(Excerpts from R.P. Saraf's interview on behalf of the Front for Trilateral Resolution of Kashmir Problem as given to Zakir Malik and published in Daily Greater Kashmir, *Srinagar, October 3, 2004)*

Kashmir Struggle No Terrorism— What Is The Solution?

What is your opinion about the Kashmir issue?

Kashmir issue is the world's dangerous flash-point and a disputed question between the two countries (India and Pakistan). The ongoing Kashmir struggle is against the misrule of New Delhi. It is in no way terrorism as the people of the state are striving for their rights.

What in your view could be the solution of the problem?

The realistic solution to Kashmir issue resides in a formula reconciling the interests of all the three parties involved in the dispute—India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu-Kashmir. We requested a team of journalists from Pakistan visiting the state to think on this proposal: (a) the respective national aspirations and interests of India and Pakistan be balanced by jointly entrusting to them Jammu-Kashmir's sovereignty in the constitutional form of Indo-Pak condominium in regard to Jammu-Kashmir's defence and foreign affairs; (b) the regional aspirations and interests of the people of Jammu-Kashmir, especially Kashmiris, be met by constitutionally accepting Jammu-Kashmir as an independent state, enjoying sovereign power in all matters except defence and foreign affairs; and (c) the ethnic aspirations and interests of Jammu-Kashmir's different regional communities be accommodated by giving maximum possible constitutional autonomy to each of them.

How can your formula lead to the resolution of Kashmir issue?

To resolve Kashmir issue, a broad peoples united front be constituted to help India and Pakistan to adopt the formula. Moreover, initiating confidence building measures would help to establish and strengthen a state of normalisation in Jammu-Kashmir as well as between India and Pakistan.

What should be the measures to establish normalcy in Jammu-Kashmir?

To establish normalcy in Jammu-Kashmir, it is important that India should declare a unilateral ceasefire. Besides, release of all political prisoners, end to all human rights violations by all forces, particularly those of India, partial withdrawal of Indian forces deployed in Kashmir to barracks, appointment of jointly agreed upon Indo-Pak commission to investigate into the complaints of human rights violations committed by the three groups and to recommend proper compensation to all victims, are some of the proposals for establishing normalcy in Jammu-Kashmir state.

However to establish normalcy in whole sub-continent, both India and Pakistan governments should extend ceasefire on the borders. Withdrawal of forces up to one kilometre by the two countries behind the line of control, joint patrolling by the contingents of the two military forces, signing of three agreements on Siachen, Wullar Barrage and Sir Creek and opening of some closed routes between India, Pakistan and Azad Kashmir are some other measures both other countries could take. And, in the one kilometre disengaged area, Indo-Pak friendly parks and trade centres should be opened besides a jointly run Indo-Pak research centre at Siachen mountain, as the place is suitable for such research studies.

Will your proposal suit the world community and the parties involved in the dispute?

I hope the above-stated proposal would suit the world community by diffusing one of the most dangerous problem of the world. It will benefit the South Asian community by removing the blockades to its socio-economic development, besides establishing a common market and a joint defence. The proposal will also serve India, Pakistan and people of Jammu-Kashmir by making them equal partners in economic development in which all will have an equal amount of finance. While Jammu-Kashmir would contribute its share in the form of natural resources. The people of Jammu-Kashmir will get an additional advantage by becoming the citizens of the two countries.

What is the root cause of Kashmir problem?

The cause lies with New Delhi, whose majoritarian outlook, discriminatory to all religious minority and ethnic communities, pro-rich policies and suppressive ways, particularly the method of human rights violations, contrary to its written pledge of granting full autonomy to Jammu-Kashmir people, have completely alienated the Kashmiris. After tolerating such an inhuman treatment under various pro-Indian Kashmiri regimes for over 40 years, people were forced to take up the militant path. The next fault rests with the Hurriyat Conference which has no short-term agenda for the solution of peoples day-to-day problems and further the fault also resides in Islamabad whose Sunni fundamentalism created fissures not only between different religious but also the ethnic groups.

How to create consensus on negotiations to settle Kashmir problem?

This requires three-sided basic task and seven-sided immediate task. The basic task is: (a) to awake, mobilise and organise Jammu-Kashmir people on the basis of Front's declaration and other concerned documents; (b) to try to evolve a general consensus on a realistic, just and trilateral solution to Jammu-Kashmir problem; and (c) to develop the social consciousness, a value based style and a democratic organisational structure of the front. The immediate task comprises: (a) to immediately establish cordial and friendly relations with all humanistic, peace-loving and democratic forces on the other side of the LOC and discuss with them the issue of sorting out a realistic and just negotiated settlement of Jammu-Kashmir problem in order to arrive at a common understanding, (b) to hold district level conferences in the Jammu division, (c) to launch a signature campaign in favour of Front's three point formula, (d) to organise public discussion on front's agenda, (e) to carry further on inter-ethnic and inter-party dialogue for evolving a consensus-based, rational, just and trilateral solution to Jammu-Kashmir problem, and (f) to arrange communal harmony conferences at various sensitive places in the state.