

Countering Anti-India Terror: Beyond War and Surrender -I

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The debate about policy options available to India to counter the phenomenon of terrorism directed against this country has once again sharpened with several ominous developments taking place in the region. These include the gruesome massacre of numerous Indians including 22 Army personnel at Kaluchak in Jammu on 14th May; a series of missile tests conducted by Pakistan; heavy shelling by Pakistan forces along the India-Pakistan borders; Pakistan's reported decision to shift some of its forces deployed along Pakistan-Afghanistan borders to the eastern side bordering India; the killing of a moderate and peace-inclined Kashmiri leader, Abdul Gani Lone; the killing of Amarnath pilgrims on 7 August and the address to his nation by the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, on 27th May, which the then Indian Foreign Minister, Jaswant Singh, described as both highly disappointing and dangerous.

In his earlier address on 12th January, which he delivered under international and Indian pressures after the attack on Indian Parliament earlier on 13 December 2001, the General had not only assured the world community to dismantle the terrorist networks active within Pakistan, but he also did take some steps towards that end, however unsatisfying those may be from Indian point of view. But in his address of 27th May, he simply declined Pakistan's involvement in cross border terrorism in India and appealed the global community to "ask India to move towards normalisation of relations" with his country. Not surprisingly, India has described this statement as "mere verbal denials" about Pakistan's "lethal export of terrorism" and domestic pressure is increasingly mounting on the Indian government for a decisive action against Pakistan.[1] The various spokespersons of the Indian Government, too, have clearly declared that "India cannot be penalized for ever for its patience." India's expulsion of Pakistan's High Commissioner, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, in the context of the above-mentioned terrorist attack at an Army camp near Jammu appears to reflect cascading anger and a strong sense of frustration, though in a highly interactive and globalised world such an act can hardly help India reduce or roll back cross-border terrorism.

The visit of Colin Powell in July, his endorsement of elections in Kashmir and subsequent announcement of dates for elections by the Indian Election Commissioner seemed to have no effect at all on the ground reality in Kashmir. Against this backdrop, in August, as the graph of violence climbed up, the General admitted that it was very much probable that the infiltration might be on along the LoC, which was extremely porous and it was virtually impossible on his part to stop it entirely.

The growing consensus in India towards a show-down with Pakistan has, however, narrowed the debate about countering anti-India terror to the twin options of going to war with Pakistan because the Indian Army is deployed on India-Pakistan border since the attack on Indian Parliament on 13 December, or of withdrawal with loss of face. In the process, no room has been left in the ongoing

discourse for a deeper analysis of the options available to India. This diminishes the Indian state to the status of a helpless nation without a range of viable options against its hostile neighbour. The present paper attempts to examine the pros and cons of various policy options available to India for dealing with the menace of cross-border terrorism.

II

As we approach the issue of cross border terror, the reasons behind India's largest-ever military mobilization need to be briefly discussed. Taking a leaf out of its Afghan experiment, Pakistan has nourished *jehadi* groups since late 1980s as their first line of defence against India and has kept India militarily engaged in a proxy war without the need of involving Pakistan army directly. At another front there is the Pakistani strategy of 'bleeding India through a thousand cuts'. The Indian response to the Pakistani strategy had so far been rather ambivalent, which has indirectly encouraged Pakistan to stick to its strategy.

Thus one finds Vajpayee's Lahore trip closely followed by Kargil war. And the Vajpayee took yet another bold peace initiative by implementing a unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir in the Islamic holy month of *Ramzan* in November 2000,[2] and later on invited President Musharraf for talks in the historical town of Agra in July 2001.[3] Agra talks were followed by increase in violence in Kashmir. Islamabad once again replied these peace initiatives by engineering attacks on India. The attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 proved to be the proverbial last straw and since then the strategists in India have been talking of 'proactive policy options'.

It is really a measure of the Vajpayee administration's deep interest in peace that even while mobilizing its troops on the border, it did not use these betrayals to renege on its commitment to peace. This was evident when in his New Year reflections for the year 2002 the Prime Minister reiterated his commitment to "search for a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem, both in its external and internal dimensions." In addition to this commitment, he did also declare from the ramparts of the Red Fort during this years' Independence Day that Kashmir would have "free and fair elections." While both the governments in New Delhi and Srinagar are still determined to conduct the Assembly elections, the spurt in violence in the state has jeopardized the chances of demobilization of troops. But can India really exercise the option of war? Is it necessary to do so? If yes, what precautions are necessary? The present paper attempts to discuss these and related questions in the following sections.

III

As military preparations continue apace and tension spiral along the India-Pakistan border, a question of enormous significance begs to be answered: is war an option? While the calls for an effective intervention to end this unceasing onslaught are understandable, there is—in the existing circumstances—an enormous difference between the rhetoric of war and the actual practice of it. Despite the sabre-rattling, it appears that if New Delhi has so far resisted the temptation of embarking on the course of hot pursuit of terrorists and attacking their camps running across the Line of Control (LoC) in Pakistan, the reasons are several. Firstly, any strike on the terrorist camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) is unlikely to achieve India's objective of stopping the flow

of terrorist infiltration into this country due the usual practices of organized terrorist groups to shift their operational bases to ward off strikes.

Secondly, any surgical raids against these camps could spin dangerously out of control. The Kargil example is sometimes used to establish that a limited war with Pakistan is a wholly feasible proposition. But the dynamics of the Kargil conflict, which was essentially a battle to recover a piece of Indian territory, were entirely different from what is being envisaged in some quarters now. Moreover, India maintained the restraint of not crossing the LoC during the Kargil conflict. It is more than likely that an Indian attack on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK), or on specific terrorist camps within Pakistan, will result in a dangerous widening of the conflict. The possibility of nuclear conflagration is by no means the only hazard in case of such an escalation of conflict. A full-fledged conventional battle—in these days of long-range missiles tipped with devastating payloads— would cause extensive damage to both countries.

Thirdly, those who advocate military option citing the example of the US war against terror forget that the comparisons are misplaced. Neither India has the might of US, nor can one equate Pakistan with the war-ravaged anarchical Afghanistan. Moreover, the fact that is more important is that the US could succeed in wiping out the terrorist bases in Afghanistan only with the help of the anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan. Similarly, India could inflict a decisive defeat on Pakistan in 1971 because the East Pakistani forces, known as *Mukti Vahini*, fought along with the Indian forces against the Pakistani army. At present, on the other hand, there is no indication that the disgruntled Pakistanis like the *Sindhis*, *Baluchs* or *Mohajiris* would extend support to Indian military action against Pakistan. On the contrary, an Indian attack on Pakistan can only unite all the Pakistanis against India.

Finally, while Indian establishment may rightly resent the American ‘double standards’—reflected in its continued calls of restraint to India even as it zealously proclaims its right to launch both retaliatory and pre-emptive strikes pretty much where it pleases, New Delhi just cannot afford to antagonize the US at this critical juncture. The American presence on Pakistan soil and its transparent interest in mopping up the residual *Al-Qaeda* operatives with the assistance of Pervez Musharraf are at least two of the factors that New Delhi can hardly afford to overlook. Since it is the Musharraf regime in Pakistan that has allowed the US forces to operate freely on Pakistani soil against Al-Qaeda remnants compelling them to launch desperate acts of terrorism— the recent Karachi suicide attack being one of the most dramatic ones— the US cannot countenance any move—either within Pakistan or by India—which will threaten the Musharraf regime in any way.

While there are several factors obliging India to maintain restraint so far, one of the most important reason could be that New Delhi cannot sustain this war-preparedness indefinitely without any substantive action. Apart from huge economic cost of military build up, a state of high alert without actual war can also erode the morale of our security forces. Military costs apart, the political strategy of doing nothing and hoping that the problem would just disappear cannot work for too long. Time is not going to automatically address the problem.

It is therefore necessary to rule out the option of maintaining the military mobilisation in a passive manner despite the fact that this typically Indian “do nothing-for the-moment” strategy will have many attraction for the policy makers in New Delhi such as it would postpone the decision to

confront Pakistan on cross-border terrorism and avoid diplomatic complications abroad and would put India in tune with the major powers, who are calling for restraint. Stretching out the process of demobilisation could also limit the political costs of the Indian ruling establishment at a time when the opposition is trying to exploit each and every weakness of the coalition government. But this policy will not enable India to achieve any objective that led to the military mobilisation in the first place.

On the contrary, sudden demobilising would demonstrate to Gen Musharraf that India has no stomach for a decisive confrontation and that it is prepared to bleed from cross-border terrorism than risk the escalation of military tension with Pakistan. It would demoralise the armed forces and open India to a perpetual threat of cross-border terrorism. Failing to respond effectively will make the nation vulnerable to even outrageous and aggressive acts of violence.

IV

If India can neither afford to strike at the terrorist camps within Pakistan, nor can quietly withdraw its troops from the borders or indefinitely keep them in a state of high alert (as they are now since December 13) what option is available to it? As stated at the outset, a deeper thinking can provide a range of options to India including the use of diplomacy before using the war as a last resort. War has to be the last option, only after exhausting all possible means of peaceful negotiation. The US too began military operation only after considerable diplomatic preparation despite its being the sole surviving superpower. That is why, even while readying its defence forces for military action New Delhi has given priority to diplomatic offensive including recalling of its High commissioner from Islamabad, slicing down the presence of Pakistani staff in its High Commission in New Delhi, terminating the New Delhi-Lahore bus service as well the *Samjhauta* Express, withdrawing permission to Pakistan to fly its aircrafts through the Indian sky, and demanding the extradition of 20 persons accused of committing various terrorist acts in India. New Delhi also demanded from Pakistan an effective action against Pakistan based terrorist groups such as *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (LeT) and *Jaish-e-Mohammad*.

As the Vajpayee government did not expect any voluntary action on the part of Pakistan, it banked on the moral indignation of the international community, apart from mobilizing its military forces. It made intensive consultation with leaders of important countries such as the US, Britain, Russia, Japan, and China, etc. This three-pronged Indian strategy--military build up, mobilizing international pressure, and mounting bilateral pressure on Pakistan, of course, produced certain results. As stated at the outset, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, not only condemned religious extremism in his open address to this country on 12 January 2002, but he also banned certain terrorist outfits including LeT and JeM. Besides, he arrested hundreds of terrorists and detained their kingpin Maulana Masood Azhar, though as a balancing exercise he refused to hand over any Pakistani national demanded by India. Very soon, the Musharraf regime freed the detained extremists on the ground that no charges could be sustained against them. This emboldened them to first attack the Raghunath temple and then commit massacre at Kaluchak and kill the moderate Kashmiri leader, Abdul Gani Lone.

But it has since become apparent that the Pakistani President is either unwilling or incapable or both to control the extremist forces radiating out of Pakistani soil against India. We are thus back

to the square one with President Musharraf again announcing that he will not permit terrorists to operate against any country from Pakistani soil, but he will continue to extend moral, political and diplomatic support to the “freedom struggle” in Kashmir. As India cannot forever continue to absorb the pains of this support to so called “freedom struggle,” which is nothing but an euphemism for Pakistan’s encouragement and abatement to terrorist violence in Kashmir, the Indian government has rightly decided to give diplomacy one more chance even while preparing for exercise of the last option, i.e., war.

Issue of Internationalisation

As regards the diplomatic front, it is pertinent to mention here that although ‘internationalisation’ has been a bad word for India’s policy on Kashmir, it has not always been so. In fact it was India, which took the Kashmir dispute to the U N in 1948. India accepted Russian mediation at Tashkent after the 1965 war with Pakistan. It was only after the 1971 war and the Shimla Agreement of 1972, that the Indian policy has become centred on ‘bilateralism’. The renewal of Pakistani clamour in the 1980s for third party mediation and international intervention and India’s opposition were both based on a reading of the international correlation of forces prevailing at that time. Islamabad believed, rightly, that any international intervention would be in its favour. New Delhi, on the other hand, believed that given the traditional Western tilt towards Pakistan, there was no way India could accept an external role. The Indian and Pakistani postures on internationalisation were thus not based on any universal principle.

After the Cold War, however, much has changed in great power equation with India and Pakistan. From a “zero-sum” approach during the Cold War, the Western countries in general and the US in particular, are developing their separate policies towards the sub-continental rivals on the basis of the inherent interests in both countries. India’s rapid economic growth and liberalisation programme in the 1990s, influence of the ‘Indo-American’ community in the US, display of responsible international behaviour on the part of India after Pokharan-II, America’s pressing need for India’s software professionals, Washington’s interest in peace after the Cold War to enable its citizens to enjoy in the safe heaven of home, etc., motivated Washington to extend an accommodative approach towards India.[5] On the other hand, the endemic financial crisis in Pakistan has begun to differentiate the Western policies towards the two nations. Pakistan’s drift towards extremist policies has also alarmed the major powers and many of Islamabad’s neighbours.

New Delhi’s intense interactions with the major world powers in recent years indicate that it has gradually realised the hollowness of assumption that the West will inevitably be hostile towards India in any dispute between India and Pakistan. In fact, the Kargil crisis saw an important shift in the US approach, which forced Pakistan to unconditionally and unilaterally withdraw from across the LoC. Since then the US has argued that the status quo in Kashmir cannot be changed by use of force. Under these circumstances, the emphasis of India must be more on political outcomes of the incipient peace process rather than on its mechanics alone. This does not, of course, mean that India would accept externally dictated solution in the sub-continent. In shaping an external component of its policy in the region, New Delhi, however, needs to clearly define the likely outcomes and the boundary positions to the process.

It may also be noted that whether India likes it or not, the international community is concerned about the situation in Kashmir. The worries that the Indo-Pakistan tension could escalate into a nuclear one continue to drive those policies towards the subcontinent. Under these circumstances, the diplomatic challenges before India is to move beyond the traditional posturing against 'internationalisation' of the Kashmir dispute and look at ways of using global concerns about a nuclear flashpoint to its own advantage. Elsewhere on diplomatic front, the BJP-led government has acted decisively to overcome longstanding dilemmas. It acted boldly to end protracted nuclear ambiguity. It is also pressing China to accelerate the talks for resolving the prolonged boundary dispute. This is time now for a similar imaginative approach in Indian foreign policy.

Since India lags behind Pakistan in the propaganda stakes at the international stage and the recent communal carnage in Gujarat has eroded its image as a tolerant and secular nation,[6] India must vigorously convince the world community that the Kashmir issue, which has a definitive history peculiar to the ethos of India and Pakistan and cannot be equated with Palestine question. New Delhi has decided to engage the international community by giving non-polemical diplomacy one more chance at this stage to serve the cause of meaningful restraint maintained by it so far. This is not to make light of evidence that New Delhi has already gathered, but only to point towards the need of learning a lesson from the US, which, at the height of its ongoing anti-terror war in Afghanistan, released what it classified as a providentially obtained video-record. This pertained to Osama bin Laden's confession concerning his role of orchestrating the terrorist offensive against America.[7] The need for providing evidence of Pakistan's involvement in cross border terror to the global community has become all the more urgent now in view of dispatching of five special envoys by General Musharraf to the US, Europe and several Muslim countries to counter Indian diplomatic initiatives.

While it is heartening for India that the international community and especially the major powers such as the US, Britain, Canada, Russia, and Japan, etc., have clearly told Pakistan to stop using terror as a tool of foreign policy, New Delhi should nonetheless impress upon the Bush administration that it is an over-simplification on their part to treat both the Vajpayee and Musharraf governments as victims of terrorism merely because both the countries have experienced terrorist strikes of late. True, for *Al-Qaeda*, Gen Musharraf is as much a foe as the rulers of India and the US. But barring *Al-Qaeda*, all terrorist groups in Pakistan continue to enjoy the support and patronage of the Pakistani agencies. If the US is made to grasp this central fact, New Delhi may be able to turn the American "interest" in the sub-continent to its advantage.

In addition to mobilizing pressure on Pakistan from the world community in general and major powers such as the US, Britain, Canada, Russia, China, and Japan, etc., in particular, the Vajpayee administration can also explore taking the terrorism issue to the UN Security Council. Under Resolution 1373 that the Security Council passed after the terrorist attack on the US in September 2001, all the UN members are mandated to thwart every form of terrorism regardless of motivations at work. The resolution was adopted under the UN Charter's Chapter-VII, which explicitly provides for enforcement measures such as economic sanctions or military force. In contrast, the old UN resolutions on Kashmir are not enforceable in a mandatory sweep, as the Secretary General noted in different context in January 2002. Minimal, therefore, is the attendant risk of India now opening a Pandora's box as regards those Kashmir resolutions. More

significantly, it is not at all beyond India's diplomatic ingenuity to drive home the historical dissimilarities between the continuing terrorism and the old Kashmir related complaint as it was first presented by New Delhi itself before the UN. India's historical activism in multilateral forums on every globalised aspect of peace and disarmament is the best guarantee of the country's credibility in internationalising the cross border terrorism issue.

Countering Anti-India Terror: Beyond War and Surrender -II

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V

Indian decision makers even while using diplomacy to end cross border terror, must essentially depend on its own strength and be prepared for using the last option in the case of failure of all other alternatives. But this raises the question are we prepared for this eventuality? To put it differently, if India hits *Jehadi* points across the LoC, will Pakistan choose to retaliate with a conventional or a nuclear strike?

Pakistan's military is so deeply committed to a proxy war in Kashmir and is so convinced that India has no answer to it, that it is almost inconceivable that it will allow India to call its bluff and get away with it. On the other hand, India's military thinkers seem convinced that Pakistan's response will not be nuclear[8] This rock-solid belief in each country that the other is bluffing is the root cause of the threat of nuclear war in South Asia. It is precisely due to this miscalculation that both the neighbours have several wars including the 1965 and 1971 wars.

It is obvious from the mindset of Pakistani military leaders that almost any conflict in Kashmir will most probably widen into a more general conflict. For once Pakistan will retaliate any Indian action across the LoC by choosing areas where it has a favourable terrain (of which there are many) and India will have to use the air force obliging Pakistan to do the same. Though India might fare better in such a conflict, but in that case, Pakistani Generals will have to decide that whether they should opt for a conventional war in which they can hardly expect to match Indian capabilities, or launch a nuclear first strike.

In case a conflict in Kashmir leads to military stalemate, for which there are an even chance, Pakistan will use that situation to pump thousands of *jehadis* into the state to attack the Indian forces and civilians behind the front lines. This will force India to attack Pakistan across the international border with the aim of capturing territory that can be exchanged for peace. The chance of use of nuclear weapons by the Pakistani generals in that case will be stronger.

Under the circumstances, the only factor that can deter Pakistan from embarking on a course of nuclear holocaust will be India's capability to withstand a nuclear first strike and launch a devastating second strike of its own. This is precisely what Pakistan's generals doubt that India has.[9] For, they know that though India has a small superiority in nuclear war head, it has neither a large number of missile silos hardened to withstand nuclear assault nor a submarine based nuclear strike force, which can enable it to withstand a first nuclear strike and launch a convincing second strike. Secondly, the Indian Government has never revealed as to whether its nuclear command and control system has the capacity to continue functioning after Pakistan aims its

missiles at India and especially its capital, New Delhi. India's deterrent capability therefore hinges upon its capacity to launch its own missiles after Pakistan fires its missiles but before they hit Indian targets. Since Indian decision makers will get only a few minutes to recognize the Pakistani threat and issue their order and since India's propellants and fire control systems of the missiles are not sufficiently sophisticated enough to lift off so quickly before the arrival of Pakistani missiles, New Delhi can hardly deter Pakistan in that case.

Indian decision makers must therefore make adequate preparation before they decide to use the last option of retaliating across the LoC or international border. They must increase India's numerical edge in warheads, build many more solid fuel-propelled *Agnis* and *Prithvis*, disperse them and its nuclear armed aircrafts more widely, build many more hardened silos, and above all marry all of its warheads and bombs, and missiles, for instant use. Most important of all, to minimise the chance of a war by miscalculation, they must let Pakistan and the world know that India has done so.[10]

These preparations will take months to complete. For instance, the Army is still in the process of inducting the T-90 tanks from Russia that will give its armoured fleet a clear advantage. India also may need a few more months to acquire and induct additional state-of-the-art SU-30 fighter jets into the IAF in order to launch a swift military campaign. In the absence of a full-scale war option now, the armed forces may consider some action without crossing the Line of Control. In the past, India's long-range-artillery has been used against Pakistani border posts. Limited air strikes, especially on some of the training camps may be an option. But without the assurance of an effective diplomatic intervention, such a step can risk the escalation of hostilities that New Delhi, at his moment, may wish to avoid.

In the meanwhile, India must therefore continue with its diplomatic campaign. It can also open dialogue with Pakistan to get a better idea of where Musharraf stands, where he would like to go and the extent to which he might turn a blind eye to action against the *jehadis* in PoK, if these become necessary.

If Musharraf continues to remain uncooperative despite his verbal announcements under the US pressure, India will be justified in declaring that a state of war exists between the two countries, snapping of all political and economic links. If the inflow of *jehadis* still continues, India can blockade Karachi port to deny oil to Pakistan. Only after that fails, the military option should be used. But even while resorting to that alternative, it must be calibrated and gradual, as India will have a range of military options at hand from punitive strikes by air, to ground forces action against military post, which facilitate infiltration, to gradual military action in PoK to obtain territory, which provides the bases for infiltration, etc. The option of taking the military conflict in Pakistan across international border must be the last option.

VI

In countering the terrorist menace, the Vajpayee administration has to face tough challenge at the internal front as well. Though as stated above a consensus is developing within the country to end the Pak-sponsored terror once and for all, in view of intense domestic differences over each and

every issue of national significance till recently, it is not certain how long the emerging consensus will last.

One of the biggest vulnerabilities in India as far as countering terrorism goes is the daily spectacle of a Parliament which does not recognise any discipline and rules and projects the image of being in a state of permanent civil war. This creates an impression in the minds of terrorist that this country is very close to disintegration and a few well-aimed terrorist blows would bring about that result. Therefore, the attack on Parliament should have proved as a wake-up call for all MPs to carry out introspection. But unfortunately, even after that incident several opposition leaders refused to send their representatives as a part of India's diplomatic mission to explain its position to the world.

Liberal intellectuals, who erroneously think that all others around us share our liberal values, also compound the problem. Unfortunately, that is not so. The world had to deal with Hitler in the past and now has to deal with the Osama bin Laden, Mullah Omars and people of their ilk. Such people may have to be dealt with by force. There may be several fundamental causes, which could have led to the rise of such people. But just as when a house is burning the priority has to be given to putting off the fire first instead of finding out the cause that led to the fire. Similarly, in dealing with terrorism, the violence should be dealt with first, even as underlying political, economic, social, and other basic causations are addressed in the longer run.

This government's attitude to national security, too, is one of mere tokenism. It set up a National Security Council, which has not yet been convened. It sets up a National Security Advisory Board and does not publicise its reports, which should logically have focussed on terrorism among other things. It is sitting on a draft nuclear doctrine for over two years. The government's lackadaisical attitude towards national security is a function of the indifference of the elite and Parliament to that issue. While the present international war on terrorism is bound to be won and its fall-out beneficial to India that may not be the end of the war on terrorism in India. As long as our political leaders and media think that having more men in uniform toting weapons constitutes security, this country will continue to be vulnerable to terrorism and proxy war.

The country must, therefore, have an overall comprehensive assessment on terrorism, an adequate strategy to deal with it and an entire gamut of measures in terms of intelligence, operational functions, legal measures and popular mobilisation. Parliament, the states and the media have to be brought into the effort. The first step is to provide the country with an overall assessment of terrorist threats. This is not a matter for the home ministry alone, but involves the states, ministries of external affairs, defence, information and broadcasting and finance, and intelligence agencies. Consequently, this has to be handled by the National Security Council though the nodal ministry will be home. The government's approach has to be on the basis of enlisting the cooperation of all opposition parties and state governments and mobilising societal support.

VII

In the longer-run, however, Pak-sponsored terrorism in the Valley cannot be controlled without the winning the acquiescence, if not the hearts, of the people in Kashmir. It is therefore necessary for both the governments in New Delhi and Srinagar to begin with search for developing a consensus

for fulfilling the yearning of the Kashmiris for self-governance and preservation of their special identity, known as *Kashmiriyat*. Unfortunately, the last three governments in India until recently seemed to have subscribed to the view that, with the militancy going into remission and with an elected state government in place, Kashmir would, like Punjab, return to normal. As is evident, this is not happening after Kargil, as Kashmir is not Punjab. As a substantive initiative, however weary an insistence this may seem, the autonomy issue must now therefore be addressed not just as a ploy, but as a seriously intended praxis.

Surprising though it may appear, a window of opportunity for bringing the Kashmiris back into our fold has opened once again. The Kashmiris have turned further away from Pakistan after the latest instance of the trampling of democracy in that country in the guise of referendum. Besides, they cannot but take note of the fact that India has demonstrated in Kargil and military build up after December 13 and May 14 that it is prepared to make any sacrifice to retain every inch of territory on its side of the Line of Control. More significantly, the international community in general and the US in particular is now not only firmly against any attempt on the part of Pakistan to redraw international boundary through bloodshed. They are putting considerable pressure on Pakistan to see the reason and co-exist with India. Besides, the BJP leadership, particularly because of political space it occupies, is in a better position to help evolve a broad-based consensus in this regard. Finally, though there is revival of indigenous insurgency, the fatigue from violence that set in the mid-1980s still persists. And the killing of Abdul Gani Lone reflects panic among the hardliners rather than their confidence.

It is, therefore, a high time to take a bold initiative towards striking a harmonious balance between the need to integrate Jammu and Kashmir within the national mainstream, and the state's demand for autonomous self-government to make that state as a model for "cooperative federalism." The argument that autonomy for Kashmir will give rise to similar demands from other states and lead to disintegration is a red herring to divert attention from the main issue. No other state signed an Instrument of Accession; J & K was the only state, which acceded to India; other states merged with the Union. When special dispensation was provided for J & K under Article 370, no other state raised objections or sought similar special status.[11] Autonomy for that state, therefore, cannot be equated with any plan for restructuring the Indian federation or for further devolution of powers of the states. Autonomy is needed to change the perception of the Kashmiris that India has gone back to accord special status to the state. This is the least that must be conceded to win back the Kashmiri people, to assuage their hurt feelings and restore their honour and dignity.

The forthcoming elections in Jammu and Kashmir provide New Delhi and Srinagar a valuable opportunity to re-kindle the political process to this end. There is pressure building from the Kashmir public on the self-proclaimed representatives to show their political mettle by joining the electoral process. Militant groups are aware of the consequences of missing out on the election for another six years. If the elections are sabotaged or disrupted by militant groups whose leadership operate from Pakistan, the onus will be on Gen Musharraf. No more proof would be needed of his partisan position on terrorism. That will strengthen New Delhi's case for action against Pakistan. To ensure the success of electoral process, however, New Delhi should re-deploy its forces from the international border to the Line of Control to make infiltration a very costly and foolhardy venture for Pakistan. This will provide confidence to the public, who wish to participate in

elections, and discourage those who are against it. The newly-elected Jammu and Kashmir legislature will be a source of strength for New Delhi's action against Pakistan.

Closely related to the issue of autonomy or self-governance is the desire for good governance. This involves a strong stable economic infrastructure that can unleash the entrepreneurial potential of the people of the state and generate employment; an accountable, streamlined, and people-sensitive administrative machinery; and a speedy grievance redressal system that includes an upright and effective judiciary. As all these are virtually absent in the state through most of this decade.

The very fact that Dr Abdullah became unpopular despite the popular verdict in his favour in 1996 elections shows that people in Kashmir are yearning not only for self-governance but also for good governance. It is therefore heartening to note that Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, has announced during his visit to the state in May 2002 an economic package of more than 6,000 crores rupees for the development of that state. But ensuring the proper and transparent utilization of this package is more important than the vast amount involved.

As regard the strategy of countering terror in Jammu is concerned, it needs to be noted that one of the foremost objectives of militancy in the Jammu region is to deepen the communal divide between the Hindus and Muslims. The peace workers have therefore to play as vital a role in containing militant violence as the security forces. For, without local support militancy cannot survive for long. Giving more powers to the security forces at the cost of the civil administration is not going to help, as only the civil officers have the knowledge of who's who in every area. Security forces cannot acquire this during their brief stay. Besides, some of the loopholes in the security system that have been hinted at the reports on the Kaluchak massacre—e.g., lack of coordination between intelligence agencies and the various security forces—need to be plugged. The reasons for the delay in fencing the international border have also to be addressed.[12]

VIII

India has demonstrated in the past such as after its nuclear tests in 1998 that it has the capability to act as a responsible and mature nation. India as a regional and nuclear power has once again had the opportunity to demonstrate its strategic maturity in facing the challenge to its security needs. The terrorism standoff is being forced on India by a Pakistani military leadership, which is itself facing serious difficulties. Strengthening that leadership by a military conflict may prove to be counter-productive for India. New Delhi's capability to counter Pakistan's proxy war against this country will be greatly enhanced by the success of the democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir. It would be essential therefore to increase the range of Indian options rather than narrow them to mere military choices. India's war against Pakistan sponsored terrorism will then be won with the cooperation and support of other nations' war against terrorism instead of opposition to it.

End Notes and References

1. After a long spell of domestic discord on each and every issue of national importance, Indians are once again showing solidarity on the issue of dealing with Pakistan. Except certain extremist leaders and intellectual for whom any talk of national solidarity is

“fascism,” most of the leaders are now calling for a decisive battle against Pakistan sponsored terror. The sense of unity displayed during the Lok Sabha debate on this issue in May vividly demonstrated that patience of Indians is very fast running out. Not only several leaders inside and outside Parliament called for a major offensive against Pakistan, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Ms. J Jayalalitha, even went to the extent of favouring a full-scale war. See editorial, “Strategic and Cool,” *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 18 May 2002. Several newspapers endorsed this call for military action against Pakistan. See, for instance, editorial, “Murder Most Foul,” *ibid*, 15 May 2002; editorial, “Message to Rocca,” *Times of India* (New Delhi), 15 May 2002; editorial, “Diplomatic Offensive alone will Not Do,” *Chronicle* (Bhopal), 18 May 2002; editorial, “*Pak ke Khilafh Karvay Samay ke Mang*” (Action against Pak is the Need of the Hour), *Nav Bharat Times* (New Delhi), 18 May 2002; and Hriday Narayan Dixit, “*Atam Raksha ki Kathin Chunauti*,” (Difficult Challenge of the Self-Preservation), *Jan Jagaran* (New Delhi), 16 May 2002.

2. This peace initiative was a bold one in the sense that had been seized by India and not by any Pak-sponsored terrorist outfit as was done in July 2000. This shifted the onus of keeping the peace to the warring groups of militants and their mentors across the border. It has also put General Mushraf, already under severe pressure from within his country to restore democracy and slammed for missile exports by the United States, on the defensive.
3. For an analysis of reasons for the failure of the Agra summit, see Nalini Kant Jha, “Southern Asia Internet Forum Dialogue Question XXIII, Part-5, “Life After Agra: What Next?” at www.stimson.org
4. K. K. Katyal, “The Washington Factor,” *The Hindu* (Madras), 20 May 2002.
5. See, for details, “Nalini Kant Jha, “The US, Pokharan-II and South Asia”, *India Quarterly* (New Delhi), vol. 55, nos. 1-2, January-June, 1999, pp.1-18; and his, “US-India Relations after Pokharan-II: Effectiveness of India’s Clout”, *South Asian Journal of Socio-Political Studies* (Kerala), vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 12-21. Also his, “India and the United States: Pursuit and Limits of Accommodation”, *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), vol. 27, no. 2, April 1994, pp. 89-107.
6. Shishir Gupta, “Upset with Britain and EU, India Charges them with Using Gujarat to Cater to Their Domestic Audiences,” *India Today* (New Delhi), vol.27, no.18, 30 April-6 May 2002, pp.42-43.
7. After the Kaluchak massacre, the Vajpayee Government is providing the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, who visited India and Pakistan at end of May 2002, clinching evidence of and details concerning Pakistan’s involvement in terrorist violence in India and the specific measures required by Islamabad to contain this menace. Though he may pass on this information to the US authorities, New Delhi can directly provide these details to the US and other major powers as well.
8. Prem Shankar Jha, “Are We Prepared for War?” *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 18 May 2002.

9. Ibid. Also see, Atul Aneja, "Full-scale War' Not an Option," *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 17 May 2002.
10. For details about strengthening of India's military preparedness to deal with Pakistan sponsored terrorism in Kashmir, see Nalini Kant Jha, "Roads that Lead from Kargil", *Trishul* (Wellington), vol. 12, no. 1, Autumn 1999, pp. 1-7; and his, "Defending the Himalayan Frontiers: Lessons from Kargil", paper presented at a National Seminar organized by the Centre of International Politics, Jawaharlal Nehru University and BSF in New Delhi on April 28-29, 2000.
11. Nalini Kant Jha, "Kashmir: Need for a Balanced Peace Initiative", *Journal of Peace Studies* (New Delhi), vol. 7, no. 6, November-December 2000, pp. 37-91. Also his, "Reviving US-India Friendship in a Changing International Order", *Asian Survey* (California, Berkeley), vol. 34, no. 12, 1994, pp. 30-35-46; and N. Krishnan, "Roads that Lead from Kargil", *Asian Age* (Calcutta), 22 July 1999.
12. Balraj Puri, "Countering Terror in Jammu," *The Hindu*, 27 May 2002.