

THE KARGIL WAR: CONSEQUENCES FOR INDIA'S SECURITY

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BY

AYESHA RAY



Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament,
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

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CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, ORGANIZATION & DISARMAMENT
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110 067

Gram : JAYENU
Phone : 6107676, 6167557
Extn.: 2349
Fax : 91-11-6165886

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "The Kargil War: Consequences for India's Security", submitted by Ayesha Ray in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil), is her own work and has not been previously submitted for any degree of this University or any other University.

Ayesha Ray
(Ayesha Ray)
Signature

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

(Dr. Varun Sahni)
Chairperson

(Dr. Kanti Bajpai)
Supervisor

Chairperson
Centre for International Politics
Organization & Disarmament
School of International Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110 067

To my Parents and Dhruv

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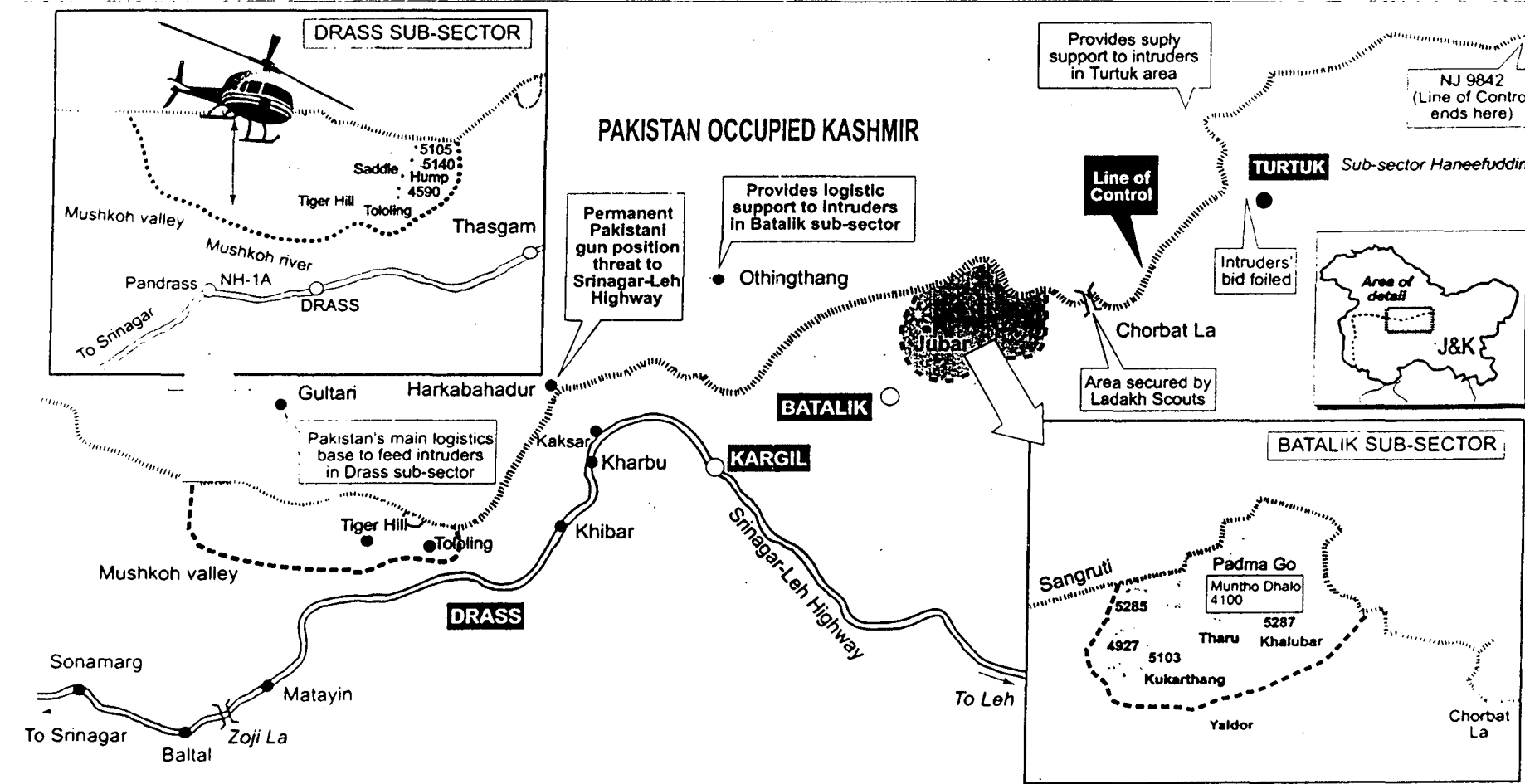
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THE AREA OF INTRUSION



The Indian Express Map: B K Sharma

Source: Gaurav Sawant, *Dateline Kargil*, (New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers, 2000).

INTRODUCTION

The Kargil war in all its dimensions is extremely significant for the future of India-Pakistan relations. The fallout of the war will be decisive in directing the course of India's military, political and diplomatic policy towards its neighbour. The aim of this dissertation is to answer three basic questions: the causes that precipitated the war, the military and diplomatic strategies employed by India during the course of the war, and the implications of the war for India's external and internal security.

The rationale for conducting this research is to address certain issues that merit urgent attention. For one thing, South Asia as a region is important because of the nuclear tests of 1998. There was widespread concern in political and strategic circles about the breakout of hostilities between India and Pakistan after the tests and, given the likelihood of such a scenario, the military and diplomatic measures both countries would resort to. The Kargil war demonstrated that these fears were not unfounded and there were underlying factors that drove the countries towards conflict. The South Asian case further merits attention because this is an area which has been prone to recurring conflict. Although a lot has been written on India Pakistan relations, there is no large body of work that has addressed the nature of conflict in the region (primarily between India and

Pakistan). The only substantial contribution on the causes of war between the two countries is that of Sumit Ganguly in his *Origins of War in South Asia*.¹ There has been a general lack of understanding of the reasons for the outbreak of wars between India and Pakistan. This is why South Asia should be the focus of further study and research; it should be “added” to the corpus of work on the causes of war which mostly relies on wars involving Western powers and the great powers.

In the history of wars between India and Pakistan, the Kargil war was different for a number of reasons. First, the war was fought between two countries which had turned overtly nuclear in the summer of 1998. Waging a war in the shadow of nuclear weapons increased the danger of threshold levels being crossed. This war thus exhibited the characteristics of a limited war in nuclear conditions, the first of its kind in the history of wars between India and Pakistan.

Secondly, the causes that led to the outbreak of this war were not rooted in any one dominant explanation like religion or ideology. Instead, there were a number of factors that operated giving it a different dimension. Primarily the war was used by Pakistan to achieve its political ends.

¹ Sumit Ganguly, *Origins of War in South Asia*, West View Publishers, 1994.

Thirdly, Kargil was not just about India's victory. It not only highlighted India's strengths on the battlefield and in diplomatic circles but also compelled the need to address outstanding security concerns like upgrading intelligence and modernizing Indian defence forces, issues that had been shelved for a long time.

Fourth, this war displayed a change in the attitudes of international powers. Cold war equations had changed. There was a visible US tilt towards India. No longer was the pro-Pakistan position of the US dominant.

Fifth, it was not just Kargil but the aftermath of the war which witnessed rapid changes in both India and Pakistan. In Pakistan, the overthrow of the Nawaz Sharif government in the October coup of 1999 and the installation of General Pervez Musharraf as the Chief Executive was linked to the Kargil episode. Internally, within India, there was an alarming increase in terrorist activities with frequent attacks on army and police base camps in Srinagar and adjoining areas of Kashmir. Hence the internal dynamics operating in India and Pakistan after Kargil was significant for the relations between the two countries.

Finally, Kargil's military and strategic significance for India and Pakistan can be gauged from the battles that have been fought for its

control. In 1947, Kargil and the heights surrounding it were occupied by Pakistani intruders and Ladakh was effectively cut off from the rest of the country. These forces were subsequently pushed back by the Indian army. In 1965, again, Indian infantry battalions had to push back Pakistani posts. Some of these posts were later handed over to India as part of the Tashkent Agreement in 1965. In 1971, Indian battalions again attacked Pakistani positions in the area to push back enemy forces. In the 1980s and 1990s Pakistan resorted to heavy artillery fire in the area which intensified during the last few years. The Kargil fixation of the Pakistani military is a longstanding riddle. It emanates from the mistaken belief that securing a few heights in the area will open up the Kargil – Leh sector that is militarily of strategic advantage for Pakistan².

India has fought three major wars with Pakistan, Kargil being the fourth. According to Sumit Ganguly, there were four major causes which explain the first 1947 war between India and Pakistan. These were the existence of two competing ideological forces on the subcontinent, irredentism on part of the Pakistan leadership, the strategic location of

² V.R. Raghavan, "The Kargil Conundrum", *Hindu*, (Madras), 28 May. 1999.

Kashmir, and the lack of sufficient institutional arrangement by the British to ensure an orderly transfer of power³.

Under the India Independence Act of 1947, the Princely states were free to execute an Instrument of Accession promising to accede to either Dominion under the heads of Defence, External affairs and Communications. They could also choose to remain independent.⁴ Of the 570 states, 487 states acceded to India. However, on 15 August, 1947, the three princely states of Hyderabad, Junagarh and Jammu and Kashmir remained undecided. The legal framework for independence provided for rulers to enter into Standstill Agreements with either or both the Dominions in the interregnum while they determined their choice. Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir offered such Standstill Agreements to both dominions. While Pakistan signed a Standstill Agreement with Hari Singh on 14 August, 1947, India did not do so.⁵ Consequently, Pakistan launched an economic blockade on Jammu and Kashmir, in total disregard of its Standstill Agreement and cut off essential supplies such as salt and petrol, stopped the supply of currency notes and

³ Sumit Ganguly, *opcit*, p.14.

⁴ Kargil Review Committee Report, p.23.

⁵ *Ibid*.

small coins to the Imperial bank in Kashmir and severed postal and telegraphic connections.⁶

On the morning of 22 October 1974, two months after independence, the first military raid on India occurred. The Maharaja appealed to the government of India for help. The Indian government agreed to provide assistance to the Maharaja but only on the condition that he accede to the Indian Dominion. On 26 October 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession. Jammu and Kashmir legally and constitutionally became part of India.⁷

The intermediate causes of the tribal invasion were first, the failure of the Maharaja's government to maintain order among its Dogra troops many of whom who had committed atrocities against the Muslim population of Kashmir, and second, the massacres that took place in Punjab when Muslims were trying to leave India for Pakistan.⁸

From the morning of 27 October 1947, Indian troops began to be flown into Srinagar. The Government of India took the issue to the UN Security Council on 1 January 1948⁹. The UN Security Council passed a

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Jaswant Singh, *Defending India*, St. Martin's Press. 1999, pp.154-155.

⁸ Sumit Ganguly, *opcit*, p.40.

⁹ Jaswant Singh, *opcit*, p.156.

resolution, made recommendations and established terms for a ceasefire, a plebiscite and for establishing a commission of five members to proceed to the Indian subcontinent to place its good offices at the disposal of the two governments. The Commission reached the region in July 1948. On 15 August 1948, the Commission adopted a resolution providing for a ceasefire, a truce agreement and consultations for a plebiscite after the Truce Agreement was concluded. The ceasefire became effective from the midnight of 1-2 January 1949, and an agreement on the ceasefire was signed in Kashmir on 27 July 1949.¹⁰

In 1965, India got embroiled with Pakistan over the dispute in the Rann of Kutch and later when Pakistan evolved a plan to attack the city of Akhnur to cut off Jammu and Kashmir from the rest of India. A prelude to the 1965 war was the Rann of Kutch dispute. Clashes between India and Pakistan began in January 1965. The differences between the two countries went back to partition. The Radcliffe Commission, which drew up the boundaries of India and Pakistan in the western sector had failed to give a ruling on the area in and around Rann of Kutch. The ambiguity led Pakistan to lay claims on the area, claims which for India were completely baseless. In April 1965, the Pakistanis argued that the Indian forces had attacked a Pakistani position near Kanjarkot. Pakistan retaliated by using

¹⁰ Ibid.

regular troops. The conflict came to an end through British mediation and an agreement was signed under which both parties agreed to revert to the status quo before the commencement of the conflict. The Kutch episode was a way of probing Indian's military strengths. What ensued in the August 1965 was part of a larger Pakistani game plan.¹¹

The 1965 war began when Pakistani mercenaries infiltrated into Kashmir around August 5, 1965. The first major confrontation took place on August 14, 1965. On August 15, the Indian military captured three important positions in the northern sector. With increased Pakistani shelling in the areas of Tithural, Uri and Poonch, Indian forces pushed into Azad Kashmir territory and captured a number of strategic Pakistani mountain positions, wresting the key Haji Pir Pass from the enemy. On September 1, Pakistan retaliated by mounting a major attack in the southern sector. In this battle the Indian forces suffered heavy casualties.¹² On September 5, Pakistan attacked and captured the village of Jaurian to proceed to Akhnur with the aim of cutting off Jammu and Kashmir from the rest of India. The Indian forces being fully prepared attacked Pakistani Punjab. On September 6, the Indian army launched a massive attack on Lahore and the town of Sialkot. The Pakistani forces were pushed back

¹¹ Sumit Ganguly, *opcit*, p.70.

¹² *Ibid*.

from Akhnur. To compel the Indian forces to retreat from Lahore, Pakistan launched a counter offensive at Khem Karan in Punjab. The Indian Army laid an ambush which resulted in heavy casualties on the Pakistani side. By mid September, the war had reached a stalemate. At this juncture the United Nations Security Council passed a unanimous resolution on September 20. The Indian government accepted the ceasefire resolution on September 21 followed by the Pakistani acceptance of the same on 22 September.¹³

The 1971 war was a continuation of the hostilities between India and Pakistan. For both sides the symbolic value of incorporating Kashmir into its domain was enormous. To Pakistan, Kashmir represented a clear irredentist claim on the basis of its Muslim population. In response to Pakistan's claim, a powerful impulse was also generated in India, which was based on the determination that Kashmir had to be in the Indian Union so as to prove that minorities could live in a secular state. ¹⁴

The 1971 war began on December 3, 1971 with the Pakistani aim of attacking a number of military bases in India's south-western region. Till the end of the war on December 17, the Indian Air Force used its air power.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Sumit Ganguly, *opcit*, p.84.

Indian forces attacked the headquarters of the Pakistani Air Force in Peshawar and Karachi. On the evening of December 3, the Pakistani army launched ground operations in Kashmir and Punjab and began armoured operations in Rajasthan. In Kashmir, the operations were directed at Poonch and Chhamb. In Chhamb, the Pakistani forces forced the Indians to withdraw from their positions. The major Indian counter offensive came in the west of Chhamb in which both sides suffered heavy casualties. The two armies also engaged in a number of battles in Punjab especially in the Anupgarh and Dera Baba Nanak sectors.¹⁵

The Indian force that ultimately led the attack into East Pakistan was drawn primarily from the Eastern Command. Its total composition included six divisions supported by additional platoons and Mukti Bahini forces organized into eight infantry battalions. Indian forces pushed into East Pakistan. The IAF rapidly destroyed the Dacca airfield and the Indian Navy carried out a thoroughly effective blockade of East Pakistan. By December 10, Indian forces along with the Mukti Bahini established two possible approaches for a final attack on Dacca. The Indians continued their advance on Dacca and regrouped on December 13 and by December 16 reached the outskirts of the city. On December 17, the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi ordered a unilateral ceasefire to begin at 8 p.m. that

¹⁵ Ibid.

evening. Pakistan had lost 200 tanks and about 15 aircraft. On the Indian side, the losses for the same categories amounted to 80 and 45.¹⁶

One of the earliest analyses of the Kargil war, Praveen Swami's *The Kargil War*, is a cogent, concise and lucid account of the war which addresses a number of vital questions.¹⁷ It looks at the causes of the war, the military strategy employed by India, the linkages between the nuclear tests conducted by both India and Pakistan and the war, India's diplomacy vis-à-vis the US and the internal dynamics within Jammu and Kashmir. The book has contributed not only in increasing an understanding about the war, but has addressed deeper issues like the status of Jammu and Kashmir and the adverse effects of insurgency in the State.

A second account of the war is advanced in the *Kargil Review Committee Report*. Also called the *Subrahmanyam Committee Report*, this analysis highlights the failure of the Indian intelligence services. It puts forth certain vital recommendation with regard to creating the position of a National Security Advisor, improving India's border management strategies, advocating a clear declaratory policy on the LOC and achieving self reliance in defence-related technology.¹⁸ Although the

¹⁶ Ibid, p.83.

¹⁷ Praveen Swami, *The Kargil War*, Leftword Publishers, 1999.

¹⁸ *Kargil Review Committee Report*, New Delhi, 1999.

recommendations are useful, the Report mirrors a rather pro-government stand. While drawing attention to revamping India's intelligence apparatus, the Report does not go into an in depth analysis of the reasons for these deficiencies.¹⁹ Also, it does not include an analysis of the battles fought, the phases of the war and the crucial turning points of the war. It does not adequately account for logistic and force deployments. Despite its recommendations and major findings, it falls short of providing a balanced account of the war.

One of the most well researched collection of perspectives on the war is *Kargil and After: Challenges for Indian Policy*, an edited book by Kanti Bajpai, Afsir Karim and Amitabh Mattoo.²⁰ The book highlights India and Pakistan's concerns and the major issues that may continue to plague the relations between the two countries. It encapsulates the diverse views of academics, journalists and policy analysts.

A recent addition to the body of work on Kargil is Major General Ashok Krishna and P.R.Chari's, *Kargil: The Tables Turned*.²¹ The book contains some excellent contributions by Suba Chandran, and P.R. Chari.

¹⁹ The Kargil Review Committee Report, <http://www.saag.org/papers2/paper108.html>.

²⁰ Kanti Bajpai, Afsir Karim and Amitabh Mattoo ed., *Kargil and After: Challenges for Indian Policy*, Har Anand Publications, 2000.

²¹ Major General Ashok Krishna and P.R. Chari, ed., *Kargil: The Tables Turned*, Manohar Publishers, 2001.

Major General Ashok Krishna's chapter on the lessons of the Kargil war raises some pertinent questions on the planning and management of Indian forces. As a whole, the book provides an insight into past motivations and events that have driven India and Pakistan towards conflict.

This dissertation tries to arrive at a comprehensive analysis of the war including the causes of the war, the strategies employed and the larger implications for India's external and internal security. It seeks to provide a fresh explanation of the causes of the war from three different angles, which have been dealt with in Chapter I. It especially seeks to highlight the issues that are deep rooted and recur in India-Pakistan relations. It tries to offer fresh insights and raises questions which are relevant for any future understanding of the relations between India and Pakistan. Further, it attempts to deal with the major dimensions of the war in one comprehensive analysis.

Chapter I advances three possible causes that precipitated the Kargil war. The first explanation provides the rational-political objectives for Pakistan's conduct of the war. War is seen as a rational act moving towards the attainment of a political objective. In the words of the famous strategist Karl von Clausewitz, war is a continuation of policy through other means. The second explanation revolves around the Waltzian notion

of the relationship between war and the nature of internal structure of the State. In this respect, Pakistan's internal contradictions and struggle for power between the army and the political leadership could have been a cause of the war. The final insight into the cause of the war looks at Pakistan's desperation to avenge India for its previous military defeats in the 1971 war and in Siachen.

Chapter II deals with India's military strategy. It begins with an overview of Pakistan's strategy to capture the most strategic peaks. It then focuses on the major features of India's military strategy. The clearance of the Drass and Batalik heights was the priority along with the eviction of intruders sector by sector depending on the seriousness of threat to Kargil. The feasibility of transgressing the LOC to push back the intruders was also an idea that the Indian Army had to consider. The chapter surveys the war in three phases from military defeats in the early phase, to one of consolidation in the second phase, to capturing the crucial peaks in the final phase. There is also a critical assessment of India's military strategy, the nature of terrain, logistics and force deployments.

Chapter III encapsulates India's diplomatic strategy during the war and in the aftermath of Kargil. The Kargil war was a major setback to India's diplomatic relations with Pakistan especially in the light of the

pledges both countries undertook at Lahore in February 1999 to strive towards the bilateral settlement of the Kashmir issue and in adherence to the Shimla Agreement. During the war, there were crucial turning points in the form of international reactions to India's responses, public statements by Indian and Pakistani leaders and initiatives which culminated in bringing the war to an end. India gained diplomatically in many ways but could not prevent Kashmir from being internationalised. There were various twists and turns in India's diplomatic strategy. The hijacking episode of December 1999 was another setback to India-Pakistan relations.

Chapter IV addresses the implications of the war for India's external and internal security. The major recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee Report are noted here. The intelligence failure of the Indian government and the country's intelligence agencies and the need to revamp India's intelligence structure is of primary importance. Also, improving levels of tactical intelligence within the Army is vital for India's internal security. The debate on conducting a limited war under nuclear conditions has also acquired significance after Kargil. With regard to this, the chapter looks into the implications of deterrence and limited war for India's external security. The execution of the war in the background of the

possession of nuclear weapons by both countries created space for instability, and it became difficult to predict whether the threshold level would be crossed. The need to reconsider the possibility of converting the LOC into an international border has also been the focus of attention. Another aspect explored by the chapter is Pakistan's attempts to sponsor cross-border terrorism in India, which has grave implications for India's security. The nexus between the Pakistani army and the ISI poses a serious threat to India's efforts to curb terrorism in the Subcontinent. The chapter also focuses on Kashmir which has been internally afflicted by political and economic turmoil. This in turn has fuelled the forces of separatism and militancy. Hence the initiative on part of the Indian government to arrive at a political settlement to the Kashmir issue, talks on ceasefire with the militants and the Autonomy Report is a positive move towards strengthening internal security in Kashmir and India. Another area of concern is the modernization of the Indian army with the aim of increasing the defence preparedness levels of the Indian troops. All the above factors are crucial for India's external and internal security.

The research for the dissertation has been conducted by drawing heavily from secondary source materials like newspapers, journals and books on the subject. There has been little use of primary source material

because, besides the Subrahmanyam Committee Report, there are no major government documents on the subject. Most relevant material is classified and therefore out of bounds. Thus, the dissertation uses the Kargil Review Committee Report as the only official government document on the subject.

Information from the Internet has also been used to support facts. The archives of the Pakistani daily, *Dawn*, and the Indian newspaper, *The Hindu* were vital. The Indian Army's official website, <http://www.vijayin kargil.org>, has also been of tremendous use.

Chapter I

Causes of the War

The history of armed conflict and tensions between India and Pakistan dates back to the first India-Pakistan war of 1948-49 and the subsequent wars of 1965 and 1971. Kashmir has been the larger issue for which both states have constantly been at loggerheads. The recent war fought in the Kargil heights in 1999 is yet another instance of the protracted conflict between the two countries. In addition to the religious dimension, the territorial dispute has also been a strong motivation for engaging in war. Evidence suggests that Pakistan's two-nation philosophy from the time of Partition has been in fundamental contradiction with India's secular beliefs. From the day Pakistan was created, it adopted an ideology premised on religion which soon became the basis of the state itself. This is the reason why Pakistan has constantly referred to Kashmir as the unfinished agenda of Partition. The Kargil war was yet another attempt by Pakistan to rekindle the debate on Kashmir and draw the attention of the world to the Pakistani cause.

This chapter reviews three hypothetical explanations for the causes of the 1999 war between India and Pakistan. The first perspective views

the war as serving Pakistan's political ends. A second reason has been attributed to the internal state structure of Pakistan. The third view looks at the war as a tool in Pakistan's hand to avenge its previous military reverses especially the 1971 war but also the Siachen dispute.

The First View: War as the Continuation of Policy

The first view looks at war as an instrument to achieve a political objective. It is here that the renowned Prussian strategist Karl Von Clausewitz's definition of war as a continuation of policy by other means become useful. War is essentially a rational act with the aim of achieving or defending known purposes. Before applying this definition to the Kargil war, it is essential to understand what this definition means. Clausewitz recognised the importance of politics in relation to war. For him the ultimate end that war served was purely political.¹ In his book *Von Kriege* (*On War*), Clausewitz stated that "the belligerent would act on the principle of using no greater military aim than that which would be sufficient for the achievement of his political purpose".² In war there is a careful correlation of means and ends. The measure of violence unleashed to achieve the political object would be rational to the extent that it would

¹ Charles Reynolds, *The Politics of War*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1989, p. 63.

² Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought*, Frank Cass Publishers, 1992, p. 78.

benefit the state and maximize its power. But the question is why would states resort to the use of war? The underlying rationale is that war would be one of the many ways of pushing for change within a short period of time in order to resolve issues that have not been amenable to other techniques of settlement.

Therefore the importance of the ultimate objective constitutes the most crucial variable. This type of war is a manifestation of sound reasoning that focuses on a number of factors. First, restraint is exercised where total victory seems improbable due to a range of factors beginning with inadequate resources to the balance of political affiliations between states. Second, since the war has limited ends, there is a premium placed on the extent and scale of violence unleashed. Third, the sheer irrationality of going to extremes for limited political ends provides a check on military extremism.³ Hence, the basic calculations revolve around achieving symmetry between means and ends so that the essential 'political' end is attainable by the former. Further, political reverses through military defeat are acceptable as long as they do not dramatically change the political status quo. Once again this makes war a limited one in terms of damage inflicted, in duration and cost and the changes it seeks to enforce. This is

³ Charles Reynolds, *opcit*, p.67.



why war for Clausewitz war is a political instrument, a continuation of policy by other means.

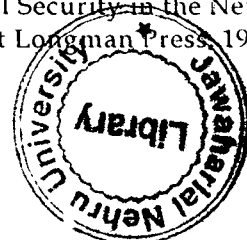
Does Kargil fit in within the Clausewitzian definition of war? This is where I shall highlight the political objectives for which the Kargil war was fought and the political aims that Pakistan sought to secure by waging this war.

There are three fundamental political aims that Pakistan wanted to achieve through its Kargil strategy. First, to internationalize Kashmir; second, to capitalize and seize the initiative in Kashmir by pushing in armed infiltrators and thereby giving a further boost to its sponsorship of cross border terrorism in India, and third, to probe India's military strengths especially after the two countries conducted nuclear tests in the summer of 1998. I shall reflect on these three issues separately to show how they satisfied Pakistan's political aspirations.

Since 1990, Pakistan has been trying to garner international support on the Kashmir issue and the necessity to involve third party mediation.⁴ On the other hand, India has urged the international community to recognize Kashmir as a bilateral issue to be solved within the framework of

⁴ Brahma Chellaney, "Challenges to India's National Security in the New Millennium", in *Securing India's Future in the New Millennium*, Orient Longman Press, 1999, p.538.

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the Simla Agreement. By declaring Kashmir as the “unfinished agenda” of partition and the “core” issue, Pakistan has narrowed the choices for itself.⁵ Diplomatically this was not looked upon favorably by the international community.

Kargil offered Pakistan the opportunity to revive the United Nations jurisdiction over Kashmir and elicit the attention of the international powers.⁶ India’s successes in the past in resisting international mediation compelled Pakistan to embark on the Kargil war. Politically, it was a means of showing the world that the Kashmir issue is still alive and cannot be placed on the back burner. Pakistan also believed that in the event of such a war, if India were to react aggressively, Pakistan would highlight the new tensions and provocations on the part of India. This would reinforce the Pakistani argument that Kashmir is the world’s nuclear flash-point (given the fact that both countries are overtly nuclear weapon states) and that the international community must intervene to resolve the problem. Hence, the aim here was to reverse the trend of declining interest in the Kashmir issue⁷.

⁵ Jasjit Singh, “Pakistan’s Fourth War”, *Strategic Analysis*, August 1999, p.688.

⁶ J.N.Dixit, “Global Eyes on Kargil”, *Telegraph*, 17 August, 1999.

⁷ C.Raja Mohan, “India Has to Press Ahead in Kargil”, *Hindu* (Madras), 28 May, 1999.

The second political objective of Pakistan was to revive the dying militancy in Kashmir by pushing in more infiltrators into the region. The Indian army has been quite successful in its anti-insurgency campaigns in recent years. Effective army operations have precluded a free movement of intruders along the border regions. Also far fewer Kashmiri youths are willing to take up arms or respond to the call made by the insurgents.⁸

Ever since the resumption of Operation Gibraltar in 1965, which was aimed at facilitating the entry of mercenaries into India, Pakistan has continued to push in infiltrators.⁹ A large number of training camps have been set up across the border which impart training to the militants in addition to supplying them with arms, ammunition and funds necessary to sustain the proxy war against India.¹⁰ By pushing in the infiltrators, Pakistan wanted to send a reminder to India that the covert proxy war will continue to bleed India unless the Kashmir issue is addressed. Pakistan has been engaging in sponsoring cross-border terrorism since the 1980s. Previously Pakistan had not attempted to use the inhospitable Kargil terrain as a route for pushing in militants. It changed tack this time by sending not only well-trained and well-equipped infiltrators but further

⁸ Rajesh Rajagopalan, "The Danger in Kargil", *Hindu*, Madras, 29 May, 1999.

⁹ Neeraj Rohmetra, "Several Moves to Convert LOC into Border" *National Herald*, 19 July, 1999.

¹⁰ Ibid.

aimed at capturing the Turtuk and Shyok valleys and dismembering India's links with the Siachen glacier.¹¹

The Pakistan army and ISI have been providing military training, weapons, ammunition and explosives to the militants besides extending financial support. By mid 1998, the Indian security forces were in complete control of the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and the state was rapidly returning to normal. This increased the frustration within the Pakistani army and the ISI. In desperation, as a last resort to "re kindle" the "dead embers of militancy", the ISI pushed in a large number of mercenaries into Jammu and Kashmir during the winter months of 1998-99.¹²

In this regard, a third political objectives for the war also becomes clear. The Pakistan Army and the ISI found it hard to believe that the Indian army could conduct a successful counter insurgency campaign using minimum force. Hence the aim was to probe India's military strengths.¹³ Pakistan intended to gauge if India could successfully beat back Pakistani forces despite being caught by complete strategic and tactical surprise. If so, then India could beat Pakistan anywhere.¹⁴ With

¹¹ Brahma Chellaney, *opcit*, p.535.

¹² Gurmeet Kanwal, "Pakistan's Continuing Challenge in Kashmir: Need For a Trans LoC Pro Active Response", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XXIII, No. 12, pp.2160-2161.

¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 2160-2161.

¹⁴ Jasjit Singh, "Pakistan's Fourth War", *Strategic Analysis*, August 1999, p. 685.

respect to probing India's military strengths there exist linkages between the nuclearization of the sub continent and the Kargil war.¹⁵

Once India weaponised, Islamabad embarked on its policy of nuclear tests to gain an equal footing with India.¹⁶ Notwithstanding the imbalance that existed with respect to the conventional forces of the two countries, Pakistan believed that militarily it stood on an equal footing with India. Pakistan felt the need to probe India's strengths driven by the assumption that the presence of nuclear weapons provided a protective shield. This would deter India from engaging in a conventional war fearing that the threshold of confrontation could be crossed any time.¹⁷ Pakistan was working on the assumption that nuclear weapons would cancel out or neutralize India's superiority in waging a conventional war.¹⁸ Hence, under the shadow of nuclear weapons, the possibility of waging a limited war would have a definite advantage for India.

It is here that Clausewitzian strategy once again becomes relevant. In the Clausewitzian instrumental sense of war, there is an inherent assumption on both sides that they would maintain an essential political

¹⁵ Praveen Swami, *The Kargil War*, Leftword Publishers, 1999, p.8.

¹⁶ Amit Baruah, "The South Asian Nuclear Mess", *Frontline*, 21 May, 1999, p.118.

¹⁷ Maleeha Lodhi, "Anatomy of a Debacle", *Newsline*, Karachi, July 1999.

¹⁸ Jasjit Singh, *opcit*, p.691.

relationship and would not use nuclear weapons. To say that any political value was worth the destruction of millions seemed a facile argument.¹⁹ However to use the weapons, even in the form of a deterrent, required both sides to believe and act as if they would. In this way the faith in nuclear weapons underlines the rational determination of both countries to protect their vital interests.²⁰ This is what was exhibited in Kargil.

Thus, violence is often resorted to with a conscious calculation. The one who initiates the violence often weights the stakes in its favour. Countries which use war as an instrument for securing a political objective believe that it is a rational act.²¹ According to Clausewitz, the political object constitutes the original motive for the war which will determine both the military objective to be reached and the amount of effort it requires.²²

Thus, policy makers generally seek to defend, extend or achieve certain objectives. When these purposes and the means to implement them become incompatible in the normal course of policy, the probability of the use of force increases. Governments thus must consider whether the stakes

¹⁹ K. J. Holsti, *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order 1648 - 1989*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.287.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Seyom Brown, *The Causes and Prevention of War*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1994, p.49.

²² Holsti, *opcit*, p.13.

are worth the risks to achieve that political purpose. Pakistan displayed such intent and resolve in Kargil.

The Second View: War and Internal State Structure

The second model for explaining the Kargil war has been borrowed from the Waltzian view of the nature of the state. In his book, *Man, The State and War*, Kenneth Waltz describes the internal organization of states as the key to understanding war and peace. For Waltz, a state plagued by internal strife and domestic instability may seek war that will bring internal peace.²³ Waltz outlines three images of the causes of the war. The first cause is related to human behaviour and man's aggressive nature. The second image views war as a product of the internal structure of a state, the role of the state, its political form and its social and economic content. The third view explains the international system as one characterized by anarchy and the lack of a supranational government. The international system also impinges on the way states behave.

Waltz's second view can be used to describe and understand the internal structure of Pakistan and its effects on policy. The incidence of war is thought to depend on the type of government, the common assumption

²³ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, The State and War*, Columbia University Press, 1954, p.80.

being that democracies are more peaceful while authoritarian states are more aggressive.²⁴ Pakistan from the time of its creation has had a history of military rule. Internal contradictions within the state have often found manifestation in aggressive behaviour. Just as the international system is characterized by anarchy, so also the domestic sphere of a state is one of conflict. Bad government and bad political, social and economic conditions within a state can often lead to complete disarray within a state.²⁵ Some states are less perfectly formed and by virtue of their internal conditions display a higher proclivity towards aggression, conflict and war to secure themselves internally. They are more inclined to put their proficiency to test.²⁶

Waltz further goes onto show that there are a number of internal problems or defects that explain the external actions of states. These are as follows: First, there may be a government which is generically bad. This is true for a despotic regime where tensions between the despots and their subjects may manifest itself in some form of foreign adventure. Second, there could be a government which in itself is not bad but is constantly plagued by defects.²⁷ A third reason arises from geographic or economic

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, p.231.

²⁶ Ibid, p.232.

²⁷ Ibid, p.82.

deprivation. Hence, when a nation is dissatisfied about its natural frontiers and feels the need to expand further, then the war which extends the parameters of the state to its desired end becomes justifiable.

Waging an external war often brings about internal stability within a state. In this context, Pakistan's internal state is a cause of concern because of the internal contradictions that beset it. The struggle for power between the political leadership and the army has been a constant destabilizing force internally. Further politics has been marked by factionalism. There has been a rapid growth of fundamentalist and Islamic forces that have been retrogressive elements. Ethnic strife and economic disarray have debilitated the country. Also, internationally, Pakistan no longer receives the kind of support it enjoyed from the US during the Cold War period. Under such circumstances where its internal security was being undermined, Kargil offered Pakistan a moment to win back domestic support and legitimacy by projecting its victories externally.

For a better understanding of Pakistan's internal state structure, I shall briefly look at four broad areas: first, the role of the military; second, the nexus between the military and the ISI, including the role of jihadi elements; third, weak democratic institutions and the frequency of ethnic

strife; and finally the deep divisions which existed between Nawaz Sharif and Pervez Musharraf.

Ever since the creation of the state of Pakistan it has been caught in political military and bureaucratic wrangles. Gradually, the politicians lost most of their political leverage and the Pakistani army took over the reins of leadership.²⁸ One of the most important features of the Pakistani State has been the role of the army and the military regimes that came to power. The development of the military in Pakistan occurred at a time when the country was experiencing a severe crisis of state formation, national identity and quest for political stability.²⁹ The political forces in the country had been weakened by the inner machinations of the military bureaucratic elites. The military in Pakistan underestimated the political leadership and believed that the latter could never deliver a workable political structure to the country. From its very inception, strengthening of the army was considered central to the building of a strong state.³⁰ The problem of the ideology of Pakistan and the problem of legitimacy have

²⁸ Virendra Narain, "Tensions in Pakistan: Politics Behind Religious Fundamentalism" in Kalim Bahadur, ed., *South Asia in Transition: Conflicts and Tensions*, Patriot Publishers, New Delhi, 1986, pp.148-154.

²⁹ Rasul Baksh Rais, "Security, State and Democracy in Pakistan", in Marvin G. Weinbaum and Chetan Kumar, ed., *South Asia Approaches the New Millennium: Reexamining National Security*, West View Press, p. 68.

³⁰ Ibid, p.67.

been two major factors that have led to an increasing role of the army in domestic politics.³¹ The army has always helped the government in power in the maintenance of law and order. Also, the military has been an important decision making factor in Pakistan.³²

A second emerging feature in Pakistan's domestic politics has been the nexus between the army and ISI, the growth of fundamentalism and the Islamisation of the Pakistani State. From the 1980s a number of developments affected the traditional balance of power inside Pakistan. Primarily there was a tremendous growth in power and influence of the ISI Directorate, which conducted the proxy wars in Afghanistan and in India. The ISI besides amassing weapons and waging proxy wars in neighbouring countries became a potent force to domestically reckon with. General Zia-ul-Haq began the Islamization of the Pakistani State. The Jamaat has played a major role in the power structure of Pakistan. After 1971, General Zia-ul-Haq's policies gave it a significant influence in the power structure of Pakistan, especially since it had strong support within the Army. Lieutenant General Hamid Gul, the ISI chief from 1987-89 was a committed Islamicist. The ISI used the Jamaat in its management of internal power

³¹ Jasjit Singh, "The Army in Pakistan", in Jasjit Singh, ed., *Kargil 1999: Pakistan's Fourth War for Kashmir*, Knowledge World Publishers, pp. 42-45.

³² Hasan Askari Rizvi, *The Military and Politics in Pakistan*, Progressive Publishers, Lahore, 1976, p.64.

equations. Manned by the military, the ISI has acquired the position of an independent centre of power.³³ The Jamaat fundamentalists and Islamicists hold considerable influence among military officers, lower level bureaucracy and the emerging middle class. Post Zia, the state structures have continued to unleash and promote forces of holy war not only in Kashmir but in many other areas as well. While propagating the cause of "jihad", these structures got transformed and became autonomous from the larger power structure.³⁴

Third, democratic norms and governance have continued to elude the fragile state of Pakistan. Democracy was restored in 1998 after more than a decade of military rule that had seen state policy fuel ethnoregional and sectarian tensions and widen economic disparities.³⁵ The military's refusal to accept civilian supremacy had distorted the democratic character of the political order in place since 1988. Long years of authoritarian rule had left the political leadership unable to work collectively to strengthen and maintain democratic institutions and values. Most Pakistani governments had disregarded constitutional governance and norms. The long period of authoritarian rule had given birth to deep divisions within

³³ Jasjit Singh, *opcit*, p.41.

³⁴ Imtiaz Alam, *News*, 23 July, 1999.

³⁵ Samina Ahmed, "Pakistan at Fifty: A Tenuous Democracy", *Current History*, Vol. 96, No. 614, December 1997, p.419.

the body politic. The distorted constitutional framework inherited by elected governments after the restoration of democracy in 1988 prevented the consolidation of democratic institutions and norms.³⁶

Moreover, the country has been decimated by ethnic and sectarian violence. Pakistani political history reveals that ethnic divisions and sectarian tensions are directly related to the absence of representative rule and democratic norms. Successive regimes have failed to provide institutionalized mechanisms to accommodate ethnic and regional demands in a pluralistic society, transforming the internal competition for political power and socio economic benefits into conflict between sub-state actors. Only superficial attempts have been made to provide adequate representation to ethnic minorities such as the Sindhis and the Baluchis, and the Punjabis who form a majority of the population continue to dominate the military and civil bureaucracy. The 1973 constitution has failed to accommodate regional demands for greater autonomy and control over provincial resources. Authoritarian rulers have relied on coercion to suppress regional and ethnic demands. The military has retained control over sensitive policy areas, including ethnic relations. Its dependence on

³⁶ Ibid.

ethnic manipulation divides and rule strategies and the use of force have exacerbated internal divisions.³⁷

In the present context and in the background to the Kargil war, there appears to have been a sharp division between the former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the present Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf. The toppling of the Sharif government in the coup staged by the Pakistani Army in October 1999 was a culmination of the struggle for power between the political establishment and the army. Nawaz Sharif had become extremely powerful. He had acquired tremendous powers over the Presidency and the Judiciary. The Army Chief, General Jehangir Karamat, was forced to resign in October 1998. Never before in the history of Pakistan had the elected political leader enjoyed such powers.³⁸

The Sharif government's narrow based and personalized decision making coupled with political and economic mismanagement led to strains in civil-military relations. Decisions by the political leadership had caused alienation and discontent in the smaller provinces.³⁹ The political instability began with the resignation of General Karamat in October 1998.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Jasjit Singh, n-31, opcit.

³⁹ Hasan Askari Rizvi, "Pakistan in 1998", *Asian Survey*, Vol XXXIX, No.1, January-February 1999, p.181.

His statements voicing concern over good governance had invited the displeasure of the Pakistani leadership. The resignation dealt a severe blow to the army's prestige, as no Pakistani Army Chief had ever been removed from service.⁴⁰ Karamat also made a number of statements on the growing internal threats to the polity and talked about the adverse implications of the economic deterioration of the country on its internal and external stability.⁴¹ When Karamat was dismissed from service, Sharif further antagonized the army with the replacement of the Lieutenant General. Nassim Rana the DG-ISI by a new officer, Lieutenant General Ziauddin. All this was done by Sharif without active consultation with the COAS, General Musharraf. This resulted in a crisis of governance and caused deep resentment within the army.

The internal conditions prevailing within Pakistan and domestic instability could have been a major precipitant of the Kargil war. The war would have provided Musharraf with the initiative to salvage his position at home. However, there is no concrete evidence to support this fact. It also remains uncertain at what stage and to what extent the political leadership was informed of this operation.⁴²

⁴⁰ Bidanda Chengappa, "Pakistan's Fourth Military Takeover", *Strategic Analysis*, December 1999, p. 436.

⁴¹ Askari Rizvi, n-39, p.181.

⁴² P.R. Chari, "Introduction: Some Preliminary Observations", in Major General Ashok Krishna and P.R. Chari, ed., *Kargil: The Tables Turned*, New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, 2001, p. 15.

The Third View: War as Vengeance

A third explanation for the Kargil war may lie in Pakistan's desire to avenge itself on India for inflicting humiliating defeats on it in the past, especially in the 1971 war and in the Siachen dispute.

There was considerable suspicion and mutual distrust between the two countries going back to partition, the first India-Pakistan war of 1948-49 and the 1965 war. Partition held bitter memories for both India and Pakistan and Kashmir remained the bone of contention. The deep Hindu-Muslim cleavage and the desire on the part of Pakistan to internationalize the dispute over the issue of identity remained a constant factor that bedevilled relations between the two-countries. The 1965 war inflicted casualties on the Pakistan army in term of loss of men and material. Pakistan lost 20 aircraft, 200 tanks and 3800 men. Additionally, it lost about 725 square miles of territory.⁴³ The Bangladesh war of 1971 and the Siachen dispute in the 1980s dealt further blow to Pakistan. Here, I shall briefly reflect on how Pakistan was faced with a humiliating defeat in the 1971 war and its Siachen experience, both of which spurred Pakistan towards revenge given the opportunity.

⁴³ Sumit Ganguly, *Origins of War in South Asia*, Westview Press, 1994, p.48.

The roots of the war over Bangladesh lay in the political oppression of the East Pakistani nation by the West Pakistani ruling elite and the latter's failure to address Bengali demands for self determination and autonomy.⁴⁴ By supporting the East Pakistani demand for independence which finally led to its creation as a separate country, India dealt a severe blow to Pakistan from which the latter did not recover till the 1980s. Pakistan suffered in many ways. First, the end of the war established India as a regional hegemon in the Asian subcontinent and diluted Pakistanis prestige and power. Second, by emerging victorious in the Bangladesh war, India destroyed Pakistan's efforts to internationalize the Kashmir dispute.⁴⁵ Third, this war led to the signing of the Simla Agreement in 1972 by which Pakistan had to undertake a pledge to refrain from the threat or use of force against India, to confine bilateral disputes with India to bilateral forums and to recognize the cease-fire line in Kashmir as the line of actual control.⁴⁶ Fourth, Bangladesh's separation destroyed the two-nation theory on the basis of which Pakistan was created the theory that religion constitutes the basis of national identity.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Maya Chaddha, *Ethnicity, Security and Separatism in India*, Oxford University Press, 1997, p.206.

⁴⁵ Ibid p.84.

⁴⁶ Ibid p.98.

⁴⁷ J.N.Dixit, *Across Borders: Fifty Years of India's Foreign Policy*, Picus Publishers, 1998, p.190.

India also made Pakistan vacate two posts in the Lapa Valley and Titural which the latter had captured in May 1972 in the Kashmir sector. Further, Pakistan had to reconcile itself to the status quo in Kashmir. It was faced with the gargantuan task of economic reconstruction and repairing the psychological damage inflicted on it by the loss of Bangladesh.⁴⁸

At end of the Bangladesh war, the Indian military reigned supreme. The Pakistan military was in serious turmoil and its stability was undermined by the threat of a coup and counter coup.⁴⁹ Pakistan could no longer exert control over Indian forces in the eastern sector. After the war, India's conventional superiority and geographical advantage pushed Pakistan on the path of weaponisation. Pakistan gave serious thought to developing its nuclear capability. The dismemberment of Pakistan reinforced the outstanding hostilities between the two countries and exposed Pakistan's strategic vulnerability which precipitated Pakistan's desire to acquire nuclear weapons.⁵⁰ The conduct of India's nuclear tests in 1974 further exacerbated Pakistani fears. Conflict between the two countries continued.

⁴⁸ Ibid p.101.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.97.

⁵⁰ Sumit Ganguly, *opcit*, p.115.

In the 1980s, India got embroiled with Pakistan over the Siachen Glacier dispute. The Pakistani move to capture the Siachen heights served the purpose of reviving the Kashmir issue and expanding its control over the strategic heights stretching northeast towards the Karakoram ranges.⁵¹ The Siachen glacier is strategically significant for India because it separates Pakistan Occupied Kashmir from Aksai Chin. For Pakistan, the Siachen dispute is linked to the Kashmir issue and dates back to the signing of the Karachi Agreement on July 27, 1949. This agreement established the cease-fire-line between India and Pakistan but stopped at point NJ 9842. The original cease-fire did not cover the "area of the glaciers" because of problems of delineating the line which extended till grid point NJ 9842 and then moved north to the glaciers. The ambiguity introduced by the Agreement marked the beginning of a series of clashes between India and Pakistan over the control of these heights. Even in the 1972 Simla Agreement, in which the cease-fire line was changed into a mutually acceptable line of control the issue was left unaddressed which led to Pakistan's military attempts to grab the territory by force. Pakistan and India sought to stake their respective territorial claims by interpreting the vague language of both agreements to their advantage.⁵²

⁵¹ J.N. Dixit ,*opcit*, p.193.

⁵² Jasjit Singh, "Battle for Siachen; Beginning of the Third War", in Jasjit Singh, ed., *Kargil 1999; Pakistan's Fourth War for Kashmir*, Knowledge World Publishers, 1999, pp. 63-67.

The first traces of the military conflict go back to September-October 1993 when Indian troops detected a column of Pakistan troops moving towards the Saltoro Ridge. India launched Operation Meghdoot in 1984 by placing two platoons each at the Sia La and Bilafond La passes along the Saltoro Ridge. The Pakistani forces executed two unsuccessful attacks on the pickets at Bilafond La after which they were beaten back. There were frequent clashes but the last significant military clash took place in 1987. By the end of 1993, Indian troops were in possession of Indira Col and the two posts of Sia La and Bilafond La.

Once again India became the aggressor in Pakistan's eyes. An important motive for continuing the conflict was the desire on the part of Pakistan to avenge its initial military reverses and put unbearable pressure on India in terms of high human and financial costs.⁵³ Pakistani analysts continue to claim that the Siachen Glacier has been a "defacto and dejure" part of Pakistan's Northern Areas ever since the creation of the cease-fire line.⁵⁴

Pakistani efforts to seize control over strategic territory on the Saltoro Ridge was frustrated by India's military. But Pakistan intends to keep the issue alive by projecting the image of a "beleaguered and

⁵³ Ashutosh Misra, "Beyond Kashmir: The Siachen, Sir Creek and Tulbul Water Disputes", in Kanti Bajpai, Afsir Karim and Amitabh Mattoo, eds., *Kargil and After : Challenges for Indian Policy*, Har Anand Publishers, 2000, pp. 206-209.

⁵⁴ Shabir Hussain, "Siachen Glacier: Fact and Fiction", *Pakistan Times*, 6 September, 1985.

vulnerable State” that has been constantly threatened by Indian military designs.⁵⁵ The Kargil war can be viewed as an offshoot of Pakistan’s attempts to avenge India for previous humiliations. In this regard an important revelation was made by Altaf Gauhar (Information Secretary to Field Marshal Ayub Khan) who claimed that the Kargil intrusion was planned by General. Zia-ul-Haq way back in 1987 but the plan had been aborted since Foreign Minister Yakub Khan had been opposed to the idea due to the problem of logistics.⁵⁶ A deepening sense of frustration also pushed Pakistani towards launching a proxy war against India in the mid 1980s. Once Pakistani initiatives in Siachen received a setback, it not only planned to push in militants and terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir but also worked at stepping up the militancy in Punjab in 1988.

Conclusion

While the domestic politics argument seems plausible, there are reasons to believe that it is not the most reliable cause for the war. For the first time in the history of Pakistan, the Prime Minister had become very powerful. Under such circumstances, there was no credible threat to the Prime Minister and therefore little need for him to seek to salvage his position internally by waging an external war. There has been a lot of

⁵⁵ Jasjit Singh, n-31, p.73.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

speculation on the struggle for power between Nawaz Sharif and Pervez Musharraf. Though there is some truth in this, there is no substantial evidence to suggest that the war was a result of this power struggle.

Similarly, the third view also founders on the lack of adequate evidence. Scholars on the subject have documented India's victories in the past and Pakistan's attempts to punish India for inflicting successive defeats on it. It is a well-established fact that Pakistan has attempted to promote militancy in India. The 1965 and 1971 wars were also damaging to Pakistan's prestige. Pakistan's repeated failures to annex Jammu and Kashmir, fifteen years of fighting in Siachen and twelve years of militancy had undoubtedly fuelled frustration.⁵⁷ However, there is no strong evidence that links the Kargil War of 1999 to these antecedent events. To draw a straight line from the 1970s to the 1990s requires much more evidence than we at present possess.

The explanation for the war which does best is the political one. The war was fought to achieve Pakistan's political ends. The available evidence also supports this interpretation. Declining global support for Kashmir, the setback to Pakistan's efforts to aid the militancy and the need to probe India's conventional strengths after the nuclear tests were the primary objectives for which Pakistan waged this war against India.

⁵⁷ Major General Ashok Krishna, "The Kargil War" in Major General Ashok Krishna and P.R.Chari, ed., *Kargil: The Tables Turned*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 2001, p.95.

Chapter II

India's Military Strategy

Exactly a year after the conduct of the Indian nuclear test and the subsequent Pakistani tests in May 1998, India found itself embroiled in a bitter conflict with Pakistan when heavily armed infiltrators mounted a huge offensive in the Kashmir valley which culminated in the Kargil war. The war in all its dimensions is extremely significant for the future India-Pakistan relations.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first part deals with the main objectives behind the Pakistani offensive. The second part aims at studying India's response in terms of military strategy and tactics. This is followed by an account of the actual operations. The final section is a critical assessment of some of the key factors that determined the course of India's military strategy.

The Pakistani Offensive

The operational planning for the Kargil war seems to have moved into high gear soon after General Pervez Musharraf took over as Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) in October 1998.¹ The Pakistani army evolved a plan which was kept confined to the Pakistan Army Chief (COAS), Chief of

¹ Jasjit Singh, "Pakistan's Fourth War", *Strategic Analysis*, August 1999, p.696.

General Staff (CGS), Director General Military Operations (DGMO) GOC 10 Corps and GOC Force Commander Northern Area (FCNA) who was made the overall incharge of operations in the Kargil sector. Even the Corps Commanders were not kept in the picture. All this has been substantiated by the interception of the taped telephonic conversation between the Pakistani COAS, General Pervez Musharraf and the CGS, General Muhammad Aziz.²

The major objectives of the war were:

- a) To occupy the dominating heights overlooking the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh road which were left unheld by the Indians during the winter period, hence exploiting large gaps which existed in the defences in the sectors both on the Indian and the Pakistani side of the Line of Control (LOC).
- b) After having established a firm base, the next step was to cut off the line of communications to the Ladakh sector, the aim being to undermine the ongoing Siachen operations. Further, Pakistan wanted to recapture Turtuk and then isolate the Siachen Glacier.³ The aim was to turn the Indian defences in Siachen by taking Turtuk in a flanking movement

² "Pakistan Army's Plan for the Kargil Intrusions", <http://vijayinkargil.org/features/feature6.html>. Also visit, <http://www.armyinkarshmir.org/kargil/kargil1.html>.

³ Lecture delivered by Lt. Gen. V.P. Malik during a Seminar on *Kargil Revisited* at the School of International Studies at JNU on 12 February, 2001.

from Chorbitla and push the Pakistani forces upwards through Shyok Valley towards Thoise, the main supply base for the Indian forces in the Siachen area.⁴

- c) To alter the status of the Line of Control.
- d) To position an armed force across the well established formally accepted LOC in the Kargil sector in the Kashmir Valley in the form of a bridgehead and use this for infiltration of militants and mercenaries into the Kashmir Valley.⁵

The Pakistani army adopted the tactics of surprise and deception to catch the Indians unaware. They did not induct any fresh troops into the FCNA for the proposed operation since any large-scale troop movement would have aroused suspicions on the Indian side. No reserve formations or units were moved into FCNA till after the execution of the plan. The administrative bases for the intrusions were to be catered for from existing defences and the logistic lines of communication were organised along

⁴ Manoj Joshi, "The Kargil War: The Fourth Round", in Kanti Bajpai, Afsir Karim and Amitabh Mattoo eds., *Kargil and After: Challenges for Indian Policy*, Har Anand Publications, 2001, p.38.

⁵ Vinod Anand, "India's Military Response to the Kargil Aggression", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XXIII, No.7, Oct. 1999, p.10.

ridge lines which were reasonably far off from the position of Indian troops.⁶

According to the plan, four independent groups from four infantry battalions and two companies of the Special Service Group located in the FCNA were called together. These were:

- a) 4 NLI Battalion, the FCNA reserve located in Gilgit.
- b) 6 NLI Battalion, ex 62 Infantry Brigade located at Skardu,
- c) 5 NLI Battalion, ex 82 Infantry Brigade located at Minimarg,
- d) 3 NLI Battalion, ex 323 Infantry Brigade LOCated at Dansam.⁷

The groups were equipped with shoulder-fired Air Defence Missiles of the Stinger variety. Pakistani artillery numbering 20 batteries provided fire support to the intruding groups from the Pakistan side of the LOC. Observation post officers from the Pakistan Army were also grouped along with line and radio communications.⁸ The main groups were divided into a number of smaller subgroups of 30 to 40 each for the purpose of carrying out multiple intrusions along the ridge lines to occupy the dominating

⁶ "Pakistan Army's Plan for the Kargil Intrusions",
<http://vijayinkargil.org/features/feature6.html>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

heights. The four main sub sectors where the intrusions were planned were Batalik, Kaksar, Drass and Mushkoh nullah. After the plan had been implemented, Pakistan moved approximately a brigade worth of troops into FCNA to re-create reserves.⁹

The Kargil intrusions highlighted a shift in Pakistan's strategy from a low intensity conflict operation (wherein armed forces would infiltrate into Indian territory) to mounting an attack by professional military personnel disguised as Mujahideen.¹⁰ The broad strategy was built around internationalizing the Kashmir issue and simultaneously undermining the sanctity of the LOC. However while the tactical advances made by the Pakistanis displayed careful planning and execution, it was deficient in the sense that it did not include a grasp of the strategic repercussions.¹¹

India's Military Strategy

The evaluation of India's military strategy must take into account three major factors, namely, terrain, enemy strength and dispositions, and the factor of time and space.¹² The Drass heights which dominated a very

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Bidanda Chengappa, "Pakistan's Compulsions for the Kargil Misadventure", *Strategic Analysis*, October 1999, pp.1071-1094.

¹¹ Manoj Joshi, *opcit*, p.36.

¹² Vinod Anand, *opcit*, p.1058.

long stretch of the Kargil road and camping ground in Drass where the Brigade Headquarters is located were undoubtedly the center of gravity of the entire Kargil region. Therefore the clearance of the Drass heights by the Indians was the first priority. Batalik did not pose an immediate threat to Kargil but would have opened the route for further intrusions into Nubra and Shyok valleys thus turning the flank of the Siachen sector. And so, Batalik was allotted second priority. The Mushkoh and Kaksar belts were given last priority since these were considered less important and could be tackled once the Drass heights had been captured. Hence the objective was to address the pockets of intrusion sector by sector in order of priority of threat to Kargil.¹³

The Indian Army's first attacks were to clear the intruders from the vital Tololing and Tiger Hills heights that rise over 15000 feet and overlook the highway near Drass. Tiger Hills was strategically the most important peak. Once it had been taken, the highway would be totally free of any concentrated shelling. Tiger Hills was significant because of its height and its location. It is not the highest peak in the area at 4965m. However, because it is largely isolated and rises steeply ending in a conical shape with no spare on ridgelines on either side, Tiger Hills represented the most

¹³ Ibid, pp.1057-58.

difficult target to climb. Even a small number of intruders (25-30) at the top had the capacity to tackle one entire brigade.¹⁴

The Turtuk sector was also strategically vital for the Indian armed forces. First, a Pakistani advance here would put pressure on the flanks of the Siachen route and could open an axis to Batalik. Second, any Pakistani advances in this sector would not only give them control over the high altitude Thoise airbase but would also open up the possibility of establishing a direct axis to Batalik via Chorbitla and from there on to Kargil.¹⁵

As part of India's military strategy, a nagging problem that Indian military strategists had to grapple with was whether or not to cross the LOC. There was a growing feeling that if India's paramount interests were at stake, then the option of crossing the LOC could become a reality. However, as time passed, the military utility of crossing the LOC began to diminish. Also as Pakistan has closed the gaps between intrusions across the LOC, the Indian soldiers would have had to infiltrate near the vicinity of the intruders. This, however, was not a feasible option, as it would have

¹⁴ "Pakistan's Dilemma", *Outlook*, July 12, 1999, p.33.

¹⁵ Ishan Joshi, "The Siachen Factor", *Outlook*, June 28, 1999, pp. 30-32.

invited heavy casualties. It would have further affected our logistical re-supply chain and lines of communication.¹⁶

The tactics employed on the Indian side included the use of air power to launch strikes on Pakistani bunkers and supply lines while the infantry encircled the mountain. The artillery was positioned upfront to force the intruders to keep their heads down and allow the infantry to advance up the mountain slope. This was followed by either driving out the enemy or engaging the latter in hand to hand combat and then launching a final assault to capture the enemy posts.¹⁷ The Indian military tactics were directed at softening the enemy with fire assaults, carrying out multi-pronged attacks, surrounding the enemy and thereafter delivering the final strike in the form of a deadening infantry assault. One of the early priorities for the Indian soldiers was to push back protective patrols and early warning elements that would have been deployed ahead and to the flanks of their main positions. It was vital to reach the flanks in order to interfere with the supply routes of the enemy.¹⁸

¹⁶ Vinod Anand, *opcit.*

¹⁷ "Operation Kargil", *Outlook*, June 28, 1999, p.18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The War

This section is devoted to an account of the war that was code named Operation Vijay. There were clearly three marked phases of the war. In the initial phase, that began in early May, the Indian soldiers suffered heavy casualties and most of the tactics failed till air power was brought in. In the second phase, the Indian Army began to consolidate its position and worked on its strengths. This phase was characterized by the clearance of the Drass heights. The final phase of success began with the victory of Tiger Hills and the eviction of intruders from the Mushkoh, Kaksar and Turtuk sectors.

The Initial Phase

This phase began with the detection of intrusions in the first week of May and continued till early June. On 3 May 1999, Indian troops detected the first signs of Pakistani intrusions. Pakistani troops were spotted moving along the ridges of the Yaldore area. By 8 May, Pakistani forces were heavily entrenched on the heights from Batalik to Drass sectors.

The Indian military establishment at this point thought that the intrusion was nothing more than a localized skirmish, a premature attempt to push in the infiltrators and destabilize the region. On 11 May 1999, HQ

70 Infantry Brigade was made responsible for the sector. Official information that began pouring in at 15 Corps Headquarters confirmed that intrusions had occurred at a number of unheld gaps in the Batalik sector. By May 17, it was apparent that the intruders had positioned themselves firmly along Drass-Batalik-Kaksar-Mushkoh sectors in strengths ranging from 200 to 250.¹⁹

The Indian Air Force was brought in to launch air strikes on the Pakistani positions. On 24 May, Indian combat jets bombed Pakistani held positions throughout the arc from Mushkoh Valley to Batalik. This was followed by disaster on May 27 when a Mig-21 fighter plane flown by Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja was shot down by a Stinger missile and Flight Lieutenant Nachiketa flying a Mig-27 was taken Prisoner of War (PoW) in Pakistan territory. By 30 May, the Indian Army casualties stood at thirty killed, one hundred and thirty wounded and twelve were missing in action. The Indian Prime Minister declared a "war like" situation in Kargil on 31 May. As casualties began to mount, the army halted all suicidal missions and prepared itself for a systematic build up of forces.²⁰

¹⁹ *Kargil Review Committee Report*, p.77.

²⁰ Praveen Swami, *The Kargil War*, Leftword Publishers, New Delhi, 1999, p.12.

In the initial phase of the war the Indian Army suffered huge reverses. The infantry action was not bringing any results. The enemy was comfortably perched on the mountain and the Indian soldiers were sitting ducks to the heavy machine gun bullets. There were just a few batteries of 109-mm field guns firing at heavily defended enemy bunkers.²¹ At this stage, the Indian Army was faced with the dilemma of revising its strategy to evict the intruders.

The Second Phase

This phase was marked by consolidation of various positions on the Indian side of the LOC especially in the Drass and Batalik sectors. From the first week of June, Russian made 130-mm anti tank guns were moved gradually and 155-mm Bofors Howitzers were employed.²² The army began flushing out intruders from the Batalik sector and moved further north toward the Mushkoh Valley. It was only after the success of operations in the Drass sub sector that similar tactics were employed in Batalik. Previously all operations had been conducted to probe the enemy strengths. Now gun positions and troop deployments were increased and efforts were made to strengthen the Batalik Yaldore axis.²³ The campaign

²¹ Gaurav Sawant, *Dateline Kargil*, New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers, 2000, p.20.

²² Ibid. p.20.

²³ Ibid, p.59.

to evict the intruders became more systematic. On 6 June, the build up in troops and logistics was adequately achieved. The Indian Army launched major offensives in Kargil and Drass sub sectors. These were accompanied by air strikes to keep the crucial Srinagar – Leh highway free from any Pakistani threat. The first Indian attack was launched against Point 5203 on the night of 7 June by four groups of 12 Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (12 JK LI). On 10 June, India received the mutilated bodies of Lieutenant Saurav Kalia and five other soldiers of the 4 Jat Regiment which led to outrage within the ranks of the Indian Army.

One of the most formidable challenges for the Indian soldiers was the clearing of the Tololing ridge. This was strategically vital for Indian forces. The 18 Grenadiers were called into action. Concentrating on the Western spurs, they launched attacks on Point 4590. The very next day the 2 Rajputana Rifles, with the support of 18 fire units, engaged the target in a direct firing mode.²⁴ On 13 June, the Tololing Peak was captured, and on 20 June, the capture of Point 5140 completed the Tololing victory after six weeks of sustained artillery bombardment. This victory was a decisive turning point for India because India now exercised an advantage over the Drass Heights. The clearing of the Tololing ridge also gave the Indian

²⁴ Manoj Joshi, *opcit*, p.47.

forces a strategic view into the Pakistani defences in the area across the LOC. The 18 Garhwal Regiment further led an assault on Point 4700 that was the central ridge in the Drass sector and a major hub of Pakistani operations. The clearance of this ridge marked the end of the second phase.

The Final Phase

This phase was one of successive victories for the Indian Army beginning with the assault on Tiger Hills and subsequent efforts to clear the Kaksar - Mushkoh belts. Tiger Hills was the most dominating feature in the area. The infantry assault led by a commando platoon consisting of soldiers from 18 Grenadiers began the steep and arduous climb from the north-east end of the ridge.²⁵ The troops then branched off into groups to destroy the Pakistani bunkers. The artillery constantly pounded enemy bunkers atop Tiger Hills to ensure that enemy soldiers either die or at least keep their heads down.²⁶ Meanwhile, soldiers from the Sikh Regiment moved up from the south to capture a saddle, isolating the Pakistanis on the hill.²⁷ The Pakistanis thought an entire Brigade was attacking them from one flank and were desperately seeking reinforcements.²⁸ After a 10-

²⁵ Gaurav Sawant, opcit, p.124.

²⁶ Ibid, p.124.

²⁷ Manoj Joshi, opcit, p.47.

²⁸ Gaurav Sawant, opcit, p.129.

hour battle, the peak was captured at 5:25 hours on the morning of 4 July.²⁹ Casualties on the Indian side were high. Four Officers, two Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) and seventeen Jawans were killed.³⁰ By 7 July, the Tiger Hills Complex was fully secure. Once both Tololing and Tiger Hills were captured, the tide began to swing in India's favour. Indian forces now enjoyed the strategic advantage of pushing back the intruders by occupying these vantage points.

During the same period, another attack was launched on Point 4875 which is situated to the west of Tiger Hills. This position provided depth to the Pakistani administrative base at Point 4388. The final push from the Indian side began in early July. The 5287m summit of Khalubar, east of Yaldore, fell on 2 July. West of Urdas Langpa, Peak 4812 popularly known as Dog Hill followed. Holding these flanks on the Batalik side, the Indian troops began cutting off Pakistani reinforcement making their way down from the rear base at Muntho Dalo. The capture of the Jubbar heights was also significant. The final assault up the ridge would have been a herculean task had a shell not struck a massive Pakistani ammunition dump near the Jubbar peak. The route to Peak 4294 and beyond to Peak

²⁹ The Pakistan Commanders launched three counter attacks to recapture the Hill from the Indian army before they were finally driven out.

³⁰ Nitin Gokhale, "The Tiger Hills Countdown", *Outlook*, July 12, 1999, p.34.

4927 was now clear. The push from the village of Yaldore on the Yaldor Langpa to Peak 4821 on Kukerthang had been a protracted one, claiming heavy casualties. But the mountain was finally taken. The Tharu summit was next to fall. With the heights reclaimed, the Pakistani movement to reinforce positions along Gargurdu, Garkhun and Yaldore Langpa became next to impossible.³¹

The Kaksar sector also witnessed bitter fighting. Indian soldiers were engaged in battle as late as 23 July (in Marpola, Muntho Dalo and Shangruti positions on the LOC). Around 11 July, Pakistani infiltrators began retreating from Kargil. On 14 July, the India Prime Minister declared Operation Vijay a success. The Indian Government set conditions for talks with Pakistan, urging it to recognise the LOC as sacrosanct and put an end to cross-border terrorism. Indian troops finally reached key positions on the LOC around the third week of July, well after the Pakistani withdrawal.

An Assessment

This section provides a critical insight into a number of factors which are important for India's military strategy. One of the first attempts is to undertake a re-appraisal of Indian military strategy listing both its merits

³¹ Praveen Swami, *opcit*, pp.16-18.

and shortcomings. This is followed by an analysis of the terrain, logistics and force deployments.

A reappraisal of India's Military Strategy

It is reasonably clear now that a number of factors affected India's responses in the early leg of the campaign. These were disorderly military tactics; poorly acclimatized troops; delay in inducting the Air Force; chaotic planning; lack of proper reconnaissance and the failure to sever enemy supply lines.

This war clearly highlighted the poor results of the Indian army's strategy in the first few weeks of the war. Due to an inability in gauging the enemy's actual intentions, Indian military tactics were often confused. For instance, a small number of poorly acclimatized troops with thin artillery support were often pushed up mountains in separate efforts to vacate Pakistani posts at the earliest. It was almost ten days before the Army considered bringing in the Air Force which could not be provided immediately for a variety of reasons.³² Indian military strategy reflected the negative effects of bad planning and maladroit management. While the military strategy was sound, it backfired because the army was first trying desperately to conceal the scale of the intrusion and then project quick

³² Keith Flory, "What a Victory: A Kargil Perspective", *Statesman* (Calcutta), 23 July, 2000.

rapid military gains.³³ These two strategies were completely irreconcilable with each other.

The initial operations against the Pakistan army were conducted without proper reconnaissance. Lacking a complete assessment of the enemy's strength and its game plan, the infantry was directed to attack the Pakistani intruder's hideouts. It was only after the Indian Army suffered reverses in Drass and Batalik, that the Indian Air Force and Artillery were inducted to clear the way for the advancing infantry.³⁴

Though the army captured several crucial peaks in the Drass sub sector, it failed to cut off the enemy supply lines. The 50 (Independent) Para Brigade was flown from Agra to the Kaobal Gali base from where the commanders were ordered to choke Pakistani supply lines from Gultari, Nullah, Marpola, Bimbet and other areas along the LOC.³⁵ A Para Special Forces Regiment better known as Ski specialists was inducted in the Mushkoh Valley sub sector and was then tasked to cut off the line of communication near Marpola from the base in Sando. Hence it was evident that before the Commanders were called in there was a growing sense of frustration within the infantry units. While the infantry captured peaks,

³³ Praveen Swami, *opcit*, p.31.

³⁴ Shishir Gupta, "Some Uncomfortable Questions", *The Hindustan Times*, 17 July, 1999.

³⁵ Gaurav Sawant, *opcit*, p.90.

they had failed in cutting off the supply lines of the enemy. A month into the operations, the Field Commanders conceded that they had also not completely succeeded in preventing the enemy helicopters from violating Indian air space.³⁶

However, there were some instances when commanders displayed tremendous foresight and skill in the strategy to be adopted to tackle the intruders. For instance Brigadier Surinder Singh, Commander of the 70 Brigade, used the strategy to contain Pakistani positions at peaks 4080, 4590 and 5140, by pushing troops around them in order to choke Pakistani positions.³⁷ It was tough for the soldiers in the initial stages to choke the Pakistani links because enemy troops were adequately equipped with heavy machine guns, high machine guns, air defence guns and mortars, besides plenty of Stinger missiles.³⁸

At times when the Indian soldiers suffered heavy casualties, the reasons could be attributed to the failure to anticipate the enemy's movements in advance. Also Indian planners had not anticipated the use of Stinger missiles by Pakistani air defences. In the wake of increasing losses, combat aircraft were compelled in general to fly at higher attitudes

³⁶ Ibid. p.94.

³⁷ Swami, *opcit*, p.31.

³⁸ *India Today*, 14 June, 1999, p.30.

using defensive measures to deflect these missiles. Critics have raised a significant point. How effective was the air offensive and what purpose did it serve? Combat aircraft were not being used for the task for which they were designed. Attacks on major Pakistani supply bases and artillery positions were ruled out because such an offensive would have meant flying across the LOC which would have meant violating Pakistani air space. Therefore, even air power was of limited effectiveness.³⁹

Terrain

The inhospitable terrain was a factor that led to heavy casualties on the Indian side. The Pakistanis exercised an edge over the Indians in this regard. Most of the Pakistani posts were built on higher ground. Due to the nature of the terrain, only a limited number of posts are held on the Indian side between May and November. Hence the Pakistanis enjoyed an advantage over India topographically.⁴⁰ In most instances, the terrain favoured the intruders. For instance, the Batalik ridges are less steep on the Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) side. This was highly advantageous to the intruders and helped them to breach the LOC and occupy the heights without their movements being noticed. The mountain ridges linked to

³⁹ Rahul Bedi, "Army Disputes Effectiveness of Indian Air Strikes in Kargil", *The Asian Age*, 22 July, 1999.

⁴⁰ M. Lakhera, "A Rough Terrain", *The Pioneer*, New Delhi, 6 July, 1999.

high Pakistani features in Batalik and Mushkoh were difficult to crack since they facilitated supplies, reinforcements and ammunition for the intruders from their PoK bases. Hence, whenever there was a gap, as in the Tiger Hills or Tololing area, it was possible for the Indian forces to push themselves and interpose themselves between the intruders and their supply lines.⁴¹

The area from Mushkoh Valley to Turtuk along the LOC is dotted with rugged mountains. Weapons, ammunition and supplies have to be carried by men and mules. But because of the rarefied atmosphere, the carrying capacity of both men and animals gets reduced substantially. It requires four to six men on an average to keep one man supplied on these heights. Movement is arduous and time consuming.⁴² Also given the negative effects of terrain, the utility of air power and artillery shells is drastically reduced. With regard to terrain, fighting the Pakistanis in a sustained manner could prove to be very costly in terms of men and materials for India.

⁴¹ *India Today*, 21 July, 1999.

⁴² Lakhera, *opcit.*

Logistics

The Kargil war demonstrated the grave problems that Indian troops encountered in the area of logistics. The issue of maintenance and movement of soldiers at such high altitudes with adequate supplies has acquired relevance in the aftermath of the war.

The local mules were in short supply in the Valley. A mule in such a terrain is worth ten trucks. Given the heights ranging from 12,000 to 20,000 ft. where Indian troops have to set up over 200 posts and the fact that there are almost no motorable roads, the mules are the only means for transporting food, clothing shelter and ammunition up the steep slopes. The 56 Brigade needs approximately 800 mules to carry winter supplies to the ridges. But since people have fled the town and villages, they have been able to muster only 200. This means that the Brigade will have to requisition more helicopters to do the job. This in turn will have an adverse effect on costs. For instance, a Cheetah Helicopter can lift loads of upto 100 kg on each trip at an expense of Rs. 30,000. Two mules can do the job for Rs. 300 which constitutes a fraction of the cost.⁴³

⁴³ Raj Chenagappa, "Battle for the Kargil Heights" *India Today*, 16 August, 1999, p.49.

As part of the post Kargil strategy, about two and a half divisions will have to be deployed on the posts on the mountain tops. The support force required at the base of the mountain for such deployment is in the ratio of 1:3. Thus for 25,000 troops on the peaks, the support strength on the ground will be 75000 men. There is also the question of establishing supply lines for the summer months while preparing for the winter.⁴⁴

In the end of July, as the combat ended and tactical areas to be occupied were identified, the time factor became crucial. In a hundred days before snowfall closed the land route to the Ladakh region, winter stocking from 1 November to 31 May had to be completed. Permanent defences had to be constructed. To give an estimate, a load of roughly 2 lakh tonnes (10 times more than the previous year) required more than 3500 sorties by MI-17 and Cheetah helicopters. The mere construction of one fibreglass bunker on a forward post demands 11 sorties.⁴⁵

Winter management of troops, supplies and equipment is one of the greatest obstacles for the Indian Army. In this regard, the newly created XIV corps with its headquarters in Leh has been especially designated with the responsibility of overseeing the operational management of Kargil.

⁴⁴ "On Permanent Watch", *Outlook*, 26 July, 1999, p.16.

⁴⁵ Ramesh Vinayak, "Winter Warriors", *India Today*, 21 February, 2000, p.65.

Force Deployments

In the initial phase of the war, only one brigade was available. As the Indian side suffered heavy casualties, an Infantry Brigade from the Leh sector and a mountain division along with the reserve brigade of 15 Corps were rushed in to tackle the intruders. By the time the attacks on Tololing heights were launched, there were five to six Infantry Brigades in the Kargil sector consisting of a total of 16 to 18 infantry battalions. The Infantry Brigades were stationed under two divisional headquarters.⁴⁶

When attacks were made on enemy positions, there were five to six regiments of 105mm field guns, some units of 130 mm medium guns, 160 mm heavy mortars and 120 mm mortars. There were one or two subunits of 12mm multi barrel rocket launchers. By the middle of June, two mountain divisions from the eastern sector were moved to the western sector to meet any eventuality which might arise out of a possible escalation of hostilities.

On the Pakistani side, once the battle commenced, the total force level in Batalik, Kaksar, Drass and Mushkoh Valley was estimated to be 800-900 regulars with 1000 or so fighting porters. It was also believed that

⁴⁶ *Times of India*, Press Briefing, 23 July, 1999.

a similar number was waiting on the other side of the LOC to join the battle. This force was being provided with artillery support from well-prepared artillery emplacements from across the LOC. The Pakistan artillery component consisted of 25 pounders, 105mm howitzers, 155mm mortars and some 122mm multi barrel rocket launchers. However, the most potent force multiplier was the use of the gun locating radar, ANTPQ-37 that directed accurate counter bombardment against Indian artillery gun positions in Drass and Kargil.⁴⁷

Conclusion

The Kargil war has raised a number of significant issues which merit urgent attention. The war revealed many chinks in India's military strategy. Despite India's victory on the battlefield, New Delhi should not be deluded into believing that its strategy was impeccable. This is the time to undertake an appraisal of India's military strategy by re-examining its national security objectives.

Kargil further highlighted that there must be a consensus on the issue of modernising and upgrading the forces by imparting efficient training and equipping the soldiers with state of the art technology. If we have to acquire war prevention capabilities, we need to restore the

⁴⁷ Vinod Anand, *opcit*, p.1057.

conventional edge in favour of Indian forces. The presence of overt nuclear capabilities between two hostile nations like India and Pakistan is a further reminder to build strong conventional defence capabilities, to ensure that the nuclear threshold is not crossed in any further war.

The absence of a suitable higher defence organization and structure will reflect on the preparedness of the defence forces. The flaws within the Indian organisational structure should be removed. Intelligence structures too should be revamped to meet any contingency.

Finally, the crisis in leadership at the higher levels should be the focus of any future study that tries to improve the standard of the army. A strong committed leadership is the backbone of a strong army capable of galvanising the potential and strength of its soldiers in a crisis and guiding them towards victory. The lack of preparedness of Indian troops in some ways reflects this failure of leadership.

Chapter III

India's Diplomatic Strategy

This chapter attempts to highlight India's diplomatic strategy during the Kargil war and in the post Kargil phase. There is a necessity to understand the manner in which New Delhi responded diplomatically to the challenges and threats posed by Pakistan. The chapter begins with the Lahore Declaration. The next section highlights the salient features and turning points in India's diplomatic strategy during the war. This is followed by an analysis of international reactions by the US, UK, China and Russia during the war and after. The chapter's final section draws attention to the further deterioration in India-Pakistan relations with the hijacking of Flight IC814 from Kathmandu in late December 1999. The conclusion summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of India's diplomatic strategy.

Background

On 21 February 1999, the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan signed the Lahore Declaration. Both parties condemned terrorism in all its

forms and agreed to resolve all contentious issues with primary emphasis on Kashmir.¹

The Lahore Declaration affirmed that the two countries would implement the Shimla Agreement in "letter and spirit" and that bilateral relations between the two countries could be conducted within the framework of the Agreement.² The two leaders recognised the dangers of a nuclear arms race in the subcontinent and maintained that in the event of such a happening, both would undertake a commitment to notify each other of any nuclear related incidents and warn of any ballistic missile tests. The Declaration acknowledged the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir and pledged to intensify efforts to resolve the problem.³

Both New Delhi and Islamabad also committed themselves to facilitating the dialogue by holding frequent official meetings at the level of Foreign Secretaries.⁴ This was followed by a meeting between the Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan at Colombo on 22 March where they reaffirmed their commitment to the Lahore process. The two Foreign Secretaries signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which provided for

¹ *Kargil Review Committee Report*, p.49.

² *Ibid*, p.49.

³ Tehmina Mahmood, "Kargil Crisis and Deteriorating Security Situation in South Asia", *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol.52, No.2, October 1999, p.113.

⁴ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, London, Vol.45 (2).

bilateral consultations on security issues and nuclear doctrines in order to avoid conflict and promote confidence-building measures in the nuclear and conventional fields. However, the goodwill that was built between India and Pakistan was short lived because India did not anticipate that in the coming months she would be engaged with Pakistan in a serious military confrontation and her relations with the country would hit an all time low.

India's Diplomacy During the War

New Delhi was caught by complete surprise when the first signs of the Pakistan intrusions were detected in early May. On 21 May, New Delhi issued a strong warning to Pakistan to stop violating the LOC in Kashmir. In the first government reaction to developments in Kargil, a Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesman questioned Pakistani allegations that India was violating the LOC. This was seen as a brazen attempt by the Pakistani government to obfuscate the truth and camouflage its true intentions. By 24 May, the United Nations Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) had been informed about the cease-fire violations.⁵

⁵ "Three Killed in Indian Firing", [wysiwyg://58/http://dawn.com/daily/19990525/top17.htm](http://www.dawn.com/daily/19990525/top17.htm)

On 26 May, the US Ambassador in New Delhi, Richard Celeste, met India's Defence Minister George Fernandes and expressed concern over the situation. The US State Department released an official statement saying that "the latest fighting underlines the pressing need for India and Pakistan to resolve their differences. We hope they will be able to do this quickly in the context of the recent Lahore summit. We understand PMs Sharif and Vajpayee have been discussing developments in Kashmir by telephone and we encourage them to remain in touch."⁶ U.S. spokesman Mike Hammer urged the two countries to exercise restraint.

On 30 May, the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, and British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, spoke to India's External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh. The United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan also held discussions with the envoys of India and Pakistan. The Indian PM rejected the UN offer to mediate by declining its proposal to send a special envoy to India.⁷ On 31 May, Vajpayee accepted Sharif's offer to send Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz to New Delhi for talks on the Kashmir crisis.⁸ However, the situation took a turn for the worse when two

⁶ "Washington Move to Defuse Tension",
[wysiwyg://106/http://dawn.com/daily/19990527/top4.htm](http://www.dawn.com/daily/19990527/top4.htm)

⁷ "P.M. Rejects U.N. Offer", <http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/05/31>

⁸ C. Raja Mohan, "India Accepts Pakistan's Offer",
<http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/06/01/>

Indian MIGs were shot down in Pakistan territory. While one of the officers, Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja, was killed, the other, Flight Lieutenant Nachiketa, was taken prisoner of war by the Pakistan army. Though Nachiketa, was released as a goodwill gesture and was handed over to the Indian High Commission, India reacted to the incident by deferring the Pakistani Foreign Minister's visit to New Delhi.

Initial attempts at diplomacy by India were disappointing. The statements made by India's Defence Minister George Fernandes expressing his willingness to offer safe passage to the intruders occasioned considerable flak.⁹ Further, the Indian Prime Minister stated that "if the infiltrators ask for safe passage to withdraw, the matter will be considered but there is no question of stopping the military action and allowing them to go without tasks on the issue with Pakistan".¹⁰ These two statements provoked tremendous criticism in military circles, because one, it was a strategy the Indian military did not subscribe to, and second, it reflected a lack of proper understanding of the ground realities by the political leadership and a misrepresentation of the Indian Army's objectives.

⁹ C. Raja Mohan, "Non-military Option Open", <http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/06/02/>

¹⁰ "No Conditions for Talks: PM", <http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/06/03/>

In the first week of June, the US President, Bill Clinton, sent the Prime Ministers of both countries an official letter urging them to respect the Line of Control in Kashmir. The US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is reported to have called PM Nawaz Sharif and asked him to flush the intruders out of Kargil. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Karl Inderfurth, also summoned Pakistan's Ambassador in Washington, Riaz Khokar, to deliver the same message.¹¹ This was viewed as a diplomatic success for the Indian side. Pakistan complained to the United States that the US statements on the Kargil conflict reflected a bias in favour of the Indian position as the State Department spokesman James Rubin had used the term "infiltrators from Pakistan" instead of Kashmiri Mujahideen during a press briefing in Washington.¹²

In a major diplomatic development, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz was scheduled to visit Beijing on 10 June before the June 12 India-Pakistan talks in New Delhi. The Foreign Minister was expected to hold talks with his counterpart Mr. Tang Jixuan and brief him on the current situation on the Line of Control in Kashmir. Sartaj Aziz's visit to China also assumed significance given the fact that the Indian Foreign

¹¹ "Concern Over Clinton's Letter", [wysiwyg://109/http://dawn.com/daily/19990606/top6.htm](http://www.dawn.com/daily/19990606/top6.htm)

¹² Sridhar Krishnaswami, "US Extends Support to Indo-Pak Talks", <http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/06/06/stories/02060004.htm>

Minister Jaswant Singh was scheduled to visit Beijing on 14 June. Also India's decision to welcome talks with Sartaj Aziz was a sound one. India realised that the political and diplomatic implications of a negative stance towards Pakistan could work against its own interests in the long run since.¹³ Meanwhile, the Pakistani Information Minister Mushahid Hussain stated that Pakistan was not using its close relationship with China as a leverage in its dispute with India over Kashmir.¹⁴

Diplomatic talks between India and Pakistan began on 12 June with the arrival of Sartaj Aziz in New Delhi. The Pakistan Foreign Minister met the Indian Prime Minister and the Indian Foreign Minister who urged the former to agree to the withdrawal of the "infiltrators from the region."¹⁵ Aziz indicated that the problems between India and Pakistan could be resolved only through respect for each other's concerns and not on the basis of unfounded allegations.¹⁶ Reacting to the Foreign Minister's statement, Jaswant Singh is believed to have said that there was no

¹³ "India for Talks on June 12", <http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/06/09/>

¹⁴ "Pakistan Not Playing China Card: Says Minister", [wysiwyg://205/http://dawn.com/daily/19990611/top4.htm](http://www.dawn.com/daily/19990611/top4.htm)

¹⁵ K.K. Katyal, "Stalemate in Indo-Pak Talks", <http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/06/13/stories/01130001.htm>

¹⁶ Ibid.

confusion on the demarcation of the Line of Control, which according to him was clearly “delineated”.¹⁷

However, the talks did not result in any breakthroughs and there was complete deadlock on both sides. On 13 June, Jaswant Singh adopted an aggressive stance saying that Pakistan must “withdraw from Indian Kashmir” before hoping to pursue any kind of dialogue with India. “It is for Pakistan to establish its bonafides. We do not have the luxury to talk about talks”.¹⁸ On the same day, the Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had a telephonic conversation with his Indian counterpart Prime Minister Vajpayee. He reiterated the desire to defuse the current situation and expressed the hope that India would join Pakistan in devising mutually acceptable approaches to preserve peace and prevent the region from descending into chaos.¹⁹ Pressure on Pakistan began mounting as the infiltration was seen as a violation of the Shimla Agreement and foreign powers made a note of the situation. In this regard, Jaswant Singh’s visit to Beijing came at a crucial time. The visit was significant, as it was the highest level visit to Beijing by an Indian official since New Delhi tested nuclear weapons in May 1998. India’s statement describing China as

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “Nawaz Speaks to Vajpayee, Calls for De-escalation, Heavy Indian Shelling Continues”, [wysiwyg://247/http://dawn.com/daily/19990614/top1.htm](http://www.dawn.com/daily/19990614/top1.htm)

enemy No. 1 had been a major setback to India China relations. Hence, the Indian Foreign Minister's visit was hailed as a positive step towards improving ties between the two neighbors. China's Foreign Minister Tang Jixuan was optimistic about the prospects of a marked improvement in Sino-Indian relations given the fact that both sides did not see each other as a threat.²⁰ Moreover the two countries agreed to constitute a security dialogue mechanism.

On 15 June, the US President Bill Clinton in telephonic conversations with the Indian and Pakistan Prime Ministers urged the latter to withdraw Pakistani troops from the India part of Kashmir. He also telephoned the Indian PM and praised Vajpayee for the restraint he had displayed in the current situation.²¹ By now international concern began pouring in from all quarters. The Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif urged the G-8 leaders to play an effective role in resolving the Kashmir issue by adopting a "constructive and solution oriented approach".²² The Indian National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra also met member countries of the G-8 and issued a warning that if Pakistan did not withdraw early, the Indian

²⁰ C. Raja Mohan, "India China to Begin Security Dialogue", <http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/06/15/stories/01150005.htm>

²¹ "Clinton Appreciates India's Restraint", <http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/06/15/stories/01150003.htm>

²² Amit Baruah, "Sharif Writes to G-8 Seeking Support", <http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/06/19/stories/01190004.htm>

military would be compelled to cross the LOC. India also asked for measures to be taken against Pakistan including a blockade on economic assistance from the IMF.²³ On 20 June, leaders of the G8 called on Pakistan and India to end hostilities immediately and resume talks. In a statement, the G-8 leaders including US President Bill Clinton and Russian leader Boris Yeltsin voiced "deep concern" over the continuing military confrontation in Kashmir repeating their earlier charge that the fighting was the result of "the infiltration of armed intruders which violated the Line of Control".²⁴

The weekend of June 26-27 was crucial for the diplomatic resolution of the Kargil war. On 23 June, the US announced that it had dispatched a top military general to Pakistan to ask Islamabad to withdraw the infiltrators across the LOC in the Kargil sector. General Anthony Zinni, Commander-in-Chief of the Central Command (CENT COM), travelled to Pakistan immediately for talks with civilian and military officials. Diplomatic analysts believe that the US move intended to increase pressure on Pakistan to stop the situation in Kargil from escalating. This visit was interpreted as a warning to Islamabad not to violate the LOC and withdraw

²³ C. Raja Mohan, "India Hopeful of G-8 Backing on Kargil Issue", <http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/06/19/stories/01190003.htm>

²⁴ Shadaba Islam, "G-8 Calls on Pakistan, India to Hold Talks", <http://www.dawn.com/daily/19990621/top1.htm>

from Kargil.²⁵ The US State Department also cautioned that things could “get bad” for Pakistan.²⁶

On 24 June, India expressed its willingness to receive a senior US official, Gibson Lanpher, to discuss the Kashmir conflict but emphasized that it was against any kind of third party mediation.²⁷ The structure and timing of the Pakistani withdrawal constituted the crux of the discussions between Zinni and Musharraf. General Zinni conveyed to Nawaz Sharif a message from President Clinton underscoring the need for de-escalation of the current situation in Kashmir and the importance of a peaceful resolution to the Kashmir dispute.²⁸

On the same day, the US State Department Spokesman, James Rubin, came out with his toughest statement saying “we want to see withdrawal of forces supported by Pakistan from the Indian side of the Line of Control”.²⁹ This was the first time that the United States had come out in the open and squarely put the blame for the war on Pakistan. There was a visible tilt in

²⁵ C. Raja Mohan, “Pakistan Must Pullout Troops”,
<http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/06/28/stories/01280001.htm>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ C. Raja Mohan, “Will US Match Words with Deeds”,
<http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/06/26/stories/02260001.htm>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ “A One-Sided Approach Will Not Work”,
[wysiwyg://473/http://dawn.com/daily/19990626/ed.htm](http://www.dawn.com/daily/19990626/ed.htm)

favour of the Indian position, and pressure on Pakistan mounted to withdraw its troops.

Diplomatically, the decisive point during the war was the Clinton - Sharif Agreement signed on 4 July at Washington. As part of the Statement, "it was agreed between the President and the Prime Minister that concrete steps will be taken for the restoration of the Line of Control. They also agreed that it was vital for the peace of South Asia that the Line of Control in Kashmir be respected by both parties in accordance with their 1972 Shimla accord."³⁰ As a consequence of the talks, Nawaz Sharif promised to withdraw troops and respect the LOC in accordance with the Shimla Agreement. Shortly after the three hour talks between Nawaz Sharif and President Clinton, the Americans made it clear that they expected Pakistan to retreat within a specific time frame or call for cessation of hostilities at the earliest. A US official is quoted to have said, "those forces that have been involved have crossed over to the Indian side of the LOC. Those are the forces that are at issue."³¹ Officials at the State Department reiterated that as an outcome of the Clinton - Sharif talks, it was understood that the government of Pakistan exercised the necessary

³⁰ Sridhar Krishnaswami, "Pakistan Agrees to Pullout", <http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindus/1999/07/06/stories/0060001.htm>

³¹ Ibid.

influence to defuse the situation in Kargil as envisaged under the Agreement.³²

On 7 July, India declared that it would raise the ante in Occupied Kashmir until all “infiltrators” had withdrawn behind the Line of Control. It was also willing to give diplomacy a chance to secure their retreat.³³ The objective was to achieve “complete and unconditional withdrawal of the intruders from our side of the Line of Control”.³⁴ Hence diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan began to normalise in mid July with the latter agreeing to withdraw all intruders. India set July 16 as the deadline for pull out of troops.

Analysis

This section analyses India’s diplomatic strategy with the rest of the world especially vis-à-vis Britain, China, the United States, Russia and Europe. It accounts for the strengths and weaknesses of India’s diplomatic strategy during the war and post Kargil.

³² Ibid.

³³ Amit Baruah, “Pakistan to Make an Appeal”, <http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/07/10/stories/0110001.htm>

³⁴ Ibid.

During the war, it was clear that the Indian position had received major support amongst members of the G-8. A G-8 diplomat in an interview with the *Dawn* conceded that India was clearly winning the propaganda and public relations war.³⁵ Western nations largely accepted India's allegations that Pakistan was funding armed intruders and even sending regular Pakistani troops into Kashmir. This was reflected by the lack of support for Pakistan's call for high level mediation in the conflict. Russia took a strong stand in favour of India stating that the problem must be solved through bilateral talks between the two sides.³⁶ The Russian President Boris Yeltsin voiced deep concern over the military confrontation.

Britain from the very beginning of the war had expressed concern regarding the outbreak of war between India and Pakistan. Officials of the British Foreign Office were "gravely concerned" that the escalation of tension between India and Pakistan on the Line of Control in Kashmir could force the two countries to deploy nuclear weapons. They also believed that in the backdrop of the nuclear shadow, no conflict could be treated as a mere local problem.³⁷ Hence there seems to have been a

³⁵ Shasaba Islam, "G 8 Calls on Pakistan, India to Hold Talks", *Wysiwyg://365/http://dawn.com/daily/19990621/top1.htm*

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ "Nuclear Factor Worries UK" *Wysiwyg://191/http://dawn.com/daily/19990531/top7.htm*

growing realization among European and other Western countries that the spillover effects of the war might indirectly impact on their security. This is why despite the fact that India insisted on solving the matter bilaterally, the dispute had internationalised the Kashmir issue. This was one of the weaknesses in India's diplomatic strategy. However, India's success lay in the manner by which it garnered international opinion in its favour to pressurise Pakistan into withdrawing its forces. Throughout the war, Britain supported India's stand on Kashmir. British envoy to New Delhi, Rob Young said, "India's position is good" and "we have sympathy for India's position".³⁸

India's relations with China are crucial and merit attention. The Chinese stance towards India during the war is interesting. Throughout the war China seems to have maintained a neutral posture.³⁹ Singh allayed all fears in Chinese political circles that New Delhi did not consider China as a threat potentially or otherwise. Jaswant Singh was quoted as saying, "India is not a threat to the Peoples Republic of China and we do not treat the PRC as a threat to India".⁴⁰ Post Kargil, Jaswant Singh met his Chinese

³⁸ "Britian Backs Indian Stand, Says Envoy",
[wysiwyg://408/http://dawn.com/daily/19990062/top8.htm](http://www.wysiwyg.com/408/http://dawn.com/daily/19990062/top8.htm)

³⁹ Swaran Singh, "China's Posture of Neutrality", *World Focus*, June-July 1999, p.32.

⁴⁰ Swaran Singh. "Why and How of China's Neutrality", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.XXVIII, No.7, 2000, p.1091.

counterpart on 24 July 1999 during the annual meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Singapore. Both countries agreed to the formulation of six joint initiatives in their bilateral ties and the Chinese side hailed India as a “stabilising force” in South Asia.⁴¹

China’s neutral posture during the war also played a decisive role in facilitating the Clinton – Sharif deal. The Kashmir issue did not figure in the talks during the Pakistani Prime Minister’s visit to Beijing. Pakistan had expected the Chinese to take its side and address the Kargil issue at the forthcoming session of the UN General Assembly. However, the Chinese Premier, Zhu Rongji, described Kashmir as a “historical issue involving territorial, ethnic and religious elements” which could be solved only through peaceful means and through bilateral talks between New Delhi and Islamabad.⁴² The Chinese posture can be explained by the fact that it is a player on the global stage. Also, China itself has been experiencing rapid change by dismantling its nationalized sector, encouraging privatization and trying to carve a niche for itself as a global player in a multipolar world. With the stakes being so high, China did not want to jeopardize its position in the international system by supporting Pakistan beyond a point.

⁴¹ Swaran Singh, n-39, opcit, p.32.

⁴² Ibid, p.34.

Finally India's diplomacy with the United States was the most important driving force in bringing an end to the war. The most vital gain for Indian diplomacy was the positive attitude displayed by Washington. The US acknowledged the fact that the genesis of the crisis lay in Pakistan's miscalculated adventure.⁴³ Further, the Clinton administration refused to support Pakistan's call for internationalisation of the Kashmir issue. Kargil embodied the first ever-political cooperation between New Delhi and Washington on a core national security concern of the former.⁴⁴ The war also demonstrated that the Americans were interested in furthering their ties with a stable, democratic nation with one of the world's biggest consumer markets.⁴⁵

In the aftermath of Kargil, India's relations with the United States were further strengthened by President Clinton's visit to India. In March 2000 Clinton emphasised the ending of violence in Kashmir as a precondition for an India-Pakistan dialogue. Clinton's four R's package outlined "restraint by both sides", "respect for the LOC", "renewal of the

⁴³ C. Raja Mohan, "The US and Kargil", *World Focus*, June-July 1999, pp.28-31.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Sunanda K. Datta Ray, "Winning a Reprieve", *Guns and Yellow Roses*, Harper Collins Publications, 1999, p.209.

India- Pakistan dialogue" and the "rejection of violence".⁴⁶ President Clinton ruled out American intervention on behalf of Pakistan in the Kashmir dispute. He confirmed Indian charges of Pakistan's involvement in cross border terrorism saying, "I believe that there are elements within the Pakistani government that have supported those who are engaged in violence in Kashmir".⁴⁷ The two leaders decided to facilitate greater cooperation in the fields of commerce, economy and technology. As part of the Clinton-Vajpayee talks, the "Vision Statement" envisaged the creation of an institutional arrangement for promoting government-to-government and industry to industry dialogue between the two countries.⁴⁸ Indian and US based private enterprises signed agreements for projects worth \$ 4.1 billion. They agreed to hold regular meetings at the ministerial level for discussions on trade and investment. India and the US further agreed to enter into joint collaborations in the field of Science and Technology and also signed a Joint Statement on Energy and Environment.⁴⁹

President Clinton's visit to India was extremely significant because it offered India the opportunity it had been waiting for. First, the US

⁴⁶ Balraj Puri, "Kargil in the Perspective of Indo-Pak Conflicts", *Mainstream*, 31 July, 1999, pp.11-12.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

President's visit came at a time when India was trying to garner international support to combat terrorism (the hijacking of the Indian Airlines Flight IC814 by Pakistani terrorists in December 2000 was a case in point). In this regard the setting up of the India-US Joint Working Group on Terrorism was an important milestone towards tackling the threat of terrorism. Second, the Vision Statement recognised the importance of resolving the conflict bilaterally and ruled out prospects of third party mediation. President Clinton urged a return to the framework of dialogue as envisaged under the Lahore Declaration.

In the context of India - US relations, the Indian Prime Minister's visit to the US in October 2000 acquires special significance. In his address to the US Congress, Vajpayee sharply brought out India's concerns on terrorism.⁵⁰ He further argued that an effort should be made to define behaviour among nations by "cooperative" rather than "aggressive" assertion of national interests.⁵¹ He urged further cooperation in advancing democracy and arriving at a shared partnership in areas like in energy and environment, science and technology and international peacekeeping.⁵²

⁵⁰ Ranjit Bhushan, "Such a Long Journey", *Outlook*, 25 September, 2000, p.20.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² For a text of the Statement made by Prime Minister Vajpayee to the Joint Session of the United States Congress, see *Strategic Digest*, Vol XXX No.10, October 2000, pp.1441-1443.

On September 13, President Clinton and Prime Minister Vajpayee signed a Joint India-US Statement, which welcomed the progress of the Joint Working Group on Terrorism and the establishment of the Science and Technology forum in July 2000.⁵³ In the economic arena they reaffirmed their confidence in three ministerial level economic dialogues and functioning of a High-level coordination group to improve bilateral trade, environment, facilitate greater commercial cooperation, promote investment and contribute to strengthening the global financial and trading systems.⁵⁴ The United States and India further sought to advance the dialogue on security and non-proliferation by building on the Joint Statement signed during President Clinton's visit to India in March 2000. India reaffirmed that it will continue its voluntary moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons until the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was implemented. India also gave its support for a global treaty to halt the production of fissile materials for weapons and for the earliest possible start to the Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty (FMCT) negotiations in Geneva.⁵⁵

⁵³ "India-US Statement", *Strategic Digest*, Vol. XXX, No.10, October 2000, p.1444.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Hence the basic foundation for a strong India-US partnership was laid. What now remains to be seen is how effectively India can utilize the areas of interactive diplomacy to improve its ties with the United States. A welcome theme in India-US discussions was Vajpayee's stress on India as an Asian power and the decision to incorporate a dialogue on Asian security in the India US agenda.⁵⁶ The US no longer sees India and Pakistan as a unit and would consider it useful to recognise India as an independent entity.⁵⁷

The Hijacking of IC814: A Test of Indian Resilience?

Indian efforts to normalize relations with Pakistan suffered a major debacle when an Indian Airlines flight IC814 from New Delhi to Kathmandu was hijacked by five Pakistani terrorists on 25 December 1999. The seven-day drama finally ended when India agreed to the demands of the hijackers and released three hard-core militants for the life and safety of the passengers on board. Although India could have fared better, given the circumstances, it utilised the best feasible options at hand to tackle the crisis.

⁵⁶ Teresita Schaffer, "The Next Crucial Steps", *Outlook*, 2 October, 2000, p.30.

⁵⁷ Gary L. Ackerman, "Get Real", *India Today*, 27 March, 2000, p.25.

The hijacking was carried out by five professionally-trained Pakistanis to serve a number of objectives. First, the hijackers wanted to humiliate the Indian State and expose its vulnerability in the face of low intensity terrorism.⁵⁸ Second, they attempted to raise the level of Indian and international concern on the Kashmir issue. The final objective was to secure the release of Maulana Masood Azhar, a Pakistani whose release would be a boost for secessionist and terrorist forces in Kashmir.⁵⁹

The Government at the very beginning blundered in its handling of the crisis. When the Air Traffic Control in New Delhi first received news of the hijacking, the Crisis Management Group (CMG) led by Union Cabinet Secretary Prabhat Kumar saw no reason to convene immediately.⁶⁰ Officials at the Intelligence Bureau and the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) who were experienced in dealing with such situations were not even contacted.⁶¹ These were serious lapses on part of the government. Also, after taking off from Delhi the plane was forced to land at Amritsar where precious time was lost. Instead of rushing in a team of commandos or the CMG to tackle the crisis, the plane was allowed to take off to Kandhar.

⁵⁸ "Defeat at Kandahar", *Frontline*, 21 January, 2000, p.10.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Praveen Swami, "Bowling to Terrorism," *Frontline*, 21 January, 2000, p.5.

⁶¹ John Cherian, "Failure of Diplomacy," *Frontline*, 21 January, 2000, p.20.

On the way it refuelled at Lahore and halted at Dubai. There is no credible explanation as to why the United Arab Emirates (UAE) did not detain the aircraft at the Dubai airport. Initially, the Indian Prime Minister and several of his Cabinet members adopted a hard stance and rejected the demand to release the three militants. Once the plane landed at Kandhar, New Delhi's options narrowed. Though the Indian government was assured that the Taliban would not allow any harm to come to the hostages, it soon became evident that India was completely at the mercy of the Taliban authorities.⁶²

The hijacking refocussed international attention on the country. In the last week of December, the Indian government began talks with the Afghan officials. Though, both India and Pakistan had taken the pledge to fight the scourge of terrorism jointly, Washington did not offer any logistical support to New Delhi. Jaswant Singh himself arrived at Kandhar to take stock of the situation and New Delhi had to concede to the demands of the hijackers.

Diplomatically, the hijacking was important for a number of reasons. First, India received very little international support on the issue. Efforts to get the international community and the United Nations to exert pressure

⁶² Ibid.

on the Taliban and on Pakistan were futile. The Indian government failed to convince other countries of the validity of the evidence to establish that Pakistan had played a role in the hijacking.⁶³ The Indian Prime Minister went as far as to appeal to the US to declare Pakistan a terrorist state. However India's appeals met with a lukewarm response. India's Ambassador to the US, Naresh Chandra, expressed his disappointment on the fact that the Clinton government had overlooked the large body of circumstantial evidence presented by India in order to establish Pakistan's involvement in the hijacking. Chandra said that characterising Pakistan as a "terrorist state" was "eminently justifiable and necessary".⁶⁴ Washington responded by saying that India's claim about Pakistan's involvement was "unconvincing". Hence it seems that the US was not comfortable with the idea of blatantly supporting the branding of Pakistan as a terrorist state. It was seen more as a desperate attempt by India to salvage some of its lost pride and authority. As expected, Pakistan denied the charges of masterminding the hijacking. It stated that Islamabad had not established any contact with the hijackers.⁶⁵

⁶³ John Cherian, "Megaphone Diplomacy," *Frontline*, 4 February, 2000, pp.12-18.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Amit Baruah, "Terror Links", *Frontline*, 4 February, 2000, p.10.

Second, once the identity of the hijackers was established, the role of jihadi groups that use Pakistan to sponsor their terrorist activities came into sharp focus.

Third, the hijacking turned out to be a catalyst in India's relations with the Taliban. For the first time since the Taliban regime came to power three years ago, India established direct relations with it as an independent entity and on a new footing. It provided India with the opportunity to seek a mutually beneficial arrangement with the Taliban. This marked the beginning of Track II diplomacy between the Taliban and India.⁶⁶ For the past three years India had no diplomatic contact with Afghanistan, which had aided and abetted terrorist activities in India. The scenario has changed in the light of the international pressure faced by the Taliban from the West on the issue of sponsoring terrorism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are broadly five strands that emerge from India's diplomatic strategy during Kargil. First, much to the consternation of India, the Kashmir issue was internationalized. Although India maintained that problems would be resolved bilaterally, it was external pressure from

⁶⁶ Rashmi Saksena, "Crisis and Opportunity", *The Week*, 9 January, 2000, p.41.

major powers like the US, China and Europe that played a vital role in ending the war.

Second, both India and Pakistan resolved to work within the framework of the Shimla Agreement and also reaffirmed faith in the Lahore Declaration.

Third, India opened a new chapter in its relations with China. The security dialogue between the two countries normalised relations between them especially after relations had deteriorated with the conduct of the Indian nuclear tests in 1998 and India accusing China of being potential enemy number one.

Fourth, there was a clear recognition on part of the Western countries that India and Pakistan can no longer be regarded as a unit. The US interacted with India independent of the Pakistan factor. Instead, it strongly denounced Pakistan for its infiltration across the Line of Control. This is evident in the statements issued by the State Department and other US officials at Washington. During Vajpayee's visit to the United States, Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth remarked that the "hyphenated relationship of always referring to India and Pakistan together" was no longer "appropriate". This was a clear sign of greater accommodation of

New Delhi. There was a clear tilt in favour of India on the restraint it exercised in not transgressing the LOC. It soon became clear that the Western countries also had a stake in the interests of the Subcontinent. They feared that in case of an escalation of hostilities, they would inevitably be drawn into the conflict to protect their interests in the region.

Finally, India garnered international support to combat the threat of terrorism. The India - US Joint Working Group on Terrorism was an important milestone in India's endeavour to combat terrorism in South Asia.

Chapter IV

Implications of the War for India's External and Internal Security

In the aftermath of the Kargil war it has become imperative to ask questions about the war's implications for India's external and internal security. This war highlighted India's need to reassess and redefine its view of national security. There are a number of crucial areas where redefinition is required. The chapter begins by summarizing the major recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee Report. The next section looks at the intelligence failure of the Indian government, the country's top intelligence agencies and the Indian Army. It also provides an insight into the need to build a strong Army and a strong chain of command. The third section examines the necessity of reexamining our deterrent posture and the implication of a limited war for India's external security. This is followed by a debate on the repercussions of converting the LOC into an international boundary. The next section focuses on the modernisation of India's defence forces through upgrading technology and increasing the defence preparedness of Indian troops. This is vital for both India's external and internal security. This chapter also examines Pakistan's attempts to sponsor cross- border terrorism in India. The final section

analyses the need to arrive at an early political settlement to the Kashmir dispute which is crucial from the viewpoint of India's internal security.

The Major Recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee Report

The Report primarily focuses on issues which should be addressed forthwith. The major areas of concern are the upgradation of intelligence; the creation of the post of a National Security Advisor as part of the National Security Council; establishing the sanctity of the LoC; increasing self-reliance in defence-related technology; setting up of a National Defence Headquarters; improving techniques for border patrolling; and the publication of a White Paper on India's nuclear weapon programme.

One of the very first disclosures made by the Report focuses on the lapses committed by India's top intelligence agencies. It notes the need for greater and closer coordination among the intelligence agencies.¹ There is no institutional mechanism for coordination between agencies at different levels. There is also no mechanism for evaluating their performance and reviewing their records.² In addition, the country needs to induct high

¹ *Kargil Review Committee Report*, p.200.

² *Ibid*, p.217.

altitude Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) which are extremely effective in conducting surveillance. India's successful interception of the telephonic conversation between Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and the Chief of General Staff (CGS) demonstrate the capabilities of communication intelligence (sigint). This area is not adequately funded in India. There is also a shortage of direction finding equipment. Thus India needs to induct advanced communication technologies.³

Secondly, as part of the National Security Council (NSC) there should be a National Security Adviser. Also, members of the National Security Council, the senior bureaucratic service and the service chiefs must regularly conduct assessments on intelligence pertaining to national, regional and international issues.⁴

Thirdly, the sanctity of the LOC should be maintained and this should be strengthened by advocating a clear declaratory policy statement that defines any violation of the LOC as an act of aggression. A comprehensive space and aerial based surveillance system should supplement this.⁵

³ Ibid, pp. 216-217.

⁴ Ibid, p.216.

⁵ Ibid, p.187.

Fourth, in the light of large-scale terrorist activities, the task of the paramilitary forces has to be restructured, particularly with regard to leadership and command and control functions. The Committee recommends the need to examine the possibility of adopting an integrated manpower structure for the Armed Forces, paramilitary forces and the Central Police Forces.⁶ Over the years the quality of the paramilitary and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has not been upgraded. This has led to an increased dependence on the Army in combating insurgency. This in turn has affected the levels of its efficiency.⁷ The manpower integration proposal would ensure compatibility of equipment and render it easier for the Army and other forces to operate effectively.⁸

Fifth, the Report recommends that India should pursue and develop a greater degree of self-reliance in defence-related technology. The Members of the Committee were informed that there have been significant delays in terms of time and cost in the development, production and induction of indigenous equipment for the three Armed Services. Pakistan, on the other hand, has not been plagued by such problems.⁹

⁶ Ibid, p.218.

⁷ Ibid, p.208.

⁸ Ibid, p.210.

⁹ Ibid, p.211.

Sixth, the Committee recommends the setting up of a National Defence Headquarters to help in building an effective national security planning and decision making structure for India. Hence, the Committee suggests that the entire gamut of national security management and apex decision-making and the structure and interface between the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces Headquarters should be reorganized.¹⁰

Seventh, during the war a lot of inaccurate information was generated, and media personnel lacked training in military affairs and war reporting. Further, the information-handling procedures within the Armed Forces and their public dissemination were also dealt with crudely. While there should be a cadre of well-trained war correspondents, all levels of military training must incorporate a through understanding of media relations and the techniques and implications of information war.¹¹

Eighth, the Committee also recommends an examination of the present structure and procedures for border patrolling, border management strategies must be made more effective by evolving force structures that ensure a reduction in the inflow of narcotics, illegal

¹⁰ Ibid, p.220.

¹¹ Ibid, p.222.

immigrants, terrorists and arms. This is vital from the point of view of India's external security.¹²

Finally, the Committee recommends the publication of a White Paper on the Indian nuclear weapons programme, which will provide an insight into the dynamics behind the evolution of Pakistan's nuclear capability.¹³ The Committee rejects the widely held view that Pakistan was emboldened to embark on its Kargil adventure because of the mutual nuclear deterrence established as a result of the Pokhran and Chagai nuclear tests of May 1998. The Committee believes that Pakistan had achieved nuclear deterrence by 1990 and this is why, despite India's conventional superiority, Pakistan had sustained its proxy war against India.¹⁴

The Intelligence Failure

The war demonstrated the grave intelligence failure by the Indian Government and the top intelligence agencies that proved to be extremely costly in terms of loss of men and material. It seems that as far back as August 1998, India's Defence Minister, George Fernandes, had received

¹² Ibid, p.220.

¹³ Ibid,p.222.

¹⁴ John Cherian, "Blaming It on Intelligence", *Frontline*, 17 March, 2000, pp.29-30.

reports on enhanced Pakistani activity in the Kargil sector.¹⁵ Since September 1998, the government had received definite information from the Intelligence Bureau (IB), Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and Ministry of Intelligence (MI) on the detection of visible activity along the LOC. In September 1998, the IB Chief, Shyamlal Dutta, warned the Home Ministry of impending trouble in Kargil. On 27 October 1998, an IB official in Leh reported to the Union Ministry that approximately 300 militants were being trained at Olthingthan in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). On 20 December 1998, the IB reported that Pakistani Remote Piloted Vehicles (RPVs) had intruded into the Indian territory at least 20 times and, in February 1999, the National Security Council was briefed on the border build up. All these reports were clearly ignored by the government and the army. India's National Security Adviser and Principal Secretary to the PM, Brajesh Mishra, was also aware of the intelligence warnings given to the NSC. Neither the government nor the Army was willing to take the blame in the initial stages of the war.¹⁶

In India, there are three principal agencies that are responsible for intelligence. These are the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the Research and

¹⁵ Nitin Gokhale and Ajith Pillai, "The Men Who Knew", *Outlook*, 16 September, 1999, pp.26-27.

¹⁶ Ibid, p.26.

Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Military Intelligence (MI) Branch. The Kargil war displayed the inefficiency of these organizations in alerting India to Pakistan's imminent attack. RAW did not conduct photo reconnaissance of the Kargil sector during the time of the Pakistani build up along the LOC. In its half yearly assessment ending in September 1998, RAW had anticipated the possibility of an attack from the Pakistani side but there were no indicators to substantiate these findings. Indeed, RAW dropped this assessment in its six monthly report.¹⁷ The Intelligence Bureau (IB) did not cross check reports from the Leh office in June 1998 about a build up of Pakistan forces at Skardu. The Military Intelligence too was oblivious to the signs of infiltration.¹⁸

The failure in intelligence indicates the need for closer cooperation and greater coordination between these intelligence agencies. The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) has not been accorded the importance it deserves. The JIC reports did not receive the attention they warranted at the political and higher bureaucratic levels.¹⁹ Of the 45 intelligence inputs generated between May 1998 and April 1999, only 25% went through the JIC. Below the JIC there are no institutional processes by which the RAW,

¹⁷ Kargil Review Committee Report, p.200.

¹⁸ "Intelligence Failure", *India Today*, 14 June 1999, p.22.

¹⁹ John Cherian, *opcit*, pp.29-30.

IB, BSF and the Army intelligence officials can interact periodically. There is also a lack of systematic, periodic and comprehensive intelligence briefings at the political level and to the Committee of Secretaries.²⁰ Hence the Kargil Review Committee has recommended a thorough review of the national security system and the appointment of a full time National Security Adviser.²¹

The Committee's Report further goes on to reveal that there were a number of changes in the Order of Battle (ORBAT) of the Pakistani forces in the FCNA-region during 1998-1999. These changes included the induction of new units in addition to the existing thirteen and the forward deployment of two units from Gilgit to Gultari and from Skardu to Haarziund, respectively. Information about the induction of these two additional battalions in the FCNA region and the forward deployment of two of the battalions would have been a strong signal about a Pakistani intrusion.²² Had RAW and the Director General of Military Intelligence (DGMI) spotted the additional battalions in the FCNA region that were missing from ORBAT, they could have requested air reconnaissance flights in the winter of 1998. The last flight was in October 1998 and the next in

²⁰ KRC, pp.202-203.

²¹ Cherian, *opcit*, p.30.

²² KRC, p.201.

May 1999, showing the huge lapse in conducting regular air reconnaissance.²³

Hence India had to pay a heavy price for the gaps in its intelligence apparatus. First, the critical failure in intelligence was related to the absence of any information on the induction and de-induction of battalions and the lack of accurate data on the identity of the battalions in the area. Second, India's surveillance capabilities particularly in the use of satellite imagery was extremely poor. To remedy this situation, the Army should acquire high altitude UAVs. Also to match this, institutional arrangements should be made so that the UAV imagery generated is disseminated to the concerned intelligence agencies as quickly and efficiently as possible.²⁴ Third, there are few back up and support systems within the intelligence structure to rectify the failures and shortcomings in intelligence gathering and reporting. Fourth, most agencies work at cross-purposes given the ill defined hierarchical structure and there are grave differences in the system of collection, reporting, collation and assessment of intelligence. Fifth, the performance of the JIC leaves much to be desired. At the level of the National Security Council, there is the need to establish a National

²³ Ibid, pp.202-203.

²⁴ Ibid, p.216.

Intelligence Level Committee to coordinate the activities of these intelligence agencies.²⁵

Finally, as the defence services have been increasingly overburdened with performing a diverse range of operations from managing conventional to low intensity conflicts, it would be useful to establish a Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA). This would provide integrated intelligence support for joint operations, manage national strategic assets and coordinate intelligence activities in areas of common interest.²⁶ Moreover, technical intelligence, popularly known as techint, which includes communication intelligence (com-int) and electronic intelligence (el-int), and second, space reconnaissance, are two reliable and accurate means of intelligence collection and should be classified as strategic assets.²⁷

The armed forces paid a heavy price for the government's failure to detect the intrusions in the early phase of the war. A postmortem of the war revealed gross errors in the Indian Army's tactical intelligence. A secret report prepared by the intelligence unit of the Border Security Force (BSF) indicated that Pakistani based infiltrators and army regulars had

²⁵ Brigadier Satbir Singh, "Restructuring the Intelligence Apparatus in India", *Strategic Analysis*, December 1999, p.1601.

²⁶ Ibid, pp.1602-1603.

²⁷ Ibid, p.1602.

occupied the highest posts in the Kargil sector as early as January 1999. These movements had gone unnoticed till three weeks before the actual war erupted.²⁸ The Report states that occupation was possible because positions manned by four units of an Infantry Brigade along the Line of Control from Kabal Gali in the West to Chorbatla in the East were vacated in winter and not reoccupied due to paucity of troops. There were three prominent gaps from Kabal Gali to Mushkoh nullah, Bimbat to the west of Kaksar and the west of Chorbatla sector.²⁹

Further, Brigadier Surinder Singh, Brigade Commander of the 121 Kargil based Independent Brigade, personally briefed the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Malik, about enhanced activity along the Line of Control during the Chief's visit to Kargil in August 1998. Major General V.S. Budhwar, who also happened to be present, was briefed along with the Chief on the border situation. The Briefing was put down under a file titled "Brief - COAS - 124/GSD/VIF/DG" dated 25 August 1998 and was subsequently sent to the Army Headquarters in New Delhi. Army Headquarters denied the existence of the file. The Brief highlighted four major concerns:

²⁸ Swati Chaturvedi, "Army was Caught Unawares: BSF Report", *Indian Express*, 28 May, 1999.

²⁹ Ibid.

First, there was a growing threat of infiltration in Kargil, Drass and Batalik sectors. Second, Singh identified nine gaps in the LoC as the predictable points of intrusion. These were Marpola, Mushkoh, Kao Bali nullah, Tololing, Kaksar, Bhimbhat and Batalik. Third, there was an apparent scarcity of troops on the ground. Fourth, there was an urgent need to induct remote-piloted vehicles for surveillance along with quick satellite pictures of the LOC and enhanced electronic surveillance.³⁰

In addition, Singh had also sent at least six letters and signals to request for winter reconnaissance. Brigadier Surinder Singh reiterated his points in a briefing. This letter sent to the Headquarters of the Leh based 3 Infantry Division on 1 September 1998, "106 / GS / OPS / (Brief / COAS / 124 / GSD / VIF". It stated that resources were urgently required to induct a weapon-locating radar system, remote-piloted vehicle for reconnaissance and winter equipment for troops.

Two key points were stressed: first, the urgency to address the threat of intrusions, and second, the acquisition of resources. When warnings went unheeded, Singh finally took recourse to the mechanism of the Redressal of Grievances (ROG) dated 12 November 1998 in which he disclosed serious professional differences between himself and Major

³⁰ Nitin, Gokhale, "Muddier By The Day" *Outlook*, 16 August, 1999, pp. 24-25.

General Budhwar, GOC, 3 Infantry Division in matters of operation. He expressed his grievance that repeated requests to conduct surveillance had been ignored and also GOC 3 Infantry Division had ignored his warnings.

What is surprising is that instead of paying heed to his warnings, Singh was removed from his command and was directed by higher authorities to report to the Headquarters of the Srinagar based 15 Corps. On June 13, his transfer was cancelled. In the interim he sought an interview with the Army Chief, General Malik, which proved to be futile. He was finally posted to Secunderabad where he was supposed to take over as the Commander of Andhra Sub Area but was subsequently transferred to Ranchi as Deputy GOC 23 Division.³¹

The failure in tactical intelligence is directly linked to the failure in command by the top leadership in the army. This in turn has had a detrimental effect on the morale of the Indian troops. This is evident by the fact that soon after Kargil, 40 cases of court of inquiries were instituted against officers and JCOs at various units in the Kargil sectors. There has been selective victimization of junior officers by their seniors. The four top army generals who were well aware of the Kargil intrusions have absolved

³¹ Nitin Gokhale and Ajith Pillai, "The War That Should Never Have Been", *Outlook*, 6 September, 1999, pp. 21-26.

themselves of all responsibility and instead have been decorated for their contributions in ending the war. These officers were equally responsible for the intelligence failure but the issue has been swept under the carpet as a face-saving grace. Major General V.S. Budhwar, General Officer Commanding (GOC) 3, Infantry Division, based in Leh, was responsible for giving the go-ahead signal for the withdrawal of a winter post in Kaksar which facilitated the intrusions.³² In March 1999, he ignored requests from battalion commanders for the deployment of more troops. Lieutenant General Kishan Pal, Commander of 15 Corps in Srinagar, diverted two battalions from Siachen to Batalik and ignored the serious difference in perceptions between General V.S. Budhwar (GOC, 3 Infantry Division) and Brigadier Surinder Singh (Commander of 121 Independent Brigade in Kargil). On May 12, 1999, Lieutenant General H.M. Khanna, Northern Army Commander, assured the Defence Minister on the eviction of intruders within 48 hours despite reports of intrusions by a large number of infiltrators. The General has been decorated with the Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medal. Finally, in August 1998, General V.P. Malik had been warned

³² Nitin Gokhale and Murali Krishnan, "War and Witch Hunts", *Outlook*, 2 October, 2000, pp.39-42.

on the enhanced threat from across the LOC but chose to ignore them.

Instead, he was away in Poland during the outbreak of the war.³³

The result is that there has been discontent within the army ranks. The soldiers are disillusioned and demoralised. The weakening morale of the troops is not a good omen for the rank and file of the army. It has increased a feeling of alienation among soldiers who are beginning to feel victimised.³⁴

Deterrence Revisited

The time is conducive for a re-examination of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear threat perceptions in the aftermath of Kargil. This section analyses the implications of deterrence and the emergence of the limited war doctrine for India's external security.

The Kargil war was a pointer to the fact that the creation of overt nuclear capabilities by both India and Pakistan does not provide corresponding political and military stability. Despite India's overt nuclearisation after the conduct of its tests in May 1998, the Kargil war proved that deterrence does not work at the level of low intensity

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

conflicts.³⁵ The existence of a nuclear balance does not seem to have dissuaded Pakistan from embarking on risky policies. On the contrary, it has emboldened sections within the Pakistani military and polity to stretch this low intensity conflict, the aim being to gain a strategic advantage at a time when India's "conventional escalation options" have been constrained by the threat of use of nuclear weapons and the force of international opinion.³⁶

Thus, it can be shown that nuclear weapons cannot deter subconventional conflict. Indeed, the presence of nuclear weapons may positively encourage conflict below the level of nuclear and conventional confrontation.³⁷ In such a situation, while the presence of nuclear weapons leads to stability at the level of outright inter-state war, this stability could be undermined by the possibility of sub conventional conflicts or proxy wars. The experience of South Asia seems to show this. For instance, despite India's apparent nuclear capabilities after 1974, Pakistan was not deterred from openly extending support to the Sikh militants in the 1980s and the Kashmiri and North- east rebels in the 1990s.³⁸

³⁵ Huma Siddiqui, "Strategic Lessons from Kargil", *Financial Express*, 27 June, 1999.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Kanti Bajpai, "The Fallacy of An Indian Deterrent" in Amitabh Mattoo, ed., *India's Nuclear Deterrent: Pokhran II and Beyond*, Har Anand Publications, 1998, p.178.

³⁸ Ibid.

One can say with all conviction that, post weaponisation, military stability has not been ensured in South Asia. The war underscores the dangers of miscalculation and misperception of the enemy's response. In such cases it becomes extremely difficult to predict when hostilities may spin out of control and when the nuclear threshold may be crossed. This is why it was international pressure on India and Pakistan that put an end to the conflict because the two countries by themselves were incapable of arriving at a settlement.³⁹ To avoid unacceptable costs adversaries must "clarify and accept thresholds of use".⁴⁰ The invasion of Kargil is a signal that Pakistan would like to test the limits of India's endurance in the shadow of nuclear weapons to try and pursue a "hostile and confrontationist relationship" to promote its national interests.⁴¹ At the start of the war, Lieutenant General Raghavan, in one of the many responses to the war, argued that the possession of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan will impact on policy and the decision making processes involved in managing the situation in Kargil. The challenge now lies in

³⁹ Maleeha Lodhi, "Anatomy of a Debacle", *Newsline* (Karachi), July 1999. For more on the Pakistani reactions to the Kargil War, see a compilation of articles in the *Strategic Digest*, Vol XXIX, No9, Sept 1999.

⁴⁰ One of the arguments put forth by Admiral Raja Menon in his book, *A Nuclear Strategy for India*, Sage Publishers, 2000.

⁴¹ J.N. Dixit, "A Defining Moment", *Guns and Yellow Roses*, Harper Collins, 1999, pp.187-196.

keeping any future military operations against such intrusions firmly at the low-intensity conflict threshold.⁴²

It is here that the emerging debate on limited war acquires tremendous significance for India's external security. India's Defence Minister George Fernandes unveiled the Limited War Doctrine on 24 January 2000. In an inaugural address at the "Second International Conference on Asian Security in the 21st Century", he declared that India had demonstrated the ability to fight and win a limited war, at a time and place chosen by the aggressor.⁴³ This statement is crucial from the point of view of India's military doctrine and for the future of deterrence.

The most distinguishing feature of a limited war is that it is a conflict in which the threat of an all-out nuclear war remains omnipresent. To engage in a limited war is to threaten the enemy with a general nuclear war.⁴⁴ Nuclear weapons make it imperative that for a successful execution of a limited conventional war the control over escalating the conflict lies with the central political leadership. Given the inherent possibility of

⁴² V.R. Raghavan, "The Kargil Conundrum", *Hindu* (Madras), 28 May, 1999.

⁴³ Swaran Singh, "Kargil Conflict and India's Debate on Limited War", *Encounter*, Vol.3, No.5, p.26.

⁴⁴ Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1996, p.105-106. See John C. Garnett, "Limited Conventional War in the Nuclear Age, in Michael Howard, ed., *Restraints on War*, Oxford University Press, London, 1979, pp.82-83.

escalation, the belligerents try to use their military force as leverage to pursue their political ends.⁴⁵

What are the implications of the limited war doctrine for India's security? First, depending on the evolution of India's limited war doctrine, the planning of India's force structures will have to address a whole lot of contingencies ranging from a controlled limited nuclear war to maintaining civil defence awareness in suspected target locations.⁴⁶ Second, the introduction of limited war doctrines will impact on the methods of war fighting which will have to deal with various types of aggressions – nuclear, conventional, military and subconventional in their covert and overt forms.⁴⁷ Third, most importantly, Pakistan's responses will have to be reassessed. Pakistan might continue to engage India in proxy wars and low intensity conflicts on the assumption that India will be cautious not to retaliate in a manner which might compel Islamabad to push the nuclear trigger. Hence, in future, Indian military responses will have to determine the threshold levels. How these threshold levels are likely to evolve will play a critical role in deciding the profile of India's military responses as it

⁴⁵ Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, Harper and Brothers, New York 1957, pp.140-141.

⁴⁶ Swaran Singh, "Kargil Conflict and India's Debate on Limited War", *Encounter*, Vol. 3, No.5, p.27.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p.28.

moves beyond a deterrent posture into the sphere of fighting and winning a limited war.⁴⁸

Converting the LOC into an International Boundary

The war has energized the debate over converting the LOC into an international border which dates back to the signing of the Shimla Agreement. It was apparently part of an understanding reached by the then Prime Minister of India and Pakistan, Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, respectively. In an article in the *Times of India* dated April 4, 1995, it was revealed that in 1972 Bhutto not only agreed to change the cease-fire line into a Line of Control but also agreed that it could be gradually converted into an international border.⁴⁹

The Kargil war was a clear violation of the LOC by Pakistan. In the future, respecting the sanctity of the LOC is going to be extremely important for protecting India's territorial integrity. While Indian leaders reiterate the country's commitment to the Lahore process, the channel for an early resumption of talks will depend on how Pakistan responds to the

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Cited in Neeraj Rohmetra, "Several Moves to Convert the LOC into Border", *National Herald*, July 19, 1999.

need for restoring trust along the LOC.⁵⁰ There was widespread speculation during the war on whether India would itself respect the LOC. Had India crossed the LOC, Pakistan's existence as a nation may have been threatened compelling the latter to push the thresholds of war leading to a nuclear confrontation.⁵¹

The Kargil Review Committee's observations suggest that it is fallacious to believe that the LOC runs north east to the Karakoram Pass. The country must not allow another Siachen to occur in Kargil. The proper response would be a declaratory policy which clearly outlines that deliberate infringement of the sanctity of the LOC and wanton cross border terrorism in furtherance of proxy war will meet with prompt retaliation in a manner, time and place of India's choosing. Pakistan must realize that India's defence of the LOC cannot be regarded as "escalatory" and that the aggressor and victim "cannot be bracketed and placed on par".⁵²

India and Pakistan are faced with a dilemma on the issue of transforming the LOC into an international boundary. Neither India nor Pakistan can alter the LOC because given their overt nuclear postures any

⁵⁰An opinion expressed by K. Subrahmanyam in the *Deccan Herald*, July 22, 1999.

⁵¹ Lieutenant General Moti Dar, "Blundering Through", *Guns and Yellow Roses*, Harper Collins Publishers, 1999, pp.170-173.

⁵² KRC Report, p.225.

large scale attack across the LOC would lead to a nuclear confrontation. Had India been unable to block and evict the intruders in Kargil, New Delhi would have escalated the conflict either by crossing the LOC or opening up another front. In such a scenario Pakistan would have been compelled to unsheathe its nuclear sword. Such a move by Pakistan would have absolved India of its no first use commitment which would have brought the conventional conflict to the nuclear level.⁵³

However, there may be temporary remedies to the problem. Each side could centrally fortify the LOC with a string of sensors and other early warning devices. The second method would be to negotiate a firm and verifiable agreement that will be based on an implicit trust that neither side would cross the LOC.⁵⁴ Though no verification agreement is absolute, such an agreement would reduce the incentives for cheating. In the absence of a verification agreement, the only way to ensure that the LOC is not violated is to have year round deployments all along the LOC particularly in the Drass and Batalik sectors. Here again the Army lacks the necessary manpower to watch every single inch of the LOC. Information about the other side's movements can be attained by monitoring the troop and

⁵³ W.P.S. Sidhu, "Of Myths and Realities", in Kanti Bajpai, Afsir Karim and Amitabh Mattoo, eds., *Kargil and After: Challenges for Indian Policy*, Har Anand Publications, 2000, p.118.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.120.

equipment build up along the LOC by using several technical means like ground sensors, break beams and microwave sensors. Aerial reconnaissance can be conducted by either using high – resolution satellite imagery or overflights by reconnaissance aircraft and UAVS. One of the biggest hurdles in negotiating and implementing a verification agreement would be India and Pakistan's lack of expertise in the art of cooperative monitoring.⁵⁵ In sum, the question of converting the LOC into an international border and the manner in which its sanctity is safeguarded warrants attention after Kargil.

Upgrading Equipment and the Modernisation of Indian Defence Forces

The Kargil war revealed gaps in India's defence. Much of the technology that the Indian Army used during the war was either obsolete or scarce. The army lacked Battlefield Surveillance Radar (BSR). Indian troops also complained of the lack of crucial Direction Finding Equipment that was meant to be used to detect the geographical location from which radio communications are transmitted.⁵⁶ Helicopters employed for air

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp.120-122.

⁵⁶ Praveen Swami, "Now the Cover Up", *Frontline*, 13 August, 1999, p. 17.

surveillance patrolling lacked sophisticated monitoring and sensing devices.⁵⁷

One of the major impediments that Indian soldiers faced during the war was that the use of heavy second-generation night vision devices could discern enemy movements only half a kilometre or away. The Indian army used the cumbersome night vision equipment of the Milan anti-tank missiles. Nor could the army use the Searched Mark 1 (the UAVs purchased from Israel) because these were specially designed to operate at heights of just 10,000 ft. India's indigenously built Nishant, which is still undergoing user trials, has the same capability but its development has been delayed by a couple of years. So, as a makeshift arrangement the Nishant's sophisticated all-weather cameras were latched on to Cheetah helicopters during the war to send back real time information and images.⁵⁸ The Indian forces were also ill equipped with ground sensors. India's inability to silence Pakistan's artillery guns was due to the lack of a weapon-locating radar called the 'Firefinder' that accurately tracks down an enemy shell's trajectory and determines where the gun position is. Also, Indian communication systems are of World War II vintage and the risk of

⁵⁷ *Kargil Review Committee Report*, p.210.

⁵⁸ Raj Chengappa, "Battle for the Kargil Heights", *India Today*, 16 August, 1999, p.52.

interception is high.⁵⁹ The army must acquire sensors that can penetrate into enemy territory in all weather conditions. The Israeli Searcher UAV used by the Army can fly in missions upto a limit of 12 hours and provide continuous target data in the night. The French designed Stentor battlefield surveillance radars can track movements of vehicles and troops at ranges of 20-30 km. Thermal imaging systems would further help in tracking enemy movements.⁶⁰

The Indian troops fighting in Kashmir were equipped with Brenguns dating back to World War II, bulky rifles, 20 kilo packs and no high altitude gear such as parkas, snow boots and goggles.⁶¹ The troops wandered around at altitudes of 5100 m with holed boots, ate inedible rations and survived in sub zero temperatures.⁶²

Upgrading equipment in the military and eradicating technology gaps is of primary importance. The use of obsolete equipment has a number of implications for India's internal security. First, it highlights the fact that India must strive towards achieving self-reliance in defence-

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.54.

⁶⁰ Manoj Joshi, "Now Hyper War", *India Today*, 10 May, p.42.

⁶¹ "Indian Army Ill Equipped: Retired Generals", [wysiwyg://428/http://dawn.com/daily/19990624/top5.htm](http://www.wysiwyg://428/http://dawn.com/daily/19990624/top5.htm).

⁶² Ibid.

related technologies and in military hardware.⁶³ Second, the Kargil war was an example of years of under funding of the armed forces and the failure by the Indian army to modernize. It also raised questions about staff and command responsibility in the armed forces as well as the Ministry of Defence.⁶⁴

In this regard, the new Chief of the Army Staff, General Padmanabhan, has advanced a six-point formula to modernize the Indian army. He has also indicated the need to set up four task forces, one of which involves the question of appointing a Chief of Defence Staff who will oversee both organizational and structural changes.⁶⁵ The six areas that according to him deserve consideration are intelligence, weaponry, surveillance, personnel, age profile, and technology.

There is an urgency to induct electronic intelligence and improve field methodology. Also, India needs to induct T-90s, medium range guns, weapon locating radars and electronic capability to ensure tighter vigil and review troop deployments in Kargil and Siachen. In terms of recruiting personnel, the priority is to plug the 12,000 officer shortfall, reduce the

⁶³ Kargil Review Committee Report, p.210.

⁶⁴ Admiral Raja Menon, "The Road Not Taken", *Outlook*, 28 June, 1999, p.27.

⁶⁵ Murali Krishnan, "The Badge of Renaissance", *Outlook*, 15 January, 2001, p.17.

training period in the Indian Military Academy (IMA) by a year and increase seats in the Officer Training Academy (OTA) and the National Defence Academy (NDA). Further, it is vital to ensure that commanding officers are in the age group of 32-35 and impart training to officers enabling them to handle modern weaponry better.⁶⁶

Post Kargil, reports indicate that the Indian Army has decided to equip itself with new gear. This includes 20,000 bullet proof jackets, helmets made of composite material that would fit better, high quality West European climbing equipment like ice axes, crampons, ladders, pitons carbines, glacier mattresses, fibre glass hats, special socks and more.⁶⁷ In the sphere of technology, three areas merit attention. First, the Army needs to introduce thermal imaging for conducting tactical surveys. Second, it must ensure the accuracy of artillery fire. Third, it needs to acquire man-portable laser designation for air attacks with Laser Guided Bombs.⁶⁸

One of the major deficiencies that plagues the Indian system is the gap between projected requirements and resource availability for modernisation.⁶⁹ The Reports of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Keith Flory and Srinjoy Chowdhury, "New Gear Boost for Sentinels on Line of Control", *Statesman*, 21 October, 1999.

⁶⁸ Admiral Raja Menon, "The Road Not Taken", *Outlook*, 28 June, 1999, p.27.

⁶⁹ KRC Report, p.147.

Defence have pointed out that the Ministry of Finance has been allocating sums which are substantially lower than what the Ministry of Defence has been seeking. This gap has been 18.81% and 26.63% during the years 1996-97 and 1997-98 respectively. The KRC Report suggests that in the light of the need to optimise defense expenditure, a comprehensive security policy is vital. The pertinent question raised in this connection is the impact of declining defence expenditure on the nation's capacity to effectively counter the Kargil intrusion. Declining defence expenditure and its adverse impact on defence modernisation re-enforced the Pakistani perception that the Indian defense services were ineffective. Over the past few years, actual defense expenditures have been below the amount required by the defence forces to perform the tasks allotted to them.⁷⁰

Devoting resources towards the modernisation of India's forces is vital for a number of factors. First, it will directly impact on the defence preparedness levels of Indian troops. Second, modernisation is relevant because weak conventional defences imply a greater reliance on nuclear weapons, which increases instability. Third, modernisation plans will positively affect India's border management strategies and measures to combat insurgency. The army has begun equipping its troops with modern

⁷⁰ KRC, pp.149-150.

equipment such as the South African Casspir mine proof trucks and highly sophisticated direction finding equipment to track militant wireless emissions. It is also preparing to boost surveillance capabilities along the Line of Control using battlefield surveillance radars, unattended seismic sensors and thermal imaging equipment.⁷¹ There has also been a realization in defence circles that the present structures and procedures for border patrolling must be reviewed in order to acquire increased capabilities for area surveillance and electronic fencing.⁷² As part of improved border management strategies, air reconnaissance of the LoC should be undertaken along a much wider security zone in the India-Pakistan LoC.⁷³ Also, since Ladakh and Kashmir constitute two distinct geographical and cultural units, their defence should be planned separately.⁷⁴ Special attention should be devoted to the Yaldore Batalik sector and strengthening force deployments in the Drass - Mushkoh Valley.

The Indian government's measure to constitute a Defence Procurement Board and appoint a Chief of Defence Staff is a significant move to revamp the national security system. The Chief of Defence Staff will be the single point adviser on military affairs and will also head the

⁷¹ Manoj Joshi, "Now Hyper War", 10 May, *India Today*, p.42.

⁷² KRC, p.219.

⁷³ Atul Aneja, "New Border Management Strategy on Test", *Hindu*, 24 November, 1999.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

country's nuclear forces. There is also speculation over the formation of an integrated tri-services Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA).⁷⁵ Restructuring our defence forces, improving the cost effectiveness of manpower, returning and re-deploying troops, and dispensing with obsolete machinery will not only affect levels of our defence preparedness but also strengthen India's national security.

Pakistan-Sponsored Cross Border Terrorism

The October 12 coup in Pakistan witnessed the ousting of the Nawaz Sharif government from power and the relocation of power in the hands of a new military government. The coup was neither a good sign for Pakistan or for India.

The internal problems that beset Pakistan do not present a pretty picture. Most of Pakistan's social and economic structures are deeply feudal. National institutions like the civil service are weak. There is rampant corruption in most sectors of the government. Sectarian strife and urban violence have plagued parts of the country. Tax evasion, excessive short-term foreign debt, high population growth and widespread illiteracy

⁷⁵ "Defence Procurement Board to Be Set Up",
<http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/2001/03/28/stories/01280001.htm>.

have gone unaddressed.⁷⁶ Added to this is the mushrooming of loosely structured Islamic organisations.⁷⁷

The Army has displayed unhappiness at having been made to withdraw from the Indian side of the LOC. After coming to power the Army Chief had declared himself Chief Executive Officer (CEO), suspending the Constitution and Parliament. This is definitely not a favourable omen for democratic institutions in Pakistan.⁷⁸ The state of civil military relations in Pakistan is also markedly different from that in India. Civil institutions in Pakistan have been plagued by many weaknesses.⁷⁹ What does all this portend for India? There are no simple answers. India is suspicious of any Pakistani move. The domestic situation in Pakistan and the possibility of a disintegrating state on India's borders is a cause of serious concern. India, which for 50 years has constantly upheld the principles of democracy, has always been uncomfortable about structuring its relations with a military regime.

⁷⁶ Teresita C. Schaffer, "This Honeymoon Won't Last", *Time*, October 25, 1999, p.23.

⁷⁷ See Sumita Kumar, "Sharif vs Musharraf: The Future of Democracy in Pakistan", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol XXIV, No. 10, Jan 2001, p.1861.

⁷⁸ Schaffer, op.cit.

⁷⁹ Sumit Ganguly, "Pakistan's Never Ending Story", *Foreign Affairs*, March- April 2000, Vol. 79(102), pp.2-3.

One of the most serious challenges to India's external security has been the cross border terrorism sponsored by Pakistan and the emerging Pakistan-Taliban nexus. It is an open secret that General Musharraf has close connections with the ISI and has extended his support to the organization. Since the change of ruler in Pakistan, General Musharraf has been patronizing the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen militant outfit. Soon after the military coup, the ISI increased its support to the Harkat-Ul-Mujahideen by providing it with weapons and money.⁸⁰

The Lashkar-e-Toiba, a militant group in Pakistan was allowed by the military regime to hold a three-day congregation which was attended by both President Tarar and General Musharraf. On 17 March, less than 10 days before US President Bill Clinton's arrival in Pakistan, the clergy in Islamabad's Faisal mosque openly delivered provocative speeches on waging jihad in Kashmir. Present in the mosque were President Rafique Tarar and Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider and both raised their hands in prayer for the success of jihad in Kashmir.⁸¹

The Musharraf government cannot curb the rise of Islamic extremism as long as it continues to use the latter as an instrument to lay claims on

⁸⁰ *Deccan Herald*, April 3, 2000.

⁸¹ Harinder Baweja, "General in Trouble", *India Today*, April 10, 2000. p.44.

Kashmir and use jihad as the means to liberate it.⁸² Funded by the Pakistani ISI, a large number of training camps have mushroomed in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and also along the international boundary where battalion commanders of 1 and 10 Corps of the Pakistan army have imparted training to the jihadis. Organisations like the Al-Akhwan Academy and the Markz-e-Toiba run a number of training schools. All these training camps and madrasas follow a strict regimen of religious indoctrination. A large number of Pakistani army personnel, both serving and retired, are part of the school staff. For instance, the Al Akhwan Academy is run by Colonel Abraham Khalil (retd.) formerly a Colonel G S Operations with the Pakistan ISI.⁸³ The weak gaps along the LOC, namely, Jamiawali Gali in Poonch, Uri and Gurez sectors have been the target of frequent attacks by militants.⁸⁴ In November 1999, Musharraf stated that he would boost the support Pakistan was giving to jihadis in Kashmir. In an interview to the *Hindu* in January 2000, Musharraf jettisoned the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration and asserted that Kashmir was the core issue between the two countries.⁸⁵

⁸² Prem Shankar Jha, "The Inevitability of War", *Outlook*, 7 February, 2000, p.14..

⁸³ "Pakistan: A Cradle for Terrorism", <http://www.armyinkashmir.org/articles/pakmili.html>.

⁸⁴ "Invasion of the Hordes", *Outlook*, April 17, 2000.

⁸⁵ "In the first ever interview to an Indian daily, General Musharraf speaks to the *Hindu*", *Hindu*, 17 January, 2000.

Post Kargil, the militants have adopted a new strategy of stepping up terrorist activities by the frequent use of suicide missions popularly known as “fidayeen squads” with the aim of directing attacks on Indian security forces in the country.⁸⁶ What is of immediate concern to India is the way in which the militants have been able to gain entry into the high security zones. The Urdu daily *Nawa-e-Waqt* carried a detailed report in October on the Toiba’s plans to target Indian troops in Kashmir. These incidents of striking army base camps are part of a new plan by the Pakistani and Afghan militants to roll back the pre-Kargil dominance of the security forces in the Valley.

With regard to Pakistan, India’s concerns revolve around three broad issues. First, there is an apprehension that Pakistan will continue to decimate India through limited wars. Second, Pakistan may be unable to disarm the militants who exercise no restraint along the LOC. Third, given domestic instability in Pakistan, there is a view that Pakistan may drift towards hard-line Islam and that its nuclear capability might fall into fanatical hands. Such a scenario would spell great danger for India’s security.

⁸⁶ Ghulam Hasnain, “Ready for Jihad”, *Outlook*, 25 September, 2000.

Kashmir

The Kargil war signalled a warning that unless India arrives at an early and speedy political settlement to the Kashmir issue, we could be faced with many more Kargil-like situations. In the last decade, the state of Kashmir has been fraught by internal problems that have not been adequately addressed. This has sown the seeds of dissent among the local populace who have been gripped by a sense of despair. Their plight has been exacerbated by the fact that due to rampant discontent, they have gone along with the fundamentalists and the militants. One solution to the Kashmir dispute is the granting of greater autonomy to the state. This section examines the merits of granting autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir. It also looks at the cease-fire initiative taken by the Indian government to enter into talks with the militant groups. The implications of both the autonomy proposal and the talks on cease-fire for Kashmir have been discussed below.

It is judicious to assess the question of autonomy for two reasons. First, the people of Jammu and Kashmir are familiar with the political and social conditions in the Valley and there appears to be a growing feeling of

political disillusionment with Pakistan.⁸⁷ The Hurriyat's initial shift towards welcoming a dialogue with the government reflects the realisation that the current phase of militancy in the Valley is discrediting the initiatives of the Kashmiri leaders. This is because militancy is no longer being looked upon as a legitimate instrument to voice grievances.⁸⁸

In the 1951 elections, soon after the declaration of cease-fire between India and Pakistan, Sheikh Abdullah and his party, the National Conference, came to power. Jammu and Kashmir was accorded special status under Article 370 of the Constitution. As per special status, restrictions were placed on outsiders purchasing land and the nominal head of the state (*Sadar-e-riyasat*) could only be appointed by the Centre after his selection had been approved by the provincial legislature. The Presidential order, also called the Constitution Order 1950, led to the implementation of Article 370, which has been amended from time to time. In August 1953, the Sheikh was dismissed and arrested on charges of conspiracy. The Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir came into effect on 26 January 1957.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Amitabh Mattoo, "Promising Signals", *Times of India*, 3 December, 1999.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ashok Malik, "Twist with Destiny", *India Today*, p.27.

The debate over granting autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir re-emerged in 1974 with the signing of the Kashmiri accord between Sheikh Abdullah and Indira Gandhi. It affirmed the continuing relevance of Article 370.⁹⁰ However, the issue of granting autonomy was shelved and between 1984 and 1987 the state of Jammu and Kashmir was afflicted by weak political management. The latter gave birth to armed insurgency which has sustained cross border terrorism until now.⁹¹

In the year 2000, the debate resurfaced when the present Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah convened a special session of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly to discuss the controversial Autonomy Committee Report. Farooq's autonomy package in many ways mirrored his father's demands as early as 1953. When the resolution was passed, it was completely unexpected and was received with shock and disbelief. It recorded the approval of a report which demanded that autonomy should be restored to its pre 1953 position when the Centre enjoyed jurisdiction over the three departments of Defence, External Affairs and Communication. The State Cabinet endorsed the recommendations of the State Autonomy Committee Report by a two-thirds majority.⁹² On 5 July

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ B.G. Verghese, "Freedom and Its Discontents", *The Hindustan Times*, 24 June, 2000.

⁹² Harinder Baweja, "Belligerent Posture", *India Today*, 10 July, 2000, pp.24-25.

2000, the Union Cabinet flatly rejected the autonomy resolution. India's Home Minister LK Advani stated that "to scrap the extension of provisions of the Constitution to Jammu and Kashmir" and return to the pre 1953 status quo ante "would be a betrayal of the people of Jammu and Kashmir as they would be deprived of all the rights extended to them through the Constitution".⁹³

Given the internal problems that plague Kashmir, the question of autonomy for Kashmiris is important because it cannot be an end in itself. Instead, it must be a means to securing good governance and economic reconstruction of the state. What the country and Kashmir particularly need is autonomy of functioning at every level of representative government.⁹⁴

Regional autonomy can be best achieved by amending the old Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Act and bringing it in line with 72nd and 73rd Amendment along with investing more power in the zila parishads. It could also include the provision of allowing any two or more contiguous zila parishads to group together within the regions of Jammu and Kashmir

⁹³ "Cabinet Rejects Kashmir Autonomy Resolution", <http://www.expressindia.com/ie/daily/20000705/ina05016.html>.

⁹⁴ "Over to Delhi", *Times of India*, 29 July, 2000.

and Ladakh as presently defined.⁹⁵ Good governance is crucial for improving the internal situation in J and K by building a strong and stable economic infrastructure that can unleash the entrepreneurial potential of the public and generate employment.⁹⁶ It is also essential to establish the legitimacy of the state government in the eyes of the people through free and fair elections. A competition free and competent administration must be responsive to the people's needs and the state government must guarantee protection against the terrorist groups by raising special forces to protect villages and townships in remote areas.⁹⁷

According to K Subrahmanyam, the only meaningful autonomies are financial autonomy and the maintenance of law and order. The state should increase responsibility to raise its own resources and spend them autonomously in the light of their economic needs. This is where the J and K autonomy proposals are deficient because they do not include the need for the state to assume responsibility for its own resources.⁹⁸ Economic stagnation has been the reason for widespread discontent among the masses in J&K. There are not many employment opportunities for the youth. The feeling of increased alienation has also fuelled militancy and

⁹⁵ B.G. Verghese, *opcit.*

⁹⁶ Amitabh Mattoo, "Kargil and Kashmir", *World Focus*, June-July 1999, pp.25-26.

⁹⁷ Afsir Karim, "The Conflict in Kashmir", *Seminar*, No 479, July 1999, p.23.

⁹⁸ K Subrahmanyam, "A Dependency Syndrome", *Times of India*, 24 July, 2000.

the unemployed have taken to arms. An indication of this increasing alienation is the decreasing participation of voters in the elections in the last three years. The polling percentage which was 35 in Srinagar, 50 in Anantnag and 41 in Baramullah in 1996, dropped to 12, 14 and 28 respectively in the elections of September-October 1999.⁹⁹ Hence an early political settlement is necessary for improving the overall internal political and economic structure within Kashmir and to prevent the threat of militancy from destroying the state.

In this connection, the offer of unilateral cease-fire extended by the Government of India in response to the Hizbul Mujahideen's cease-fire declaration of 24 July 2000 acquires special significance. Advocates of a cease-fire believe that this measure would scale down the Hizbul Mujahideen's activity and consequently lead to a reduction in violence paving the way for a meaningful dialogue. Second, the cease-fire would force Pakistan to de-escalate hostilities due to international pressure.¹⁰⁰ India extended the cease-fire in J&K for a three-month period upto May 2001. The government has invited representatives of all sections of people of Jammu and Kashmir to join in the peace process.¹⁰¹ However, talks hav

⁹⁹ Balraj Puri, "Alienation and the Revival of Militancy", *Frontline*, 4 February, 2000, p.2

¹⁰⁰ Praveen Swami, "Disturbing Ceasefire", *Frontline*, 5 January, 2001, p.28.

¹⁰¹ "Government Throws the Kashmir Talks Door Wide Open",
<http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/2001/04/06/stories/01060001.htm>.

entered a deadlock with the Hurriyat's refusal to go ahead unless Pakistan is also made part of the talks. An extension of the cease-fire will have two major implications for Kashmir's internal security. First, it will keep a check on the levels of militancy. However, New Delhi has to ensure that as part of the dialogue the militants must lay down arms. Second, a dialogue with the All Party Hurriyat Conference may build the confidence of the Kashmiris and restore their faith in the government's policies.¹⁰²

However, the prospects of curbing militancy in the Valley may require much more sustained efforts because statistics reveal that after Kargil, militancy has been stepped up. Although the number of civilians killed has dropped from 53 in the fortnight before the cease-fire to 35 in the fortnight after it began, the number of those injured almost trebled. The numbers of attacks and bombings by terrorists have risen. The second fortnight of November 1999 recorded the highest levels of violence.¹⁰³

The Centre's latest move of injecting political content into the ongoing unilateral cease-fire has been to appoint Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, K. C. Pant, as its chief negotiator for a dialogue with the Kashmiri groups. An unconditional dialogue is being offered to the

¹⁰² N. Sudarshan, "The Benefits of Truce", *Outlook*, 11 December, 2000, p.32.

¹⁰³ Praveen Swami, *op.cit*, p.28. For more on the issue, see Michael Krepon, "One Track Kashmir Policy Futile", *Hindu*, (Madras), 10 November, 1999.

parties such as the National Conference, the Congress I, the BJP, trade unions, NGOs and social and religious groups. Shabir Shah, the leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP), has indicated that his party is ready for a dialogue anytime. The Government may face some obstacles in its dialogue with the Hurriyat. Internal conflict and differences of opinion among its leadership have straddled the Hurriyat itself. The All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has described the Centre's latest measure as a formality. In an interview with the *Hindu*, Abdul Ghani Bhat, the Chairman of the Hurriyat Conference said, "the initial gains of the cease-fire have withered away". There has been discontent among the members of the Hurriyat because New Delhi has withheld the passports of all seven members of the Hurriyat Executive and blocked the road to Islamabad and future dialogue. What strategy the government now adopts will have a major impact on Kashmir and on tackling the militancy. It is imperative to build a substantive dialogue not only between Indian officials and Kashmiris but also between India and Pakistan.

Conclusion

Hence for the protection of its external and internal security, India will have to address a number of concerns ranging from upgrading

its intelligence to formulating a clearly laid out limited war doctrine. Also, the debate over converting the LOC into an international boundary is extremely important for India's external security. The modernisation of Indian armed forces and eradication of obsolete machinery is a prerequisite for guaranteeing internal and external security. To build a strong army, it has become imperative to build a strong leadership and improve the levels of tactical intelligence. Further, it has become absolutely necessary not only to tackle the threat of Pakistan sponsored terrorism but also to resolve the deadlock between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue through the instrument of a political settlement.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation examines three basic questions. It aims at discerning the causes of the Kargil war between India and Pakistan. It analyses the course of India's diplomatic and military strategy and finally draws out the implications of the war for India's external and internal security. The Kargil war was not just about the strategies that India and Pakistan sought to pursue but also about deeper issues on why both countries adopted a certain course of action towards each other.

At the outset, it is necessary to recognise the fact that this war was different from all the three previous wars fought between India and Pakistan especially on one issue. The war was not a product of the Hindu-Muslim divide or the "Kashmiryat" identity. Though this issue lies at the heart of all problems between India and Pakistan, there were more basic political aims that Pakistan intended to fulfil through the Kargil war of 1999.

This war was a rational act, an instrument of policy in the hands of the Pakistani leadership to pursue three political aims. First, internationalising Kashmir was seen as vital for Pakistani interests. The second aim was stepping up the militancy in Kashmir. The third aim was

probing India's strengths given conditions of "stability-instability" owing to the presence of nuclear weapons. The primary cause of the war therefore was not to seize territory or fight for identity but rather for the political reason of bringing back the Kashmir issue to the world stage, an issue which for so long has been the bone of contention in the relations between the two countries.

In this regard there are three perspectives that stand out clearly. Post Kargil, the crux of the bitter relations between India and Pakistan is Kashmir. Whatever initiatives may be taken by both governments in other areas of cooperation, there will be many more Kargils in future if an answer to the Kashmir conundrum is not found. This dissertation sought to address the Kashmir issue from the standpoint of India's internal security and suggested that a political settlement to the Kashmir issue seems to be the only channel for winning back the legitimacy of Indian rule in the eyes of the people and curbing the growth militancy in the Valley. The ceasefire talks are a welcome initiative and should be weighed positively.

A second issue that was raised by the Kargil war is the emerging doctrine on limited war. Given the presence of nuclear weapons on both sides, it is vital for India and Pakistan to try and define threshold levels and to plan for force structures in order to prevent any future conflict from

escalating into a nuclear confrontation. In terms of ensuring greater security, limited war doctrines should be incorporated as a major dimension of India's military strategy. Kargil raised another fundamental question. Does nuclear deterrence work? This issue requires serious thought and debate in any future research. My arguments have highlighted the military instability that is generated due to the presence of nuclear weapons at the subnational level through an increase in proxy wars. This could put great stress on India's military posture and cause it to escalate conflict in a future war. With escalation may come nuclear confrontation. Quite how India should respond to a future proxy war incursion needs assessment.

Third, the debate over converting the LOC into an international boundary is vital. Past and present situations have shown that gaps and undermarked areas along the LOC have been used by Pakistan to push in militants and step up the proxy war in India. These undefined areas have been witness to military clashes between the two countries as demonstrated by the conflict in Siachen. Hence arriving at a verification agreement on the LOC within a time bound framework is crucial.

Fourth, among the broader issues at stake after Kargil, India's military and diplomatic strategies need to be reassessed. At the outbreak

of the war, Indian military strategy reflected bad planning and chaotic management since the army was caught by complete surprise. There was a lack of proper understanding of the enemy's strength and its gameplan. It was only after the Airforce and the infantry were brought in that the tide began to turn in India's favour. One of the merits in India's military strategy was the decision not to cross the LOC to push back the intruders. This was a strategic move and displayed restraint. The deeper strategy was to reinforce that Pakistan was the aggressor who was trying to push India to the brink of catastrophe. Linked to India's military strategy is the necessity to modernize the Indian army and equip the soldiers with state of the art technology. This war revealed that years of under funding of the armed forces and its consequent neglect had affected the defence preparedness levels of Indian troops who had to fight a battle not only in inhospitable terrain but also without any food and other essential supplies. There are glaring deficiencies in the armed forces which need to be rectified. The morale of the troops has to be further uplifted by providing them with basic necessities in times of war and peace. The failure of higher military authorities in tackling the crises effectively and the shifting of blame on to junior officers do not speak well of the general leadership within the Army. All these are larger issues that have been jettisoned over

the years. It takes a war like Kargil to show that it is time to carefully weigh the implications of building a strong, modern and “fighting” army.

India’s diplomatic strategy reflected a sharp understanding of the dynamics at work in the international community and India played her moves accordingly. Despite the fact that the Kashmir issue was internationalised, Indian diplomatic strategy was used to completely isolate Pakistan by displaying restraint and focussing world attention on Pakistan’s deliberate tactics to sponsor cross border terrorism in India. Thus, India effectively garnered international support from all quarters and diplomatically emerged on the winning side. In terms of larger policy implications, India embarked on a new phase of friendship with the United States and normalised relations with China which had deteriorated after the 1998 Indian nuclear tests when China was identified as India’s “potential” enemy number one.

After the coup in October 1999 in Pakistan, India had to proceed with caution in handling the Musharraf government. It is still early in the day to predict how both countries will proceed towards normalizing relations with each other. Among other issues that merit attention after Kargil is the necessity to restructure India’s intelligence apparatus at the government and army levels. Coordination and accountability within intelligence

agencies and the setting up of an institutional mechanism for closer coordination between the agencies is vital.

The Kargil war has raised a number of larger questions. Further research should be conducted on issues like upgrading India's armed forces and tackling the threat of insurgency, the role of nuclear weapons, converting the LOC into an international boundary, arriving at a political settlement on Kashmir and issues surrounding the doctrine on limited war. These are areas that must become the center of debate and discussion in any future analysis on India-Pakistan relations.

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