

Periscope

55 percent of Israeli adults believe Ariel Sharon should issue a
the right of the Palestinians to exist and have their own homeland

INDIA-PAKISTAN

Counting the Minutes ... Or the Months?

INDIANS COULD BE FOR-
given for thinking that
Pakistan's crackdown on
terrorism was half-hearted. In
January, days after Pakistan's
president, Gen. Pervez Mu-
sharraf, declared that he would
no longer tolerate militant
groups in Kashmir, 2,000 radi-
cals were arrested. The organi-
zations believed to be behind a
December attack were banned.
But within months, half of
those detained were back on
the streets, while their leaders
were free or under loose house
arrest. "The feeling is that it
was cosmetic," says Amitabh
Mattoo, a professor of interna-
tional studies at Delhi's
Jawaharlal Nehru University.
The mask cracked early last
week when three Pakistani sui-
cide attackers killed 33 people at
an Indian Army base in
Kashmir. By Friday, India and
Pakistan were once again lob-
bing artillery shells at one an-
other, and hard-liners in India's
ruling Bharatiya Janata Party

(BJP) were demanding retaliation. On Saturday, India ex-
pelled Pakistan's high commis-
sioner to New Delhi, Ashraf
Jehangir Qazi, to show its anger
over the Army base killings.
"Many believe we have to re-
spond to demonstrate we won't
take this lying down," says
Mattoo. "We have to act to break
the psychological paralysis."
Fortunately, although the
drumbeat of war has quickly
grown loud again, most ana-
lysts think war itself is still
some way off—if not utterly in-
conceivable. The goal of a so-
called limited war—knocking
out terrorist training camps in
Pakistan-controlled Kashmir
that can be easily rebuilt—
would achieve little in the long
run. And the dangers of escalation
are immense: Pakistan has
always maintained that it
might use its nuclear weapons
to respond to a conventional
Indian attack. "We might have
a limited objective," says
Commodore Uday Baskar,



**MORE DEATHS FROM
MILITANCY:** Paying
respects to the latest
Indian casualties of
Kashmir

deputy director of Delhi's
Institute of Defence Studies
and Analyses, "but how
Pakistan responds is a more
difficult problem."

Other factors would also
seem to preclude a rush to bat-
tle. India's hopes of holding
elections in the state of Jammu
and Kashmir in September or
October would fade with any
conflict. There's also a lack of
political consensus, both within
the ruling coalition and the op-
position. "The way things stand
to be a war," says Sundeep
Waslekar, of the Mumbai-based
think tank International Centre
for Peace Initiatives. "Both sides
understand the costs would out-
weigh the benefits."

The real question may be
whether Musharraf can control
the militants. Pakistani officials
say he is sincere in his attempts
to prevent insurgents from
crossing the Line of Control
into Jammu and Kashmir. But,
says former information minis-
ter Mushahid Hussain, "he just
may not have the tools to do
the job." Pakistani police are
hamstrung by corruption and
poor intelligence; often they
simply round up suspects who
are loosely connected to the

militant groups, not the key
cadres. Musharraf may be able
to cut off direct aid and sup-
port to the Kashmir fighters.
But many of them have simply
shifted their operations into
Kashmir itself, while others are
well aware that Pakistani Army
troops are highly unlikely to at-
tack their former comrades.
Perhaps most important, the
insurgents' actions are now
aimed at destabilizing
Musharraf as much as India.

That means that their at-
tacks will likely continue, and
push the BJP into a corner.
When the Indian military was
mobilized last December, offi-
cials said they would need nine
months to prepare for a major
offensive. By September, the
thinking goes, the United
States may have rolled up the
remnants of Al Qaeda in
Pakistan and be less averse to
an Indian operation—particu-
larly if Musharraf can't deliver
on his promise to rein in the
militants. "I think there'll be a
war in September or October,"
says one Indian defense ana-
lyst. "That's the only way to let
the steam out of the pressure
cooker." War may be more like-
ly than both sides realize.

ZAHID HUSSAIN and IAN MACKINNON