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Insurgency in Kashmir

Sir: That restoration of a political process in Kashmir should be the ultimate aim of any counter-insurgency operation could hardly be disputed, but the timing of such an initiative on the part of the Government could, certainly, be debated.

It is to be presumed that before the start of insurgency in Kashmir the Government, after de consideration of the demands of the militants, determined that it would rather face insurgency than yield to such anti-national demands. Any initiative on the part of the Government to revive dialogue before the first round has been fought and the insurgents forced to modify their demands, after being made to realise the futility of their armed struggle, would naturally be taken by them as a sign of the Government's weakness, and consequently prove to be counter-productive. Little wonder that even a remote feeler by the Home Minister in this direction, permitting the militants to participate in the election, as and when they are held, has been construed by a militant out-fit in Kashmir as a "simple admission of defeat by the Government". For the talks to be meaningful these must, indeed, be held with the insurgents and insurgents alone; but this should happen only when they ask for it. In this regard no face-saving should be allowed to the insurgents and they must seek dialogue on the political process without reservations.

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