

M.N. ROY MEMORIAL LECTURE 1999

**PROSPECT OF
INDO-PAK AMITY**

by

KULDIP NAYAR

INDIAN RENAISSANCE INSTITUTE

A-12, Neeti Bagh, New Delhi - 110 049.

FOREWORD

M.N. Roy, architect of Indian Radical Humanist Movement and founder of Indian Renaissance Institute, a Revolutionary-philosopher was a man of genius. What drove him was his conviction that man is the master of his life and salvation. A lecture is delivered on 21st March, every year, by a distinguished person, in commemoration of Roy's birth in 1887. This year the lecture was delivered by Mr. Kuldip Nayar, a well known journalist and political commentator, on "PROSPECT OF INDO-PAK AMITY". With the deep grasp of Indo-Pak political relationship, Mr. Nayar identified core problems that stand between the friendship of the two countries and called upon them that the historic bus ride by Prime Minister Vajpayee should not go waste. The function was chaired by India's highly regarded and popular Chief Election Commissioner Dr. M.S. Gill.

Mr. Ashraf Jahangir Qazi, Pakistan High Commissioner to India, who was present, when invited to intervene, said that in the two Prime Ministers, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mr. Nawaz Sharif, the people of India and Pakistan have, for the first time in history, been given a priority in developing a strategy for better relations.

I, on behalf of the Indian Renaissance Institute and Indian Radical Humanist Association, take this opportunity to extend our sincere welcome to Mr. Kuldip Nayar, Mr. M.S. Gill and all the distinguished guests present.

Gauri Bazaz-Malik

Chairperson

Indian Renaissance Institute

Member Executive, Indian Radical Humanist Association

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By Kuldip Nayar

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

I did not have the privilege of knowing M.N. Roy. But I am privileged to speak at the lecture instituted in his memory. Founder of the Radical Humanist Movement in India, he gave man the dignity and the focus that the different ideologies had ignored to recognise. He visualised a decentralised people's state, a democracy organised from below, composed of a countrywide network of people's committees, which would hold power all the time. The political apparatus would then be under perpetual democratic control. Parliament would function at the top as the supreme People's Committee.

The economy of the country, as he said, would have to be drastically reorganised to eliminate exploitation of man by man. It would be based on people's co-operation. His view of human nature gives us a new approach to social reorganisation. Man can think for himself.

Few people will dispute Roy's intellectual brilliance; even his detractors agreed he had a great mind. All that he knew he had taught himself. Indeed, all he achieved was by his own efforts; nobody pushed him. He was entirely a self-made man.

Roy was a constant critic of Mahatma Gandhi. But his assassination shook him. He wrote that his martyrdom might not be in vain. Essentially the Mahatma's message, he said, was a 'moral, humanist cosmopolitan appeal'. The core of his message is that the end does not justify the means.

Independence came in August, 1947, but the rejoicing and celebrations were muted by the enormous sacrifice in human life and suffering caused by Hindu-Muslim clashes. Roy, who had predicted the weakness of imperialism by war and its disappearance, noted that his expectation had proved right. And this brings me to the topic of my lecture : Prospects of India and Pakistan Relations.

Why was India divided? This is the question which is asked even after 51 years, both in Pakistan and India. With the sequence of events stretching back to many decades, such an exercise can only be an academic distraction. But it is clear that the differences between Hindus and Muslims had become so acute by the beginning of the forties that something like partition had become inevitable.

For those who still regret the division, I can only say that the British could have probably kept the subcontinent united if they had been willing to ladle out more power in 1942 when Sir Stafford Cripps tried to reconcile the aspirations of the people of India with his limited brief. The Congress Party could also have done it if it had accepted in 1946 the Cabinet Mission proposals of 'a Centre with limited powers and zonal and provincial autonomy'. But the 'ifs' of history are at best hypothetical and at worst subjective.

Has partition served the purpose of the Muslims? I do not know. In Pakistan, people avoid the word 'partition'. On 14th August they celebrate their deliverance not so much from the British rule as from the fear of Hindu rule. During my trips to that country, I have heard people say that they are happy that at least they have 'some place' where they feel secure, free of 'Hindu domination' or 'Hindu aggressiveness'. In fact, I feel that the Muslims have been the biggest losers; they are now spread over three countries—India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Imagine the influence that their numbers—their votes—could have commanded in the undivided subcontinent. They would have been more than one-third of the total population.

When I left Sialkot, the town of my birth, on September 13, 1947, I never thought that I would not return to my home. It was a temporary upheaval which would subside after sometime and all the uprooted would return to their place to live happily after. This was not to be. But I believe that one day the high walls that fear and distrust has raised on the borders would crumble and the peoples of the subcontinent, without giving up their separate identities, would work together for the common good. That might usher in an era, fruitful beyond their dreams.

This is the faith which I have cherished ever since I left my home town, Sialkot, in Pakistan. And this is the straw, I have clung to, in the sea of hatred and hostility that has for long engulfed the subcontinent. This is the hope, not the nostalgia, with which every

Indian and Pakistani, over the age of forty, often looks back.

Feeling of kinship is natural. Both of us come from the same stock, share the same history and have the borders. The Punjabis, who are in a majority in Pakistan, are close to the Punjabis in India linguistically, culturally and otherwise. Once I discussed with the Punjabis in Lahore, the differences between them and the Punjabis on this side. All that we could find was that after death I would be cremated and they buried. The same holds goods for the Sindhis.

In fact, the transfer of population, probably affected by people on their own, was not part of settlement over partition. All were expected to stay where they were living. Jinnah gave an assurance even before the birth of Pakistan (11th August): "You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the fundamental principle that we are citizens and equal citizens of one State". Mahatma Gandhi said he would lay down his life to prevent harm coming to Muslims.

Still, peoples on both sides indulged in looting and killing, spreading over the weeks. Even an official estimate put the figure of the killed around 5 lakh and the uprooted around 200 lakh. No religions sanctions murder of the innocent. Still they killed in the name of religion.

People on both sides have gone apart so much that it seems difficult at present to span the distance. How can we do it is one point which I want to dilate on but, more specifically, what prospects are there to build the relationship between the two?

However difficult it is to imagine that religion can form the basis of nationality, the fact remains that Pakistan was founded on the thesis that the Hindus and the Muslims in the subcontinent were two different nations. The Pakistanis will take it an amis if their faith is challenged. Most of them believe that India has not accepted the basic thesis.

There was a long applause to a remark by prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee at the civic reception in Lahore last month that Pakistan did not require any stamp from India for its recognition as a separate, sovereign country. It was there and he accepted the 23rd March 1940 resolution which had demanded the Partition of India and the formation of Pakistan. People in Pakistan were overjoyed

because a sense of insecurity plagues the country even after 51 years of its existence.

The loss of East Pakistan has been a traumatic experience for them and they have not stopped blaming India for it. Therefore, any assurance on Pakistan's entity, unity or stability helps remove the fear that New Delhi wants to undo Pakistan.

The fear enhances when it comes to the community as such. Hindu-Muslim rioting in India, lately less than before, strengthens the Pakistanis' belief that they have a country of their own where no one hurts them because they are Muslims. I recall that soon after the emergency, the R.S.S.—some of its members—were in the same ward at Tihar where I was detained during the emergency—invited me to address one of their *shakhas*. I told them that if ever there came a time when the Pakistanis found Muslims in India secure, enjoying equal status with the Hindus, they would themselves obliterate the border.

Incidents like those in Bhiwandi, Jamshedpur, Ahmedabad, Meerut or Mumbai shake the confidence of Pakistanis. That the recommendations of no inquiry report has been implemented in the last 50 years or that none among the killers has been hanged has convinced most Pakistanis that Muslims are not safe in India. The new generation has been born with this belief. A statutory obligation to implement the recommendations by an inquiry commission on Hindu-Muslim rioting will go a long way to establish the bonafides of Indian liberal society.

More recently, the Justice Sri Krishna Report on the riots in Mumbai has remained unimplemented. It has mentioned some officers by name for killing Muslims. The Shiv Sena-BJP Maharashtra government has rejected the report. I asked Home Minister L.K. Advani in Parliament the other day to take action against the Indian Police Service officials mentioned in the report because they belonged to the all-India Services, which were under the Union Home Ministry. His reply was that since the State government had rejected the report, the Centre would not take notice of it. What should the Muslims in Pakistan or, for that matter, the Muslims elsewhere infer from that.

In fact, the Maharashtra government and its alter ego, Bal Thackeray, have damaged India's image the most. His diktats like

banning the Pakistani artists from singing or stopping the cricket match between India and Pakistan at Mumbai provide the grist to the hate-mill of fundamentalists in Pakistan. Believe it or not, Bal Thackeray is so much lionised in Pakistan that one begins to feel as if he represents India's mainstream. He is like Qazi Ahmed Nissar, the Pakistan Jamat-e-Islami chief, equally vituperative, who casts a long shadow on the relationship between the two countries. Qazi Sahib, however, never wins at the polls, while, unfortunately, Bal Thackeray does.

Still it was the Jamat-e-Islami which delayed the banquet given by Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif. The roads had to be cleared before Vajpayee's cavalcade could move from Government House, where the prime minister was staying, to the Red Fort. One policeman died of bullet, fired by the Jamiat supporters. The general reaction was that of horror, but the explanation offered was that the Afghan war had given access to arms to all and sundry. Indeed, Pakistan has the problem of unlicensed arms, which are in lakhs. Once Benazir Bhutto, then Pakistan prime minister, told me that every hostel room in Sind and Punjab had *klashnakov*.

However unpopular, fundamentalists have a nuisance value in Pakistan. They have more or less silenced liberals. The common man is afraid of them and of their religious clout. The maulvi does not have any political pull but he wields influence in the field of religion much more than a pandit or brahmin does in India. And that is saying a lot in an Islamic country.

Still I saw how the busride from Wagah to the other side blanketed the two countries with hope and confidence. The Nawaz-Vajpayee summit was the stuff dreams are made of. Sworn enemies beamed at each other and at everyone else, poured out sentimental words, vowed to herald in an era of peace and amity, settle all outstanding disputes and join hands for a better future for the people of the two countries. It was a moving sight and even the most die-hard felt a flutter or two in their hearts. No one had ever imagined seeing such scenes in their lifetimes because Pakistan-India enmity has always been accepted as a fact of life, something which one takes for granted and, therefore, permanent factor in the decision-making process.

What is one to make all these dizzying changes which threaten

to disturb the proverbial applecart? How does one begin to comprehend the sheer magnitude of what is surely the beginnings of a radical transformation in South Asia? It has now become fashionable to speculate on what is going to happen and how new realities in the region will affect the lives of common citizens. Politics, economics, culture, all three are now under the spotlight, waiting for the effect of this new detente to make itself felt. There is excitement, there is anticipation and there is a fear of the unknown---a fear which can manifest itself in many forms and which can whitewash the entire process.

At the heart of this lurking fear lies the danger that we may have been taken for a ride and that in our earnestness to settle issues and get on with life, we may end up bargaining away everything and ending up with nothing. In normal give and take, such fears can be tackled through tough negotiations after having established a bottomline. But in the case of Pakistan-India relations, this principle fails to be applicable in the true sense of the word because one slip-up, one false move and the window of opportunity slams shut. If a position is compromised, there is no way it can be retrieved. It is for this very reason that each small step requires so much thinking and so much determination. It is for this reason that no one has dared to take this first small step.

I know there is still bitterness on both sides. I saw at the civic reception accorded to Vajpayee in Lahore, a Pakistani citizen in his late fifties did not stand up when India's national anthem was played. He later said his action was intentional because he had not forgotten the killing of seven members of his family in Hoshiarpur, Punjab. He and his grandfather were the only survivors. His grief, if not anger, is understandable. But he did not realise that thousands of Hindu and Sikh families coming from Pakistan met the same fate. They too saw murder and worse--their near and dear ones were hacked to death before their eyes.

It was an avalanche of migration: humanity was on the move. None expected it and none wanted it, but none could help it. I too saw piles of bodies on both sides of the road and empty trucks here and there bore testimony to looting. When it came to violence, there was no difference between the followers of Islam and Hinduism. Both soaked their hands in blood.

The question that the two sides have to ask themselves is whether they want to live in the horrible past and blotch the future or come into the open to face the challenges. They can live in distrust and hatred as they have done for the last 51 years. Or, they can begin a new chapter of understanding to solve their problems in peace. Such an effort was initiated by the two prime ministers when they met in Lahore.

Vajpayee publicly admitted that he was opposed to partition and he felt that a grievous injury was inflicted on him when Pakistan was carved out. A large portion of the wound, he said, had got healed over the years, but he sought friendship and amity to remove the scar which was there. The thundering applause by the Pakistan elites indicated their response to a fresh start for fostering neighbourly relations. It looked as if the darkness of decades was beginning to recede.

I had my fears when I travelled from Amritsar to Lahore. The mood in the bus was relaxed, but very few exchanged words with one another. A feeling of expectancy hung in the air. Some nervousness was visible and it got heightened with every kilometre-stone going past. How would the visit go was the thought in everyone's mind. Still they were conscious of the history they were making.

'It was a courageous step', I remarked when I sat next to the prime minister briefly. He only smiled. I persisted with my questions: 'What made you respond to Nawaz Sharif's off-the-cuff remark to take a ride in the bus?' 'What about your party, the BJP?' He said: 'I thought, let me do something to be remembered. After all, the prime ministership does not last long.' Then he mentioned the killing of Hindus at Rajouri. He was disturbed. 'Certain elements always do it to sabotage the talks.' I wanted to talk to him further but there was a long queue: I returned to my seat.

Before long, we were out of Attari and then at Wagah. The sun was setting but a new one was rising to shed the light of love and friendship. Never before had the prime ministers of the two countries met at the border. The iron gates on the Pakistan side were still closed, although the welcome sign in Urdu was visible. People were milling around the Indian side. There was the usual guard of honour, a large contingent of policemen. The guard of honour is a beaten

path, covered again and again, even 51 years after the British rule. The Bhangra team was, however, a relief. So was the gidda party by girls, which conducted the bus right into the Pakistan territory.

The mood of abandon on the Indian side changed into sombreness. The Pakistan Rangers stood rows to attention. There was silence and the air was heavy. Nawaz Sharif's smiling face broke the monotony. Some of his colleagues dressed in 'achkan' too were a relief. "*Kush ammed* (welcome) to Pakistan" were the first words Sharif spoke before he embraced Vajpayee. His Ministers also lined up to shake hands with Vajpayee. The three Service chiefs of Pakistan were not there. I wonder if they were supposed to be there. On my arrival in a hotel, a newsman asked for my reaction to a story published in a paper that the three had refused to salute the Indian prime minister. This seemed far-fetched. The story did not appear in any other paper. The chiefs were, however, present when the helicopter, carrying Vajpayee and Sharif from the border, landed at the Government House in Lahore.

The Pakistanis fell in love with Vajpayee. None from India had spoken to them so well, so frankly and so honestly. Even otherwise, Many Pakistanis argued it was but logical that a Hindu-backed BJP should have come to an understanding with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

What the two prime ministers achieved might seem very little in concrete terms, particularly when Pakistan weighs everything in the scales of Kashmir. Even as Mr. Vajpayee said, at least three times during the visit that the problem of Jammu and Kashmir had yet to be settled and that the two sides would continue to have talks until they resolved it. In other words, he conceded that it was a dispute. That he did not say that Kashmir was an integral part of India was something which the Pakistanis noticed.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Sharif tried to queer the pitch within a week of the signing of the Lahore Declaration. True, he had to say something harsh at a function where the gathering mostly comprised extremists. But he should have realised that while placating the ultras he could not be jeopardising the prospects of a settlement. Kashmir cannot be resolved in a short time, the consensus will have to be built up on both sides. The atmosphere of suspicion has to change and the Kashmiris will have to be associated at some stage. To say

that Pakistan may resort to 'other means' if Kashmir is not settled within a specific time-frame is to ask for a solution at the point of pistol. Rhetoric is all right but it will serve no purpose if a prime minister is swept off his feet. The stakes are too high to be lost in a flourish of oratory.

New Delhi did well not to react. It had to deny the 'yes' attributed to Mr. Vajpayee on the Kashmiris' right to self-determination. I can appreciate Mr. Sharif's domestic compulsions but Mr. Vajpayee too has fundamentalists to reckon with. I do not know in what context Mr. Vajpayee said what. Was it necessary for Mr. Sharif to disclose details even if there was some such reference in some way? In comparison, Mr. Vajpayee was discreet. For a prime minister of a country which lost territory to China in the 1962 War, it was not outlandish to say that he was determined not to lose any more territory. May be, he had in mind the eventuality of an agreement along the present line of control in Kashmir. If it ever becomes an international border, Mr. Vajpayee will not be blamed for having retracted his words. Such an arrangement does not make India yield more land.

I fear that the journey may go waste if the two sides are not careful about what they say. Foreign offices in both countries have to show more responsibility because they hold a press briefing almost every-day. Politicians may say that they were quoted out of context. Officials cannot. Many a time in the past, I saw the beginnings of a new era. It happened after the Tashkent Agreement in 1966 and after the Simla Agreement 1972. But then, distrust and suspicion overtook the two countries. And they became distant neighbours. I trust that politicians and bureaucrats will this time resist the temptation of stoking the fires for their vested interests. The people on both sides are sick and tired of being enemies. They want to live in peace so that their children and grand-children can grow up in an environment of security and confidence. Is it too much to ask for?

Until now, both Nawaz Sharif and Vajpayee have taken such steps as provide an opening which can be owned further. But nations rarely ever take action on sincerity alone; it has to be backed by national interest and a firm conclusion that their long-term objective will be realised through such a course of action. This gives the leaders

room for manoeuvre. It also places them in a situation where they can either make history or be condemned by it, a risk many would shy away from. This being the case, the countdown has begun because the clock started ticking for both prime ministers when Vajpayee disembarked from the bus at Wagah border and put his arms around Nawaz Sharif.

That embrace, which triggered off a thousand flashlights, is now part of recent history and will remain etched in the memory of billions across the world if the two leaders are successful in delivering on their promises. Talk of a Nobel Peace Prize for both is already in the air, indicating that any breakthrough in the real sense of the word (meaning that developments go beyond mere symbolism) will be considered an event of global standing, to be bracketed with the Middle East Peace Accord. Such grandiose scenarios are of course meant to spur the two leaders on and embolden them to move ahead on the path they have charted. But before this can be done, a bitter dose of realism is required to clear away the emotional debris and get down to the nitty-gritty.

The 'feel-good' factor in Pakistan-India relations is a rarity and one is tempted to hang on to it as long as possible, if for nothing else than to relish the exciting possibilities that it conjures. Flights of imagination need no visas, and hence are always so pleasurable. One will avoid terming the latest developments as such because that would unfairly belittle what is indeed a monumental move forward, but by doing so, we run the risk of leaping ahead of time. The problem is that sometimes things are too good to be true. One fears that the bus diplomacy may become a prime example of this truism because it has sparked off more than it can perhaps realistically deliver.

There are a host of factors which have the potential of punctuating the bus factors which include domestic compulsions, mutual mistrust, uncertainty, second thoughts, differing interpretations and in the extreme case fall of the government. These factors were swept away in the background by the sentimental avalanche that accompanied Vajpayee's Pakistan visit, but since these waves of euphoria have receded, bitter realities have decided to undertake a return trip to the arena. The day after the day that was, is always a 'downer'.

Difficult times lie ahead, to put it simplistically. The threads of

the Lahore-Declaration are yet to be knotted firmly and till the time this is done, they will continue to sway with the wind. We can assume that both New Delhi and Islamabad have reaped benefits from the public extravaganza in Lahore and are now settling in for some quiet diplomacy to prepare for the next round of talks. Or, we can assume that as per tradition peace between Pakistan and India is merely the period falling between two rounds of battle. In either case, all we can do is wait with bated breath while enjoying the thoughts of what new vistas can open up if things work out.

Books are the ones which foster thinking. They are bad on both sides and they need to be changed. History has two basic constituents. First, a story of the facts; second, their interpretation. As a student, or even a casual reader, you might accept and indeed welcome, interpretations that are original and unorthodox. But you would certainly not tolerate a distortion of the facts. And yet, this is not as evident or innocent as it sounds. Before he embarks on the interpretation phase of his work, a responsible historian has to make a choice from among the mass of facts that he has assembled, a distinction between the essential and the contingent in human affairs, a choice of those facts that he regards as significant. It is already here that prejudice can raise its ugly head.

In a textbook that Dr. Romilla Thapar wrote some 30 years ago, she mentioned that Mahmud of Ghazni was an iconoclast and raided the temple towns of India for wealth collected from other campaigns, he built a Central Asian empire, including a very renowned library at Samarkand. Communal historians were quick to pick on this passage, applauding Thapar's statement that he was an iconoclast and raided the temples but did not mention 'that he used that money to build a large empire and a library'. She gave yet another instance, Aurangzeb's bad qualities were mentioned, but there was never a mention that he also gave grants to brahmins and temples. So, it's a selective history.

After a selective, prejudiced choice of acts, our communal historians try to convince us that 'for the last thousand years Indian history has been dominated by a society which consists of a monolithic Muslim community and a monolithic Hindu community'. Therefore, every historical event that takes place is to be explained by this conflict. This is absolutely primitive history.

The cause of an event has to be explained through a range of explanations which we then arrange in order of priority. So none of us as self-respecting historians, say that an event has only a single cause. This is making a mockery of history.

Thapar identified Nehru's decision to adopt adult franchise as the single-most decisive factor in India's history since independence, the one thing that saves us from dictatorship and from fascism. On the negative side, the rise of *Hindutva* is going to put us back by at least a century. We simply won't be able to think of ourselves as a modernising society because of all these impediments. Look at the articulation—you have a film like *Fire* and they go and break down a cinema house. Hussain painted a picture and they go and burn it. This is not modernisation, not even civilised living. This is barbaric, because it terrorises society and prevents creative impression.

I have been surprised over a proposal that India could take Jammu and give Kashmir to Pakistan. Some hardcore Pakistanis have made the suggestion. The reason why it is not acceptable to New Delhi is the thinking it delineated on communal lines. India is a pluralistic society. It cannot accept the basis that the Muslim-majority Kashmir should go to the Islamic state of Pakistan and the Hindu-majority Jammu to Hindu-majority India. This will give a fatal blow to the policy of secularism that India upholds. Some other formula has to be worked out which includes the say of Kashmiris. Both countries have suffered enough from partition on the basis of religion. For them to go back to the days of the religious divide is to invite disaster.

Islamabad has disappointed me by not reciprocating New Delhi's offer of no-first use of nuclear weapons. The argument that this would disadvantage Pakistan, which is weaker in conventional warfare is fallacious. The bomb has, in fact, ruled out wars between India and Pakistan. A no-first-use pact may be difficult for Pakistan to accept because of domestic compulsions. There can be a no-war-pact at least. This does not jeopardise defence in any way. Had Vajpayee and Sharif signed such a pact, a sense of relief would have swept across the subcontinent. The two countries could have cut their military expenditure and diverted funds to education, health and hunger, the vision to which they referred during their speeches.

May be, all of us should work towards that now in the days-to

come. The core problem is trust and confidence, not Kashmir. That has to be built first. One way to make the beginning is to lift restrictions on the newspapers and books of one country entering the other. Now more contacts between the peoples of the two countries will help. Delhi should do it immediately. A visa is issued for three countries and the visitor has to report to the police regularly. This practice is barbaric. India should take the initiative of issuing a visa for the entire country and do away with the police-reporting.

Bhutto told me that he honestly believed that a preponderant majority of Indians did not want to undo partition. The change is dependent on how soon economic prosperity comes to the subcontinent so that people can forget religious differences and set themselves the task of improving their standard of living. This is not impossible because all the three countries—India, Pakistan and Bangladesh—are now committed to social justice and democracy.

The idea of an economic market may not mature for a long time to come because India is a developed country compared to the other two. Bhutto told me: 'We will have to see whether we can mutually benefit but in principle I think as far as a common market is concerned, we are not ready for such an arrangement. Europe also was not ready for it. It took time for Europe as a whole to get the advantage of a common market. Today we are basically producers of primary commodities and their industrial progress has been better than ours. We have also had some industrial progress but we have not reached that standard of industrial development where there can be a grand collaboration in industry because these things are very difficult to arrange and even Europe is finding it difficult regarding agricultural commodities.'

However, trade among the three countries—India, Pakistan and Bangladesh—may grow. One estimate made before the emergence of Bangladesh was that if India and Pakistan were to have even normal trade, there would be a turnover of Rs. 5,000 crores per year. But if the distrust and suspicion overtake the subcontinent once again and if the goodwill generated by the Lahore accord is allowed to be dissipated, events will meander to a situation where, even if there is no conflict, there will be no settlement; even if no hostility, no harmony; and even if there is no war, there will be no peace.

And for a long time, India and Pakistan will continue to be distant neighbours.

The constant attack on the security forces in Kashmir can affect the talks. After the injury to D.I.G., Police, state chief minister Farooq Abdullah has said that the interference in Kashmir has to be fought like a war. He is a volatile person. But his message that peace cannot be achieved when the war is on, is unexceptionable. Senior officials of the armed forces in India have also been making the same point.

Islamabad should realise that it cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hound. That is unproductive. War and peace are two contradictory situations. The presence of the one is the absence of the other. The Lahore Declaration has provided Pakistan with a fresh opportunity to depart from the path it has taken in the past.

An unofficial proposal reaching India is that New Delhi should be prepared to withdraw its forces from the valley if it wants the interference from the other side to stop. How far the Sharif government is willing to back the proposal is not known. But it is not an outlandish one. That can form a basis for discussion. The point to keep in mind is that the strength of security forces in Kashmir is in proportion to the danger faced or perceived by India. Once the interference from the other side lessens, the strength of security forces in the valley will automatically go down.

There is no doubt that the armed forces will return to the barracks once militancy ends. And whether the Pakistanis believe it or not, the insurgency in the valley has come down considerably. The embers get re-ignited when the valley receives fresh supply of arms and armed men. And the Afghans and the Sudanese, who come through Pakistan, communalise the situation.

Even if Pakistan does not see the reason behind the discontinuance of its involvement, India should take the initiative to settle the other aspects of Kashmir : the Siachin glacier dispute. Nearly 10 years ago, both new Delhi and Islamabad had reached an agreement, which was initialled by foreign secretaries of the two countries. An indiscreet announcement at that time sabotaged the entire exercise. The draft can perhaps be retrieved for further discussion, if not for straight implementation.

I believe that our army is against the old agreement. But the

retired top brass that I have talked to tell me that the Siachin glacier is of no strategic importance. If so, the political leadership should not leave it to the army and order withdrawal of forces from there on the condition that Pakistan also does so. The word, redeployment, was used in the draft agreement.

Primarily, there is a lack of confidence on both sides. The suspicion is that if one side were to vacate, the other would step in. Surely the agreement can be endorsed by America, Britain, Russia and France to guarantee its full implementation.

In fact, the Lahore Declaration should build mutual confidence. There is no need for a third party. May be, as the days go by, the trust will increase. But there is no doubt that the Declaration has made a new start possible. Living in the past will only bring back bitter memories. If Great Britain and France could be friends after fighting wars for 100 years, why not India and Pakistan?

End.

INTRODUCTIONS

Kuldip Nayar, Journalist, Author and Human Rights Activist presently Member of Parliament-Rajya Sabha, has also been a member of the Indian Delegation to U.N. besides being India's High Commissioner to the U.K. Mr. Nayar worked as a correspondent and Editor of many prestigious newspapers; his syndicated column appears in dozens of newspapers in India and abroad. He has served on the senate of Punjab and Guru Nanak Universities, has authored many books which include 'Between the Lines'; 'India : The Critical Years'; 'India After Nehru'; 'The Judgement'; 'The Tragedy of Punjab and India House'.

Dr. Manohar Singh Gill presently the Chief Election Commissioner of India since 1997, has earlier been a Secretary to Govt. of India, Chemicals, Petro-Chemicals-Pharmaceutical; Agriculture Cooperative, and Election Commissioner of India. He is the President of the 'Indian Mountaineering Foundation'. Has published many books that include, 'Travels in Lahaul-Spiti', 'Folk Tales of Lahaul', and 'An Indian Success Story-Agriculture and Co-operative'. He has lectured at many prestigious Universities of USA including Harvard.

"What is a revolution? And who is a revolutionary? A revolutionary is one who has got the idea that the world can be remade, made better than it is today; that it was not created by a supernatural power, and therefore could be remade by human efforts. A revolutionary further starts with the knowledge that the world has been remade, time and again, and that the process of remaking the world takes place of necessity. Those Indians who have felt the necessity of remaking our country, and are convinced that the people of India have the power to do so, are revolutionaries. One cannot be a revolutionary without possessing scientific knowledge. One must have the conviction that not only human beings can remake the world, can make and unmake gods, but ever since the birth of the race have been doing that. Human nature is to set up gods, topple them down and set up new ones."

(M.N. Roy : **Philosopher-Revolutionary**, *Sibnarayan Ray*,
Ajanta Pub, 1995, p.31.) New Delhi.