

Rapprochement in Jammu & Kashmir

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This paper was written a year ago and therefore does not incorporate some recent developments such as the Indo-Pakistan Secretary level talks.

The Genesis

There is a Kashmir Question, which has been both a cause and consequence of Indo-Pakistan enmity. Its genesis is disputed and embodied in divergent perceptions of relevant history. Rehearsing the past is unlikely to yield dividends and can only result in mutual recrimination. This must be avoided.

The UN Resolution of 1948 and 1949 proved unimplementable in the years following their adoption for a variety of reasons. Here again, perceptions differ. However, Gunnar Jarring, the UN mediator noted in 1958 that the situation had changed and that the Resolutions had been overtaken by events.

The Agreements

The Tashkent Declaration sought to provide a new framework in the wake of the abortive Swaran Singh-Bhutto rounds. There was no progress.

In 1972 the Shimla Agreement set out a fresh formulation. It committed both sides "to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them." It envisaged further discussions "for the establishment of peace and normalisation of relations including... a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir." Pending this it was agreed that "neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation and both shall prevent the organisation, assistance or encouragement of any acts detrimental to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations."

The New Situation

Unfortunately, no further discussions have taken place on "a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir." Meanwhile, internal discontent in the Indian part of J&K, as a result of various factors described below have been manifest in the alienation and violence which has received armed support and encouragement from across the border. This has created a new situation albeit that, contrary to one strongly held view, this external intervention is the consequence rather than the cause of the current turbulence and militancy in Kashmir. Pakistan however sees the present movement in Kashmir as an uprising or freedom struggle for self-determination and its suppression as being responsible for human rights violations. It holds that crossing the Line of

Control in Kashmir by Kashmiris is no transgression. Here again, perceptions differ, as does the language employed.

Be this as it may, the fact is that there is today an entirely new situation in Kashmir, post-accession; post UN resolutions, post-Shimla, all of which have receded into history. The past obviously cannot be ignored and is equally not an adequate guide to the future. This requires understanding.

The Accession and its Consequences

The Indian Independence Act stated that the rulers of the then princely states might accede to India or Pakistan by executing an Instrument of Accession. Independence was a theoretical possibility though it was made abundantly clear, and by and large accepted, that practical realities and geographical compulsions left the rulers little choice but to join either one of the two new Dominions. The circumstances leading to the Maharaja's accession to India are well known. The cessation of hostilities on January 1, 1949 found the original State inclusive of the associated territories, to which it had legal title, effectively divided between India and Pakistan along the cease-fire line, which, with minor adjustments, remains the Line of Control to this day.

The purpose of this recitation is not to chronicle the factors leading to Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India, which Pakistan disputes, but to notice its consequences. Three consequences followed. First, the State was divided, with nearly all of Kashmir and much of Jammu and Ladakh going to India. To Pakistan went that part of Jammu province and the Kashmiri fringe of Muzaffarabad now falling within Azad Kashmir, most of Baltistan in Western Ladakh, and the Northern Areas, including Gilgit, Puniyal, Nagar and Yasin. Secondly, the State's accession to India in its entirety was written into Article 1 and Schedule 1 of the Indian Constitution, defining the country's territorial extent.

Thirdly, the three heads of accession listed in the instrument of Accession, namely defence, external affairs and communications were incorporated in Article 370 governing Centre-State relations in regard to J&K. This Article stipulates that any change in this relationship will only be effected with the concurrence of the government of the State.

Centre-State Relations

There were periods of warmth and of tension in this Centre-State relationship, with Sheikh Abdullah's arrest at one time and return to office years later. Despite charges about the credibility of the polls held in the State and protests regarding what was seen by some as an involuntary erosion of autonomy, the Abdullah's restoration 1975 and the solidarity shown by the local people with the rest of the country in 1962, 1965 and 1971 were indicative of their continuing faith in India's basic commitment to democracy, secularism and federalism in a plural society all of which had drawn the State to India in the first place. A post-1947 generation saw new opportunity for reconstruction and progress in the admittedly free and fair elections held in J&K in 1977 and 1983.

The Rise of Militancy

Subsequent political mismanagement of Centre-State relations through crude interference, dismissal of the popularly elected Farooq Abdullah Government in 1984, an unpopular National Conference-Congress alliance, rigged elections in 1987 and signs of eroding federalism and rising communal tendencies, outraged local sentiment in J&K which felt its autonomy, democratic aspirations and plurality threatened. The anger and alienation produced, amidst evidence of misrule and corruption, stirred the discontent which, through legitimate, was exploited and communally manipulated in an action-reaction syndrome. Fuelled by militancy, it moved from mass agitation and civil disobedience to militancy and insurgency. Militant violence has taken countless innocent lives. Anywhere between 1,50,000 to 2,00,000 Kashmiri Pandits, other Hindus and local Muslims have been forced to flee the Valley.

Whereas the militant movement was initially led by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, a broadly secular, progressive movement seeking independence for the entire State of Jammu and Kashmir on both sides of the Line of Control, Pakistan's patronage has moved to the Hizbul Mujahideen and other more fundamentalist, pro-Jamaat, pro-Pakistan organisations which are today better armed. However, as between the scores of militant groups extant, popular support remains with the JKLF.

Several other factors are noteworthy. The splintering of militant groups has led to the degradation of the movement under adventurist leaders, though some ideological groups remain. There continues to be considerable internecine warfare among rival militant groups, particularly between the JKLF and Hizbul. Many of those going across the border for arms and training are reluctant warriors, either because they were dragooned into joining the militant ranks or because they have been disillusioned by what they have seen and experienced on the other side of the hill. This accounts both for the steady stream of surrenders, with weapons, and the growing intelligence available to the Indian security forces. Those crossing the border have discovered that they are no longer in Kashmir or among Kashmiris but in a Punjabi-Pathan milieu in which a Kashmiri identity seems less assured. There is also a sense of betrayal among those who feel they have risked and sacrificed much in heeding Pakistani exhortations only to discover that they have been led up the garden path.

The heady early-1990 feeling that 'azadi' was around the corner, may be days or just weeks away, has dissipated. Instead, there is a growing sense of fatigue and disapproval of the depredations of the militants who have come to be feared for their coercive tactics and mindless killings, kidnappings, extortions, and *hartals* that have made life uncertain and insecure and affected the economy.

It is noteworthy that the militants are largely active only in Kashmir. Even within the Valley, certain districts are relatively normal. While there have been stray incidents in Doda and elsewhere, Ladakh, Kargil and most of Jammu province barring Doda have been unaffected. Indeed, Ladakh and Jammu have their own grievances against alleged Kashmiri dominance. These intra-regional tensions await resolution.

Pakistan's handling of the JKLF's proposed march across the Line of Control on February 11, 1992, was initially encouraging but later on employment of force to abort the plan, has created further uncertainty and dismay among its Kashmir constituents. This has not been dispelled by the

announcement of Pakistan's so-called Third Option for Kashmir, namely independence, by the Prime Minister and its subsequent disavowal by the President. At the same time, Mr. Sharif's statement that he does not want war with India could mark the beginning of a turnaround if this logic is pursued.

No Military Solutions

The President's Address to the joint session of Parliament on March 24, 1992 expressed the Government of India's resolve to deal with border infiltration and promote meaningful interaction with the people of Kashmir within the framework of the Constitution in order to restore normalcy in the strife-torn state. More recently the Government has spoken of its desire to hold elections in J&K. There can be no military solutions in Kashmir. The only alternative is a negotiated settlement, first, internally, with the people of J&K, and then in the larger context of a settlement with Pakistan which in turn must return to the Shimla principles and abjure the threat or use of force in or over Kashmir.

The Starting Point

The starting point has to be the new reality in Kashmir rather than labouring over the past and talking of completing the "unfinished business of partition" as some do. No one in India is prepared to accept a second partition on the principle of a further communal divide. India is a plural society with as many Muslims as Pakistan and a welter of other minority groups. Any proposition that seeks to settle the Kashmir question by a direct or indirect appeal to religion is untenable. This would undermine the basis of the Indian State, seeking to heal the part by dismembering the whole. Such an approach is self-defeating and cannot be the basis of a viable solution.

It is fanciful to believe that the emergence of the European Community and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia herald the decline or even the end of old sovereignties and existing nation states within established boundaries. The break-up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia can be autonomously explained and does not offer any general theory of history. India is an ancient civilisational concept and even Jammu and Kashmir's links with the Indian heartland go back over 2500 years.

Right of Self Determination

Like Pakistan, India is both a plural society and a new nation-state. As in the rest of the Third World, the nation-building process is still under way in the subcontinent. Undermining one pillar could destabilise the whole edifice. "Self-determination" for parts of sovereign states could open a Pandora's box, leading to dangerous balkanisation and instability. What is to be the unit of self-determination in plural societies? Witness the bloody dilemma of Nagorno-Karabach. Is J&K also to be fragmented? Religion is not the only divide. Both sides of J&K exhibit a multiplicity of ethnic and linguistic difference as well.

The point was well summed up by a third country participant at a Wilton Park Conference in the U.K. in February 1992 at which both Indian and Pakistani representatives were present:

“Self-determination is an unchallenged principle in discussions of how to respect the rights of ethnic and religious communities. But in practice self-determination only means ‘determination by a majority of a minority within a larger majority’. Self-determination for a minority within a state merely re-imposes a new ‘majoritarianism’ on the minority within that minority. There are therefore limits on the scope for sub-division into smaller and smaller states: a process, which in any case can be as conflict-ridden as the maintenance of larger multi-ethnic states. The principles of individual human rights can be applied to protect minorities, but if minority rights are taken too far they only exacerbate the problems by creating discrimination against the majority; it may then become necessary to protect the majority from ‘minoritarianism’.

The Line of Control

Though Pakistan may dispute this, the ground reality is that the Line of Control has over the years come to acquire the attributes of an established border, violation of which can and indeed has, led to war. Pakistan has ceded J&K territory to China in the Shaksgam Valley and has absorbed Gilgit and the Northern Areas, bringing them under direct central rule without ever conceding any semblance of popular regional government. Nor should one be unmindful of the fact that the Gulf War saw unprecedented collective action on the part of the UN in defence of the principle that established borders shall not be violated.

Alternative Vision of ‘Azadi’ and Self-Determination

Yet, the status quo is unsatisfactory and unacceptable. However, against the background of the preceding paragraph it appears possible to distil certain principles on the basis of which to structure a settlement that could give satisfaction to all concerned – Pakistan and, not least, the people of Jammu and Kashmir. There is merit in spelling out a package of principles that offers an alternative vision of “azadi” (Independence) and “self-determination” in practical terms. Phasing and details could be negotiated and a number of combinations considered. The governing principle must be that India, Pakistan, and the people of J&K separately and collectively should and do achieve the substance of stability, self-determination and identity which they have been seeking, without prejudice to sovereignty or security.

Without necessarily placing them in sequence, the following unfolding is suggested:

1. Let India call a truce in Kashmir and announce that as from a given date the security forces will, except along the border, not undertake combat patrolling, cordon and search operations or interrogations provided the militants observe similar restraint and do not parade with arms, intimidate the population or disturb the peace. Such a declaration would be greeted with relief and willful violation is likely to earn the wrath of public opinion.
2. Simultaneously, let all political prisoners be released and all militants in detention be freed if not charged with specific capital offences. A general amnesty should be declared and all militants invited to surrender their arms and return to their homes and vocations without question. Those held for heinous crimes should be promised expeditious trials on the basis of consolidated charges and awarded the lightest sentences permissible if found guilty. They should be detained in open prisons with rehabilitation programmes and granted maximum

remissions for good behaviour. These measures would be in line with the treatment meted out to the Naga rebels and Chambal offenders in India.

3. An independent human rights commission should be set up to investigate and dispose of all extant cases and allegations of human rights violations. Injury must be compensated to the extent possible. This should be a time bound programme.
4. Regional autonomy must be devolved on Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Such federalisation of the State should satisfy regional aspirations and ensure a greater degree of access and participation in governance, with panchayatiraj at the district level and below as proposed nationwide.
5. There should be an announcement of totally free and fair elections to the regional legislatures and State assembly. This will allow power to be handed back to popular representatives and the opening of a dialogue on devolution of greater autonomy to the J&K Government, going back even to the three original heads of accession (defence, external affairs and communications), if this is agreed upon.
6. Prior to the elections, all migrants who have fled the State must be enabled to return to their homes and avocations in safety and honour. Damage to property must be compensated.
7. Along with the calling of elections, the Government of India should announce its intention to negotiate with Pakistan a rationalisation of the Line of Control in order to convert an arbitrary line where the fighting stopped (basically on January 1, 1949) into a rational boundary on considerations of geography, administrative convenience, security and other relevant factors. It must be noted that, howsoever, accidental its creation, the Line of Control represents something of a linguistic and ethnic divide. There have been earlier more than one round of discussions on rationalising the cease-fire line. Hence no new principle is involved and some spadework has been done. The line of Control has been a *de facto* boundary. It should be made so *de jure* with mutually agreed adjustments.
8. Even pending such a transformation and demarcation, both sides should pull back from Siachen. These wastes in the high Karakoram are of no strategic value to either side and have been fought over at exorbitant cost in terms of blood and treasure. The principle of disengagement is now more or less accepted by both parties.
9. The Karachi Agreement of July 27, 1949 signed by the two Governments delimited the cease-fire line in J&K. This defined the Line as running up to grid reference NJ 9842 and “thence north to the glaciers” in the Siachen sector. As a result of hostilities in 1971, the Line of Control (as it came to be known at the Shimla Conference) was delineated afresh by the two High Commands, indicating departures from the old CFL in certain sectors in accordance with the new ground realities. The Suchetgarh Agreement of December 11, 1972, incorporated the Indian gains on the ground south and west of NJ 9842 which remained the last demarcated grid reference. Some maps however align the LOC northeast towards the Karakoram Pass from NJ 9842. These are obviously erroneous and need to be corrected.

10. Negotiations with Pakistan over J&K presuppose its willingness to desist from aiding or encouraging terrorist or subversive forces and from hostile propaganda, whether locally or abroad. Pakistan, in turn, charges India with encouraging troubles in Sind. Both Governments should enter into an accord not to interfere in one another's internal affairs whether in J&K, Punjab, Sind or elsewhere and to recognise that the destabilisation of either country poses a threat to the other.
11. Having demarcated the international border *de jure* down the length of J&K, India should demonstrate its willingness to dissolve this border *de facto* by making it fully porous. Such a "soft border" should enable all bonafide subjects of the entire J&K state as it originally existed, including Gilgit et al, to move and trade freely across the border without the formality of passports, visas and currency restrictions up to a given value per head. Thus, people might travel with no more identification document than a driving licence, ration card or magistrate's certificate and carry their own currency up to say Rs. 5000 or Rs. 10,000 per head without permits. It should be open to persons on either side of this divided State to reside, purchase property, take up employment, trade, enroll in an educational or training establishment or seek medical treatment on the other side, subject to certain rules. Access to newspapers, magazines and books should be permitted from the other side. None of this would be unprecedented. Rigid regulations could be liberalised. Parallels are to be found in the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan arrangements and in the protocols that obtained under the 1954 Treaty between China and India on Tibet, and the agreement regarding tribal movements across the Indo-Burmese border after 1937. A soft border of this description would facilitate easy movement, trade, business, pilgrimage, tourism and other human exchanges and would unite divided families. There would be no requirements of the dual nationality, and international passports to travel outside and beyond J&K in its entirety.
12. One variant could be to limit such a soft border and related protocol only to the valley of Kashmir and Jammu and contiguous areas in Azad Kashmir.
13. The Uri-Muzaffarabad, Jammu-Sialkot, Kargil-Skardu and other roads should be restored and improved and thrown open to traffic-local, national and international. The Pakistan railway system could be linked to the Indian via-Sialkot-Jammu.
14. Even if India were to act unilaterally, Pakistan would be compelled to follow suit in some measure or face mounting internal pressure. It has nothing to lose and everything to gain as it would have won access to all of J&K just as much as India would have in reverse. No third country need feel uneasy, as there would be no change in sovereignty or security parameters.
15. The further logic of such an unfolding would be demilitarisation of the border (starting with Siachen) instead of having armies confront one another in some of the most inhospitable terrain in the world. The mutual cost saving would be enormous and the initial withdrawal could lead to further agreed measures towards balanced force reductions. Although an "established border", a Line of Control in disputed circumstances entails guarding "every inch of territory" for political reasons. This implies holding forward positions, constant patrolling and high visibility, which compels emulation by the other side in an upward spiral. A settled border does not require the same kind of vigilance and hence the borders themselves can be

drawn with a view to rationality and convenience rather than defensibility or actual possession every inch of the way. This consideration will itself facilitate rationalisation of the LOC and its transformation into a well-demarcated international boundary as proposed above. For the same reason, maintaining this as a soft border should produce fewer qualms from a security point of view.

16. One may go still further. India might propose that representatives of the two halves of J&K be enabled to meet from time to time to monitor, regulate, and expand the human and cultural exchange, trade and tourism engendered by the proposals outlined above. Management of the environment and collaboration in developing the large remaining untapped potential of the Indus system of rivers could be two other subjects of mutual concern.
17. The Indus Treaty has served well. It gives the three eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej) to India and the three western rivers (Chenab, Jhelum and Indus) to Pakistan. This division has enabled both India and Pakistan to develop their Bhakra-Pong and Tarbela-Mangla systems, achieve a green revolution and feed cheap, renewable, clean energy into their respective grids. The headwaters of the three western rivers, however, lie in the Indian part of J&K. While the Indus Water Treaty permits India certain consumptive and non-consumptive uses from these rivers, mutual suspicion has precluded this being exploited except to a limited degree. This has also entailed prolonged disputation as over the Salaal hydel project earlier and the Tul bul (Wulur Lake) navigation project currently. Apart from this, there is a great storehouse of power waiting to be tapped with storage and flood control benefits that would benefit Pakistan apart from serving J&K. This suggests possibilities for joint collaboration, joint management and sharing of further benefits in an Indus-II as envisaged in the Indus Treaty itself.
18. The fact that Pakistan has signed a memorandum of intent with Tajikistan to purchase 1000 MW of hydropower from the Rogun Dam on the Vaksh river, which is to be commissioned in stages between 1997 and 2000, is indicative of both a political connection and an economic need. Pakistan is to provide assistance worth \$500 m over a five year period and will need to build or secure transmission facilities across hundred of kilometres across the Hindu Kush and intervening Afghan territory before it can use this energy. Indus power is much nearer.
19. Mutual access to the Karakoram High way over the Khunjerab Pass in Pakistan and a potential Karakoram Pass highway from India could revive and reinvigorate J&K's as much as India and Pakistan's historical trade routes to Central Asia and Singkiang.
20. An over-arching arrangement, straddling both sides of J&K, would provide a mechanism for pulling together the various territorial units comprising the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir conglomerate. Though apart, they would come together for certain practical purposes without undermining existing sovereignties.

Paras 1 to 16 have tended to suggest certain ideas and principles, which could constitute the basis of negotiations on the Kashmir question. These ideas are illustrative, not exhaustive. A solution to the Kashmir question lies only through negotiations. Given the need to make the people of Jammu & Kashmir a party to any settlement, a framework for such negotiations will have to be devised.

The First Step

Nobody can question the fact that the governments of Pakistan and India have to be involved in any settlement. The point that remains is how to involve the people of J&K? It has been suggested in Para 16 above that there should be “totally free and fair” elections to the State Assembly in the Indian part of J&K. A similar process should undergo in that part of the state which is under Pakistan’s control. The governments in the two parts of J&K elected through this process should be associated with the Governments of India and Pakistan in negotiating a final settlement of the Kashmir Question. Principles other than those suggested in Paras 1 to 16 above could be added from either side to provide a basis for negotiations which, of course, should be without pre-condition.

An Independent Kashmir

The British Prime Minister, John Major told the Scottish nationalists, on the eve of the British general election in 1992 that an independent Scotland would divide and diminish a great nation at a time when Great Britain was moving into Europe and the world towards globalisation. The same could be said of an independent Kashmir—which would be weak, unviable, and wholly dependent on the goodwill of two powerful neighbours, whereas both parts of J&K could otherwise cast away fear for their security, enjoy a large measure of autonomy and each benefit from membership of a great nation while yet being able to develop a beneficial association with their other great neighbour. Jammu and Kashmir, which has long divided India and Pakistan, could become the fulcrum of a new relationship in an era of Indo-Pakistan friendship and cooperation.

The BJP Commitment

Indian political opinion may not be averse to considering a solution along these lines if it holds out the promise of a final and lasting settlement. The BJP is on record as proposing an Indo-Pakistan confederation as a longer-term goal, if mutually acceptable. The more limited and immediate proposal outlined above for resolving the J&K Question, would not undermine the established nation state structure of Pakistan or India and need not have a domino effect within either in view of the unique nature of the Kashmir issue.

The Final Settlement

Once a mutual accord is reached, the Kashmir Question could be taken off from the United Nations agenda through a joint application by India and Pakistan outlining the proposed settlement. This would amount to a treaty deposited with the UN and would carry the imprimatur of a virtual UN guarantee that neither side would find prudent to violate or upset.

A number of international precedents, such as the Anglo-Irish Agreement for joint consultation and action in certain matters pertaining to Northern Ireland and six bordering countries of the Republic of Ireland (1985), could provide models in certain particulars.

Further embellishments could be added by locating certain UN or other international facilities in Kashmir, which has aspired, to becoming “the Switzerland of Asia.” The UN University could be invited to establish a faculty and a research centre for peace studies in Srinagar.

The principles of settlement proposed would fit well in the framework and ethos of SAARC, which could also be persuaded to locate certain regional institutions or facilities in Kashmir.

A Gradual Process

None of this may happen in a day. But such a consummation may not be very far off either if all sides initiate a dialogue with sincerity, looking ahead at the future rather than reopening the wounds of the past. The dialogue should be without preconditions. The India side would, however, do well to outline the broad principles on which it is prepared to proceed and let the package and phasing unfold as the negotiations progress, with the people of J&K being equal partners in this process. Larger Indo-Pakistan confidence-building measures would reinforce the J&K dialogue. Partition in 1947 ended in bloodshed and mass migrations. A J&K settlement now must unite and be a salve.

There is much bitterness and suspicion to be overcome all round. India certainly has to regain the trust and confidence of the people of the Valley. This it can do by showing genuine remorse for various acts of omission and commission, making amends where possible, and restoring democratic, plural, secular, federal values throughout the country.

Both Hinduism and Islam have been deeply influenced in Kashmir by sufis, pirs and rishis to create a unique Kashmiri blend of religious harmony and fraternity. A return to that tradition would be a balm to fevered minds in India and Pakistan. It could be Kashmir’s greatest gift to sub-continent.

The Alternatives

What are the alternatives? India could perhaps hold the Valley indefinitely even in the face of the present low-intensity or “proxy” war, though at heavy cost. But the status quo is clearly unsatisfactory and involves an opportunity cost to both Pakistan and India in terms of forging improved relations and a reduction in defence burdens. A Sword of Damocles should no more hang over them, threatening war by accident or design. War can solve nothing, while proxy wars can be played both ways to nobody’s gain.

It is unlikely that the UN will intervene or that the UN Resolutions of 1948 and 1949 can be revived despite human rights violations – some genuine, others exaggerated or invented – which must necessarily be and are being addressed by India.

The climate of opinion in the valley is changing against Pakistan which also could confront increasing problems in Azad Kashmir, the Northern Areas and Gilgit for failing to apply to those areas the principles it advocates in the Valley. The rumbling can be heard.

A partial plebiscite in the Valley alone may not be a viable option if there is an appeal to religion which would be very difficult to preclude in the light of recent events. Many Pakistanis denounced the late President Zia's posing of the electoral question at the height of the MRD movement in 1987 in terms of "Islamisation or multi-party elections? The dice was seen to be loaded. A plebiscite on these lines, "Islam or Pakistan", would pose a false choice and undo far more than it might hope to resolve.

Partition of J&K (with a partial plebiscite in the Valley) was proposed by Sir Owen Dixon in 1950. Other lines of partition have been discussed at various times – during the 1963 Swaran Singh Bhutto talks and, more recently, along the Chenab. Further partitioning of the state is likely to aggravate the problems and would certainly be unacceptable to the JKLF, which seeks independence from Pakistan and India, as well as to Indian opinion.

The Promising Option

The most promising option appears to be to proceed on the basis of the principles outlined earlier in this paper. This will require public education in both countries as a number of myths have been assiduously built up around the Kashmir Question in Pakistan as much as in India. Both Governments are afraid of the Opposition and can be embarrassed by it: witness the Ekta Yatra of the BJP in India and the JKLF march in Pakistan. The Kashmir issue is being used as a collateral stick with which to beat the government of the day on either side. Kashmir must be delinked from this kind of internal politicking. Each side must help the other to do so in its own interest.

Both sides need to develop another vocabulary and a new, forward-looking perspective on J&K, getting away from cliches and emotional slogans founded in disputed and disputable history. This is reason to hope that all the varied elements making up J&K in every part of this troubled state on either side of the LOC will find themselves able to walk that path. They will do so as they may see it as meeting their aspirations very substantially, even if not quite in full measure.

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