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Kashmir Solution

Sir,

In his article “Kashmir: Hard-line The Only Policy” (May 6), Ramesh Khazanchi has rightly pointed out that political astuteness and not expediency should form the basis of our Kashmir policy. However, counter-insurgency can be a long drawn-out affair, particularly when it is not possible to cut off the channels of communication between the insurgents and the foreign power that is assisting them by way of arms, ammunition, training and the necessary incitement to keep the insurgency going. The stress and agony of having to fight your own people over a prolonged period is indeed great and there is need for a strong national will for the adoption of a “hard line” policy that will see us through in our fight to the finish.

At present, judging by the wishful thinking being indulged in by the government and some opposition parties in seeking an easy solution, one feels that as far as Kashmir is concerned the national will is already beginning to wilt. Apparently too much seems to be made of what appears to be the popular support for the militants. We now have the experience of Punjab to show that much of the “popular support” that the militants acquire is through the gun. Besides, the masses have a tendency to drift towards the winning side. After all, how many of us, no matter what our convictions, can dare to oppose someone if we have reason to believe that one day he may be presiding over our destiny. Before expecting support from the masses, therefore, they must be convinced that the ultimate victory will be that of the national cause. Only a government that appears to be firm in dealing with the situation can create such a feeling among the people.

The crux of the Kashmir problem is that notwithstanding the repeated assertions of our leaders that the state is an integral part of India it has never been made to look like one. This has kept the issue of accession alive and consequently made the state vulnerable to both internal dissension and external intervention. Any attempt in the part of the Central government to put the clock back, and make Kashmir look even more unlike other parts of India, cannot be a satisfactory solution to the problem.

**K BRAHMA SINGH
JAMMU**