

PAKISTAN - INDIAN PEACE INITIATIVES - AN INTERNET RESEARCH WORK

BY

Dr Yahya Hassan Bajwa

FOR WORLD CONFERENCE ON RELIGION AND PEACE

(Institute for Communication Research, Meggen and TransCommunication,
Baden/Switzerland)

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1. Introduction

World Conference on Religion and Peace is committed to Peace Work between nations all over the world. “Today in many parts of the world, people remain divided from one another based on nationalist, ethnic, or religious rivalries that are passed on from generation to generation...” [Peace Education, see www.wcrp.org] This can be seen also in the conflict between Pakistan and India. Already for more than 50 years both countries are fighting against each other without any positive result. In this research paper for the World Conference on Religion and Peace / Peace Education Standing Commission, the history of this conflict will be shown from the Pakistani and Indian viewpoint. The comments of peace loving people in both countries will point out why Pakistanis and Indians want peace. Their views are publicised in different internet-sites which will be checked and commented. At the end also the question “what role could WCRP play in this process” will be asked.

2. Historical Background - "The Pakistani and Indian Viewpoint"

2.a. "The Pakistani Viewpoint"

The Nehru Report recommended in 1928 that a Declaration of Rights should be inserted in the constitution assuring the fullest liberty on conscience and religion.

The following are the recommendations advanced by the Nehru Report:

1. India should be given the status of a Dominion on a unitary basis with parliamentary powers of state.
2. Residuary powers should be vested in the center.
3. India should have a parliamentary form of government headed by Prime Minister and six ministers appointed by Governor General.
4. There should be no separate electorate or weightage for minorities.
5. Reservation of Muslim seats could be possible in the provinces where Muslim population was at least 10%, but this was to be in strict proportion to the size of the community.
6. Muslims should enjoy one fourth representation in the Central Legislature.
7. The N.W.F.P. should be given full provincial status and Sind should be taken away from Bombay and made a separate province.
8. A new Canarese-Speaking province 'Karnatak' be established in South India.
9. Hindi should be made the official language of India."

[See: www.storyofpakistan.com/articletext.asp]

"Gandhi-Jinnah Talks occupy an eminent significance with regard to the political problems of India and Pakistan movement. The talks between the two great leaders of the sub-continent began in response to a general public desire for a settlement of Hindu-Muslim differences. Gandhi wrote to Quaid-i-Azam on July 17, 1944 in which he expressed his desire of meeting Quaid-i-Azam. [...]

Gandhi-Jinnah talks began on September 19, 1944 in Bombay and lasted up to September 24, 1944. The talks were held directly and through correspondence. Gandhi told Quaid-i-Azam that he had come in his personal capacity and was not representing the Hindus or Congress.

[...] Quaid-i-Azam painstakingly explained the basis for the demand of Pakistan. **"We maintain"** he wrote to Gandhi, **"that Muslims and Hindus are two major nations by any definition or test of a nation. We are a nation of hundred million. We have our distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all the cannons of international law, we are a nation"**. He added that he was, **"convinced that the true welfare not only of the Muslims but of the rest of India lies in the division of India as proposed in the Lahore Resolution"**.

Gandhi on the other hand maintained that India was one nation and saw in the Pakistan Resolution "Nothing but ruin for the whole of India". "If, however, Pakistan had to be conceded, the areas in which the Muslims are in an absolute majority should be demarcated by a Commission approved by both the Congress and the Muslim League. The wishes of the people of these areas will be obtained through Referendum. These areas shall form a separate state as soon as possible after India is free from foreign domination. There shall be a treaty of separation which should also provide for the efficient and

satisfactory administration of foreign affairs, defence, internal communication, custom and the like which must necessarily continue to be the matters of common interest between the contracting countries". This meant, in effect, that power over whole of India should first be transferred to Congress, which thereafter would allow Muslim majority areas that voted for separation to be constituted, not as independent sovereign state but as part of an Indian Federation.

Gandhi contended that his offer gave the substance of the Lahore resolution. Quaid-i-Azam did not agree to the proposal and the talks finished.”

[See: www.storyofpakistan.com/articletext.asp]

The discussion on this topic went on but in 1945 the Simla Conference failed on account of the refusal of the British government as well as the Congress party to recognise the Muslim League as the only representative party of the Muslims. [Elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures were held in the winter 1945-46. The League secured 425 out of the 441 Muslim seats in the Provincial Legislature and won all the Muslim seats in the Central Legislature.] Before the Simla Conference already there was a separation of the ideas between Muslims and Hindus. One year after the Nehru Report Muhammad Ali Jinnah brought up the ideas of the Muslims:

“It was on March 28, 1929, that Quaid-i-Azam invited members of the Delhi Muslim Conference to a meeting of the council of All-India Muslim League. It was at this meeting, in which Shafi group also participated, that Quaid gave a more cogent presentation to the Muslim demands in his famous Fourteen Points, as counter proposals to Hindu demands as expressed in the Nehru Report.

According to this resolution, no scheme for the future constitution of the Government of India would be acceptable to Muslims unless and until the following basic principles were incorporated in it.

1. The form of the future constitution should be federal with the residuary powers vested in the provinces.
2. A uniform measure of autonomy shall be granted to all provinces.
3. All legislatures in the country and other elected bodies shall be constituted on the definite principle of adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province without reducing the majority in any province to a minority or even equality.
4. In the Central Legislative, Mussalman [Muslims] representation shall not be less than one third.
5. Representation of communal groups shall continue to be by means of separate electorates as at present, provided it shall be open to any community at any time to abandon its separate electorate in favour of a joint electorate.
6. Any territorial distribution that might at any time be necessary shall not in any way affect the Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and the Northwest Frontier Province.
7. Full religious liberty, i.e. liberty of belief, worship and observance, propaganda, association and education, shall be guaranteed to all communities.
8. No bill or any resolution or any part thereof shall be passed in any legislature or any other elected body if three-fourths of the members of any community in that particular body oppose such a bill resolution or part thereof on the ground that it would be injurious to the interests of that community or in the alternative, such other method is devised as may be found feasible and practicable to deal with such cases.
9. Sind should be separated from Bombay Presidency.

10. Reforms should be introduced in the Northwest Frontier Province and Baluchistan on the same footing as in the other provinces.

11. Provision should be made in the constitution giving Muslims an adequate share, along with the other Indians, in all the services of the state and in local self-governing bodies having due regard to the requirements of efficiency.

12. The constitution should embody adequate safeguards for the protection of Muslim culture and for the protection and promotion of Muslim education, language, religion, personal laws and Muslim charitable institution and for their due share in the grants-in-aid given by the state and by local self-governing bodies.

13. No cabinet, either Central or Provincial, should be formed without there being a proportion of at least one third Muslim ministers.

14. No change shall be made in the constitution by the Central Legislature except with the occurrence of the State's contribution of the Indian Federation.” [See: www.storyofpakistan.com/articletext.asp]

During the Allahbad address in 1930, Allama Iqbal a great poet-philosopher and an active political leader explained in his address that Islam was the major formative factor in the life history of Indian Muslims. **“Allama Iqbal defined the Muslims of India as a nation and suggested that there could be no possibility of peace in the country unless and until they were recognised as a nation and under a federal system the Muslim majority units were given the same privileges which were to be given to the Hindu majority units.** It was the only way in which both the Muslims and the Hindus could prosper in accordance with their respective cultural values.

As a permanent solution to the Hindu-Muslim problem, Allama Iqbal proposed that the Punjab, North West Frontier Province, Baluchistan and Sind should be converted into one province and declared that the Northwest part of the country was destined to unite, self government within the British empire or without the British empire. This he suggested was the only way to do away with the communal riots and bring peace in the sub-continent.“ [See: www.storyofpakistan.com/articletext.asp]

In 1947 Lord Mountbatten entered into a series of talks with the Congress and the Muslim League leaders. Quaid-i-Azam made it clear that the demand for Pakistan had the support of all the Muslims of India and that he could not withdraw from this. [...] Mountbatten now prepared for the partition of the sub-continent and announced it on June 3, 1947.” [See: www.storyofpakistan.com/articletext.asp <<http://www.storyofpakistan.com/articletext.asp>>]

“Indian Independence Act

British parliament on July 18, 1947 passed the Indian Independence Act. The Act created two dominions: Indian Union and Pakistan. It also provided for the complete end of British control over Indian affairs from August 15, 1947. Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was appointed the first Governor General of Pakistan and Liaquat Ali Khan became it's first Prime Minister. Pakistan became a Dominion within the British Commonwealth of nations.” [See: www.storyofpakistan.com/articletext.asp <<http://www.storyofpakistan.com/articletext.asp>>]

2.b. Historical Background - “The Indian Viewpoint”

For the Hindus the two-nation-theory was not acceptable as it meant loosing big parts of British India to the Muslims, a minority of good 70 million.

“The British Government summoned the First Round Table Conference in London in 1930, to discuss the Simon Commission Report. The Congress boycotted it. In 1931, Viceroy Irwin persuaded the Congress to join the Second Round table conference and agreed to release all the political leaders and asked to suspend the Civil Disobedience Movement. **At its Karachi session, Gandhi was chosen to represent India at the conference in September 1931.** The Third Round Table conference held in 1932, was not attended by the Congress as the real Indian participation in the making of the constitution was negligible. **In 1935, The Government of India Act was passed in the British parliament and provided for the establishment of an All-Indian Federation and new system of government on the basis of provincial autonomy.** The Congress swept the polls in seven out of eleven provinces in July, 1937. **However, the Muslim league secured less than a quarter of the seats reserved for Muslims.** The Congress Ministry (1937-39) attended to the social welfare of people, released political prisoners and promoted civil liberties. However, due to the limitations of the Act of 1935, their achievements were few.”

[See: www.historyofindia.com/btrfrm.html <<http://www.historyofindia.com/btrfrm.html>>]

“The Congress at its Bombay session passed the famous **Quit India resolution**, calling for mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, under the leadership of Gandhi Ji. He stressed that *"We shall either free India or die in the attempt; We shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery"*; popularly known as "Do or Die". But before the Congress could start the movement, the government arrested all the major leaders and the Congress was declared illegal. Spontaneous popular revolts broke out with the battle cry of 'British Quit India'. [...]

During the end of the war period, Wavell came as Viceroy and started negotiations with Indian leaders for constitutional settlement. He released all political leaders and convened a conference in Shimla in 1945. He proposed a new executive council which would be entirely Indian with Hindus and Muslims with equal representation, except for the Viceroy, himself and commander-in-chief and will not be responsible for the Central assembly. With the end of the war, the talks broke down because the Congress objected to an attempt to reduce its status to a pure Hindu party and Jinnah insisted that all the Muslims members of the executive council should be nominated by his league.” [See: www.historyofindia.com/btrfrm.html <<http://www.historyofindia.com/btrfrm.html>>]

Finally Nehru claimed the independence from the British Raj:

"Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. **At the stroke of midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.** A moment comes which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, then an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity" -- Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister.

[See: www.itihahas.com/independent/15aug47times.html]

3. Need of peace between Pakistan and India

The meaning of peace is important for all - for the Indian and Pakistani Government, for the politicians in both countries and for most of the citizens in these two states. The only problem we face is that it seems that Governments and politicians have another interpretation of what one understands under "peace". Does "peace" mean only peace for one side and not for the other? Has "Salaam" and "Shanti" become as hollow in this region as "Salaam" and "Shalom" has become in the Middle East? What is the meaning of peace? Lets read:

"A favourite story that Grandfather [Gandhi Ji] liked to tell us was the story of an ancient Indian King who was obsessed with the desire to find the meaning of peace. What is peace and how can we get it and when we find it what should we do with it were some of the issues that bothered him.

Intellectuals in his kingdom were invited to answer the King's questions for a handsome reward. Many tried but none could explain how to find peace and what to do with it. At last someone said the King ought to consult the sage who lived just outside the borders of his Kingdom:

"He is an old man and very wise," the King was told. "If anyone can answer your questions he can."

The King went to the sage and posed the eternal question. Without a word the sage went into the kitchen and brought a grain of wheat to the King.

"In this you will find the answer to your question," the Sage said as he placed the grain of wheat in the King's outstretched palm.

Puzzled but unwilling to admit his ignorance the King clutched the grain of wheat and returned to his palace. He locked the precious grain in a tiny gold box and placed the box in his safe. Each morning, upon waking, the King would open the box and look at the grain to seek an answer but could find nothing.

Weeks later another sage, passing through, stopped to meet the King who eagerly invited him to resolve his dilemma. The King explained how he had asked the eternal question and this sage gave him a grain of wheat instead. "I have been looking for an answer every morning but I find nothing."

The Sage said: **"It is quite simple, your honour. Just as this grain represents nourishment for the body, peace represents nourishment for the soul. Now, if you keep this grain locked up in a gold box it will eventually perish without providing nourishment or multiplying. However, if it is allowed to interact with the elements - light, water, air, soil - it will flourish, multiply and soon you would have a whole field of wheat which will nourish not only you but so many others. This is the meaning of peace. It must nourish your soul and the souls of others, it must multiply by interacting with the elements."** [www.cbu.edu/Gandhi/html/articles1.html]

This is the essence of Gandhi's philosophy of "non-violence" or the pursuit of truth as Arun Gandhi is writing.

There is another story which gives an answer to the question what does peace mean?

„The Meaning of Peace

Author Unknown

There once was a King who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The King looked at all the pictures, but there were only two he really liked, and he had to choose between them.

One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for the peaceful towering mountains all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace.

The second picture had mountains, too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky from which rain fell, and in which lightning played. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all. But when the King looked, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest ... a picture of a perfect peace.

Which of the pictures won the prize? The King chose the second picture. Do you know why?

"Because," explained the King, **"peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace."**

[[http:// www.planetdeb.net/topics/messages/2919.html](http://www.planetdeb.net/topics/messages/2919.html)]

Both stories show us that peace means to struggle for something - we have to interact with the elements or one has to calm one's heart in the middle of noise, trouble and hard work. The creation of the modern states of India and Pakistan was with the noise of war, bloodshed, killing and sorrow on both sides. Also after 1947 both countries have fought against each other wars several times without any result - except that many more citizens had to suffer.

"It is known that India and Pakistan have had a very difficult relationship for the last 50 years. We have gone through full-scale wars, smaller battles, ongoing conflict over the status of Kashmir, economic disputes, and a great psychological divide. Some time or other, some one or either must take lead, to turn the wheels of time. For too long we have been trapped in the past. It's more than urgent to begin the future.

Of late many concerned citizens in India and Pakistan have made contributions towards new thinking about resolving conflicts and promoting co-operation between the two countries. Our institutes have participated in the processes in different ways. We are now excited to come together to jointly suggest a road map to begin the future." (A joint statement by Institute of Regional Studies/Islamabad/Pakistan and International Centre for Peace Initiatives/Mumbai/India) [See: www.peaceinitiatives.org/icpi.htm]

Most of the comments are the same. It is high time to change our way of life. If wars couldn't bring a positive change, then we could try it once with peace!?

"The military flare-up in Kargil has worsened the continuing tensions in Jammu and Kashmir. The claim that the possession of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan would create a situation of deterrence and hence of peace has been falsified and the hopes raised by the Lahore Declaration have been belied. In the nuclear environment in the region, this development has escalated the danger of war in the sub-continent.

The resort to aerial bombings so close to the Line of Control has escalated the military tensions between India and Pakistan. What is alarming is that this bombing and armed operations are taking a toll of innocent civilian lives. This flare-up coming so soon after the Lahore Declaration exposes the fragility of the two governments' commitment to peace. So long as the Kashmir question remains unresolved such flare-ups are likely to recur and threaten to escalate into full-fledged war including the danger of nuclear a holocaust.

There should be an immediate cessation of armed hostilities and bombings. Indian and Pakistan troops and militants and mercenaries should withdraw immediately. There should be a demilitarised zone along the LoC [Line of Control]. Steps must be taken urgently to start discussions on the pending issues with active participation of people from both sides of the LoC [Line of Control]. (E. Deenadayalan on behalf of the Pakistan-India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy, New Delhi; Times of India, Saturday 5 June, 1999, Letters to the Editor) [See: www.mnet.fr/aiindex/Kargil/Kargilindex.html].

It seems that Kashmir is a main hindrance for a successful peace in this area. Again, through wars both states were not able to solve anything!

“The Indian and Pakistani forces have, for many years, exchanged fire along the Line of Control in Kashmir. The ongoing Border War in the Kargil Sector of Jammu and Kashmir has been a matter of grave concern, as this may well lead to an all-out war, with disastrous consequences for the peoples of both nations. As both countries have now become 'nuclear weapons capable,' there is serious risk of these weapons being used, by accident or design - thereby adding an unimaginable new and horrifying dimension to this entire conflict.

The current violation of the LOC by the Mujahideens/infiltrators, assisted by Pakistani Armed Forces, has led to this unfortunate situation. However the root cause for these recurrent violations lies in the non-resolution of the long-standing 'Kashmir question.' Despite being signatories to both the Simla agreement and the recent Lahore Declaration, which specifically highlights the resolution of all disputes by peaceful means and negotiation, we find ourselves locked in yet another round of hostilities.

Before things get out of hand, we would like to impress upon the political leadership in both our countries the urgent need to cease all military activities, and to take steps to restore peace and stability in the region. This, we believe, can only be achieved by resorting to negotiations in the spirit of the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, to arrive at a permanent and acceptable political resolution of the dispute.” Admiral L. Ramdas; Chairperson - India Chapter; Pakistan-India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy; June 18, 1999; Hyderabad, India.

[www.mnet.fr/aiindex/Kargil/PIFPDhydbad18june99.html]

Time has come that the people start to struggle for peace if the leaders of India and Pakistan are unable to do so. Leaders have often little chance to make drastic changes which some times are needed because they fear of loosing their power and - as it is very important in the Indian Subcontinent - their seat! Politicians live for the sake of politics and their own power although they keep telling the people that their biggest concern is the country and its welfare. After the nuclear tests on both sides, ordinary people stood up to protest against the circle of terror and fear!

“Following the South Asian nuclear tests last May, peace lovers and concerned citizens in both India and Pakistan have been voicing their apprehensions of nuclear escalation and its disastrous

consequences for the subcontinent. The eruption of armed clashes in the Kargil sector along the LoC [Line of Control] has led to frenzied demands by war-mongers on each side to teach a lesson to the other. The inevitable Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)Ç, has proved the fallacy of the official claims that there would now be no South Asian war after acquisition of nuclear deterrent. What has happened is just the opposite: it is precisely the false sense of security born of the newly acquired nuclear status that has led up to the Kargil conflagration.“ STATEMENT ISSUED TO THE PRESS ON BEHALF OF PAKISTAN PEACE COALITION, July 8, 1999 [www.mnet.fr/aiindex/Kargil/Kargilindex.html]

Retired army personnel do know about the destruction which might come from the weapons which have been built up during the years by their governments. Therefore the following statement is important which has been signed by retired personnel from the armed forces of both countries:

"JULY 1998

JOINT STATEMENT AGAINST NUCLEAR TESTS AND WEAPONS BY RETIRED PAKISTANI AND INDIAN ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL

Recent developments in South Asia in the field of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery are a serious threat to the wellbeing of this region. The fact that India and Pakistan have fought wars in the recent past and do not as yet enjoy the best of relations, makes this development all the more ominous. The signatories of this statement are not theoreticians or arm-chair idealists; we have spent many long years in the profession of arms and have served our countries both in peacetime and in war. By virtue of our experience and the positions we have held, we have a fair understanding of the destructive parameters of conventional and nuclear weapons. We are of the considered view that nuclear weapons should be banished from the South Asian region, and indeed from the entire globe. We urge India and Pakistan to take the lead by doing away with nuclear weapons in a manifest and verifiable manner, and to confine nuclear research and development strictly to peaceful and beneficent spheres.

We are convinced that the best way of resolving disputes is through peaceful means and not through war - least of all by the threat or use of nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan need to address their real problems of poverty and backwardness, not waste our scarce resources on acquiring means of greater and greater destruction.

Signed					by
Air Marshal	Zafar	A.	Choudhry		(Pakistan)
Admiral	L.		Ramdas		(India)
Lt. Gen.	Gurbir		Mansingh		(India)

Major General M. A. Mohaiemen (Bangladesh) "

[JOINT STATEMENT AGAINST NUCLEAR TESTS AND WEAPONS BY RETIRED PAKISTANI AND INDIAN ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL, Air Marshall Zafar A. Choudhary.htm]

4. Some different sites on the internet and their opinion on peace work

Explanation: The text in [...] is a comment by the author and starts always with the remark “Comment”.

4.1. **The Beginning of the Future a Propose of the**

Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad (Pakistan)

www.peaceinitiatives.org/icpi.htm and www.irs.org.pk / E-Mail: aziz@irspak.isb.sdnpk.org and

International Centre for Peace Initiatives, Mumbai (India)

www.peaceinitiatives.org / E-Mail: icpi@bom5.vsnl.net.in / E-Mail: icpi@bom5.vsnl.net.in

with interviews, the address of President Musharraf to the Pakistani Nation on January 12th 2002 and Indian reaction to it in the media.

Sundeep Waslekar, founding director of the International Centre for Peace Initiatives and Bashir Ahmad, director of Institute of Regional Studies, made a joint statement in which they said:

“Of late many concerned citizens in India and Pakistan have made contributions towards new thinking about resolving conflicts and promoting co-operation between the two countries. Our institutes have participated in the processes in different ways. We are now excited to come together to jointly suggest a road map to begin the future.

We hope that this paper will make a positive contribution to the present debate in our countries. We dedicate this paper to goodwill and wisdom, which we believe exist in our countries but are presently latent. Its time to activate ourselves in sincerity and good faith. Its time to begin the future.”

[<http://www.peaceinitiatives.org>]

It is really time to give chance to sincerity and good faith in both countries and also to the two governments. Both should be able to do what many citizen of India and Pakistan have been doing already long ago – to become partners and even friends. How many Indians and Pakistanis have become good friends in a for both of them foreign country such as Dubai, Bahrain, England or the States? We have joint businesses by Pakistanis and Indians. There comes the question why can't the governments also make this step? The purpose of this joint venture in peace is “to seek a viable basis for peace, friendship, and co-operation between India and Pakistan” and “to suggest ways and means of defusing tension, creating an atmosphere of mutual trust, and moving towards purposeful and conclusive negotiations for a lasting peace settlement” [www.peaceinitiatives.org]. It is also very important to the see their assessment – “we have concentrated only on forward-looking ideas”. Both organisations understand that “there are several different interpretations of the history of relations between India and Pakistan” [www.peaceinitiatives.org]. “We do not wish to contribute to a debate on the past. Rather, we would like to focus on tomorrow and contribute thoughts and ideas for a better future for the people of India and Pakistan” [www.peaceinitiatives.org]. This point has been covered in this research paper under the different viewpoints of the history of Pakistan and India.

The **hypothesis** the paper of “peace initiatives” is based on the idea that the relation between India and Pakistan has to be improved and that the outstanding conflicts – especially the Jammu and Kashmir issue – has to be included in this peace finding process. For Waslekar and Ahmad it “is imperative for India and Pakistan to make a fundamental reassessment of their approaches to bilateral relations.

- Since both countries have failed to attain a high level of human development as indicated by their position below 125 in the UNDP Human Development Index.
- Since a state of confrontation between two countries armed with nuclear arms not only poses a risk to almost 1.5 billion people living in South Asia - one fourth of the world population - but also to people elsewhere in the world.
- Since continual confrontation has contributed to religious extremism, social intolerance, terrorism and crime, undermining the moral fabric of societies within the two countries.
- Since both countries have abundant natural resources, as well as talented human resources which should be harnessed with single-minded determination in the interest of the masses.
- Since many countries in the world, such as Israel-Palestine, North-South Korea, Northern Ireland and Guatemala have actively sought to establish peace in recent years creating a positive trend for civilised societies” [www.peaceinitiatives.org].

[**Comment:** The question of moral is important for both, Pakistan and India, as both of them have become nuclear-power states. Their action would not only have direct consequences for these two states but for the whole area. Larry King asked in his CNN interview Gen. Pervais Musharraf if he feared that fundamentalists could take over and that they would get hold of nuclear bombs:

“MUSHARRAF: These thoughts are around the world, in the West. But let me tell you, these thoughts are with those who don't really understand the reality of Pakistan internally.

First of all, let me say that all our nuclear assets, all our strategic assets are in very, very safe hands. We have an excellent command and control system which we have evolved, and there is no question of their falling into the hands of any fundamentalists.

But let me also tell you that Pakistan is a moderate Islamic country, and I mean every word when I say that. No extremist -- religious extremist party has ever won any high number of seats in any election in Pakistan. Even now, when we had this local government election, let me tell you that the candidates who had support from religious parties are not even 2 percent of the total number elected. So, therefore, there is a moderate -- Pakistan is a moderate Islamic country, and there is no question of any fundamentalist getting a hold of our strategic assets.” [Transcript: President's interview with CNN (23/10/2001)]

For both institutions, Institute of Regional Studies and International Centre for Peace Initiatives, the Kashmir question has to be addressed:

- “We believe that it is essential to address the Kashmir question - the core issue of discord between India and Pakistan - in order to move towards a durable peace accord in the region. While India must sincerely acknowledge the existence of Kashmir as a dispute and refrain from

calling the status of Jammu and Kashmir a settled matter, Pakistan should reaffirm its commitment to abstain from use of force in order to secure a solution to the Kashmir problem.

[**Comment:** The Kashmir problem is seen by all organisations which are struggling for peace as a main problem which has to be solved. Kunwar Idrees, an official of the Pakistan Government for 36 years in the superior administrative cadre, and who served also in the public, industrial and banking sector. During the last 6 years he has been on the boards of some companies dealing with automobile and banking. He is not involved actively in the management but the Government listens to his advice. He also writes for Dawn, the biggest English newspaper in Pakistan:

“In the past 52 years Pakistan and India have been confronting each other. They have gone to war for at least three times. But they were not able to resolve their political problems, which essentially centres around the question of Kashmir. We should now change the approach and economic co-operation is needed. First we should trade with each other, try to integrate the region. Out of that goodwill and economic relationship there will resolve a desire to solve also the political problems.” (Interview, Karachi, Pakistan, Dec. 99 & Jan. 2000)

The same question President Musharraf was asked by Larry King:

KING: And do you expect to resolve the dispute between you and India and Kashmir?

MUSHARRAF: Well, you can't clap with one hand. I'm trying my best. You need to ask that question across the border, from the Prime Minister Vajpayee.” (Transcript: President's interview with CNN (23/10/2001))

An important message of the joint statement of Waslekar and Bashir is that Pakistan should reaffirm its commitment to abstain from use of force in order to secure a solution to the Kashmir problem. This point has been taken into consideration by the President of Pakistan who addressed the Pakistani Nation on January 12th 2002:

“On the 14th of August 2001, we finally took a very important decision to ban Lashkar-e-Jhangvi [military of Jhangvi, an extremist Mullah; Jihadi-group which is fighting in Kashmir] and Sipah-e-Muhammad [military of Muhammad, Shia group] and placed Sipah-e-Sahaba [military for the companions of the Holy Prophet] and TJP (movement of Shia, Tehrik-e-Jafria Pakistan) [all three are extremist groups] under observation.

In addition, on a number of occasions, I called Ulema and Mashaikh [religious leaders] and held extensive consultations with them. The objective was to take them on board in our campaign against terrorism and extremism. These measures have been continuing since our government assumed office in 1999. I am explaining all this to you in great detail only because of the fact that the campaign against extremism undertaken by us from the very beginning is in our own national interest.

We are not doing this under advice or pressure from anyone. Rather, we are conscious that it is in our national interest. We are conscious that we need to rid society of extremism and this is being done right from the beginning. This domestic reforms process was underway when a terrorist attack took place against the United States on the 11th of September. This terrorist act led to momentous changes all over the world. We decided to join the international coalition against terrorism and in this regard I have

already spoken to you on a number of occasions. We took this decision on principles and in our national interest. [...]

Sectarian terrorism has been going on for years. Everyone of us is fed up of it. It is becoming unbearable. Our peace-loving people are keen to get rid of the Klashinkov and weapon culture. Every one is sick of it. It was because of this that we banned Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Muhammad. Yet little improvement occurred. The day of reckoning has come. Do we want Pakistan to become a theocratic state? Do we believe that religious education alone is enough for governance or do we want Pakistan to emerge as a progressive and dynamic Islamic welfare state?

The verdict of the masses is in favour of a progressive Islamic state. This decision, based on the teaching of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and in line with the teachings of Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal will put Pakistan on the path of progress and prosperity. [...]

Sects and different schools of thought in Islam have existed since long. There is nothing wrong with intellectual differences flowing from freedom of thought as long as such differences remain confined to intellectual debates.

Look at what this extremist minority is doing? They are indulging in fratricidal killings. There is no tolerance among them. Quaid-e-Azam [Muhammad Ali Jinnah] declared that Pakistan belonged to followers of all religions; that every one would be treated equally. However, what to speak of other religions, Muslims have started killing each other. I think, these people have declared more Muslims as Kafirs (infidels) than motivating the non-Muslims to embrace Islam. Look at the damage they have caused? They have murdered a number of our highly qualified doctors, engineers, civil servants and teachers who were pillars of our society. Who has suffered? The families of the dead, no doubt. But a greater loss was inflicted on Pakistan because, as I said, we lost the pillars of our society. These extremists did not stop here. They started killing other innocent people in mosques and places of worship. [...]

First of all, we must rid the society of sectarian hatred and terrorism, promote mutual harmony. Remember that mindsets can not be changed through force and coercion. No idea can ever be forcibly thrust upon any one. May be the person changes outwardly but minds and hearts can never be converted by force. [...]

The second thing I want to talk about is the concept of Jihad [“Holy War” which actually means “to strive hard for something”] in its totality. I want to dilate upon it because it is a contentious issue, requiring complete comprehension and understanding. In Islam, Jihad is not confined to armed struggles only. Have we ever thought of waging Jihad against illiteracy, poverty, backwardness and hunger? This is the larger Jihad.

Pakistan, in my opinion, needs to wage Jihad against these evils. [...]

The extremist minority must realise that Pakistan is not responsible of waging armed Jihad in the world. I feel that in addition to Haqooq Allah (Obligations to God), we should also focus on Haqooq-Al-ebad (Obligations towards fellow human beings). At Schools, Colleges and Madaris [religious schools], Obligations towards fellow beings should be preached. We know that we have totally ignored the

importance of correct dealings with fellow humans beings. There is no room for feuds in Islamic teachings. It is imperative that we teach true Islam i.e. tolerance, forgiveness, compassion, justice, fair play, amity and harmony, which is the true spirit of Islam. We must adopt this. We must shun negative thinking. [...]

Now we come to the second problem, which causes confusion in our minds and is of our particular concern. It relates to conflicts involving Muslims. Our religious leaders involve themselves in such conflicts without giving serious thought to them. I don't want to talk at length on this.

It is for the government to take a position on international issues. Individuals, organisations and political parties should restrict their activities to expression of their views. I request them to express their views on international issues in an intellectual spirit and in a civilised manner through force of argument. [...]

Now we come to internal decisions. The third issue causing conflict in our minds relates to sectarian differences. As I have already pointed out that writ of the Government will be established. No individual, organisation or party will be allowed to break the law of the land. All functioning will be in a regulated manner and within rules.

Now I come to the extremist organisations. Terrorism, and sectarianism must come to an end. I had announced a ban on Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Mohammad on 14 August last year. On that occasion, I had pointed out that Sipah-e-Sahaba and TJP would be kept under observation.

I am sorry to say that there is not much improvement in the situation. Sectarian violence continues unabated. We have busted several gangs involved in sectarian killings. You would be astonished to know that in year 2001 about 400 innocent people fell victim to sectarian and other killings.

Many of the gangs apprehended include people mostly belonging to Sipah-e-Sahaba and some to TJP.

This situation cannot be tolerated any more. I, therefore, announce banning of both Sipah-e-Sahaba [military for the companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Sunni group which is fighting against the Shia] and TJP [Shia group]. In addition to these, TNSM (Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat Mohammadi) [movement for the law of Muhammad] being responsible for misleading thousands of simple poor people into Afghanistan also stands banned. This organisation is responsible for their massacre in Afghanistan.

The Government has also decided to put the Sunni Tehreek under observation. No organisation is allowed to form Lashkar, Sipah or Jaish [all three expressions mean military]. The Government has banned Jaish-e-Mohammad [military of Muhammad] and Lashkar-e-Taiba [military of holy people].

Any organisation or individual would face strict punitive measures if found inciting the people to violence in internal or external contexts. Our mosques are sacred places where we seek the blessings of God Almighty. Let them remain sacred. We will not allow the misuse of mosques. All mosques will be registered and no new mosques will be built without permission. The use of loudspeakers will be limited only to call for prayers, and Friday Sermon and Vaaz. However, I would like to emphasise that special permission is being given for "Vaaz" (Sermon). If this is misused the permission will be cancelled.

If there is any political activity, inciting of sectarian hatred or propagation of extremism in any mosque, the management would be held responsible and proceeded against according to law.

I appeal to all Pesh Imams to project the qualities of Islam in the mosques and invite the people to piety.

Talk of obligations towards fellow beings, exhort them to abstain from negative thoughts and promote positive thinking. I hope that all Nazims, Distt. Police officers and Auqaf Department officials will take quick action against violators of these measures.” [Dawn internet version, 13.1.2002]

- At the same time it is necessary to take other steps to restore and foster mutual trust, reduce tension, and resolve other differences between India and Pakistan. The resolution of the Kashmir conflict and restoration and development of mutual trust are interdependent processes. It is impossible to resolve the Kashmir conflict unless the two sides trust each other. It is impossible to restore trust unless the two sides are committed to resolve the Kashmir conflict.
- Any search for a solution to the Kashmir conflict must be based on mutual respect by the states of Pakistan and India for each other and dignity of the entire people of Jammu and Kashmir. India must respect the fact that it is in India’s interest to have a stable, secure and prosperous Pakistan. Similarly, Pakistan must respect the fact that a stable, secure and prosperous India is in Pakistan’s interest.
- Any future search for a solution to the Kashmir conflict must be predicated on the basis of peace. There should be no violence or threat of violence. In particular, the two countries should not threaten to use nuclear weapons. In the end, principles of peace and justice should prevail over the principles of violence and intimidation. The victory of the principles of peace and justice should be the real objective of the final solution. Territorial and political compromises should be a mere means to serve this end.
- Both India and Pakistan should agree that the people of Jammu and Kashmir are the principal party to the dispute; and whatever solution of the problem is sought should not only be fair and just, but also in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiris. In determining the wishes of the Kashmiris, representatives of all different constituents and faith of the people of Jammu and Kashmir should be consulted.
- While the two countries must pledge to initiate purposeful negotiations on Kashmir and not stop short of reaching a settlement, they should first agree to take reciprocal measures to create an environment conducive for talks. What is required is to comprehensively bring home the message that the two sides are not playing a zero sum game, but really mean business.
- The pursuit of a Kashmir settlement should pre-suppose that there can be no accord without the spirit of give and take. Both sides should be willing to accept a compromise that offers an honourable way out of their mutually exclusive official stances. The negotiations should not be seen as a substitute for the battlefield, with either victory, or defeat being the logical conclusion. On the contrary, they should aim at harmonising divergent interests in order to find a viable and mutually acceptable solution. The solution to the Kashmir conflict should be based on the premise that dignity and security of India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir must be ensured.

- The negotiation process should not remain a hostage to the parameters set by the two sides in their official stances. A fresh and pragmatic approach is called for to negotiate on a different wavelength, free from the constraints of the past and capable of breaking the 50-year stalemate. There should be no room for diplomatic jargon, or legal hair-splitting to forestall free and open discussion that takes into account all the available options.
- Once the process of de-escalation of hostilities begins in right earnest, and both governments are prepared to de-link Kashmir from their point-scoring domestic agendas, it will be easier to work out the parameters of give and take. If the leaders are ready to take hard decisions, they should have little problem rallying public support.” [www.peaceinitiatives.org].

About Kashmir President Musharraf explained:

“Let us take the Kashmir Cause first. Kashmir runs in our blood. No Pakistani can afford to sever links with Kashmir. The entire Pakistan and the world knows this. We will continue to extend our moral, political and diplomatic support to Kashmiris. We will never budge an inch from our principle stand on Kashmir. The Kashmir problem needs to be resolved by dialogue and peaceful means in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people and the United Nations resolutions. We have to find the solution of this dispute. No organisation will be allowed to indulge in terrorism in the name of Kashmir. We condemn the terrorist acts of September 11, October 1 and December 13. Anyone found involved in any terrorist act would be dealt with sternly.

Strict action will be taken against any Pakistani individual, group or organisation found involved in terrorism within or outside the country. Our behaviour must always be in accordance with international norms.

On this occasion, as President of Pakistan, I want to convey a message to Prime Minister Vajpaae: If we want to normalise relations between Pakistan and India and bring harmony to the region, the Kashmir dispute will have to be resolved peacefully through a dialogue on the basis of the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Solving the Kashmir Issue is the joint responsibility of our two countries. Let me repeat some of the observations made by you, Mr. Vajpayee, some time back, and I quote: "Mind-sets will have to be altered and historical baggage will have to be jettisoned. I take you on this offer. Let us start talking in this very spirit.

Now as Commander of the Armed Forces of Pakistan, I wish to convey another message. The Armed Forces of Pakistan are fully prepared and deployed to meet any challenge. They will spill the last drop of their blood in the defence of their country. Let there be no attempt of crossing the border in any sector as it will be met with full force. Do not entertain any illusions on this count.

I would also like to address the international community, particularly the United States on this occasion. As I said before on a number of occasions, Pakistan rejects and condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestation. Pakistan will not allow its territory to be used for any terrorist activity anywhere in the world. Now you must play an active role in solving the Kashmir dispute for the sake of lasting peace and harmony in the region. We should be under no illusion that the legitimate demand of the people of Kashmir can ever be suppressed without their just resolution. Kashmiris also expect that you ask India to bring an end to state terrorism and human rights violations. Let human rights organisations, Amnesty International, the international media and UN peacekeepers be allowed to monitor activities of the Indian occupation forces.” [Dawn internet version, 13.1.2002]

According to the idea of Institute of Regional Studies and International Centre for Peace Initiatives, the process for achieving peace is divided in five phases.

Phase 1: Preparing the Ground

In the first phase the ground has to be prepared which will be done by declaring by the Governments of India and Pakistan their commitment to resolve all conflicts and issues – including the Kashmir problem through peaceful negotiations. Both have to accept the Line of Control (LoC) till the negotiations are concluded. Very important is that both sides should stop hostile propaganda in the government owned media. In each news in the Pakistan TV a big part is reserved for the Kashmir item. As it is “normal” with news only negative aspects of this conflict are given. The efforts made by different organisations to solve the Kashmir conflict are not brought into notice of the media audience. All leaders of various Kashmiri groups on both side of the LoC, representing different ethnical, religious and political groups should initiate a dialogue about their views on the future of Kashmir at a feasible time and location.

Phase 2: Initial Official Contact

In the second phase the official contacts have to be initiated by the two foreign secretaries or the foreign ministers to discuss modalities of official and periodical dialogue, which should happen at least once every few weeks irrespective of the state of bilateral relations.

Phase 3: Official Dialogue

It was thought that on the lines of the talks conducted in Islamabad/New Delhi in October/November 1998 should be launched with two components. First component should discuss Kashmir and peace and security issues; the second component other issues. Both sides should commit that at least thrice per year such talks should take place – as it was done 1990. There should be a commitment for the reuniciation of violence, support for terrorism and firing across the LoC.

Phase 4: Groundwork for Political Breakthrough

Once adequate progress is made on all front in the official dialogue, the Heads of Government should appoint special envoys to prepare for a summit meeting. These Heads should open dialogue with the main opposition parties and groups in their respective countries. Especially also with parties and religious-political groups.

Phase 5: Summit Meeting

Once the preparations are made the Heads of Government of India and Pakistan should meet. They should specifically explore a political solution to all outstanding conflicts, in particular Jammu and Kashmir, and work out a compromise solution in the interest of the security of India and Pakistan and honour and justice for the Kashmiri people. [www.peaceinitiatives.org]

[Comment: If we look at the proposal one has to admit that at this moment, at the beginning of the year 2002, we have not even reached phase 1. It is still a long way to go. What was the comment in the Indian Media on the speech of President Musharraf? External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh told to The Times of India:

"We welcome the now declared commitment of the government of Pakistan not to support or permit any more the use of its territory for terrorism anywhere in the world, including in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The commitment must extend to the use of all territories under Pakistan's control today. We would assess the effectiveness of the commitment only by the concrete action taken. Consequently, we expect Pakistan to co-operate with India in stopping all infiltration across the international border and the Line of Control (in Kashmir).

"The government notes the decision of the government of Pakistan to ban Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, the two terrorist organisations involved in the December 13 attack on the Indian parliament. We look forward to an effective and full implementation of this measure, so that its members do not continue activities under other names.

"There would be a similar need to address other terrorist organisations targeting India, as also the parent organisations that spawn them." (The Times of India, 13.1.02, internet version).]

Indian media say Musharraf disappoints on Kashmir

NEW DELHI, Jan 13 (Reuters) - Indian newspapers on Sunday expressed disappointment at Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's refusal to change his hard-line stance on disputed Kashmir, but hailed his decision to crack down on militants as a "landmark policy".

"Musharraf disappoints India, purges Pakistan," a banner headline in the Times of India said.

"On Jammu and Kashmir he is fudging but give him time to act on a landmark policy," Jasjit Singh, a leading strategic affairs analysts wrote in the Indian Express.

Nearly a dozen militant groups are fighting India's rule in Jammu and Kashmir, the only Muslim-majority state in the predominantly Hindu country.

The Indian government is expected to officially react to Saturday's landmark speech by Musharraf later on Sunday.

Musharraf said in his speech broadcast nation-wide that the issue of disputed Kashmir, which has soured ties with India since both countries' independence from Britain in 1947, must be solved through negotiation.

"As anticipated, the general reached out to the international community, principally the United States, with a trade off that India may find it difficult to accept," wrote the Hindustan Times.

Musharraf in his speech said there was no change in Pakistan's political, diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmir issue, but urged India for talks to resolve the dispute through peaceful means.

He also warned New Delhi against crossing the border adding that his armed forces "were ready to fight to the last drop of blood".

Tension between the nuclear rivals have been running high since last month's attack on India's parliament that New Delhi has blamed on Pakistan-based terrorist groups.

Both countries have rushed troops and armour to the border in a stand-off triggered by the attack on parliament sparking fears of war.

But some analysts said Musharraf should be given time to act on his promises and India should not reject his speech outright.

"While it was not a positive speech from the point of view of India, it was not a totally negative statement either.

"India should carefully examine it and should not reject it outright," B.V. Raman, a former senior official of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) wrote in The Hindustan Times. [Reuters AlertNet - Indian media say Musharraf disappoints on Kashmir.htm]

Critical voices came also from the BJP and the Congress Party:

"NEW DELHI: For once, both the ruling BJP and the principal opposition party, the Congress, appeared to be on the same side: Both were clearly unimpressed by President Musharraf's speech, stressing that there had been little change in Pakistan's position on the key issue of Kashmir. [...] K Natwar Singh, chairman of the Congress's foreign affairs department, said though Musharraf had been brave enough to admit his country is in a mess, his speech was of no comfort to India. Though he did announce a ban on two terrorist outfits, as far as his strong position on Kashmir was concerned, it was "bad news for India". Musharraf, he said, remained steadfast in his view that "Kashmir was in Pakistan's blood". (The Times of India, 13.1.02, internet version).

Under the title "Not positive, but not negative either" B. Raman, Additional Secretary (red), Research & Analysis Wing (R&AW), Cabinet Secretariat, Govt. of India writes in the Hindustantimes:

"In a manner typical of him, he has tried to carry conviction to India and the rest of the international community that his determination to act against terrorism in all its manifestations was a definitive change of policy and not just a change of posture.

At the same time, he has sought to ensure his own survival in power by reassuring his people that his denunciation of religious extremism and terrorism did not indicate a change of his country's J&K policy. It must be said to his credit that no other Pakistani leader, political or military, had ever condemned the activities of religious extremist and sectarian parties and highlighted their devastating effect on the Pakistani State and society in such strong terms as he did. It did require some courage.

So far as India is concerned, his speech only partly met the concerns of New Delhi. He banned the Jaish-e-Mohammad and the Lashkar-e-Toiba, but attributed the ban to their activities inside Pakistan and not to their acts of terrorism in India.

He has spared the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM), which, of all the jihadi organisations, has the largest following in the Pakistani Arm and had close links with the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Similarly, he has spared the Al Badr, another Pakistani organisation active in J&K, and was silent on the activities of Kashmiri organisations such as the Hizbul Mujahideen from Pakistani territory.

On the terrorists wanted by India, he has taken the traditional Pakistani position that while Pakistan would try Pakistani nationals under its own laws provided credible evidence was forthcoming, it would be willing to consider the extradition of non-Pakistanis if they are found in Pakistani territory.

Significantly, he did not try to justify jihad in J&K as he had done in the past and refrained from referring to acts of terrorism in J&K as acts of resistance to Indian occupation. Of course, he condemned India's alleged state terrorism in J&K and called for an active role by UN observers and international human rights organisations.

While it was not a positive speech from the point of view of India, it was not a totally negative statement either. India should carefully examine it and should not reject it outright. [Not positive, but not negative either - [13-1-2002] - Hindustantimes_com.htm]

[Final Comment: As it has been mentioned, no other Pakistani leader, political or military, had ever condemned the activities of religious extremist and sectarian parties. Musharraf is also the first leader who banned religious extremists after Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had lifted them to so much importance and who later were used as a political instrument by Zia-ul-Haq and others – including the USA in their fight against the Sowjets in Afghanistan.]

4.2. A Mission Of Peace & Amity

Pakistan-India Peoples Forum For Peace and Democracy

www.brain.net.pk/~pakindo/object.ht (Pakistan)

<http://www.mnet.fr/aiindex/PIF/index.html> (India)

Pakistan: 11-Temple Road, Lahore, Pakistan, Phone 042-735-7926 Fax: 042-722-3455,
Email <pakindo@brain.net.pk>, and Website <<http://www.brain.net.pk/~pakindo/>>

India: Pakistan India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy, K-14 (First Floor), Green Park Extension, New Delhi, India.

The first Pakistan-India Peoples' Convention on Peace and Democracy took place in New Delhi from February 24-25,1995.

„The Pakistan-India People's Convention on Peace and Democracy, in which more than two hundred Pakistani and Indian delegates participated, has been hailed as a major breakthrough. For two days, the delegates freely discussed the contentions issues of *Kashmir, demilitarisation, and the politics of religious intolerance* which have locked the ruling elites of the two countries in conflict. The delegates demonstrated that at the people's level the area of agreement on all these issues, is much larger than the area of conflict.” [<http://www.mnet.fr/aiindex/PIF/DelhiProceedings95.html>]

[Comment: It was a big event which took place in India and which showed that even if the governments of the two countries were unable to find a way it was possible for the people to show that there is a way – the way of talking with each other.]

In its press conference Justice Dorab Patel (Pakistan) Mubashir Hasan spoke for Pakistan and Nirmal Mukarji and Teesta Setalvad for India. It was said that they would like to meet next in Lahore, Pakistan:

“The Lahore meet is expected to take up two additional issues, business and trade relations and ecology and environment. An exchange of literature and views, especially on human rights and secular struggles, environmental and people's movements to enable the commitment of this Forum to Peace and Democracy, is to be disseminated to a wider cross section. Exchange of professional groups and students on a systematic basis. All sports activities between India and Pakistan to be resumed. Future such people to people meetings should include Indian and Pakistani Diaspora. This first-ever people to

people dialogue between 92 citizens from Pakistan and 117 from India is an independent initiative financed by contributions from groups and individuals in India. Delegates from Pakistan came to the Convention at their own cost. Delegates, especially from India, felt that statements in a section of the Indian press suggesting that it is "government backed two track diplomacy" are misleading and false. The video film "Deadlock" was screened for delegates today. Directed by Dr. Peggy Mohan, the film is an "offering from children, the people most at risk from nuclear militarization in South Asia". The Pakistan-India People's Forum also released a copy of the book Other Voices From Pakistan, a collection of alternate writings from Pakistan. There were animated discussions on four issues - Kashmir dispute, militarization, religious intolerance and governance." [http://www.mnet.fr/aiindex/PIF/DelhiProceedings95.html]

[**Comment:** Here we see the same idea developed as by Kunwar Idris that business and trade relations should be initiated to improve the relation between Pakistan and India. Also the idea of bringing together students or school children is very essential – we have experienced this in Europe between Germany and France! People-to-people meetings do change the attitude of Pakistanis and Indians. If one knows that the “other” is not too different but rather alike, the chance for a change is given. Very important is also the idea of including people-to-people meetings of Indians and Pakistanis in Diaspora. This idea has been taken up by World Conference on Religion and Peace in England and also in Switzerland. One problem which is faced by all such initiatives is money and the question how to fund such meetings. A similar meeting took place between different Palestinian and Israeli peace organisations in Amman in 1999 organised by WCRP under Prof. Lähnemann. The results were positive (see report on <http://www.evrel.ewf.uni-erlangen.de/pesc/>]

The importance of people-to-people meetings cannot be emphasised enough as we see from the situation between India and Pakistan. Already in 1994 the following was said in a joint statement by the Pakistan-India Peoples Forum For Peace and Democracy:

“At a time when the governments of India and Pakistan are intensifying mutual confrontation, with government and political leaders openly talking about the inevitability of a conflict and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, the situation in the sub-continent is on the brink of war. In a climate of hysteria forces of bigotry and religious intolerance threaten the fabric of civil society on the sub-continent. In such a bellicose atmosphere democratic rights of the people are imperilled. There is therefore an urgent need for saner voices to prevail. A group of concerned citizens from India and Pakistan, from different walks of life, have been engaged in a process to initiate a people-to-people dialogue on the critical issues of Peace and Democracy.” [September 1994, PIPFPD]

[**Comment:** This very situation has repeated itself in January 2002 where again Pakistan and India were ready to go to war. The Indian side was even speaking from a limited conventional war. The situation after the September 11th 2001 is however different. This time it seems that the terror of war is a pressure which has been built up by India to support Musharraf on the Pakistani side. Only under this pressure he is able to fight against the fundamentalists and their terror organisations which are destabilising Pakistan and which are also a treat to India – although nobody would admit this fact! At the same time this can show also the Indian fundamentalists what can happen if one doesn't sustain from terrorism.]

Further it was agreed that:

“1. That war and attempts to create war hysteria should be outlawed;

[**Comment:** A main factor in this hysteria is the mass media in both countries. As it has been already stated, in each news in the Pakistan TV a big part is reserved for the Kashmir item.]

2. That a process of de-nuclearisation and reversal of the arms race should be started;

[**Comment:** Till now the de-nuclearisation has not even started but still both sides are building up their capability of destruction. India just testes its new missile in January 2002 which is able to reach about 800km into the soil of Pakistan.]

3. That Kashmir not merely being a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, a peaceful democratic solution of it involving the peoples of Jammu and Kashmir is the only way out;

[**Comment:** At the moment India is doing everything to crack down the different groups of Mujaheddin which are fighting in Kashmir against their government. On Pakistani side Gen. Musharraf has banned several militant groups which were operating from Pakistan. A demand which was made by India.]

4. That religious intolerance must be curbed as these tendencies create social strife, undermine democracy and increase the persecution and oppression of disadvantaged sections of society;

[**Comment:** In Pakistan the situation has changed already before the September 11th 2001 when Gen. Musharraf banned activities of some religious fundamentalist-terroristic organisations. Dawn reports: “LAHORE, Jan 12[02]: President Gen. Pervez Musharraf’s televised address to the nation on Saturday in which he announced several steps to curb religious extremism and militancy and also to prevent use of Pakistani territory for military adventurism in other parts of the world drew a mixed reaction from politicians and religious groups and organisations.” Under the title ‘EU lauds ban on groups’ Dawn reports:

“BRUSSELS, Jan 12: The European Union’s security chief Javier Solana on Saturday commended President Musharraf’s clampdown on local extremist groups and said he welcomed the Pakistani leader’s commitment to a peaceful solution for Kashmir.” [www.dawn.com/2002/01/13/top7.htm]

A very important step towards freedom of religion and democracy is the reform of the present election rules. Till now we had a religious apartheid which started in 1977 under dictator Zia ul Haq where only Muslims could take part freely in elections – non-Muslims could not vote for a Muslim candidate and therefore religious minorities such as Christians, Sikhs or Hindus were uninteresting for these parties and they didn’t take their problems into consideration. Only a few seats in the parliament were reserved for minorities. The situation of Ahmadis, who call themselves Muslims but have been declared as a non-Muslim minority by the Pakistani parliament in 1974, didn’t take part anymore in politics since 1974. If an Ahmadi-Muslim wants to cast his vote he has to declare himself first non-Muslim – an act an Ahmadi would never do!]

5. And finally that the group constitutes a convening committee for setting up a Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy. It was decided to hold a larger representative convention, to which should be invited, from India and Pakistan, representatives of the human rights movement, workers organisations, peasant movement, women’s movement, environment movement and other mass organisations, cultural

workers, professionals and academics. Efforts should be made to involve persons well known for their commitment to peace, equity and social justice, communal amity, democracy and people's solidarity in the sub-continent.” [September 1994, PIPFPD]

The objectives of PIPFED are the following:

- “The politics of confrontation between India and Pakistan has failed to achieve benefits of any kind for the people of both countries.
- The people of both countries increasingly want genuine peace and friendship and would like their respective governments to honour their wishes.
- Peace between the two countries will help in reducing communal and ethnic tension in the sub-continent.
- Peace in the sub-continent will help the South Asian region to progress economically and socially, especially in the face of the new economic order.
- Governments of Pakistan and India must agree to an unconditional no-war pact immediately without yielding to any third party pressure.
- A democratic solution to the Kashmir dispute is essential for promoting peace in the sub-continent.” [www.brain.net.pk/~pakindo/object.ht]

How is it possible to implement these objectives? According to the Pakistan-India Peoples Forum For Peace and Democracy peace can be promoted through demilitarisation and denuclearization – a fact which is important but at the moment as we have seen the contrary is happening. War should be outlawed, it should be no more an option for a political solution. People-to-people meetings should be possible on all levels, between politicians, scientists, traders, workers - very important - between relatives and the common men.

The next point which should be done is the democratisation and decentralisation of the government. “Both Pakistan and India inherited a system of governance which was devised by the British colonial power to keep under subjugation a conquered people and perpetuate their economic exploitation. The structure stranglehold which it provided for the civil and military bureaucracy to trample on the human rights and basic needs of the common people... has survived in both Pakistan and India. There is a growing centralisation of the political administration (as reflected in the official policies of intolerance, suppression of political dissent and denial of regional, ethnic, religious, linguistic and other minority community rights). This has led to an increasing tendency to arm the coercive machinery of State in both countries with extraordinary laws that violate the Declaration of Human Rights (like the notorious TADA and NSA in India and the Hudood and Anti-blasphemy laws in Pakistan).”

[www.brain.net.pk/~pakindo/object.ht]

TADA [Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act] was the anti-terrorist law which was existing in India from 1985 till 1995 to tackle with the upraise of the Sikhs in the Punjab and the Kashmiris in Kashmir. It has been misused by the Indian Government as it is stated in different reports. “If enacted, the ordinance would reinstate a modified version of the notorious Terrorist and Disruptive

Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA), repealed in 1995 after widespread public protest. TADA facilitated tens of thousands of arrests, detentions, and acts of torture in violation of international law, and was used to crack down on political opponents, social activists, and human rights defenders.” (Human Rights watch Report 2001) [www.hrw.org/press/2001/10/india1018.htm]

“In April, the Law Commission of India recommended the introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Bill into parliament. If enacted, the bill would reinstate a modified version of the notorious Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA), repealed in 1995. TADA had facilitated tens of thousands of unjustified arrests, torture, and other violations against political opponents, social activists, and human rights defenders. Human rights organisations protested against the bill arguing that, if enacted, it would have similar effects.” (Human Rights watch Report 2001)

Meanwhile the TADA has been replaced by POTO (prevention of terrorism ordinance,2001).

BBC reported on October 25 2001:

“A new anti-terrorism law is now in effect in India after President K R Narayanan signed the controversial Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance late on Wednesday evening. Human rights groups as well as opposition parties have expressed strong reservations against the move, which they say violates citizens' fundamental rights. [...]Twenty-three organisations seen as encouraging terrorist activities have been outlawed in the ordinance. These include a number of separatist groups active in Kashmir, such as Lashkar-e-Toyeba and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. Several rebel groups operating in Punjab and Assam have also been banned.” [news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/south_asia/newsid_1619000/1619870.stm]

The other discussed law is:

“The National Security Act (NSA) of 1980 permits detention of persons considered security risks; police anywhere in the country (except Jammu and Kashmir) may detain suspects under NSA provisions. Under these provisions the authorities may detain a suspect without charge or trial as long as 1 year on loosely defined security grounds. The state government must confirm the detention order, which is reviewed by an advisory board of three high court judges within 7 weeks of arrest. NSA detainees are permitted visits by family members and lawyers and must be informed of the grounds for detention within 5 days (10 to 15 days in exceptional circumstances).”

[<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/india/law/>]

In Pakistan the people have to face two laws which are very problematical. First the Hudood Ordinance:

“The Hudood Ordinance criminalizes Zina, which is defined as extra-marital sex including adultery or fornication. It also criminalizes Zina-bil-jabr, which is defined as rape outside of a valid marriage. The Hudood Ordinance further defines Zina and Zina-bil-jabr on the basis of the assigned criminal punishment. Hence there is Zina and Zina-bil-jabr liable to Hadd (punishment ordained by the Holy Quran or Sunnah), and there is Zina and Zina-bil-jabr liable to tazir that is, any punishment other than Hadd.

The Hadd punishment is stoning to death, and the tazir punishment for Zina is up to ten years of imprisonment and whipping - up to 30 lashes and/or a fine. The tazir punishment for Zina-bil-jabr is up to 25 years of imprisonment and whipping up to 30 lashes.” [<http://www.lhrla.sdnpk.org/hudood.html>]

LHRLA: Lawyers for Human Rights & Legal Aid's president is Zia Awan. They are situated in Karachi/Pakistan. In an interview with me in February 1998 he pointed out that one main field of their work is to protect the rights of the women. Trafficking in women and children is a very big problem in Pakistan – it has by now become an international dimension!

Interesting in this law is that under the dictator Zia ul Haq, who ruled Pakistan from 1977 till 1988, introduced the Hodood law. When he introduced the Hadd punishment which is stoning to death he asked the highest judge (of the Supreme Court) to see into this matter if this would be according to the Holy Quran. Interesting enough is that the said judge came to the conclusion that nowhere in the Quran one could find this punishment but in the Thora and in the Old Testament. Therefore, he suggested that this law is unislamic. Zia removed this judge and the new one came astonishingly to the conclusion that this is an Islamic law.

The other law which is like a Damocles sword is the blasphemy law introduced by Zia in 1986. Its main target are the Ahmadi-Muslims – as it was told by I.R. Rehman, director of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan [interview taken in January 2000 in Lahore, Pakistan].

The law states the following:

“295-C. Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shall be punished with **death**, or imprisonment for life, and shall be also liable to fine.” [The Pakistan Penal Code & Shariat Criminal Laws by Muhammad Mazhar Hussain Nizami, Advocate, Lahore High Court, Lahore, PLD Publishers, Nabha Road, Lahore, Pakistan, 1995.]

Christians, Hindus and also not mainstream Muslims are the target of this law, which is not only misused by fundamentalists but also by the common man when he wants to get rid of a business rival or when he wants to settle in this way a dispute over land – a main reason in Pakistan for a fight.

The Government of Gen. Musharraf, which is in many aspects more democratic than the governments by Benazir Bhutto or Mian Nawaz Sharif, is trying to deal with the problems of decentralization and many Pakistanis are sure that after the election in October 2002 the new elected parliament will abolish the Amendments including not only the blasphemy law but also the Anti-Ahmadi laws.

For Pakistan-India Peoples Forum For Peace and Democracy Kashmir is also an important issue which has to be tackled by the both countries. According to them “Kashmir is not only a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan but concerns the lives and aspirations of people of Jammu and Kashmir on both sides of LOC [Line of Control]” [www.brain.net.pk/~pakindo/object.ht]. A peaceful and democratic solution with the Kashmiris has to be found.

To work in the mentioned fields the PIPFPD has formed different joint-committees in order to formulate the work-plans in the following areas:

“Education , literacy and text-books improvements Art and culture, writers Journalists and media, Lawyers and human rights activists, Students and youth; Trade-unionists, Political activists, Social activists.

Women Members of the Forum who wish to participate in this exercise are free to join any group of their choice. “[www.brain.net.pk/~pakindo/object.ht]

4.3. Pakistan Peace Coalition (PPC)

Urge for joint initiatives – Formation of Pakistan Peace Coalition (PPC)

is a joint Forum of Action Committee Against Arms Race (ACAAR) in Karachi, Joint Action Committee for People's Rights (JAC) in Lahore and the Citizen's Peace Committee (CPC) in Rawalpindi Islamabad.

<http://www.mnet.fr/aiindex/PPC/URGEFO.html>

141-D (Annexe), Block 2, PECHS, Karachi-75400

Tel: 4552170, 4557009 Fax: 4548115 Email: ppc@cyber.net.pk

Several organisations came together to form the Pakistan Peace Coalition because they had the feeling that “there was little co-ordination amongst the various peace groups, the initiatives being spontaneous and carried out independently of one another” [<http://www.mnet.fr/aiindex/PPC/URGEFO.html>] At the beginning the groups which came together rallied against nuclear weapons. The nuclear holocaust in the area became more dangerous after the tests in May 1998 by Pakistan and India.

“An acute sense of insecurity and threat to life which had already been there due to the prevalence of religious, sectarian, political, tribal and other forms of violence and intolerance became overwhelming when the threat of a nuclear holocaust in the subcontinent appeared after the May 1998 nuclear tests by the two countries. It was this realisation of the impending threat of extinction which impelled these organisations and individuals to unite into a national coalition of peace activists.”

[www.mnet.fr/aiindex/PPC/URGEFO.html]

In September 1998 a national body was formed of the PPC with the following commitment:

- “
- to oppose nuclear weapons in all forms in all countries, rejecting weapons of mass destruction and nuclear deterrence as legitimate ways of achieving national security;
 - to seek global nuclear disarmament, and for this purpose co-operate with and seek support from movements, organisations and groups elsewhere in the world that are engaged in this pursuit;
 - to pursue, as an immediate measure, nuclear disarmament and peace in the region of South Asia, and for this purpose join hands with regional movements and organisations working for this goal;
 - to press upon the Pakistani state to reduce defence expenditure in order to promote human development;
 - to counter the increasing trends of intolerance and violence in Pakistani society.”

[www.mnet.fr/aiindex/PPC/URGEFO.html]

Important for these organisations is to highlight the negative consequences of war and dividends of peace and to increase public access to information about peace and related issues and build a constituency for peace. One of such action was the resolution adopted by the **Action Committee Against Arms Race (ACAAR)** on the 22nd May 1999 when the Pakistani Government celebrated their first anniversary of the nuclear tests:

“We express our strong disapproval of the Government's plans to celebrate the first anniversary of the Chaghai nuclear tests. When India conducted the tests at Pokhran on 11th and 13th May last year, we had publicly condemned it in the strongest terms and cautioned the Pakistan Government against getting provoked into following suit, and instead take the initiative in signing the CTBT and pre-empt possible international economic sanctions. However, Islamabad thought differently and went ahead with the Chaghai tests on 28th May.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had said then that Pakistan wanted to divert its resources towards economic development and people's welfare but had been pushed to the corner by India's nuclear tests, leaving his government with no option but to follow suit. In other words, he meant that going nuclear was not Pakistan's choice, but it was forced upon us by India.

If what Mr. Nawaz Sharif said then is to be believed, how can the government justify the hysterical mass campaign being organised officially in the national media to celebrate something which Pakistan had not wanted to do but was forced to do? It is ironical, to say the least, that ours is perhaps the only country in the world which, despite our pervasive poverty, will be publicly celebrating our capability to build weapons of mass death and devastation and call it "Yaum-e-Takbeer," precisely when thousands of men, women and children in Sindh, who are also good Muslims, have either been drowned and dead, most of them in the high seas because of the criminal failure of the government to warn the fishing boats in time, and when there is an urgent need to address the problems of the rehabilitation of the survivors. [...] We also call upon the government to stop further nuclear and missile tests and continue the dialogue with India, for the denuclearisation and demilitarisation of the subcontinent.

We also express our strong protest at the repressive actions of the government against the independent journalists and institutions of civil society,(especially targeting those working for the promotion of the rights of women), who are serving the people in areas where the government institutions have miserably failed to deliver.

We demand that all such repressive measures be withdrawn and the culture of intolerance of dissent and victimisation of opposition be brought to an end.”

B.M.Kutty

Secretary (ACAAR) and Convenor Pakistan Peace Coalition (PPC)

[<http://www.mnet.fr/aiindex/Kargil/ACAAR24may99.html>]

Another action was the meeting of ACAAR & Demonstration, Hiroshima (6th August) Nagasaki Day (9th August) on the 6th August 2000:

“A well-attended meeting of doctors, lawyers, trade unionists, writers, academics and social activists was held on 6th August 2000 to observe 55th anniversary of the atom bombing of Hiroshima. The meeting was jointly organised by Action Committee Against Arms Race (ACAAR), Pakistan India People's Forum for Peace & Democracy (PIPPFD), Association of Peoples of Asia (APA), Pakistan Doctors for Peace & Development (PDPD), and International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) Pakistan Chapter.” [<http://lists.isb.sdnpk.org/pipermail/ngo-list/2000-August/000145.html>]

Joint Action Committee for People's Rights

On the 11th June 1998 an Open Letter was written to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif:

“The People of Pakistan wants its leadership to encourage a mood of sober self reflection rather than making recourse in false euphoria. we have brought ourselves to the brink of a nuclear holocaust and feel that it is the responsibility of the government and aware individuals to educate the nation on the horrifying implications of nuclearisation.

In conclusion:

1. We consider the imposition of the Emergency and the suspension of fundamental human rights unjustifiable. In our view, curtailing national discourse on issues critical to the country prevents the people of Pakistan from formulating their views in a free and tolerant environment.
2. We urge you to take the lead in ending the rhetoric of war and violence that is breeding hatred in the region and standing in the way of a peaceful resolution of conflict.
3. We feel the only way to out of this impasse is to immediately stop any further testing or weaponisation, enter into dialogue on all outstanding issues including Kashmir, sign a No War Pact with India as well as the CTBT.
4. Pakistan should use all efforts to promote universal disarmament. It is imperative that the western powers dismantle their own nuclear arsenals to show their commitment to peace.
5. In principle we support the effort to be self reliant, but the government must ensure that prices and unemployment do not spiral out of control, thus increasing the burden of the already crushed citizens.”

[<http://www.mnet.fr/aiindex/jacpr.html>]

The efforts of the PPC are also commented in the mass media. Dawn, one of the biggest Pakistani English Newspaper wrote about the PPC seminar "Prerequisites for peace in the 21st Century and the role of Pakistan":

“RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN INDIA, PAKISTAN URGED

KARACHI, Jan 1: The Pakistan Peace Coalition (PPC) on Friday called upon India and Pakistan to move away from their "maximalist" positions towards some compromise that respected the wishes of the Kashmiri people as well. [...]

At the millennium's end, the resolution stated, it was completely clear that five decades of confrontation between Pakistan and India had led to nothing but misery, deprivation, and war. [...]

The PPC resolved that the Kargil episode was a disaster for Pakistan and it had worsened the country's relations with India, as well as adversely affecting Pakistan's credibility and support internationally.

It noted there was no solution to the Kashmir problem in sight and economic collapse had been a constant possibility since the nuclear tests and emphasised that "if Pakistan is to prosper, it will have to cut down military expenditure sharply. It welcomed the recent 5 per cent reduction in the defence budget, but said it was not sufficient. [...]

Recognising that nuclear war was not an abstract possibility but something very real, the PPC called upon Pakistan and India to enter into negotiations on nuclear issues, initially with the aim of creating confidence-building measures to minimise the chances of their accidental use, but with complete denuclearization as the ultimate goal. It called upon Pakistan to sign the CTBT immediately. The seminar was chaired by M.B.Naqvi, Pervez Hoodbhoy, Dr. Nayer, Hasan Abidi and Mr. Karamat spoke in the seminar.” [Source: DAWN January 1, 2000]

4.4. Pakistanis for Peace and Alternative Development (PPAD)

DR ISHTIAQ AHMED, Co-ordinator, PPAD

Ishtiaq.Ahmed@statsvet.su.se

Ishtiaq Ahmed
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
Stockholm University
S 106 91 Stockholm, SWEDEN.
SWEDEN.

Pakistanis for Peace and Alternative Development is another example how people do react towards the situation in Pakistan and India. In the end of June, 1998, Ishtiaq Ahmad started collecting support through electronic mail for a statement against the Pakistani and Indian nuclear test explosions. Many concerned Pakistanis responded favourably to that initiative. Ishtiaq writes in his E-mail: “Most of us had never met and did not even know about each other. It was, therefore, truly a meeting of the minds. The five-six weeks during which the campaign continued many more joined in. The result was a world-wide network of persons who among themselves shared a principled belief in peace, tolerance, justice, democracy within Pakistan and amicable and friendly relations between Pakistan and India. We discussed various issues, not always agreeing with one another, but managing to exchange views in a civilised and respectful manner. Such experience led some of us to suggest the establishment of a more lasting forum for future co-operation and co-ordination of activities on issues related to peace and development in Pakistan and in the South Asian region.”

PPAD consisted of a network of Pakistanis living abroad and at home, connected primarily through electronic mail. Participation by those who subscribe to humanist ideals whether inspired by secular or religious convictions were welcomed. It was also planned that from time to time, the group would co-ordinate its activities with its Indian counterparts who share similar aims and objectives on issues of common interest. It would also seek participation in international initiatives related to peace and development.

In the first e-mail Ishtiaq wrote: “I believe, the purpose of knowledge is to improve the life conditions of human beings; particularly of those who have been denied their human rights under one pretext or the other. Such an improvement can only be possible if we invest our hope in the power of reason and persuasion and the intrinsic goodness of humankind. Consequently stimulating critical, but, constructive

inquiry would be a major objective for us to keep in mind. PPAD will try to facilitate serious debate, inviting experts to prepare introductory and background material on different subjects. The idea is that we pursue an in-depth analytical approach rather than indulge in rhetoric and angry polemics. It is my hope that all those who join us in the Core Group or as part of the wider network will do so in the best traditions of team spirit and solidarity. Personal vanity and ego should not be allowed to impair understanding and accommodation. Complete honesty and transparency will be needed to keep PPAD a vibrant, growing and caring network of dedicated individuals.”

Statement on the memorial and an introduction to the PPAD.

‘MEMORIAL AT WAGAH TO THE VICTIMS OF THE 1947 PARTITION OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN

The Partition of British India in 1947, which created the two independent states of Pakistan and India, was followed by one of the cruellest and bloodiest migrations and religious and ethnic cleansing in history and resulted in the forced transfer of an estimated 14 to 18 million people between the two countries. The ensuing religious animosity and communal strife resulted in the deaths of some two million Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and abduction, rape and killing of countless women and children. It was indeed one of the most inhuman manifestations of religious and communal intolerance with few parallels in history.

Those who survived were brutalised and traumatised and still carry the scars of their suffering which, in so many ways, have continued to dictate the relations between the two countries for more than half a century. The pain and suffering of the time have been the subject of many a poignant work of prose and poetry in South Asian literature and more recently of some touching and sensitive films.

Core Members of Pakistanis for Peace and Alternative Development (PPAD) sincerely feel that ways ought to be found to ensure that the suffering and humiliation of that period are neither forgotten nor allowed to occur ever again. Rather than the Partition leaving a legacy of perpetual animosity and conflict between Pakistan and India and between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others, it ought to be assigned a wholly different meaning and significance. It should instead represent the pain and agony of common humanity.

We propose therefore that, as a permanent symbol of the common suffering, an appropriate Memorial is built along the road in the no man's land between Pakistan and India at Wagah, with suitable provision for those crossing the two countries to make a brief stop, and in their own way, honour the dead and remember the surviving victims of the Partition.

We also suggest that a similar memorial is built at a suitable location along the border between Bangladesh and India.

It is our sincere wish and hope that these Memorials will help begin a new chapter in the history of the Sub-continent - one based on a better understanding of the past and on mutual trust and respect in the future.

We urge all peace-loving people of the Subcontinent and of the world to join us in persuading the governments of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh to acknowledge the collective responsibility of their recent history and facilitate the erection of these Memorials to mark the human tragedy of their peoples.”
[e-mail by Ishtiaq Ahmad]

DESCRIPTION AND STRUCTURE

- 1) The name of the new network will be PAKISTANIS FOR PEACE AND ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT (PPAD).
- 2) The term "Pakistani" will refer to all those who became Pakistani nationals after the partition of India; immigrated to Pakistan from India or some other country and acquired Pakistani citizenship; were born on its soil after independence; are expatriates; have emigrated from Pakistan and become citizens of some other state, but continue to identify with Pakistan in an existentialist sense; and, those whose parents (both or one) are of Pakistani origin.
- 3) An organisational Core Group consisting of volunteers will provide lead to the activities of PPAD. New members can be included and those who may want to withdraw are welcome to do so. The list has grown since the first announcement. We are not, at the moment, looking for more volunteers. I have tried to set up a Core Group which reflects a broad spectrum of perspectives and approaches on common goals and shared societal ideals. Diversity can be both an asset and a liability. The art is, of course, to discuss and learn with an open mind and a feeling heart.
- 4) All those who are already included in the network which came into being during the campaign to collect support for the statement on the nuclear tests will continue to receive information and can fully participate in all the activities which the Core Group may offer. Even direct initiative from any member of the original network will be given equal attention by the Core Group.
- 5) There will be no office-holders in our new network.
- 6) All final decisions on various initiatives will be taken through open discussion and consultation with all members.
- 7) I (Ishtiaq Ahmed) shall continue to act as the Co-ordinator as long as I enjoy your trust.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To formulate enlightened positions on issues of human rights, tolerance, social justice, and balanced economic and human development.
2. To uphold the equality of all human beings irrespective of their class, caste, creed, ethnic affiliation or gender.
3. To achieve the abolition of all forms of exploitation of one person by another.
4. To combat religious and sectarian intolerance and violence.
5. To achieve the ideal of universal literacy, and abolition of child labour, bonded labour and economic exploitation of women and depressed and marginalized groups.
6. To take an unequivocal stand against militarization in general and nuclearization in particular.
7. To promote peace between Pakistan and India, and encourage the two countries to solve their differences and disputes through discussion and mutual accommodation.
8. To concentrate efforts on promoting alternative strategies of development and change based on principles of social justice, participatory democracy and environmental protection.
9. To further such civil society, which can resist pressure both of tyrannical government and transnational companies which exploit the resources of Pakistan.
10. To participate in international initiatives related to peace and alternative development.”

[E-Mail sent by Ishtiaq Ahmad]

The first members who participated were from all over the world, starting with Ahmad in Sweden, journalists from Pakistan, Pakistani professors and research people in law, theology, sociology, literature, education or cultural anthropologists living in Pakistan, USA, UK, Canada, South Africa, France, Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Simbabwe, Ivory Coast, Australia or New Zealand. Also retired army personnel from Pakistan such as the well known Group Captain Cecil Chaudhry, SJ, SBT. Pakistan Air Force (Retd), who is now the Principal, St. Anthony's High School in Lahore, Pakistan. Prof. Pervez Hoodhboy, Department of Physics of the Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad; Dr A.H. Nayyar, Quaid-e-Azam University/Princeton University. But also Indian such as Dr. Vineeta Gupta, General Secretary, Insaaf International Kishori Ram Hospital Building, Basant Vihar, Bhatinda, Punjab, India. Also non-Asian from Italy, Switzerland, Norway or even the Church of Madagascar do take part in this group.

The PPAD also protested directly to Gen. Musharraf by writing protest letters. An important one is given below which is against the system of separate electorates in Pakistan:

“Dear Friends,

PPAD has today sent a letter protesting the continuation of separate electorates in Pakistan. If you agree, please send email messages in support of our statement to General Pervez Musharraf, the Chief Executive of Pakistan. His email address is the following: ce@pak.gov.pk

Warmest best regards,
Ishtiaq Ahmed
Coordinator PPAD

Pakistanis for Peace and Alternative Development (PPAD) Urge an End to the System of Separate Electorates

28 September 2000

To
The Chief Executive of Pakistan
General Pervez Musharraf
Rawalpindi
Pakistan.

Dear General Musharraf,

Pakistanis for Peace and Alternative Development (PPAD) is a world-wide network of Pakistanis dedicated to working in the interest of peace, social justice and enlightened humanism in Pakistan, South Asia, and in the world as a whole.

We are writing to express our serious concern at the continuation of various undemocratic, outmoded and dysfunctional processes and practices in the political system of Pakistan, notwithstanding the fact that you came to power with a promise to rid Pakistan of such afflictions. Among them the most reprehensible is undoubtedly the system of separate electorates.

The 1956, 1962 and 1973 constitutions of Pakistan were consistent in rejecting separate electorates, a system inherited from the colonial period. Quite simply, their framers were clear in their minds that a multi-religious, multi-sectarian, multi-linguistic and multicultural society like Pakistan needed norms and mechanisms, which could bring its disparate peoples together and consolidate them into a single nation. In a political sense, such an objective could only be realised through a system of joint electorates. Such an approach reflected the vision of a cohesive nation constituted by all Pakistanis irrespective of their religious beliefs which the Founder of Pakistan had spelled out on 11 August 1947 in his address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly.

The obscurantist government of the late General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq subverted this democratic consensus. In 1985 separate electorates were re-introduced in Pakistan. The ostensible argument advanced in their favour was that non-Muslims stood no chance of getting elected on a general ticket and therefore separate electorates will ensure a fair degree of representation to them. The real reason, however, was quite different. He wanted to establish a social and political order that drew sharp boundaries between Muslims and non-Muslims. The introduction of the infamous Blasphemy Law in 1986 was a further step in this direction. However, his misguided policies only served to sharpen

sectarian divisions among Muslims and alienate the non-Muslim minorities. Today Pakistan is ridden with sectarian violence and terrorism, and the non-Muslims live in constant fear of victimisation at the hands of religious bigots and zealots present in the larger society as well as in the state machinery.

We think that the options and opportunities for Pakistan to recover from long years of misrule are fast running out. We urge you to use your office and vision to prevent the movement of national self-destruction from taking its full course. To promote and restore religious tolerance and social harmony in Pakistan, the curse of separate electorates needs to be removed as an immediate first step.

Yours sincerely...“ [E-Mail by Ishtiaq Ahmad]

How important this step was, showed the reaction taken by Gen. Musharraf in January 2002 when he abolished the separate electorates and promised that in the coming election in October this law won't be any more in force!

The next protest e-mail which was sent to the President of Pakistan was in connection with Dr. Younas Shaikh in October 2000. Shaikh was accused of blasphemy – a act punished with the death sentence by Pakistani law. He dared to say that the parents of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sws) were not Muslims because they passed away before Muhammad became a messenger of God.

Pakistanis for Peace and Alternative Development (PPAD) Appeal for the Safe Release of Dr Younas Shaikh

23 October 2000

To

The Chief Executive of Pakistan
General Pervez Musharraf
Rawalpindi
Pakistan.

Dear General Musharraf,

Pakistanis for Peace and Alternative Development (PPAD) is a world-wide network of Pakistanis dedicated to working in the interest of peace, social justice and enlightened humanism in Pakistan, South Asia, and in the world as a whole.

We have learnt with great concern that recently Dr Younas Shaikh was accused and arrested in Rawalpindi on blasphemy charges and later on 19th October presented in court without any legal representation. It is indeed sad and tragic that Pakistan is increasingly descending into such a state of intolerance and religious witch-hunt.

First, the Christians, Ahmadis, Hindus and other religious and sectarian groups were persecuted for alleged blasphemy and now irrespective of religious or sectarian affiliations intellectuals and scholars of

repute are being subjected to the same narrow interpretation of Islam sanctioned by some Pakistani clerics. What Dr Shaikh has been reported to have said is a fact of history in that the Prophet's parents died much before he declared his mission at the age of forty, and therefore they did not have the opportunity to accept Islam. In his book, Hayat-e-Muhammad, the famous Egyptian Islamic scholar and journalist Muhammad Hussain Heikal has similarly referred to this fact. The Urdu translation of his book was published by the Idara-e-Saqafat-e-Islamia, Lahore, in 1988 and is considered to be a standard work of reference for serious research into the life of the Prophet (PBUH) and Islam.

The Blasphemy Law of 1986 in practice has given a licence to any fanatic or cynic arbitrarily to accuse anyone, often without any protection of law, of insulting or defaming Islam. How else should one interpret the following wording of that law?

Use of derogatory remarks etc. in respect of the Holy Prophet: Whether by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, or by any imputation, innuendo or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) shall be punishable with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall be liable to fine.

What Dr Shaikh is accused of having said cannot reasonably be construed as a derogatory remark about the Prophet. The essential point is not whether the Blasphemy Law has been applied correctly or not. Rather our position is that Pakistan, as a state, should not be involved in determining the religious beliefs of an individual. Instead it should defend and be seen to defend the rights and freedoms of all its citizens.

We urge your government to exercise its authority to ensure fairness and justice for Dr Younas Shaikh. He should be released immediately from detention, provided legal protection and recourse to defence under due process. Before closing, we must bring it to your attention, Sir, that the treatment being meted out to Dr. Shaikh by certain over-zealous officials of your government and similar episodes make it very difficult for us to promote a peaceful, tolerant and positive image of Pakistan. Your government is likely to win strong support of the enlightened and educated Pakistanis, especially expatriates living in the West, if you could provide progressive, tolerant and modernistic leadership and even-handed approach to controversial issues.
Yours sincerely ...”

On July 2 2001 an open letter was sent to General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee which is given below:

“2 July 2001

To
General Pervez Musharraf
President and Chief Executive of Pakistan
And
Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee
Prime Minister of India.

Dear Sirs,

Pakistanis for Peace and Alternative Development (PPAD) is a world-wide network of Pakistanis, dedicated to working in the interest of peace, social justice and enlightened humanism in Pakistan, South Asia, and around the world.

The whole world in general and the people of Pakistan and India in particular are anxiously looking up to you for leadership and statesmanship. They expect you to take some bold and farsighted initiatives to spare South Asia the scourge of a potential nuclear war, grinding, abject poverty and mounting frenzy of religious and nationalist extremism. This you can achieve only by interacting with each other in a spirit of reconciliation, accommodation and sincerity when you meet on 14-16 July in India to discuss those outstanding disputes and conflicts that have plagued relations between the two countries since they attained independence in mid-August 1947.

Indeed it would be tragic if this opportunity were wasted through the usual employment of diplomatic manoeuvres, zero-sum tactics and other shows of vanity and power. The people of Pakistan and India have had enough of such antics and now expect you to act resolutely but generously.

The Kashmir dispute will undoubtedly be one of the central topics for discussion and negotiation. It is imperative that it is not treated as one about ownership of territory alone. We urge you to consider all options rationally and in a spirit of accommodation. It is our firm conviction that no solution can be found through resort to cross-border terrorism, limited war along the Line of Control or something as foolish and destructive as an all-out-war between the armed forces of the two states.

Most other regions of the world have decided to bury old nationalist dreams in favour of greater prosperity through trade, co-operative ventures and free exchange of cultural and educational experiences. Borders drenched in blood only a few decades earlier are now positive symbols of national identity. The most apt example is present-day West Europe.

The legacy of our elders the various sufis, gurus, saints and sages is indeed rich in humanist attitudes, ideas and ideals. There is of course the tradition of hatred, bigotry and cruelty deeply rooted in our past, too. We have to make a choice for now and for tomorrow and thereafter. Shall our present and future generations hold the olive branch or the gun when they interact with one another? Nobody can give a more reliable answer to this question than you and your governments.

Yours

1. Dr. Ishtiaq
Co-ordinator,
Department
Stockholm
S-106
Email:

Dr. Ishtiaq
of
91

Ahmed
Political
Stockholm,

(Associate
Professor)
PPAD
Science
University
SWEDEN
Ishtiaq.Ahmed@statsvet.su.se

truly,
Professor)
PPAD
Science
University
SWEDEN

Members of the PPAD Committee (in alphabetical order)...

4.5. ASIAPEACE

The address for AsiaPeace is asiapeace@yahoogroups.com

DR ISHTIAQ AHMED, Co-ordinator, ASIAPEACE

The last organisation which I would like to mention is ASIAPEACE which is co-ordinated again by Ishtiaq Ahmed, after the PPAD was dissolved after “petty conspiracies and intrigues” as he wrote in an e-mail. He was serving PPAD as Co-ordinator from October 2 1998.

Asiapeace is a network devoted promoting peace and communal harmony in Asia in general but particularly in South Asia from where most of its members come. The founder of ACHA, Mr Pritam K. Rohila requested Ishtiaq Ahmed to become the moderator of this network.

The idea which is behind ASIAPEACE are stated as follow:

“AsiaPeace	Mission	Statement
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AsiaPeace envision South Asia to be a region of peace and harmony, where

1. Individuals of all regions, religions, rational persuasions, sects, castes, and cultural and ethnic groups live in peace and harmony, and their holy books, places of worship, and founders are respected.
2. Where there are no wars or threats of wars, and nations respect each others' borders and solve their disputes through peaceful means.
3. Where governments respect the human rights of all their residents and do not engage in persecution or repression of any individual or group on account of class, caste, ethnic or national origin, beliefs, religious practices, or political affiliations.
4. Where children of both genders, and women enjoy respect and protection.”

[E-Mail by ASIAPEACE]

One of the latest protest letter or letter of appeal is the following connected with the case of Dr Younis Shaikh:

Asiapeace Appeals to the Pakistan Government to Quash the Charges of Blasphemy Against Dr Younas Shaikh

President Pervez Musharraf

Islamic Republic of Pakistan
Islamabad
Pakistan

Dear Mr President,

We, the undersigned, appeal to you to order the release of Dr Younas Shaikh who was sentenced to death by a Pakistani court on 18 August 2001 on trumped up charges of blasphemy. As is evident from his letter below, he was framed for the alleged crime of blasphemy through a conspiracy of jihadi zealots within the state machinery as well as those present in the larger society. The very wording of the Blasphemy Law is an appalling exercise in retrogressive legislation:

Use of derogatory remarks etc. in respect of the Holy Prophet: Whether by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, or by any imputation, innuendo or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) shall be punishable with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall be liable to fine.

It is a disgrace that in the 21st century Pakistan should be applying outmoded and barbaric edicts which help fanaticism and obscurantism attain respectability in the name of religion.

As you have very emphatically pointed out in your recent speeches, Pakistan will no longer be allowing terrorism to operate from within its territories. But, is it not so that the blasphemy law by itself is a form of juridical terrorism? Its retention in any form is inconsistent with your declared intention of making Pakistan an open and tolerant society.

We, Sir, therefore, urge you forthwith to rescind the Blasphemy Law and other related discriminatory legislation prevalent in the Pakistani legal system against religious minorities; release Dr Shaikh and others who have been charged on similar grounds; and, openly declare Pakistan a democracy upholding the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as one of the main sources of constitutional and legal reform. Such a commitment will also help Islam attain its proper place in the modern world: as a great religious and ethical system catering to the individual's quest for spiritual anchor as well as providing inspiration for good deeds to fellow human beings.

1. Dr Ishtiaq Ahmed
Moderator, Asiapeace
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
Stockholm University
Tel: work: 00 46 8 16 26 24

Ishtiaq.Ahmed@statsvet.su.se

Statement supported by: [...]

[**Comment:** Gen. Musharraf surely has not the possibility to abolish the blasphemy law now without endangering himself and so the State of Pakistan. The reaction of the clerics would be too furious. At the moment the army is searching for the mullahs who have links with terroristic organisations or who are linked somehow with the Al-Qaida group. Till the election of a new Pakistani parliament in October this year the power of the mullahs will be broken.

Also important to understand is the step of Musharraf to allow only candidates to participate in this election who have a university degree. At the beginning of course one can say that this is not acceptable, what about those who have no degree! With this step Gen. Musharraf disqualified the old grade of politicians and retired army personnel who were at power for years not because they wanted to do something good for the state but who just wanted to get power and money. They were only elected because they had the money for it. The middle class citizen had never a chance in this political system – the “third class” Pakistani was never asked about their opinion – they were bought by the rich industrialists or by their landlords. Pakistan is perhaps the only country where the minister for education was not able to read or write! To avoid this kind of “democracy” the steps taken by Musharraf are absolutely necessary.

In an interview Kunwar Idris, who has been an official of the Pakistan Government for 36 years in the superior administrative cadre, gave his opinion. He also served in the public sector, industrial and banking public sector. During the last 6 years he has been on the boards of some companies dealing with automobile and banking. Idris presides now over 3-4 boards. As he told he is not involved actively in the management but the government listens to his advice. He writes also for Dawn, the biggest English newspaper in Pakistan. He pointed out:

“The problem yet is that about 500 families are coming to the national and provincial assembly over the past many years. Corruption really has made way not only into the individuals but into the families. Unless they are kept out of politics and the new middle class, urban class is given the chance, only then I have hope that Pakistan will get a new leadership. Which really subscribes itself to democracy and when they go into the assemblies they go with the will to serve the country and the people. Hopefully they are not like the previous governments which only enriched themselves. If you look at the composition of the national assembly of Pakistan you will see that the middle and the lower middle class have no resources of their own. They are not even 5% in the assembly. In Pakistan the parties are not rich unlike the parties in the West. If you have a candidate of a party in England, then the party is responsible for the person and will found him and will campaign for him. The people vote for the party. Here, unless the candidate is rich then he can invest money. The party itself can't give him money. Till now the government and the assemblies are open only to the rich. Previously the assemblies were dominated by the rural rich, the feudals. Now the urban rich who made money through business, through smuggling or dealing in narcotics they have become important. I spoke to members of the last assembly who said that one has to be prepared to invest 20 million Rs. for an election then one can take part. 20 million is not a small sum for Pakistan. It represents the income of 10'000 men for one year. Common people should get now

the chance to lead the country. One should strengthen the parties and vote for the enlightened and educated candidates.” [Interview taken in Karachi, January 2000]

The case of Dr. Shaiakh shows clearly that the mullahs are a big obstacle in the country. They can forge against anyone a case on behalf the blasphemy law – even if the truth is more than clear. These are facts which are needed by the Government so that they can take steps towards a real democracy. After the election in October the elected parliament will surely abolish the laws which were introduced since Zulfikar Ali Bhutto – that includes the Anti-Ahmadi law and also the blasphemy law – if not, then it will be an even much longer way to democracy.]

The following statement of Dr. Shaikh was mailed by ASIAPECAE:

“My Case

Now about myself: on 18.08.01 Capital Punishment was pronounced against me, though the case did not merit this.

1). On 1 October 2000 I attended a meeting of South Asian Union addressed by an ISI (Inter Services Intelligence) Brig. Shaukat Qadir (retd.) also running a religious-political association of Jamait - I - Islami. I asked a couple of questions about South Asian peace and Kashmir which offended him & he returned a threat. There were foreign office policy makers and newsmen sitting there.

2. Within 48 hours, a foreign office Pakistan's employee who was also my student at the medical college I used to lecture at the morning time, prepared an application against me alleging blasphemous remarks in their class and gave to a cleric, who improving upon the complaint, accused me of a specific instance of 2-10-2000 in the class of IIInd year male students and registered the case with Police.

- The Court set aside the cleric's evidence as hearsay.
- The student who wrote the application was found to be absent from the college on the day of the alleged incident, so his evidence was set aside.
- Two other students gave evidence that they heard the alleged blasphemous remarks on 2-10-2000 at 12.15 noon in a lecture that lasted between 12.00 to 12.45 noon.
- In my statement, I informed the Court that on 2-10-2000, I did not take any lecture from 12.00 o 12.45 noon, and therefore there was no incident of uttering blasphemous remarks at 12.15 noon. In support of this I presented the college timetable before the court, which confirmed that my timings at college were limited from 9.30 am to 12.00 noon only.
- Therefore neither the incident took place, nor the prosecution proved that the alleged sentences were blasphemous.
- During the trial, the religious students of the claimant clerics Deeni Madrassa used to demonstrate against me wearing the Taliban style head-dress & uniforms, my solicitors were threatened so much so that the court had to be moved to central Jail, Rawalpindi.
- The Court in camera held at Central Jail, Rawalpindi sentenced me to Capital Punishment, despite the flimsy and uncorroborated evidence against me, and despite documentary evidence in my favour, against which our appeal has been launched.

- & nbsp; People here designed the abuse of the blasphemy law 295/c Pakistan Penal Code as Religious Terrorism with Law Code.”

[**Comment:** This case shows the link between some army or ex-army personnel with Islamic organisations. This fact is very important in the present situation to be known by the Pakistani Government and it has to be made public by the media as well as by internet. Like that it opens the way for General Musharraf to take action against these elements in the army – which makes of course his life more save and also the started process of democracy. The public has to be prepared for this hard steps against the clerics and those who have close links with them but at the same time it is also a warning to these elements in the society that there is no place anymore for them and their terror which they were spreading in Pakistan. Also in the crucial question of Kashmir the people have to be prepared, although till now Musharraf is tough but again he has signalled that he is willing to held talks with India also on this point.]

Kunwar Idris was asked what he thinks about Gen. Musharraf and lifting the blasphemy law:

“How will Gen. Musharraf deal with the Ordinance, the Blasphemy Law?

He hasn't said anything about that, only that the constitution will remain operative until it would be suspended by a special order. He is known to be liberal in his thinking. One can see that he is tending to give in the pressure from the clerics. From the local religious groups, who are more local then influential. But they have been trying to spread the impression that he is trying to build up a secular state and that he is going to change the Islamic character of the constitution. Then they name the clauses against the Ahmadis. He has neither acted against the Ahmadis nor has he taken any action to ensure the minorities.

Do you think the situation of the minorities has seen a betterment?

The religious parties are already shouting that the government should be taught and harsh against the minorities and especially against the Ahmadis. But so far the indication is that the government is ignoring the protest of the fundamentalists. But it is not particularly being helpful to the minorities. It is premature to say that this government is better for the minorities then the past one. The army can act more independent of the pressure of theocracy then political parties.” [Interview taken in Karachi, January 2000]

The result of writing letters is not void. This is shown by the letter of Dr. Shaikh to ASIAPEACE:

“Thanks to friends like you [Ishatiah Ahmed], I am in good spirits and waiting for decision on my appeal. I am also thankful to IHEU, Amnesty International and other individuals and groups for their support.

As per news here, the American and Allied Forces have taken most of Afghanistan from the shackles of Taliban religious Terrorism; it had lots of influence on Islamabad administration, so hopes are rising for some liberal atmosphere.

My convictions for the truth of our life stance Humanism are indeed unshakeable and unbeatable. And I am most thankful for the sympathy and support from the Humanist Family of the World.

My regards to all Humanists, individually and collectively.

Yours in Humanism

Dr. M. Younas Shaikh” [sent by e-mail ASIAPEACE]

[**Comment:** A person who is in jail awaiting his/her sentence, or is already sentenced, depends very much on activities from outside. Sometimes one feels helpless but still a letter, an email can show that this person is not forgotten. The more letters arrive at the office of the president from all over the world the more impact it can have. Important is not to give up!]

5. What role could World Conference on Peace and Religion play in this process?

WCRP has a global approach to these kind of problems because its members are from all over the world, and they try to represent some of those people in their countries who are fighting for a better world today. Their believe is that all can take part in this effort – independent of their creed, nationality, colour or social class. Under the auspices of Prof. Lähnemann, the WCRP has already organised a successful meeting in Amman, Jordan, between Israeli and Palestinian organisations which were working independently for peace and freedom. Different organisations in the peace process between India and Pakistan have pointed out how important people-to-people meetings are. This is exactly what we have done in Amman. For some it was the first time to meet a Jew or a Palestinian and to find out that they both are fighting for a common cause – for peace. As soon as Indians and Pakistanis will find out that it is not only their peace but also the peace of the other the correct steps can be taken. Peace talks have to take place and the current situation – even if both countries are showing their readiness for a limited war – is favourable. Like in Amman WCRP could help to bring the two “partners” on a round table talk, beginning with the different peace organisations of India and Pakistan.

In England already a meeting of expatriates from Pakistan and India has taken place and also some work has been undertaken on this line in Switzerland. People-to-people meetings can improve the relation between the countries. It is interesting enough to find out that Indian and Pakistanis do have good personal and also good business relations with each other out of their countries. If this is possible in Switzerland, USA or Bahrain, then it should also be possible in our homeland. Business connections at the end can help to solve also the Kashmir problem.

At the World Economic Forum in New York, held in January 2002, Israeli and Palestinian businessmen decided to work together, although the political situation couldn't be worse than now. They said: “Politicians build walls, while businessmen build bridges”. Exactly this is also what we need between Pakistan and India. Kunwar Idris was asked about the economic situation in the year 2000 and why Pakistan should try to become member of the South Asian Association:

“The prosperity lies in economic growth and in opening up the economies. It is becoming a global economy. The trend is that there should be free trade. Free transfer of technology and money from one part of the world to the other. Within this globalisation you seek protection for your own economy or your own prosperity in regional blocs. Pakistan is a member of the South Asian Bloc. We have an organisation of these countries but it is only on papers. The more effective organisation is ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations). Pakistan should try to create a similar bloc. The members could be India, Bangladesh, Nepal, (Maldives), Burma. Because of political antagonism in this area, especially between Pakistan and India, it has not been possible to form an economical union. India and Pakistan, while their political differences will take time to resolve, have to adopt a step by step

approach. In the past 52 years Pakistan and India have been confronting each other. They have gone to war for at least three times. But they were not able to solve their political problems, which essentially spin around the question of Kashmir. We should now change the approach and economic co-operation is needed. First we should trade with each other, try to integrate the region. Out of that goodwill and economic relationship there will resolve a desire to solve also the political problems. For the last 52 years the political approach hasn't work out. For the last 52 years we are spending so much money for defence. We have tried to trade with countries from the other parts of the world. But to be an economic bloc, our economies should complement each other. Overland trade should be possible. That would be possible only when Pakistan would become part of the South Asian Region. We could save a lot of money. One could also plan the economy in such a manner that what can be more competitively produced in Pakistan should not be produced in India, and vice versa. What Bangladesh can produce on a lower cost, shouldn't be produced in Pakistan. The economy will centre around the profit centres of each country. I can give you an example: Pakistan has a surplus in sugar, deficit of wheat and India a deficit of sugar and a surplus in wheat. We buy wheat from Canada. If we would buy it from India, which is one hour from here, it would be much cheaper. When we buy wheat from Canada, USA or Australia, the money is made by the US farmers over there, who are already helped by the US Government or the shipping companies, which are again owned by the rich countries. Also middlemen make a lot of money. Europe for the economical purpose is one country.

The government of Pakistan is saying that it is not possible to have economical relation with India as long as the Kashmir problem is not solved. I think we can have this relation while we continue to resolve the Kashmir problem. Out of this mutual interest a solution of the Kashmir conflict will emerge which will be acceptable for all parties." [Interview taken in Karachi, January 2000]

It would be helpful if WCRP could organise a meeting like in Amman either in India or Pakistan – if needed even in a third country such as Afghanistan – a country which is becoming more and more important in the future and with which both, Pakistan and India, do have good relations. In the meeting different peace organisations and also business organisations could take part – both would influence each other in a positive way. Important in such meetings is the participation of different sectors of the population. Peace organisations are often short of money, but combined with business organisations which are not only interested in earning money but also in helping to develop harmony and peace between the conflict parties a realistic approach could be found and in this way also an influential working group could be created.