INTRODUCTION

Kashmir is always as sweet and cunning and ancient and beautiful as the world. It is rich fabulous as the great Himalayas. Kashmir is the coolest, greenest land in the imagination of the man. You climb the mountain and certainly behold the valley. The deep blue water lakes played in the eyes against the snow cladded mountains. The air is dense with the scent of love and brotherhood in spite of different cultures and religions. Life may have been little too beautiful - the evil arrived. The evil burst up through the floor board of the civilization. Peace is shot into pieces. It came up with shaking Kalashnikov riffsle- blazing away, shattering a culture. Life became nasty, brutish and short. Kashmiris have learned how to earn or how to profit handsomely from the ongoing insurgency. But life is in ruins, depressing and uncertainly continues.

Kashmir, along with Ladakh and Jammu comprises the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), which is situated in the lap of mighty Himalayan belt. The total area of the state is 222236 Square Km. which includes 78114 sq kms under Pakistan Control. 37555 sq. km area is occupied by China since 1962. J and K comprises of many regions. Each region has a district independent cultural identity yet bound by a common bond. Topography, culture, religion and ethnic type differ widely. For centuries it has served as cross-roads for invaders, merchants from central Asia. Mughal emperors, Afghans, Sikhs and Dogras have left their impressions on Kashmir. The history of Kashmir emerges as a jigsaw puzzle. One of the writers has compared Kashmir to a diamond, whose glitter and sparkle have attracted a multitude of adventurers, Scoundrels, plousmen, extortionists, fortune-seekers and romantics. And like a diamond that has brought fame and fortune to some owners and disaster to others.

"Kashmir, the most picturesque and fascinating area, known for its beauty, gardens, gentle and docile people has been reduced to a region of ghosts and death because of the devious means adopted by Pakistan a incite people by giving them arms and inciting them into terrorism."

Kashmir which was once described by Mahatma Gandhi as an island of Secularism in the Indian sub-continent is in utter turmoil. The people of Kashmir have been suffering from terrorism since long with no sight in near
future to get relief. Hundreds and thousands innocent people have been killed so far by the Pakistani militants.

So many innocent persons prey to the bullets of terrorists in the Kashmir valley. The victims included prominent educationists and subscribers to Secular ideals. Professor Mushir-ul-Haq, Vice Chancellor, Kashmir University who was kidnapped and shot dead during Ramajen, the holy month of fasting in the Muslim calendar Sarvanand Kaul 'Prem', a poet who used to take pride in reciting the Quran, P.N. Handoo, Assistant Director, Information and octogeneration, Maulana Mohammad Syed Masoodi, a renewed Muslim scholar were among such victims at the hands of the terrorists.

In the wake of ongoing terrorists' violence, more than 50,000 families have migrated from strife torn Kashmir valley and got themselves registered with the government authorities in various districts in Jammu region. Among them 45,275 families were registered at Jammu itself. They include 215 Muslims, 8270 Sikhs and 35,459 Hindus (Kashmiri Pandit) families besides 1331 other families. Since then a good number of Muslim families have fled away from the Kashmir valley and barring a handful numbering no more then 100 and no Hindu has been left in Srinagar.

The Kargil war was third attempt in the history of independent India that Pakistan tried to occupy the Kashmir assisting or backing the infiltrators. The first time just after independence in 1947, a Second time in 1965, as part of operation Gibraltar, that leads to Indo-Pak Second War and the third time through Kargil. But Pakistan could not succeed in her effort.

India and Pakistan share a history of revelry and conflict that spans over sixty one years. The primary focus of their conflict has been the disputed territory of Kashmir; where the two nations fought wars in 1947-48 and 1965, and here a diplomatic confrontation drew them close to war again in 1999. Frequent confidence building efforts have worked to dampen hostility and convey the message that, although local commanders might occasionally engage in provocative action, national level leaders remain in control and will not be drawn into conflict. However, these measures have not eliminated the sources of friction, and the deadly spring 1999 battles along the Line of
Control in Kashmir serve as reminder that events on the ground in this remote region can sometimes force the hand of national decision-makers.

Because the threat of war over Kashmir is ever present, the consequences of the decision to develop nuclear weapons must be carefully considered by both countries. Both India and Pakistan have tested nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, so conflict now threatens more dire consequences if not quickly suppressed. Today, India and Pakistan are on the threshold of nuclear weaponization in a region that has significant border disputes and the world's highest incident of terrorist violence including the Mumbai attack on 26/11. The weaponization of the region has presented a significant problem in policy planning by the Western states. If there is a continued increase of nuclear weapons on the South Asia continent then this region will be a source of continued weapons conflict into the next century.

In the changed situation both India and Pakistan have to function within the parameters of the existing reality. Interestingly enough both the subcontinental powers are aware of the new perspective where both are nuclear powers. Perhaps that is why the Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif have shown eagerness to start a dialogue to solve the pending problems, including Kashmir. But both the leaders have to contend with hawks in their own backyards.

Vajpayee's visit to Lahore, in this context, is a major step towards a new approach to the problem of Kashmir. One should not expect too much from a visit or two. But that the ice of suspicion has been broken is much more important. We, in "New Approach", are all for a thaw in the relations. And that is why we have made this endeavour to bring out a special number on Kashmir. We have been careful to solicit articles from those who are in know of things, who have been working on the subject in our civil and military establishments and also the intellectuals and academicians. Naturally the view points expressed by them are of their own, and we do not necessarily subscribe to them.

Dear reader, it is for you to judge where this country stands on Kashmir since we have tried to accommodate all points of view on the subject.