CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSIONS

We have already seen the themes and subthemes that were being projected to highlight the main preoccupations of India's Kashmir policy. Non-official channels were also projecting similar themes and subthemes with different degrees of emphasis. Kashmir issue was one of those issues on which both the press and the Parliament were supporting the official line. The criticisms from these quarters had mostly centered on the fact that the Government was not doing enough to achieve what it said were its rights in Kashmir.

A good case, however, can be lost by default. Though the foreign press was generally critical of Indian positions, it is also true that to a large extent the Anglo-American misunderstanding could be ascribed to poor publicity from New Delhi. Way back in 1951 the correspondent of the Economist and the Manchester Guardian wrote in the columns of the Times of India that, "India must at least be prepared to explain her point adequately and frequently". It was also felt that Indian publicity on this question "attempts to justify where it should explain".

Much of the effectiveness of propaganda depends on its timing and on the Kashmir question it has always been made too late.

Another important point that emerges from these criticisms is that "the arguments used have tended to be obscured

1 Teya Zinkin, "India, Pakistan and the West: Western View Point" in the Times of India (Bombay), 14 August 1951.
by the shifting of the arguments". Very often the debates in the Lok Sabha had referred to effectiveness of Pakistani propaganda and comparisons were made between Indian and Pakistani approaches. In the initial years of the problem various annual reports of the Ministry of External Affairs refer to their efforts to counter Pakistani propaganda. The general feeling, however, was that a good case had suffered a lot by lack of planned and timely publicity. From this one comes to the conclusion that there is no point in being complacent even about a good case. In other words, "there is no point in being virtuous, one has to appear virtuous also".

With these abstractions in mind we can go over the main points that emerge from this study. We had begun with an understanding that the countries feel the need to project their points because they realise the importance of public opinion in other countries. This involves propaganda and publicity. For these purposes the official machinery needs to prepare and disseminate relevant material but, for "its range and effectiveness propaganda depends on the mass media and one section of this media is in the private sector". It is also true that the press has largely reflected the 'upsurge of national will' irrespective of the deliberate efforts made by the official machinery to influence this

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section. Besides, an adverse press can do a lot to expose the official propaganda line.

In the case of Kashmir, however, we have discovered that the non-official channel of propaganda, had generally supported the official line. In fact, at times, its impatience for faster and effective action is also witnessed. For example, we can recall the theme of 'solutions' in our study. We had found that non-official coverage on this issue is much higher than the official coverage. When the official media gave it less than 3 per cent of weightage, the non-official coverage was almost four times more than this. These aspects can be treated as the positive ones in terms of support for the official policy.

Since we are looking at propaganda as an instrument of diplomacy, it is necessary to keep in mind the gains and losses, advantages and disadvantages of diplomacy as such also. The mistakes that the Indian diplomacy was making in this case were percolating down to all its instruments as well. This can be illustrated with some points that emerge from a careful perusal of the historical accounts of the Kashmir question. Indian diplomacy had put itself at a tactical disadvantage by adopting the term 'plebiscite'. Lord Mountbatten's letter of 27 October 1947, accepting the accession of Jammu and Kashmir had mentioned that "... it is my Government's wish that as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and her soil cleared of the inva-
ders the question of state's accession should be settled by a reference to the people."³

Later in his radio broadcast on 2 November 1947, Nehru had the following to say:

"The pledge we have given (the one of reference to the people), and the Maharaja has supported it, not only to the people of Kashmir but to the world; we will not and cannot back out of it. We are prepared, when peace and law and order have been established, to have a referendum held under international auspices like the United Nations. We want it to be a fair and just reference to the people, and we shall accept their verdict."⁴

Though the conditionality clause in these offers was present ever since they were made, and due to changed circumstances it was not considered practicable to refer the issue to the people. As a result India had to answer criticisms for having wriggled out of its commitment. According to the scheme of periodisation followed in this study we find that by the second period Indian attitude had sufficiently hardened. The non-official media was quicker in reflecting this change than the official media when it declared that "there will be no plebiscite".

Later, it was also realised that the talk of plebiscite was affecting and questioning the validity and finality of accession. Though it was a fact that the Instrument of

⁴ ibid., pp. 54-55.
Accession signed by the Maharaja was a complete document by itself and there was no question of 'provisional or conditional' accession, the talk of plebiscite got linked with the 'finality of accession' as such, and made 'the accession' appear as 'conditional'.

Similarly, while referring the Kashmir question to the United Nations, India had shown its complete faith in the UN. Later, however, it had to reject certain UN proposals. Due to this apparent change in its attitude, it had to indulge in explanations. Despite the arguments and reasons put forward for rejection of these UN proposals, criticisms against it continued to pour in. This was also an additional strain on Indian propaganda and publicity.

India had to face a lot of criticisms on the grounds that Sheikh Abdullah was being given different types of treatment. Initially India had wished to gain diplomatic advantages by saying that accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India was not only the wish of an autocratic ruler but, it also had the support of a popular leader. Again, in this case we find that no real advantage had accrued to India on this account. But, the subsequent developments in the State increased India's vulnerability to criticisms. Later when it was decided to hold the elections to the Constituent Assembly of the State it appeared as though India was defying the Security Council and the world public opinion.
These themes in India's propaganda and publicity can also be treated as negative themes because they were mostly answering the question as to why India was not doing or upholding certain things that it had professed to do otherwise.

Another point that call for attention is the theme of secularism. Instead of treating Jammu and Kashmir as a test and proof of India's secularism it would have been better if the examples of other areas with large Muslim population were cited. An additional positive point could have been made by highlighting that an area predominantly inhabited by the people of any particular religion can join a secular state. It can not be prevented from joining a secular state on religious grounds.

There is another hypothetical question that can be asked at this point. Assuming that the preparedness, comprehension, range and effectiveness of Indian propaganda on this case was at its best, can we say that it would have successfully bridged the information gap or the gap between the 'images' or 'image-clusters' held by different international actors? Knowing the goings-on in the Security Council where Indian delegates and representatives were going over these points repeatedly, there should not have been any "information gap" as such. There were other instances where additional information and evidences were confirming the points raised by India. For example, the findings of the
UNCIP that "there was a material change in the situation of Jammu and Kashmir; or, Dixon's contention that Pakistan had committed aggression in Kashmir in 1947 and 1948 and his willingness to call Pakistan an aggressor; or, Gunnar Jarring's contention that "the situation in the State has changed but the resolutions remain unchanged" etc. Even these contentions were not paid any heed to. With the gradual realisation that the world body is not non-partisan, and the bias and prejudice shown by its members are irrespective of the merits of the case, India decided not to wait for its 'just' verdict. It decided that the normal political processes should be allowed to take their due course in the State. This takes us to another level of generalization. It had found expression in what Nehru had to say to the Lok Sabha on 17 December 1957. Expressing his dissatisfaction with Indian publicity apparatus he had said that it is not true that "we merely have to state India's case and everybody says how right you are".

In the case of Kashmir particularly, we have witnessed that predominant ideas and concerns of international actors are inspired by their own considerations. Though India was in a position to expose the blatant support Pakistan was getting from the members of various military pacts, it could not gain any advantage on this basis.

We have got some indication as to why international actors refuse to change their respective positions. The same
is also true of their willingness to change their positions. This point can also be illustrated in this context.

The Kashmir question had become a controversial subject in the cold war period. As we have noted in Chapter III, some of the Security Council resolutions could not be passed because of Soviet veto. Here the Soviet support for the Indian position was not due to any effective propaganda campaigns by India or any sudden realisation of the merits of the Indian case. Soviet Union's support for the Indian position remained constant later because of the changed geo-political context, that is, due to Pakistan's membership of military pacts. After the Sino-Indian war of 1962, Chinese support for Pakistan can also be seen in the same light. There have been some changes in Pakistan's attitude also. A discernible change in its attitude is seen after the Simla Agreement of 1972, according to which the cease-fire line is considered as the Line of Control and virtually the final boundary line dividing Kashmir between India and Pakistan.

To sum up, it can be said that importance and the role of public opinion in foreign policy is understood and accepted by India. Even the mistakes made by India on the question of Kashmir have made positive contributions by revealing the damages that misunderstandings can cause. The fact that India had indulged in propaganda on this question is
quite evident. It can also be gathered from the nature of arguments put forward. All the pamphlets and editorials referred to, had a maximum of negative themes and they were devoid of any 'two-sided orientations', where adversary's points could be placed simultaneously. The elements of 'deliberateness' and 'manipulativeness' were also present in these 'one-sided presentations' of the case.

From repeated criticisms and suggestions to improve the publicity machinery, it is also evident that its role in influencing public opinion is duly appreciated. The official machinery can learn valuable lessons from its own past drawbacks, failures and limitations. To a large extent a quicker comprehension and better preparedness to deal with critical issues would take care of a serious drawback experienced in the case of Kashmir. With the availability of facilitative channels and understanding of the requirements of a particular area or a region a lot of handicaps can be overcome. Here we must reiterate what we had mentioned in Chapter I, about facilitative and persuasive communications. In the hierarchical impact model quoted there, it was said that persuasion regarding change in attitude begins where facilitative channel stops. In other words, the propaganda inputs, that we have analysed so far, are only one part of the story. Even if the material reaches the targets, the maximum that can be said to
have been achieved is the stage of 'exposure', which is treated as the ultimate for facilitative channels. Persuasion begins with the next stage, that is, 'awareness', and ends with 'acceptance or yielding stage'. Our study has analysed the inputs alone. They cannot be conclusively correlated with attitude change. As we have already noted, changes in attitudes can not be attributed exclusively to effectiveness of propaganda. Other factors also need to be taken into account.

Evaluation of propaganda efforts has to take into account various factors. Analysis of the material used for projection can indicate "what was being projected, when and why", but, there is another set of questions that remains unanswered, for example. How was the material received? Had it been followed up with secondary channels like public relations to reinforce the arguments? Did it make any discernible change? etc. These questions need to be answered to complete the picture. Here we realise the importance of channels feed-back.

Though it is true that effectiveness of these campaigns is also affected by the merits of the case as such. With timely action and quicker comprehension self-imposed handicaps can be eliminated. There is no point in being complacent about the merits of a case. It is better to begin with informational inputs straightaway. After a
damage is done the task gets more and more complicated because, instead of projecting the straight and simple facts one has to traverse a field of allegations, counter-allegations, explanations and justifications which renders the projection of a straight fact more difficult.