



THE RULES OF THE GAME

ABOUT 20 years ago, Argentina attacked Falkland Islands. Britain promptly sent her navy to secure the control of the Falklands. Around the same time, China staked its claim over Hong Kong citing a treaty signed in 1897. Margaret Thatcher, who was then the prime minister of Great Britain, sent an envoy to negotiate with Beijing. Why did Britain respond differently to two similar challenges?

As India needs to mobilise international opinion in the wake of terrorist attacks by Pakistan, it must realise that nations value economic might more than any moral principle. A report, *The Future of Pakistan*, gives an account of how the extremist forces are tightening their grip on Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan's military will acquiesce to the plans of *je-hadi* forces to attack targets in India, especially in Jammu and Kashmir. Every time an incident takes place, India cannot cry war. We also can't depend on American and British assurances. India needs its own long-term strategy to deal with terrorist attacks.

India has demanded an end to cross-border terrorism. General Musharraf has apparently promised to deliver on this front. There are other reports indicating that he has advised the boys to lie low for the moment and not end their operations. In any case, Pakistani authorities claim that the terrain in Jammu and Kashmir is such that they cannot fully monitor movements across the line of control (LoC). India should, therefore, demand a ceasefire by the United Jihad Council underwritten by the Pakistani army and surrender of arms by the terrorist groups. And India must be consistent with its demands, not give them up (like they did the list of 20 terrorists), the moment they are ignored in Washington D.C. and London. In Northern Ireland and Guatemala, Sri Lanka and Nepal, governments have always demanded ceasefires by militant groups, followed by decommissioning of illegal arms as a precondition for talks.

India also needs to prepare for possible implosion of Pakistan in the middle of the decade. As provinces and central institutions of Pakistan break up, we will suffer from a massive refugee inflow. This can upset the demographic balance of sensitive cities like Ahmedabad, Surat and Mumbai. We need to have disaster management plans for Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra to manage massive refugee inflows. In 1947, refugees were an economic issue. In 2007, they will bring with them many terrorists and criminals. It will not be simply a question of rehabilitation. It will also be a matter of managing internal security.

A collapsing Pakistan has implications for Hindu-Muslim relations in India since Pakistan was created on the communal principle. Already there are signs that the ISI intends to target India's communal fabric as part of its future strategy. It is essential to have a sustained dialogue between Hindu and Muslim community leaders to monitor and respond collectively to internal developments in Pakistan.

India's greatest challenge will be to avert a war — in case Pakistan wants to drag us into one around the middle of the decade — to consolidate its international situation. First, India needs to win the hearts of people in Kashmir. We need to ensure genuinely free and fair elections. Further, we need to offer a credible package of reconciliation and reconstruction measures. Second, we should open a dialogue with Pakistan at the level of the Director General of Military Operations on risk-reduction measures. At the same time, we must refrain from any political discourse until the United Jihad Council opts for a serious ceasefire. Third, we must engage the Security Council members in a regular dialogue about Pakistan's internal crisis and our intention to avert a war.

**TO MOBILISE GLOBAL
OPINION AGAINST
PAKISTANI TERRORISM,
ECONOMIC MIGHT IS
MORE CRITICAL THAN
MORAL PRINCIPLE**

This strategy will depend on India's internal strengths. If India is perceived to be a strong economic partner, major global players will want to protect our interests. If India is seen as a stagnating economy, they will not bother. In June, as travel advisories failed to force India to de-escalate, Britain might have considered harsher measures against India, but for its business interests. One reason for the US and Chinese support for Pakistan is the economics of oil and natural gas. It is useful to occupy Afghanistan if you can export Central Asian hydrocarbon resources from the Gwadar port in Baluchistan.

If the prime minister wants to win this game, he must delegate Pakistan policy to the foreign office bureaucracy and seize the top political leadership with the challenge of attaining and sustaining a 10% growth rate. Moreover, it must be the growth of the country at large and not merely of one or two sectors. If the world sees India's rural mass awakening to join the market, we will receive more diplomatic support than what diplomacy can manage. China did not have to attack Hong Kong. Even in the early 1980s, its potential was enough to convince Margaret Thatcher to send an envoy for talks. Twenty years later, the rules of the game in the conduct of international relations remain the same.

Sundeep Waslekar heads Strategic Foresight Group, a Mumbai-based think-tank.