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# 30

## YEARS AHEAD

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ANNIVERSARY

BY T. V. PAUL

# Q CAN THERE BE A JOINTLY ADMINISTERED KASHMIR?

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## A No, there is too much distrust and no one will make any concessions

The India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir has eluded a permanent settlement since 1947. Four wars have not changed the incentive structures of India, Pakistan and the Kashmiri independence movements sufficiently to cause them to abandon their long-held positions. Among the proposals aired from time to time for a settlement is the idea that India and Pakistan should agree to a condominium or a mutual control arrangement over divided Kashmir while offering greater autonomy to Kashmiris. In recent years, Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf has suggested joint control of several adjacent districts of Kashmir as the first step towards a settlement.

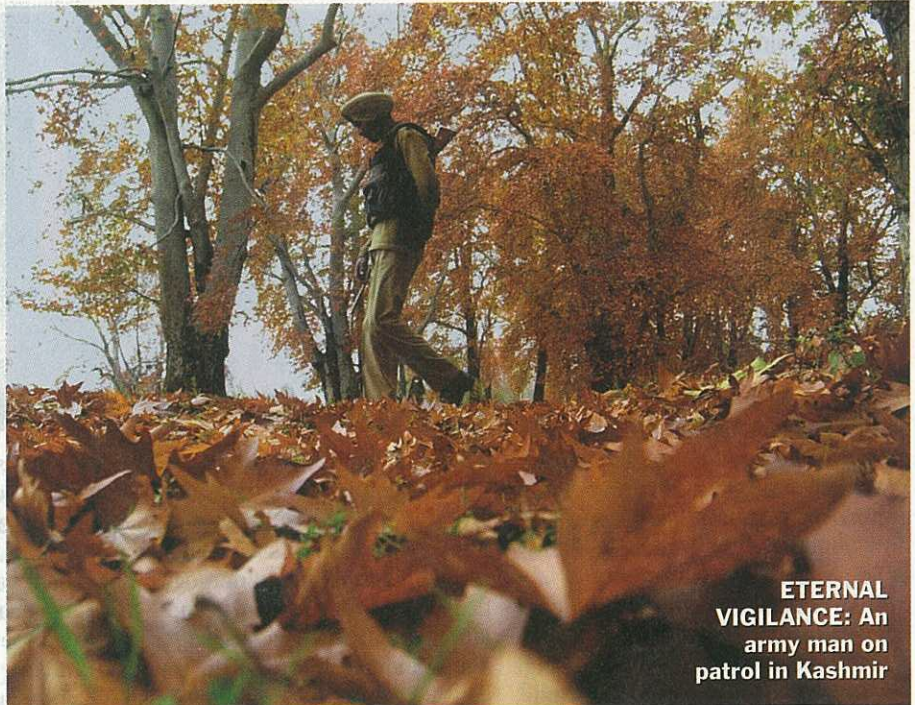
I contend that these proposals are unlikely to be implemented and if by any chance an agreement is sorted out by the political elite, it might collapse sooner than anticipated. Such proposals have not worked elsewhere—even among less bitter rivals—as demonstrated in Cyprus, Northern Ireland, and Gibraltar. In fact, there exists a greater danger of intense crises and wars erupting in South Asia as a result of the failure of

such an arrangement as expectations of the parties go unfulfilled.

Why is such a power-sharing arrangement unlikely to come to fruition? First, the mutual mistrust and misperceptions generated by the ongoing rivalry between India and Pakistan are difficult to overcome by such an arrangement. The India-Pakistan conflict is not simply a rivalry over territory, but one over identity and more importantly, over regional power position. The structural conditions surround-

ing this rivalry have not changed much, despite external shocks such as the end of the Cold War and the 9/11 attacks.

The Pakistani elite, since the days of Partition, has sought strategic parity with India. Despite the apparent power asymmetry between the two states, its quest was partially satisfied by Pakistan's geo-strategic location, alignment with the US and China, acquisition of quality armaments, including nuclear weapons, and the possibility of waging asym-



AP PHOTO

**ETERNAL VIGILANCE:** An army man on patrol in Kashmir



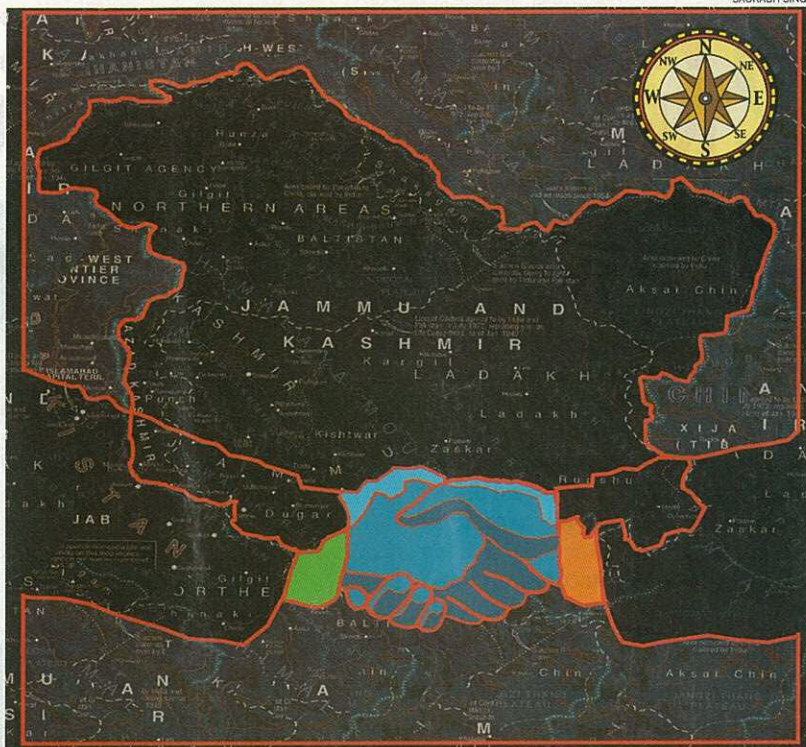
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metric war, relying on limited aims and terrorist and insurgent strategies. Pakistan's domestic power structure is built around the dominance of the Army, the primary reason for which has been the continuation of rivalry with India. Loosening the Indian juridical claim over Kashmir and the eventual unification of all of Kashmir under Islamabad are strategic objectives of Pakistan. In this logic, India agreeing to joint management of Kashmir would increase Pakistan's support for Kashmiri insurgent movements.

Second, enduring rivalries often end when a hurting stalemate is reached, which means, when one or both parties arrive at a stage where the continuation of rivalry is no longer feasible. Policy entrepreneurs, often on the side of the weaker challenger, make concessions that allow for settlement. In the Pakistani



SAURABH SINGH

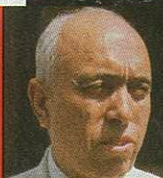
FROM OUR FILES

**TODAY** DECEMBER 15, 1977

Jammu &amp; Kashmir:

The Lion Roars

Sheikh Abdullah has sprung the Public Safety Ordinance on his people.



**"KASHMIR WILL NOT LET OTHERS PLAY WITH ITS DESTINY, WHETHER IT IS INDIA, PAKISTAN OR THE US."**

Sheikh Abdullah, J&amp;K chief minister, in 1980

The combined population of Jammu & Kashmir and Pakistani occupied Kashmir is  
**12 MILLION.**

case, a hurting stalemate has not yet been reached and no powerful domestic stakeholder has arisen who is willing to make painful concessions. Similarly, few stakeholders in India are prepared to make far-reaching concessions on Kashmir.

Third, there is little to suggest that Kashmiri movements would be satisfied by a joint power-sharing arrangement between India and Pakistan, or anything short of full sovereignty. They are unlikely to agree to the easy conduct of Indian and Pakistani forces in their territory. If Indian forces are withdrawn from any parts of Kashmir, it is very probable that Pakistan will make every effort to manipulate domestic groups

in Kashmir to achieve dominance. Pakistan could also intensely play the religious card to make Indian presence unsustainable.

Finally, when mutual expectations are not met and parties feel they have been betrayed, the outcome could be a more intensified rivalry, crises, and even war. Concessions by India are likely to be perceived by Pakistan as a sign of weakness, a psychological pathology of learning visible in past decisions by the Pakistani elite to initiate wars.

For the next decade, the pattern of India-Pakistan relations is likely to be one of intermittent crises punctuated by limited *détentes* and cosmetic improvements in trade and

people-to-people contacts. Pakistan is unlikely to abandon its asymmetric strategy under nuclear cover in order to achieve strategic parity with India unless fundamental changes take place in its society and polity. This transformation may come only if power-holders in Pakistan realise that their grand strategy is not working. Therefore, a strategy of incremental trust-building relying on increased economic interaction between India and Pakistan along with both Kashmiri jurisdictions carries greater potential for success than a condominium arrangement.

*(The writer is professor, McGill University, Montreal, Canada.)*