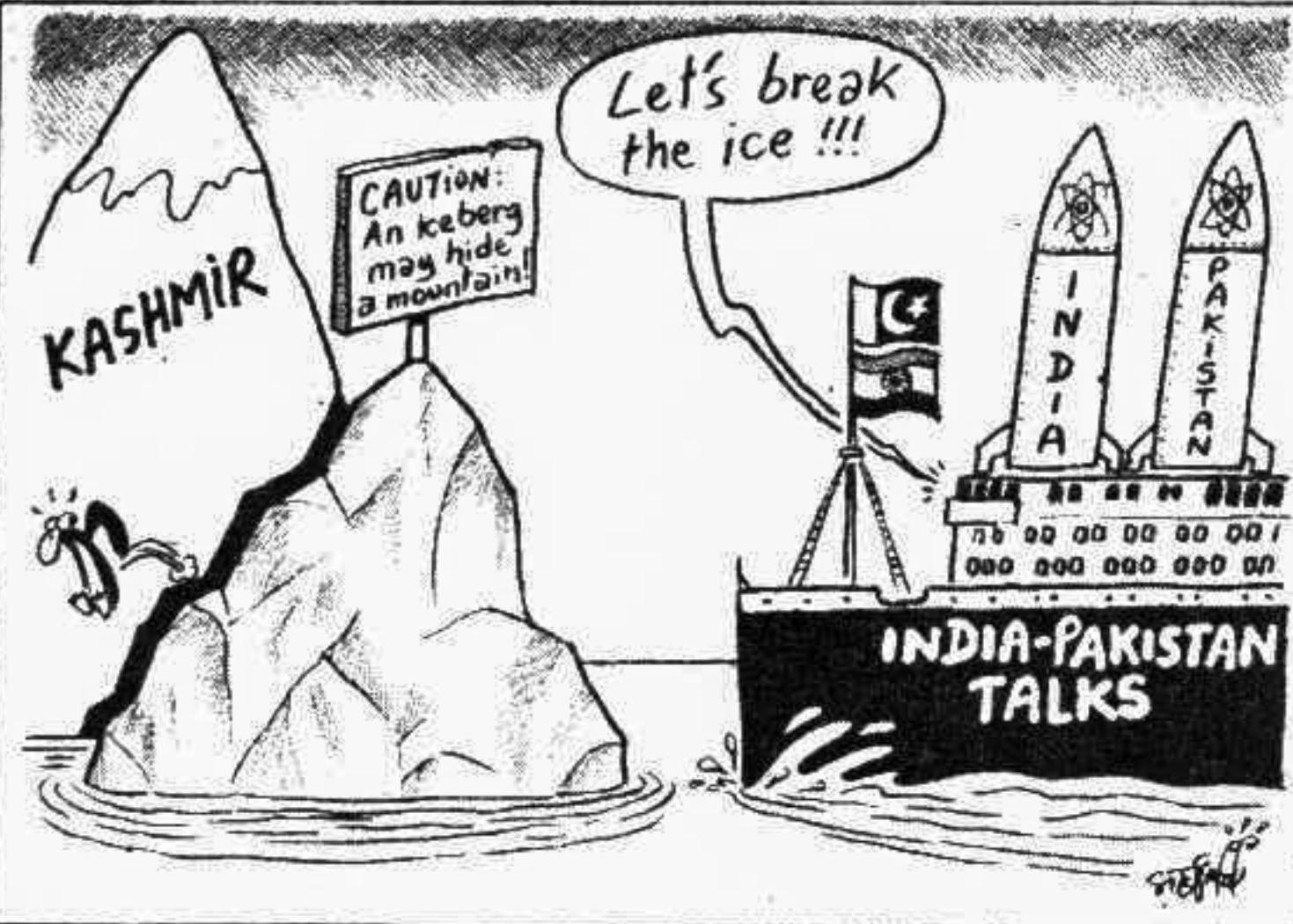


The Hope Summit

India and Pakistan declare their intent to resolve all issues, reports P Jayaram from Lahore



THE historic India-Pakistan summit concluded in Lahore on Feb 21 with the two Prime Ministers issuing what has been termed as the Lahore Declaration and the two sides signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to put all issues of contention behind them.

The MoU spelt out the statement of intent of the two sides to intensify efforts to resolve all outstanding bilateral issues, including the Jammu and Kashmir question. Setting out the agenda for future negotiations, both countries laid particular stress on the nuclear matters. They agreed to engage in consultations on security matters, including nuclear doctrines, and initiating confidence building measures in both nuclear and conventional areas.

In a fitting finale to the two-day summit, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif addressed a packed-to-the-brim press conference at the Governor's House in Lahore. Unwilling to be provoked by questions by Pakistani journalists, on the issue of "self-determination of Kashmiris," both Prime Ministers expressed their hope that these matters will be addressed in the bilateral negotiations as has been mentioned in both the joint statement and the MoU.

The two countries agreed to continue their respective moratorium on further nuclear tests unless their supreme national interests were jeopardised by extraordinary events.

The two sides shall continue to abide by their respective bilateral moratorium on conducting further nuclear tests explosions unless either side, in exercise of its national sovereignty, decides that extraordinary events have jeopardised its supreme interests," the MoU said. The MoU was signed by Indian Foreign Secretary K. Raghunath and his Pakistani counterpart, Shamshad Ahmad, in the presence of Vajpayee and Sharif. Though the two arch rivals of the subcontinent failed to put the nuclear genie back in the bottle, they agreed on a range of measures to avoid an accidental nuclear confrontation between them. The MoU said the two sides were fully committed to undertaking national measures to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons under their respective control.

"The two sides further undertake to notify each other immediately in the event of any accidental, unauthorised or unexplained incident that could create the risk of a fallout with adverse consequences for both sides, or an outbreak of nuclear war between the two countries, as well as to adopt measures aimed at diminishing the possibility of such actions, or such incidents being misinterpreted by the other," the MoU said.

Towards this end, they would identify and establish the appropriate communication mechanism for this purpose, it added. The two sides also undertook to provide each other with advance notification in respect of ballistic missile flight tests and to conclude a bilateral agreement in this regard. "The two sides shall engage in bilateral consultations on security concepts and nuclear doctrines with view to developing measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at avoidance of conflict," the MoU said.

Asked if they were disappointed that they could not "deliver more", particularly since both had described the meeting as "historic," Sharif noted that the Lahore Declaration made it clear that both governments would intensify efforts to resolve all issues, including Kashmir.

Vajpayee said the documents reflected the areas of understanding. "We must now implement our various understandings in good faith." He said though his visit was brief it was substantive and added that he was moved by the hospitality of the Pakistan Prime Minister and his people. He invited Sharif and his wife to visit India to give him a chance to return to hospitality.

— India Abroad News Service

Text of Documents Signed at Lahore

THE following is the text of the documents signed at the conclusion of the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Lahore on Sunday.

Lahore declaration

The prime ministers of the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

Sharing a vision of peace and stability between their countries, and of progress and prosperity for their people;

Convinced that durable peace and development of harmonious relations and friendly cooperation will serve the vital interests of the peoples of the two countries, enabling them to devote their energies for a better future;

Recognizing that the nuclear dimension of the security environment of the two countries adds to their responsibility for avoidance of conflict between the two countries;

Committed to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and the universally accepted principles of peaceful co-existence;

Reiterating the determination of both countries to implement the Simla Agreement in letter and spirit;

Committed to the objectives of universal nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation;

Convinced of the importance of mutually agreed confidence building measures for improving the security environment;

Recalling their agreement of 23 September, 1998, that an environment of peace and security is in the supreme national interest of both sides and that the resolution of all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, is essential for this purpose;

Have agreed that their respective governments:

- shall intensify their efforts to resolve all issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir;

- shall refrain from intervention and interference in each other's internal affairs;

- shall intensify their composite and integrated dialogue process for an early and positive outcome of the agreed bilateral agenda;

- shall take immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons and discuss concepts and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at prevention of conflict;

- reaffirm their commitment to the goals and objectives of SAARC and to concert their efforts towards the realization of the SAARC vision for the year 2000 and beyond with a view to promoting the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life through accelerated economic growth, social progress and cultural development;

- reaffirm their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and their determination to combat this menace;

- shall promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee
Prime Minister of the Republic of India

Muhammad Nawaz Sharif
Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Joint statement

In response to an invitation by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Pakistan from 20-21 February, 1999, on the inaugural run of the Delhi-Lahore bus service.

2. The prime minister of Pakistan received the Indian prime minister at the Wagah border on 20 February 1999. A banquet in honour of the Indian Prime Minister and his delegation was

hosted by the Prime Minister of Pakistan at Lahore Fort, on the same evening. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited the Minar-i-Pakistan, Mausoleum of Allama Iqbal, Gurudwara Dera Sahib and Samadhi of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh. On 21st February, a civic reception was held in honour of the visiting Prime Minister at the Governor's House.

3. The two leaders held discussions on the entire range of bilateral relations, regional cooperation within SAARC, and issues of international concern. They decided that:

a) The two Foreign Ministers will meet periodically to discuss all issues of mutual concern, including nuclear related issues;

b) The two sides shall undertake consultations on WTO related issues with a view to coordinating their respective positions;

c) The two sides shall determine areas of cooperation in Information Technology, in particular for tackling the problems of Y2K;

d) The two sides will hold consultations with a view to further liberalizing the visa and travel regime;

e) The two sides shall appoint a two-member committee at ministerial level to examine humanitarian issues relating to civilian detainees and missing POWs.

4. They expressed satisfaction on the commencement of a bus service between Lahore and New Delhi, the release of fishermen and civilian detainees and the renewal of contacts in the field of sports.

5. Pursuant to the directive given by the two Prime Ministers, the Foreign Secretaries of Pakistan and India signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 21 February 1999, identifying measures aimed at promoting an environment of peace and security between the two countries.

6. The two Prime Ministers signed the Lahore Declaration embodying their shared vision of peace and stability between their countries and of progress and prosperity for their peoples.

7. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee extended an invitation to Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to visit India on mutually convenient dates.

8. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee thanked Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to him and members of his delegation and for the excellent arrangements made for his visit.

use of nuclear weapons under their respective control. The two sides further undertake to notify each other immediately in the event of any accidental, unauthorized or unexplained incident that could create the risk of a fallout with adverse consequences for both sides, or an outbreak of a nuclear war between the two countries, as well as to adopt measures aimed at diminishing the possibility of such actions, or such incidents being misinterpreted by the other. The two sides shall identify/establish the appropriate communication mechanism for this purpose.

4. The two sides shall continue to abide by their respective unilateral moratorium on conducting further nuclear test explosions unless either side, in exercise of its national sovereignty decides that extraordinary events have jeopardized its supreme interests.

5. The two sides shall conclude an agreement on prevention of incidents at sea in order to ensure safety of navigation by naval vessels, and aircraft belonging to the two sides.

6. The two sides shall periodically review the implementation of existing Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and where necessary, set up appropriate consultative mechanisms to monitor and ensure effective implementation of these CBMs.

7. The two sides shall undertake a review of the existing communication links (e.g. between the respective Directors-General, Military Operations) with a view to upgrading and improving these links, and to provide for fail-safe and secure communications.

8. The two sides shall engage in bilateral consultations on security, disarmament and non-proliferation issues within the context of negotiations on these issues in multilateral fora.

Where required, the technical details of the above measures will be worked out by experts of the two sides in meetings to be held on mutually agreed dates, before mid 1999, with a view to reaching bilateral agreements.

(K. Raghunath)
Foreign Secretary of the Republic of India

(Shamshad Ahmad)
Foreign Secretary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Courtesy: The Dawn of Pakistan

Looking at the Core Issue for a New Ground

It appears that both India and Pakistan have their entrenched positions on the Kashmir dispute, says Barrister Harun ur Rashid, as he analyses the Lahore Declaration

Declaration

INDIA'S Prime Minister 27-hour visit to Lahore from 20th February produced plenty of robust statements of admirable intention from both sides but no specific steps or time-frame to resolve the core Kashmir issue acting as a spoiler in their bilateral relations. However the commitment to reduce the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons will be a great relief to a wary international community.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said at a banquet held at the historic Lahore Fort on 20th February: "As we seek to resolve issues we have to be conscious that there is nothing which cannot be solved through goodwill and direct dialogue."

In reply his Indian counterpart, Atal Behari Vajpayee said: "There can be no greater legacy that we can leave behind than to do away with mistrust, to abjure and eliminate conflict to erect an edifice of durable peace, amity, harmony, and co-operation."

Optimists would say that a new era would hopefully begin in bilateral relations of the two countries.

The visit had ended with a Declaration signed by the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan. The 13-paragraph Declaration, known as Lahore Declaration, set out the parameters within which they will attempt to resolve outstanding bilateral issues including the dispute of the Kashmir territory.

The Declaration commits the

two countries to refrain from intervention in each other's internal affairs, intensify and upgrade their ongoing dialogue process and step up efforts to resolve all bilateral issues including the Kashmir dispute and take immediate steps to reduce accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons.

Besides the Lahore Declaration, the two foreign Secretaries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) where the two countries undertook to notify each other immediately in the event of any "accidental, unauthorized or unexplained" incident that could create the risk of a fall-out with adverse consequences for both sides or an outbreak of a nuclear war between the two countries or an otherwise haunted country in the region. This agreement will provide a relief to the neighbouring countries of India and Pakistan that accidental nuclear war would be averted through an effective communication mechanism, a hot-line between the two countries at the highest political level.

Both sides may claim that the undertakings in the Declaration constitute a diplomatic victory over the other party. India may assert that reiteration of the 1972 Simla Agreement would mean that the Kashmir dispute will be resolved on a bilateral negotiation without the involvement of a third party. The commitment to non-interference in the other's internal affairs will prevent Pakistan from assisting the Muslim militants in the Indian administered Kashmir.

Both sides may claim that the undertakings in the Declaration constitute a diplomatic victory over the other party. India may assert that reiteration of the 1972 Simla Agreement would mean that the Kashmir dispute will be resolved on a bilateral negotiation without the involvement of a third party. The commitment to non-interference in the other's internal affairs will prevent Pakistan from assisting the Muslim militants in the Indian administered Kashmir. On the other hand, Pakistan may claim that the inclusion of

Kashmir as one of the issues to be resolved is a victory for them and refraining from internal affairs in Pakistan will suggest that "Indian inspired violence" in the province of Sindh will cease.

It may not be ignored that the visit took place against the background of violent protests in Lahore by thousands of members of Pakistan's Islamic Party, the Jamat-i-Islami. They protested the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Pakistan while Indian military oppression continues unabated on the Kashmiri people. The protest escalated in the evening when the demonstrators were trying to block access to Lahore's Red Fort where the official banquet was held.

It is an admitted fact that the resolution of the Kashmir dispute is the root cause of the tension between the two countries. It is the core issue for Pakistan and for them the bilateral relations with India cannot be moved into top gear until and unless the Kashmir dispute is first resolved. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz is reported to have said that the Pakistani public could not indefinitely sustain a dialogue process not showing substantive progress on Kashmir nor

remain immune to Kashmiri people's sufferings.

The position of both sides on the Kashmir dispute is well-known. India claims all of Kashmir (Pakistan rules one third of it) and Pakistan wants Kashmiris to decide at a UN-mandated plebiscite whether to join Pakistan or India. New Delhi is fighting a 10-year old revolt by the Kashmiri Muslim militants seeking either independence or union with Pakistan. Pakistan accuses India of gross and systematic violation of human rights of the Kashmiri people to suppress their fundamental rights of self-determination on Kashmir territory while India suspects Pakistan for assisting the Muslim militants with training as well as arms and ammunition.

The question is whether India and Pakistan will be able to resolve the Kashmir dispute given the wide divergence of each other's position. India considers that commitment to Simla Agreement implies that the Kashmir issue should be resolved bilaterally and no third party would be allowed to intervene. While Pakistan maintains that Simla Agreement does not exclude a third party's intercession because under Article 33 of the UN Charter both India and Pakistan are bound

to seek solution of the Kashmir dispute by "negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement."

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arms and ammunition.

The visit will be considered a

turning point in the history of the

sub-continent if one of the

consequences of the Lahore

Declaration leads to a path

where both sides will have a

hard look at the core Kashmir

issue and initiate a new ground

to break the stalemate.

We all hope that this historic

visit of India's Prime Minister to Lahore in 10 years for what

he hailed as a defining moment in South Asian history

turns into, in the words of Pakistan's Prime Minister "a race for the social and economic development of the region." Some

how the leaders of both countries have to find a political way out, otherwise the people of

South Asia will suffer.

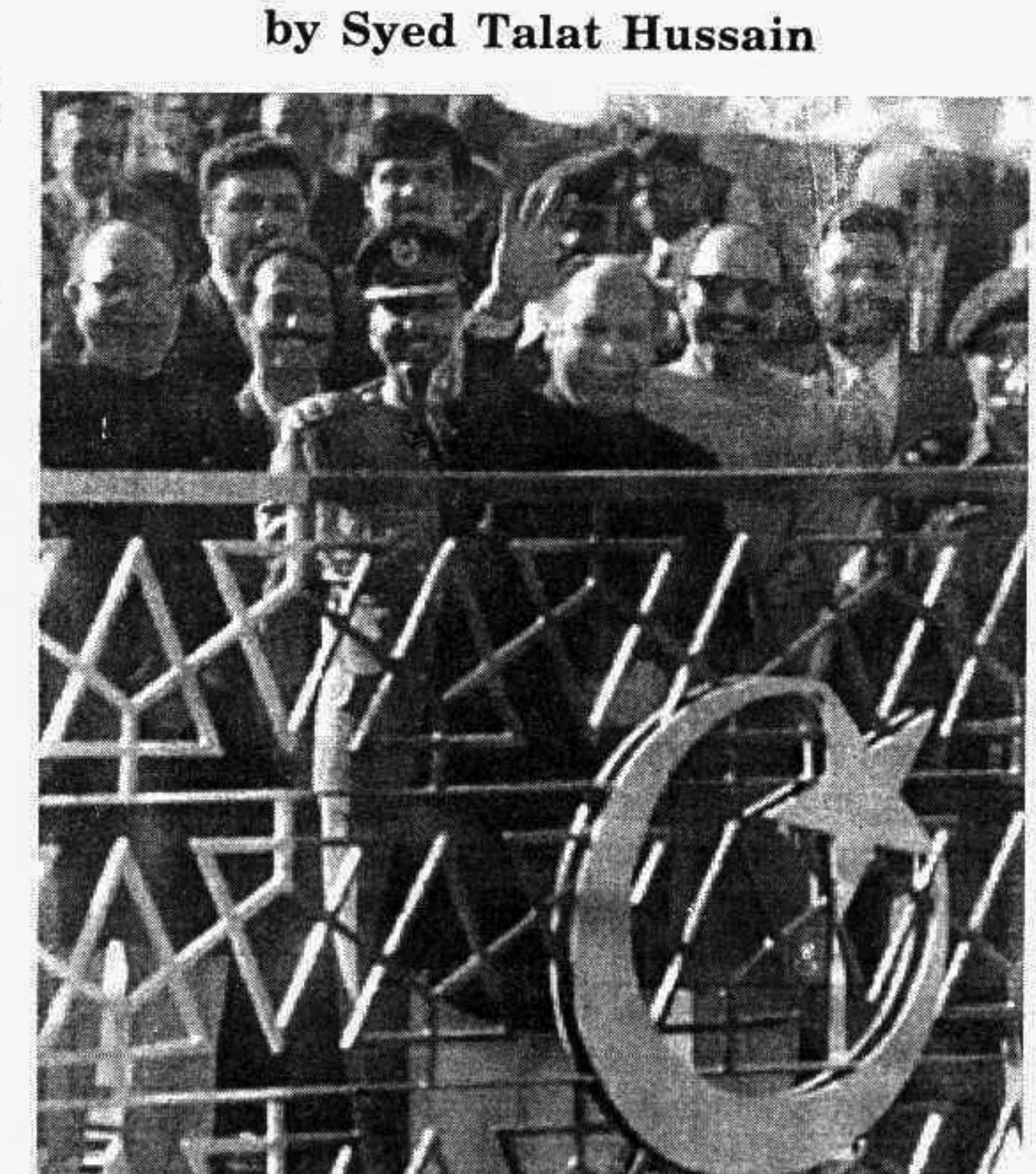
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Kashmir: Now a Domestic Bone of Contention

by Syed Talat Hussain



Bridging the gap across the border, but back home, it's tough

capitals, the better it is for Pakistan; iv) both wanted the International community to pressure India to withdraw its troops and hold a plebiscite; v) neither was averse to third party intervention to help resolve the issue; vi) neither accepted that the Simla Agreement in any way has diluted the relevance of Kashmir; vii) both accuse each other of not doing enough for the Kashmiris.

Now it is different. Mr Sharif's peace burst