensions in December last year, eminent citizens from India and Pakistan sat on the same platform here today and made out a strong case for the Governments of both the countries to return to the path of dialogue.

The occasion was the seminar organised by *Daily Times*, a new Pakistan daily launched by the veteran journalist, Najam Sethi, on the theme of 'Peace and freedom in South Asia'. The award winning author and social activist, Arundhati Roy, was the keynote speaker.

The Editor of *Frontline*, N. Ram, and the Chief Editor of *The Indian Express*, Shekhar Gupta, were the other two Indian panelists who made a forceful presentation on the futility of war-mongering in both the countries. The former Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Sartaj Aziz, and Mr. Sethi presented the Pakistan perspective.

The common thread in the speeches was the continuing tragedy faced by the people of

India and Pakistan as the two establishments cashed in on the war hysteria to divert attention from the real issues and the tremendous gains made by the only super power, the United States, in the region since September 11.

Mr. Aziz, who traced the history of the troubled relations between India and Pakistan, felt that unless both sides recognised that dialogue was the only way forward to resolving differences, there was little scope for better ties between the nuclear power rivals. He called for immediate withdrawal of forces from the border and the resumption of dialogue with a flexible approach on the contentious issue of Kashmir.

Mr. Ram, who endorsed the views of Mr. Aziz, said that the post-1998 tensions in the sub-continent could be directly linked to the ascendance of the Hindutva right-wingers in India and nuclearisation of both the countries.

"It is ridiculous on the part of anyone to argue that nuclearisation has contributed to security in the region. The talk of limited war is sheer nonsense.

There is little doubt that the nuclear explosions have weakened Indian security and complicated bilateral relations with Pakistan".

He said if the current establishment in Pakistan was guilty of the Kargil 'misadventure', the Vajpayee Government had been irresponsible in creating a situation that had led to a war hysteria. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) had no clarity on resolution of the Kashmir issue. "The Indian Government would have to seriously pursue the question of autonomy in Jammu and Kashmir."

Mr. Sethi said the need for dialogue was never more pressing than now. While maintaining that India had alienated the people of Kashmir by its "lopsided policies", he was candid in his admission that in the 90s Pakistan exploited the situation. He termed Kargil a 'disaster' but at the same time maintained that by making an offer for unconditional talks with India, Gen. Musharraf had created a history of sorts.

"We have put a lid on cross-LoC infiltration and welcomed a mechanism for verification. But

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unfortunately the Indian Government is not willing to budge".

Mr. Shekhar Gupta said the good thing about India was that it was an "imperfect democracy" and Pakistan was an "imperfect dictatorship". In a speech laced with humour, he said that in the modern world war between countries was no longer a bilateral issue. He urged the civil society in Pakistan not to exaggerate the importance of the Hindutva forces and said institutional mechanisms in India were capable of dealing with them.

Ms. Roy said she was a critic of the state and deeply suspicious of 'nationalism' and said while the richest democracy of the world, United States, was busy promoting "capitalist fundamentalism", the largest democracy, India, was pushing "religious fundamentalism". Amid applause, she said that for the establishments in India and Pakistan Kashmir was a solution and not a problem. "It (Kashmir) is the rabbit they (India and Pakistan) pull out from the hat to distract attention from the real issues".

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India's turn to reciprocate: Ashraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 7. Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to the United States, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, has said that it was India's turn to reciprocate steps taken by Pakistan for de-escalation of tension in the region and improve relations between India and Pakistan.

In a special address at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Qazi, who till recently the Pakistan's High Commissioner in New Delhi, has said that Pakistan would not be pressured even if India continued to station its troops on the borders for the next five years.

He told the media after the function that steps taken by India to defuse the tensions were inadequate but at the same time expressed optimism that the India-Pak. dialogue would begin in the near future.

"However, it is difficult to say when these (parleys) will start," he was quoted as telling the media by the official APP new agency. "It is a perception of India that any military build-up

on the borders will put pressure on the Pak. economy," he said adding that the continuation of Indian forces on the borders even for five years would not put any pressure on Pakistan, especially in economic terms.

"India has to spend more on maintaining a military build-up on the borders compared to Pakistan," he said. Mr. Qazi was of the view that international pressure on India was mounting gradually for initiation of talks with Pakistan.

The Ambassador-designate said Pakistan favoured continuation of the process of mutual understanding initiated at the Agra summit last year.

He said Pakistan was ready for any logical dialogue with India on all problems including the core issue of Kashmir. "But there should be a de-escalation on the borders before the initiation of dialogue".

Responding to a question, he said India was trying to capitalise on the post-September 11 scenario and searching for an unjust solution to the Kashmir problem through undue pressure. "Pakistan, however, is

sticking to its principled stand on Kashmir and wants the resolution of the Kashmir problem in line with U.N. resolutions."

Nod for T.N. power project

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 7. The Central Electricity Authority has accorded techno-economic clearance to the 94 MW Valuthur combined cycle gas turbine power project in Tamil Nadu at an estimated cost of Rs. 301 crores.

This project, to be implemented by the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board, is located in Ramnad district of the State near National Highway 49. The natural gas source for the project is the ONGC station about three km. from the project site and the gas would be transported by the Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL). As the project is located in an uninhabited barren land, it would not involve any rehabilitation work.

Kashmir a flashpoint: Musharraf

By V. S. Sambandan

COLOMBO, AUG. 1. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, today charged India with "hypocrisy" vis-a-vis the Kashmir dispute. Terming the relationship between the two nuclear neighbours as "may be, at its lowest" Gen. Musharraf also pressed the case for "world powers" to "understand and facilitate" in "bringing peace to the region."

Asked about the Indian objection to internationalising the Kashmir issue, he said at a breakfast meeting with Sri Lankan editors "I think there is hypocrisy in their attitude. They juggle around with semantics of words. They do not want anyone to mediate, but they may be wanting interlocutors or facilitators. I think we are involved in this English language, which is not our mother-tongue in any case. The reality on the ground is, they are talking."

Referring to the U.S. and British involvement, Gen. Musharraf asked "why is Colin Powell going there? What is Jack Straw doing when he comes here and talks? What are all these world powers and world personalities doing? They very

much are talking of the dispute between India and Pakistan and they are talking of Kashmir. The U.S. is involved. Whether you call it mediating or interlocuting or facilitating or whatever, the Indian leaders talk to them on this issue."

Expressing his hope for a resolution of the dispute through dialogue, Gen. Musharraf said "you use the English word yourself, whichever one, the fact of the matter is that there is a behind-the-scene interaction going on. Kashmir is internationalised because the whole world is concerned that this is a flashpoint with both states being nuclear."

It was a "dangerous flashpoint because of the Kashmir dispute," he said, adding that "this realisation has come in and we hope this will lead to a resolution of the dispute."

In his opening remarks, Gen. Musharraf said the full potential of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation "is not being realised" because of the tensions between India and Pakistan.

"I would like to say, that at the moment, Pakistan and India relationship is, may be, at its lowest." Referring to the border sit-

uation, he hoped that "good sense prevails and de-escalation takes place."

However, "de-escalation is not an end in itself." Though it "may bring peace temporarily," permanent peace could be attained only by "honouring" the Security Council resolution on Kashmir and "initiating a process of dialogue. We hope that the world powers understand and facilitate this process of bringing peace to the region."

It was also the view of Pakistan — which will chair the 2003 SAARC summit — that "no one member should be allowed to scuttle a summit. If any member does not want to attend, that is bad luck, but the summit must be held without that member."

Gen. Musharraf also told the editors that "true democracy" in Pakistan would be ushered in after the October elections.

Asked if the former Pakistan Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, would be allowed to return, he said she had left the country of her own volition.

She had been sentenced in two cases, for which she would have to face the proceedings. It was for her to make a choice, he said.

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THE HINDU

Pak. takes exception to ARF communique

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

9/2/02
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ISLAMABAD, AUG 1. Islamabad today took exception to the communique by the ASEAN Region Forum on Pakistan-India tension and said the Forum should have directed its counsel to India to end "repression" in Kashmir and sit across the table with Pakistan to settle the issue.

A spokesman of the Pakistan Foreign Ministry said that it would have been appropriate for the ARF to call upon India to "end its repression in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir as well as find a just settlement of the Kashmir dispute through negotiations". The statement said the resolution of the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan would remove a "dangerous source of continuing tension and threat to peace in the region". The ARF communique at Brunei on Wednesday called on Pakistan for "an urgent end to all terrorist activities in the region as an essential step to de-escalate the situation."

"While welcoming its commitment to counter terrorism, Ministers earnestly looked to Pakistan to take urgent steps to implement it," the ARF statement said. Islamabad is also piqued over the reported Indian stand taken at the meeting that it will continue to block Pakistan from becoming a member of the forum until it became a democratic state and stopped using terrorism as "state policy". The Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal, has been quoted as saying that a consensus had to prevail among the 23 nations of the ASEAN Regional Forum to make Pakistan a member, and that India would not consent unless Pakistan met the conditions.

2 AUG 2002

PARAMILITARY FORCES BROUGHT UNDER ARMY; NAVY TO SUPERVISE COAST GUARD

India goes into war-effort mode

Statesman News Service and PTI

NEW DELHI, May 19. — In a significant step that is usually taken during war, the Centre tonight placed paramilitary forces along the International Border with Pakistan and the Line of Control under the command of the Army and the Coast Guard under the supervision of the Navy.

After a two-hour meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, Mr Jaswant Singh told reporters: "The Indian Army shall conduct immediate retaliatory fire assaults every time any such incidents are committed by Pakistan along the Line of Control and the International Border."

Soldiers of the 15 and 16 Corps, located in Jammu and Kashmir, have now been asked to immediately retaliate in strength. He said Pakistan has suffered some losses.

Asked about the possibility of a limited war against Pakistan, he didn't give a direct answer. He said he would do what was necessary. He didn't seem to favour an immediate end to the Indus Water Treaty while dismissing talks about it as "speculation".

Bringing paramilitary forces like the BSF and the CRPF under the Army's control is being seen as an indication of the Centre's decision to take cohesive defensive measures against Pakistan, if necessary. Similarly, the Coast Guard will also come under the Navy's command. Such moves are usually taken during

The defence ministry will implement the decision tomorrow. The "unified" command along the LoC and the border would help take better anti-terrorism measures, Mr Singh said. Asked if the Centre would revoke the Most Favoured Nation status to

Pakistan, Mr Singh said a decision would be taken after commerce minister Mr Murasoli Maran, currently abroad, returns. Mr Vajpayee, Mr LK Advani and Mr Singh also gave a "detailed brief" on the "latest ground realities" in Kashmir after the Jammu attack at a meeting on 7 Race Course.

Congress spokesman Mr Anand Sharma said his party, in the spirit of the recent Parliament resolution and in line with Mrs Sonia Gandhi's speech extending support to the government, would fully back the Centre on the issue of "national security and defence".

He, however, refused to elaborate further, saying "traditionally on the issue of national security, it was for the government to take its decisions in its wisdom and the Opposition doesn't reveal the details about the briefing from the government side".

Indications are that there would be "more diplomatic steps" to put pressure on Islamabad while "keeping all military options open".

The armed forces are already assessing their strengths and weaknesses. It is felt that the Indian Navy being stronger than its Pakistani counterpart could be seriously involved in case the Centre decides on a military option. Some months ago, a few ships from the eastern fleet at Vishakhapatnam sailed for an exercise.

This comprised a destroyer, some small warships, submarines and a landing ship. It is understood that blocking off Karachi port would throttle Pakistan, cutting off its oil supplies and imports of other crucial products.

No decision on military strikes was taken as the government is in two minds about the advantage of a strike.

Editorial: Terror challenge, page 4



Finger on the trigger: A BSF jawan takes position at Ghadkhal, near Jammu, on Sunday after the village came under mortar fire from Pakistani troops. — AFP

Pak exercises in ultra training hub

Statesman News Service and PTI

NEW DELHI, May 19. — The Pakistani army has been conducting exercises in the Kotli area, where Al-Qaida and Taliban men have been spotted in militant training camps. The exercises were expected once the Indian Army began its exercises, but the links between the Pakistani army and militants were unexpected.

The Kotli area, opposite the sensitive Rajouri and Naushera areas, is 15 km from the border and five terrorist training and assembly camps are located there. They are at Kotli, Fagosh, Barali, Gulpur and Sarswah and 125 to 150 terrorists can train there at a time.

Two Pakistani mountain brigades participated in the exercises, held just 10 to 15 km from the Line of Control, according to Army sources here. The camps are for training Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, Al Badr, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Hizbul Mujahideen militants, who took part in the exercises. Al-Qaida and Taliban men have been spotted in Kotli and in the Mangla Reservoir area. There are three camps at Mangla, Mirpur and Jarikas for training 75 to 80 militants. Al-Qaida and Taliban men, about 1,500 in all, have been seen in Skardu, north of Kargil and Gultari.

The manoeuvres involved the use of militants as an advance guard to sabotage communication and road links and ambush troop convoys.

Kotli is a "hot spot" and Pakistan has been shelling the area to make it easier for infiltrators to slip in. About 2,000 militants have been killed in the area, officials said. From Kotli, militants can slip into India over the mountains or between Pathankot and Jammu.

Other infiltrators are gathering in Sialkot and the Shakargarh bulge area. There are two camps at Sialkot and Rasalpur and three at Zaffarwal, Shakargarh and Narawal for over 100 terrorists. The suicide squad responsible for the Kaluchak carnage was pushed in from this area. These groups could be targeting the Pathankot-Jammu and Srinagar-Leh highways in the event of a war.

Normally, India and Pakistan do not have to tell each other if there are exercises smaller than at the division level. But Pakistan has not moved out troops that took part in exercises in April. They amount to about 5,000 troops and remain 15 to 20 km from the LoC.

Pak Opposition to Pervez: Pakistan's main Opposition parties asked President Musharraf today to resign and concentrate on his role as the head of the military as tensions with India rise, adds AP from Islamabad. "Pakistan urgently needs a government of national consensus for handling the war-like situation," senior politician Mr Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan said. He said the General should work "as full-time chief of the army staff."

Another Army camp attacked, four killed

Statesman News Service

JAMMU, May 19. — In the second major *fidayeen* attack since 14 May, militants today attacked a joint Army/CRPF camp in Udhampur district, killing three soldiers and a CRPF constable. One of the attackers was also killed as troops retaliated.

The SSP, police control room, Jammu, Mr Subhash Raina, said three *fidayeen* attacked the Army camp at Chasana in Udhampur district at 3.30 a.m. The heavily armed Pakistan-sponsored ultras stormed the camp with grenades and fired from automatic assault rifles. The militants belonged to the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, sources said.

Three soldiers and a CRPF constable were killed and seven injured. As the troops retreated, a militant succeeded in fleeing the premises taking advantage of the darkness while another was engaged in an encounter. One of the *fidayeen* was killed.

A report from Srinagar said Hizbul Mujahideen claimed responsibility for the strike, adds PTI. "The attack was carried out by our activists," a Hizbul spokesman said.

Exchange of fire: Indian and Pakistani troops traded heavy fire overnight along the Line of Control and the International Border in Jammu and Kashmir, adds PTI. A person was killed and eight wounded in the exchange of fire.

A person was killed and four injured in Pakistani shelling in the Uri sector of North Kashmir last night, police said.

They said 13 people, including two BSF men, were so far wounded in unprovoked shelling from across the border in the sector since yesterday.

Sources said Pakistani rangers targeted more than a dozen villages near the Line of Control in Uri sector forcing Indian troops to retaliate. Four people were injured, three in Pargwal village and one in Panjgarayan, when Pakistani troops shelled Indian positions in Jammu sector, sources said.

The exchange of fire and shelling was continuing in several areas in Jammu-Poonch sector, including Kerri, Mendhar, Jallas, Samba, RS Pura and Laam.

Meanwhile, four people, including two militants and a counter-insurgent, were killed in separate incidents while 11 people were injured in two explosions in Jammu and Kashmir since last night, an official spokesman said today.

A civilian, Ghulam Hussain Ganai, who was among 15 people injured in Friday's explosion outside fire service headquarters here, succumbed to injuries in a hospital taking the toll in the blast to three.

In Washington, the USA today once again asked India and Pakistan to conduct talks. "We continue our efforts to lower tensions ... and encourage them to engage in dialogue," a State Department spokesperson said, reports PTI.

Mr Aziz A Khan recalled that Pakistan did not reciprocate when India recalled Mr Nambiar, while a statement by the Foreign Office said: "...Pakistan notes with disappointment the decision ... The government has decided to recall the high commissioner."

On the home front, Mrs Sonia Gandhi said she is due to meet the Prime Minister tomorrow, the first of a likely series of meetings that Mr Vajpayee plans with Opposition leaders. The Congress today also welcomed the government decision, saying it was long "overdue".

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) will meet again tomorrow, wherein the next set of retaliatory measures are expected to be finalised. There are different perceptions within the NDA and in the Opposition on the extent to which India should ignore appeals for restraint pouring in mainly from the USA and also from Russia and other normally supportive nations.

The government has asked Mr Qazi to leave within a week. This, in fact, is an extension of the set of substantial measures in this direction that were set rolling after the 13 December attack on

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Parliament. There are currently restrictions on Mr Qazi's movements and the number of his subordinates. Six months earlier, India had asked Mr Qazi's former counterpart Mr Vijay Nambiar to return from Islamabad.

Mr Qazi is expected to leave for home in a week. "It is an unfortunate step. Obviously, (it) will not have a positive impact on the state of relations, but it falls within the sovereign right of India to take any step ... whether wise or unwise," he told *PTV* from New Delhi.

Pakistan information minister Mr Nisar Memon, reacting to the "expulsion" on *BBC*, said: "We believe the disputes must be settled across the table..."

Meanwhile, the decision to ask Mr Qazi to return came as a big relief to the Pakistani establishment across the border as officials and the general public in that country were anticipating a far more aggressive reaction from Delhi.

At its two-hour meet, the CCS decided to first play the diplomatic card. "A direction has been issued by the CCS to the ministry of external affairs to require of Pakistan that for the sake of parity of representation, the high commissioner ...

currently in India be required to return," Mr Jaswant Singh said.

Just before the CCS met, Mr AB Vajpayee visited the defence ministry's Operations Room, accompanied by Mr George Fernandes. He was briefed on the situation on the ground along the International Border and the LoC, and was also told of current infiltration levels.

Top Services officers including Army Chief Gen. S Padmanabhan, Air Chief Marshal S Krishnaswamy and DGMO Lt-Gen. SS Chahal attended the meet.

No final decision, however, has yet been arrived at on what military measures should be actuated. The call for a "limited war" has been doing the rounds, as is the phrase "reverse Kargil", but whether a strike on militant camps — either by the Air Force or the Special Forces — will actually achieve the desired objectives is still in doubt. There is no guarantee that a "limited war" will not escalate into full-blown hostilities.

The USA, which has repeatedly called for peace, remains engaged in the region. The USAF still uses three minor airbases in Pakistan. More importantly, the Americans are involved in Afghanistan and perhaps in Pakistan as well in their hunt for Taliban and Al Qaida fugitives.

But with Delhi having donned the warpaint, there is panic in several sectors, with the stock market crash continuing for the third day today.

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