

Kargil Conflict 1999

The 1999 Kargil War took place between May 8, when Pakistani forces and Kashmiri militants were detected atop the Kargil ridges and July 14 when both sides had essentially ceased their military operations. It is believed that the planning for the operation, by Pakistan, may have occurred about as early as the autumn of 1998.

The spring and summer incursion of Pakistan-backed armed forces into territory on the Indian side of the line of control around Kargil in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the Indian military campaign to repel the intrusion left 524 Indian soldiers dead and 1,363 wounded, according to December 1 statistics by Defense Minister George Fernandes. Earlier Government figures stated that 696 Pakistani soldiers were killed. A senior Pakistani police official estimated that approximately 40 civilians were killed on the Pakistani side of the line of control.

By 30 June 1999 Indian forces were prepared for a major high-altitude offensive against Pakistani posts along the border in the disputed Kashmir region. Over the previous six weeks India had moved five infantry divisions, five independent brigades and 44 battalions of paramilitary troops to Kashmir. The total Indian troop strength in the region had reached 730,000. The build-up included the deployment of around 60 frontline aircraft.

The Pakistani effort to take Kargil occurred after the February 1999 Lahore summit between then Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bahari Vajpayee. This conference was believed to have de-escalated the tensions that had existed since May 1998. The major motive behind the operation was to help in internationalising the Kashmir issue, and for which global attention had been flagging for some time. The intrusion plan was the brainchild of Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Gen Pervez Musharraf and Lt Gen Mohammed Aziz, the Chief of General Staff. They obtained only an 'in principle' concurrence, without any specifics, from Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistani Prime Minister.

Pakistan's military aim for carrying out the intrusions was based on exploitation of the large gaps that exist in the defences in the sector both on Indian and Pak side of the Line of Control (LoC). The terrain is extremely rugged with very few tracks leading from the main roads towards the LoC. During winters the area gets very heavy snowfall making movement almost impossible. The only mountain pass connecting the Kargil area to the Kashmir Valley, Zoji La, normally opens by the end of May or beginning of June. Thus, moving of reinforcements by surface means from Srinagar would not have been possible till then. Pakistan Army calculated that even if the intrusions were discovered in early May, as they were, the Indian Army's reaction would be slow and limited, thereby allowing him to consolidate the intrusions more effectively. In the event, however, Zoji La was opened for the induction of troops in early May itself. The intrusions, if effective, would enable Pakistani troops to secure a number of dominating heights from where the Srinagar-Leh National Highway 1A could be interdicted at a number of places. The intrusions would also draw in and tie down Indian Army reserves. The intrusions would, further, give Pakistan control over substantial tracts of strategic land area across the LoC, thereby, enabling Islamabad to negotiate from a position of strength. The intrusions would irrevocably alter the status of the LoC.

Apart from keeping the plan top secret, the Pakistan Army also undertook certain steps to maintain an element of surprise and maximise deception. There was no induction of any new units or any fresh troops into the FCNA for the proposed operation. Any large-scale troop movement involving even two or three battalions would have drawn the attention of the Indian Army. The Pakistan Army artillery units, which were inducted into the FCNA during the heavy exchange of fire from July to September 1998, were not de-inducted. Since the exchange of artillery fire continued thereafter, though at a lower scale, this was not considered extraordinary. There was no movement of reserve formations or units into FCNA until after the execution of the plan and operations had begun with the Indian Army's response. No new administrative bases for the intrusions were to be created, instead they were to be catered for from those already in the existing defences. The logistic lines of communication were to be along the ridgelines and the nullahs well away from the tracks and positions of the Indian Army troops already in position.

After it was finalised, the plan was put into action towards the end of April. The main groups were broken into a number of smaller sub groups of 30 to 40 each for carrying out multiple intrusions along the ridgelines and occupy dominating heights.

The terrain of the Kargil and surrounding regions of the LOC is inhospitable in the best of times. Some of the characteristics of the region are jagged heights of up to 18,000 feet and harsh gusts of wind and temperatures plunging to about -60 degrees Celsius in the winter. The battle terrain of 'Operation Vijay' is dominated by high altitude peaks and ridgelines most of which are over 16000 ft. This region is part of the 'cold desert' region of Ladakh. Dry, and at the same time very cold, the Kargil Mountains are a formidable constituent of the Greater Himalayas. Unlike other similar high altitude areas, the Kargil Mountains lose snow cover rapidly as the summer progresses. Below the peaks and the ridgelines are loose rocks, which make climbing extremely difficult. If it is not the snow cover, then it is the rocks, which cause extreme hardships on the troops.

There had existed a sort of "gentleman's agreement" between India and Pakistan that the armies of either side will not occupy posts from the 15 September to 15th April of each year. This had been the case since 1977, but in 1999 this agreement was cast aside by the Pakistani army in hopes of trying to gain the upper hand in Kashmir and plunging the Indian subcontinent in brief and limited war and raising the spectre of nuclear war.

As events unfolded, Zoji La opened early on account of the unseasonal melting of snows and the Indian Army's reaction was far swifter than Pakistan had expected. Further, Pakistan also did not expect the reaction of the Indian Army to be as vigorous as has been demonstrated manifested.

Indian Army Patrols detected intruders atop Kargil ridges during the period 8-15 May 1999. The pattern of infiltration clearly established the participation of trained Mujahideen and Pakistan Army regulars in these operations in areas east of Batalik and north of Dras. Pakistan resorted to artillery firing from across the border both in general areas of Kargil and Dras. Indian army launched operations which succeeded in cutting off the infiltrators in Dras sector. Infiltrators were also pushed back in Batalik sector.

The Intruders on the heights were an amalgam of professional soldiers and mercenaries. They included the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 12th battalions of the Pakistan Army's Northern Light Infantry (NLI). Among them were many Mujaheddin and members of Pakistan's the Special Services Group (SSG). It was initially estimated that there were about 500 to 1,000 intruders occupying the heights but later it is estimated that the actual strength of the intruders may have been about 5,000. The area of intrusion extended in an area of 160km. The Pakistani Army had set up a complex logistical network through which the intruders across the LOC would be well supplied from the bases in POK (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir). The intruders were also well armed with AK 47 and 56, mortars, artillery, anti aircraft guns, and Stinger missiles.

Indian Army Operations

The Indian Army detected the intrusions between May 3-12. From May 15 - 25, 1999, military operations were planned, troops moved to their attack locations, artillery and other equipment were moved in and the necessary equipment was purchased. Indian Army's offensive named Operation Vijay was launched on May 26, 1999. Indian troops moved towards Pakistani occupied positions with air cover provided by aircraft and helicopters.

Operation Vijay in the Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir during the summer months of 1999 was a joint Infantry-Artillery endeavour to evict regular Pakistani soldiers of the Northern Light Infantry (NLI) who had intruded across the Line of Control (LoC) into Indian territory and had occupied un-held high-altitude mountain peaks and ridgelines. It soon became clear that only massive and sustained firepower could destroy the intruders' sangars and systematically break their will to fight through a process of attrition and, in the process, enable the gallant infantrymen to close in with and evict the intruders. Thus began a unique saga in the history of the employment of Artillery firepower in battle.

The first major ridgeline to fall was Tololing in the Drass sub-sector on June 13, 1999 which was captured after several weeks of bitter fighting. The attacks were preceded by sustained fire assaults from over one hundred Artillery guns, mortars and rocket launchers firing in concert. Thousands of shells, bombs and rocket warheads wrecked havoc and prevented the enemy from interfering with the assault. The 155 mm Bofors medium guns and 105 mm Indian field guns in the direct firing role destroyed all visible enemy sangars and forced the enemy to abandon several positions. The arcs of fire trailing behind the Bofors high explosive shells and the Grad rockets provided an awesome sight and instilled fear into the minds of Pakistani soldiers.

The capture of the Tololing complex paved the way for successive assaults to be launched on the Tiger Hill complex from several directions. Tiger Hill was re-captured on July 5, 1999 and Point 4875, another dominating feature to the west of Tiger Hill and jutting into Mashkoh Valley, was re-captured on July 7, 1999. Point 4875 has since been re-named "Gun Hill" in honour of the stupendous performance of the Gunners in the Drass and Mashkoh sub-sectors.

Over 1,200 rounds of high explosive rained down on Tiger Hill and caused large-scale death and devastation. Once again, the Gunners of the Indian Artillery fired their guns audaciously in the direct firing role, under the very nose of Pakistani artillery observation posts (OPs), without regard for personal safety. Even 122 mm Grad multi-barrel rocket launchers (MBRLs) were

employed in the direct firing role. Hundreds of shells and rocket warheads impacted on the pinnacle of Tiger Hill in full view of TV cameras and the nation watched in rapt attention the might of the Regiment of Artillery .

While the nation's attention was riveted on the fighting in the Drass sector, steady progress was being made in the Batalik sector despite heavy casualties. In the Batalik sector, the terrain was much tougher and the enemy was far more strongly entrenched. The containment battle itself took almost a month. Artillery OPs were established on dominating heights and sustained Artillery fire was brought down on the enemy continuously by day and night allowing him no rest.

Point 5203 was re-captured on June 21, 1999 and Khalubar was re-captured on July 6, 1999. Within the next few days, further attacks were pressed home against the remaining Pakistani posts in the Batalik sub-sector and these fell quickly after being pulverised by Artillery fire. Once again, Artillery firepower played an important part in softening the defences and destroying the enemy's battalion headquarters and logistics infrastructure.

The Indian Artillery fired over 250,000 shells, bombs and rockets during the Kargil conflict. Approximately, 5,000 Artillery shells, mortar bombs and rockets were fired daily from 300 guns, mortars and MBRLs. Such high rates of fire over long periods had not been witnessed anywhere in the world since the second World War.

Air Operations

From May 11 to May 25, ground troops supported by the Air Force tried to contain the threat, assessed the enemy dispositions and carried out various preparatory actions. Entry of the Air Force into combat action on May 26 represented a paradigm shift in the nature and prognosis of the conflict. In operation Safed Sagar, the Air Force carried out nearly 5,000 sorties of all types over 50-odd days of operations.

The Western Air Command conducted the three-week-long exercise Trishul three weeks before Kargil. During Trishul, the IAF flew 5,000 sorties with 300 aircraft using 35,000 personnel and engaged targets at high elevation in the Himalayas. The IAF claimed to have flown 550 sorties in Kargil, though just about 80 were on or close to the target. Soon after Kargil, both the commander-in-chief and senior air staff officer of the Western Air Command were mysteriously transferred to the Central and Eastern commands.

Operations in this terrain required special training and tactics. It was soon realised that greater skills and training were needed to attack the very small/miniature targets extant, often not visible to the naked eye.

The shoulder-fired missile threat was omnipresent and there were no doubts about this. An IAF Canberra recce aircraft was damaged by a Pakistani Stinger fired possibly from across the LoC. On the second and third day of the operations, still in the learning curve, the IAF lost one MiG-21 fighter and one Mi-17 helicopter to shoulder-fired missiles by the enemy. In addition, one MiG-27 was lost on the second day due to engine failure just after the pilot had carried out

successful attacks on one of the enemy's main supply dumps. These events only went to reinforce the tactics of the IAF in carrying out attacks from outside the Stinger SAM envelope and avoiding the use of helicopters for attack purposes. Attack helicopters have a certain utility in operations under relatively benign conditions but are extremely vulnerable in an intense battlefield. The fact that the enemy fired more than 100 shoulder fired SAMs against IAF aircraft indicates not only the great intensity of the enemy air defences in the area but also the success of IAF tactics, especially after the first three days of the war during which not a single aircraft received even a scratch.

The terrain in the Kargil area is 16,000 to 18,000 feet above sea level. The aircraft are, therefore, required to fly at about 20,000 feet. At these heights, the air density is 30% less than at sea level. This causes a reduction in weight that can be carried and also reduces the ability to manoeuvre as the radius of a turn is more than what it is at lower levels. The larger radius of turn reduces manoeuvrability in the restricted width of the valley. The engine's performance also deteriorates as for the same forward speed there is a lesser mass of air going into the jet engine of the fighter or helicopter. The non-standard air density also affects the trajectory of weapons. The firing, hence, may not be accurate. In the mountains, the targets are relatively small, spread-out and difficult to spot visually, particularly by pilots in high speed jets.

The Indian airfields nearest to Kargil were Srinagar and Avantipur. Adampur near Jalandhar was also close enough to support air operations. Therefore, the IAF operated from these three bases. The planes used for ground attack were MiG-21s, MiG- 23s, MiG-27s, Jaguars and the Mirage-2000. The Mig-21 was built mainly for air interception with a secondary role of ground attack. However, it is capable of operating in restricted spaces which was of importance in the Kargil terrain.

The MiG-23s and 27s are optimised for attacking targets on the ground. They can carry a load of 4 tonnes each. This could be a mix of weapons including cannon, rocket pods, free- fall and retarded bombs and smart weapons. It has a computerised bomb sight which enables accurate weapon delivery. These planes were, therefore, ideal for use in the mountainous terrain of Kargil.

However, on May 27, the MiG-27 flown by Flt Lt Nachiketa, while attacking a target in Batalik sector, developed an engine trouble and he had to bailout. Sqd Ldr Ajay Ahuja, in a MiG-21, went out of the way to locate the downed pilot and in the process was hit by a Pakistani surface-to-air missile (SAM). He ejected safely but his body bearing gun- wounds was returned subsequently. The state-of-the-art Mirage-2000s were used for electronic warfare, reconnaissance and ground attack. This fighter delivers its weapons with pinpoint accuracy. In addition to carrying free-fall bombs, it also fires the laser-guided bomb with deadly effects. In fact, it was this weapon that caused considerable devastation to Pakistani bunkers on the ridges at Tiger Hill and Muntho Dhalo. In the Mirage attack on Muntho Dhalo, Pakistani troops suffered 180 casualties.

Because of the need to engage Pakistani targets in the valleys and on ridges, the slower helicopter gunship became an important requirement. The load-carrying Mi-17 was modified to carry 4 rocket pods with air-to-ground rockets. This helicopter proved effective in engaging Pakistani bunkers and troops. On May 28, while attacking Point 5140 in Tololing sector, one

helicopter and its crew were lost to a Stinger heat-seeking missile. Thereafter, because of the number of SAMs being fired, helicopters resorted to evasive tactics but persisted with the attacks.

The operations restricted to Kargil area did not lend themselves to the use of air power. There was a constraint of not crossing the Line of Control (LoC) to the Pakistan side. The IAF was, therefore, not at liberty to destroy the Pakistani supply lines and smash the logistic bases across the LoC. However, such attacks were done on Pakistani facilities on the Indian side of the LoC. The targets were identified along with the Army and engaged by day and by night in precision attacks by Mirage 2000s and Jaguars. Supply lines, logistic bases and enemy strong points were destroyed. As a result, the Army was able to pursue its operations at a faster rate and with fewer losses.

To obviate the threat from SAMs, bombing was done accurately from 30,000 feet above sea level or about 10,000 feet above the terrain. In these high level attacks, the infantryman does not see his own fighters and, therefore, feels that air support is not there. It is estimated that in operation Vijay, about 700 intruders were killed by air action alone. The IAF has intercepted a number of enemy wireless transmissions indicating the effectiveness of IAF attacks.

Pakistan Air Force fighters were picked up on the airborne radar of our fighters but the PAF planes did not cross to the Indian side of the LoC. Nevertheless, as a precaution, IAF , strike aircraft were accompanied by fighter escorts. After all, in the recent past no war has been won without control of the air space in which operations are conducted.

Naval Operations

While the Army and the Air Force readied themselves for the battle on the heights of Kargil, Indian Navy began to draw out its plans. Unlike the earlier wars with Pakistan, this time the bringing in of the Navy at the early stages of the conflict served to hasten the end of the conflict in India's favor.

In drawing up its strategy, the Navy was clear that a reply to the Pakistani misadventure had to be two-pronged. While ensuring safety and security of Indian maritime assets from a possible surprise attack by Pakistan, the Indian imperative was that all efforts must be made to deter Pakistan from escalating the conflict into a full scale war. Thus, the Indian Navy was put on a full alert from May 20 onwards, a few days prior to the launch of the Indian retaliatory offensive. Naval and Coast Guard aircraft were put on a continuous surveillance and the units readied up for meeting any challenge at sea.

Time had now come to put pressure on Pakistan, to ensure that the right message went down to the masterminds in that country. Strike elements from the Eastern Fleet were sailed from Visakhapatnam on the East Coast to take part in a major naval exercise called 'SUMMEREX' in the North Arabian Sea. This was envisaged as the largest ever amassing of naval ships in the region. The message had been driven home. Pakistan Navy, in a defensive mood, directed all its units to keep clear of Indian naval ships. As the exercise shifted closer to the Makaran Coast,

Pakistan moved all its major combatants out of Karachi. It also shifted its focus to escorting its oil trade from the Gulf in anticipation of attacks by Indian ships.

As the retaliation from the Indian Army and the Air Force gathered momentum and a defeat to Pakistan seemed a close possibility, an outbreak of hostilities became imminent. Thus the naval focus now shifted to the Gulf of Oman. Rapid reaction missile carrying units and ships from the fleet were deployed in the North Arabian Sea for carrying out missile firing, anti-submarine and electronic warfare exercises. In the absence of the only aircraft carrier, Sea Harrier operations from merchant ships were proven. The Navy also readied itself for implementing a blockade of the Pakistani ports, should the need arise. In addition, Naval amphibious forces from the Andaman group of islands were moved to the western sea-board.

In a skilful use of naval power in the form of 'Operation Talwar', the 'Eastern Fleet' joined the 'Western Naval Fleet' and blocked the Arabian sea routes of Pakistan. Apart from a deterrent, the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharief later disclosed that Pakistan was left with just six days of fuel (POL) to sustain itself if a full fledged war broke out.

Kargil Failure:

An Opportunity for Intelligence Reform

S Ramkumar

As the dust settles on the "limited border-war" across Kargil, it is time to take stock of the situation and ensure that such intrusions are detected well in time and effective counter-measures taken. The Kargil fiasco revealed the near failure of our intelligence agencies in anticipating such a massive build-up of Pakistani regulars and *Mujahideen* who had intruded into an area of nearly 150 sq. km inside the Indian territory. Such an intrusion could only occur after months of planning. Were the intelligence agencies in deep slumber from October 1998 when the planning started? The civilian intelligence agencies (IB&RAW) each has a big set-up in J&K and operates sources across the borders from areas near the LoC. RAW, apart from ground level intelligence sources, has the advantage of bird agencies which have signal monitoring stations to intercept HF/VHF signals on either side of LoC. Were all the signals dumb during the entire period? The military intelligence and its field intelligence units also carry out patrolling, reconnaissance and other missions from observation posts (OPS), but it appears that they also ended in failure.

The crisis also revealed the failure of security management at higher levels of the nation's policy planners. The absence of an institution to formulate the national strategic policy on a medium or long-term basis is a problem that the country has been living with since Independence. The creation of NSC (National Security Council) by the BJP-led Government in Oct-Nov 1998 has not improved matters. The fact that the first meeting of the NSC took place on 8 June, well after the intrusion took place shows how cosmetic the whole exercise was.¹ The NSAB (National Security Advisory Board) which serves as a support body for the NSC has itself become a Board with accommodation for strategic analysts with diametrically opposing viewpoints being represented.

Intelligence failures can occur at three levels - at the level of collection; at the level of analysis and, during interpretation of report when it reaches the consumer. An analysis of most intelligence failures the world over would reveal that most crucial mistakes have seldom been made at the collector's level, but occur at the level of either analysis or the consumer's end. Information was sent as early as Sep/Oct 98² that training for 350 odd irregulars was being held in Olthingtang, the Pakistani forward post across the Kargil area and that intrusion was likely to occur in April this year. The report also mentioned that remote-controlled vehicles were being used by Pakistan to monitor the Leh-Kargil area. Most probably the report was not analysed in the light of continuous Pakistani shelling in the Kargil-Drass sector over the last two years, the induction of artillery in Pakistan's positions across this sector of LoC, and the post Pokhran-Chagai situation by both the civilian agencies and the military. On the other hand, if it was analysed correctly, it was probably not followed up with detailed warnings by the civilian agencies. Whereas even regular surveillance by RAW's ARC across the area would have revealed disturbing signs hardly appears to be the case. Were the agencies so complacent that they did not see anything remiss across the Kargil Sector even in the later part of the year? If

consumers were aware then necessary counter-measures were hardly in place. From the media reports it appears that blame would fall on both - at the analysis level within the agencies and at the consumer's end.

It is well known that a lot of so-called "Freedom Fighters" or Mujahideen who operate from Pakistan have their propaganda offices in London. Even certain groups, which operate in Gilgit, Baltistan and are critical of official Pakistani policy have their front offices here. Even media reports in British particularly in *The Sunday Times* from Nov 98 onwards were repeatedly referring to big push in insurgency in J&K. It also mentioned Osama bin Laden as a key factor in organising Jihad in Kashmir. It is well known that certain newspapers in London have a *good networking* with western intelligence agencies. Inder Malhotra in one of his columns in the weekly news magazine *Sunday* wrote that the UN Mission in Pakistan has reportedly told its New York mission that intrusion has taken place across the LOC.³ So what was the response of RAW operators posted at important capitals. Did they warn their HQs of such massive intrusion? Did the agency receive information and ignored it or had no such warnings? It is now reported that snow boots, specialised winter clothing equipment has been imported by Pakistan from Geneva or Brussels. Had RAW received such a report earlier?

Intelligence professionals would always claim that due to its very nature intelligence failures are very often highlighted and its successes often overlooked. They would also claim there is a very thin line between success and failure in intelligence operations. Further, they cite even failure of the best espionage agencies like the CIA and Mossad. But beyond a point such a sophistry would hardly wash. The failure in the present case has claimed over 400 lives apart from 1000 personnel suffering from major and minor injuries as per official statistics. According to a former IB Chief, "In the eighties, the complacency of India's part led to strategic myopia, following which policy makers & planners failed to anticipate the preparation being made by Pakistan to wage a proxy war in J&K. This time around also strategic planners have allowed themselves to be lulled into complacency".⁴ if we add the desperadoes of the ISI (inter Services Intelligence), then we get the big picture of agency suffering from myopia and hypermetropia. It is rather unfortunate that with such a track record no serious effort has been made to plug the loopholes and improve the productivity of nation's elite espionage arm. It would not be out of place to mention that while Pakistan was embarking on a massive aggression the agency was involved in an e-mail battle on the net as to who is going to be the next chief.⁵ An agency at war with itself can hardly take cognisance of even a "failing enemy".

The failures at RAW can traced to lack of effective systems, procedures and methodology in training and posting of its cadres. A former senior RAW Officer, Shri B Raman has written that the lateral induction of officers from other civil services into RAW has been undertaken to provide variety and experience. He also mentions that unlike other agencies in the world like the CIA, there is no compartmentalisation between analysis and operational streams. Has such recruitment and lack of differentiation served the interests of the agency or the country? Recruitment to RAS (Research and Analysis Service) created exclusively for the agency by Rajiv Gandhi in 1985 has been abused to such an extent that it has been discontinued for the last four years. Media reports have sometimes referred to RAS as "Relatives and Associates Service". The former Minister of Personnel, Mrs. Margaret Alva, once stated in a book release function in

New Delhi that in intelligence agencies most things, especially recruitment, move on the fuel of "right connections".

The Kargil fiasco raises question as to whether the collection machinery of RAW has any penetration at all at higher echelons of the Pakistani establishment, be it in the armed forces or political parties. If operations are difficult to conduct in Pakistan or across POK as a result of increased surveillance by the ISI, then third country operations must be attempted. If the Pakistanis were able to destroy ammunition dump at Kargil, and agents were detected in Turtuk sector where they had hidden arms, it amounts to failure of counter-intelligence of mainly IB&RAW. The Afghanis living in India should have also been regularly tapped for information on Mujahideen and "Afghan warriors". If the ISI is able to penetrate India through Nepal and Bangladesh, RAW should be in a position to escalate its level of operations. A point also arises about the release of tapes of the conversation between Gen. Pervez Musharraf in Beijing and his Chief of Staff in Islamabad. If it was the technical sophistication of RAW, then why we had no such electronic/telephonic interception of any major conversation of events in the pre-Kargil phase. Does not the release of taps compromise the interception process in future and lead to the politicisation of intelligence?

The analysis desk is generally expected to be manned by people who are area specialists in a particular field and they must possess qualifications in international relations. They are also expected to be in constant couch with universities, think-tanks within the country and outside. It appears that the present situation hardly caters to these normal requirements. The failure of see the picture even in the presence of information shows how the analysis output is deeply flawed. No signals were deduced from the appointment of Pervez Musharraf as the Army general who had two tenures in SSG (Special Services Group) and was trained in mountain warfare. Similarly nothing was evident to the analysts from the Pakistani Chief's visit to Skardu and Pak PM's trip to the same area during the last few months. Pervez Musharraf speaking to English speaking Union in Karachi on 13 April 1999 said that "The resolution of Kashmir issue will not be the end of the matter (Indo-Pak confrontation), India wants to weaken us, splinter us not through direct approach, but through low intensity conflict."⁶ Such statements clearly indicate an unmistakable sign of hawkishness from the Pakistan Army Chief. A former intelligence analyst of the CIA once said that "estimating is what you do when you do not know". It is role of intelligence to extract certainty from uncertainty and to improve decision-making in a confused environment.

It is not clear whether analysis in RAW/IB is top driven or bottom upwards. Is the analysis tailored to arrive at pre-determined formulations or does a wide-ranging or holistic view undertaken of events, incidents and policies of other countries? Mossad, Israel's espionage arm, dies analysis which includes a "Devil's advocate" column at the end. It was started in the wake of 1973 Yom-Kippur war, where military intelligence and civilian agencies had conflicting views and about the possibility of war. The analysis should clearly indicate like in the case of CIA whether it is based on open source or as a result of covert operation. It would be instructive to quote Robert Wohlstetter from his book "Pearl Harbour", 1962, regarding the role of an analyst. "A willingness to play with material from different angles and in the context of unpopular as well as popular hypothesis is an essential ingredient of a good detective, whether the end is the solution of a crime or an intelligence estimate. Intelligence is always confronted with the choice; whether to be alert or popular." Also any analysis or assessment done by the agency must be

precise, coherent and unambiguous. It should not be an exercise, which falls in astrological prediction variety. Further the point rises also about responsibility regarding analysis, collation and assessment within the agency. At what level is the responsibility fixed within NSC (earlier JIC) for similar functions? Is urgent/actionable information shared by RAW/IB immediately with NSC including the accessibility and reliability of the sources? What was the analysis of Pakistani gameplan pre-Pokhran, post-Pokhran and post-Chagai by intelligence agencies? One leading strategic analyst Raja Menon has written in his column in a weekly magazine that the Western correspondents based in New Delhi and other think-tanks based in Washington claim that India's conventional superiority was negated by Pakistan's bomb. The timing of the publication of such reports in Oct 98 almost coincided with the launch of Pak's operation to cross the LoC - probably, Aug-Sep 98 or Oct 98 after the takeover by Pervez Musharraf as Chief of Pakistan Army. Had any attention been paid at all to such reports? What was the assessment by the agency of Pakistani plans and strategy before and after the Prime Minister's Lahore visit? Was the agency carried away by political enthusiasm of "a new chapter in Indo-Pak relations"? If so, it is ironical to find certain peaceniks in this country being on the same side as an intelligence establishment.

In this connection it is instructive to quote Allen Dulles, the former head of the CIA who wrote "for the proper judging of the situation in any foreign country it is important that information should be processed by an agency whose duty it is to weigh facts and to draw conclusion from those facts, without having either the facts or conclusion warped by the inevitable and even proper prejudices of men whose duty it is to determine policy and who having once determined a policy are likely to be blind to any facts which might tend to prove the policy to be faulty."⁷

The fact that too much information appears to be classified than is warranted also renders the analytical process suspect. If information is classified then precise reason must be given for such classification and the signatory should be held responsible for it. To quote the Doolittle Committee report on CIA in 1954 a document which operates in derogation of security classification system as a whole." The analysis reports should also be subjected to rigorous checks either within the agency or by an independent body of analysts who have got the necessary security clearance from the agency. The CIA has a Product Review Division which was established from within the internal staff to appraise the "objectivity, balance and responsiveness of the intelligence studies on a regular basis. It has produced post mortems of intelligence failures since then. Something on similar lines should be attempted. Also on the whole both the analysis and collection machinery should encourage people with initiative and drive who come out with innovative suggestions for improvement. Such initiatives should not be looked down upon which is the normal tendency in such hierarchial layered bureaucratic secret organisation.

Finally, effective oversight of intelligence agencies is the only way to clean up the act in the aftermath of the Kargil fiasco. Those who cite other intelligence failures like those of the CIA do not understand that immediately after such failures, enquiry commissions are appointed to go into their causes. The commissions are appointed separately by the Senate or the Congress. The CIA does its own independent investigations. Also oversight mechanisms exist in case of the CIA - the House intelligence committee and Senate intelligence committee and they are generally informed of major covert operations. In Canada, its Parliament created the Security

Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC) to exercise oversight of the domestic intelligence apparatus. The SIRC is not a committee of the parliament but is composed of privy consultation with opposition leaders. The SIRC reports to the parliament annually, but it has no legislative or budgetary powers. In Canada, the necessary independence from the senior executive branch is obtained by relying on eminent senior statesman.

The United Kingdom in 1994 passed a parliament law regarding the role of both MI5 (internal agency) and MI6 (external espionage arm). The budgets of the agencies have been released to the general public since 1994. A parliamentary committee headed by a distinguished leader, who holds an important position in the present government, in 1990-91, had reportedly recommended accountability and even internal case-auditing of investigative agencies like the CBI, IB & RAW. While the past track record of inquiries whether in respect of 1962 war or 1965 war do not inspire confidence, let us hope that inspite of its non-statutory nature the Subrahmanyam Committee report leads to re-appraisal of the functioning of our intelligence agencies. If the Kargil crisis to treat as an opportunity and a challenge, then a mechanism to monitor the performance of the intelligence agencies should be the most important step to be taken by the government. As an initial measure, a parliamentary (at present executive law exists) bill is required responsibilities of the espionage apparatus. This will help pinpoint the duties and the responsibilities that fall within their charter precisely and unambiguously and avoid bureaucratic obfuscation. The head of intelligence agencies must be appointed by a panel consisting of PM, Opposition Leader and Speaker of the Lok Sabha and should remain in office for a specific period of 3 years, irrespective of the party in power, to avoid politicisation. Further the chiefs of the agencies must report to the NSC or a full time National Security adviser and only when necessary, call on the Prime Minister. The reforms in intelligence apparatus are long overdue and if any further delay takes place, it may not be long that questions may be raised about the *raison de etre* of the agencies and their role in national security.

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INDIA DEFENCE CONSULTANTS

WHAT'S HOT? — ANALYSIS OF RECENT HAPPENINGS

REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES IN INDIA'S HIGHER DEFENCE SET-UP —
AN EXCLUSIVE IDC ANALYSIS OF THE DECISIONS OF THE GoM

New Delhi, 06 June 2001

Preamble

This week marks the second anniversary of the Kargil war which saw the Indian Armed Forces and the nation taken by complete surprise and the Intelligence agencies caught with their pants down. Unified command and control and single point advice were non-existent and even photographic evidence that India had paid for, was not forthcoming despite a modern Defence Imaging and Processing Centre (DIPAC) in the Cantonment of Delhi.

The NDA Government with George Fernandes as Minister were naive on matters Defence and the cabinet were still getting to grips with the newly acquired Nuclear power, which was like a galloping horse needing to be corralled. The National Security Council was still-born, with a yet to deliver secretariat headed by a super efficient bureaucrat Satish Chandra of the JIC and the part-time National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra ensconced in PMO as the powerful Principal PS to the PM. The PMO was running most shows and doing the fire fighting for all ministries. The Raksha Mantri had just dismissed the Navy Chief Vishnu Bhagwat and was running the Defence Ministry as he ran the Railway Ministry — with dispensations.

Now in hindsight, it is no wonder that India's decision to use air power to support the bogged down Army units in Kargil, was paralysed from 5 to 22 May 1999 (Chapters dealing with this are deleted from the Subrahmanyam Committee Report). It was after the CCS meeting on 22 May that the PM decided to consult the Service Chiefs, and thereafter the offensive air operations commenced in Kargil.

IDC believes that this was a time and occasion when a CDS was sorely missed, as even 'recce' sorties were denied to the hapless Jawans fighting the Pakistani troops up on the hills. The tide slowly but surely turned, but the Army's losses were high and the Government realised it needed to put the country's higher defence and intelligence systems in order.

After a preliminary Report on facts by Mr Subrahmanyam, four Task Forces were set up to recommend corrective measures. These were Higher Defence Management (headed by Arun Singh), Intelligence (under Gary Saxena ex RAW and presently Governor of J&K), Border Management (headed by Madhav Godbole) and Internal Security (under NN Vohra). Just when the matters were being finalized came the 'Tehelka' bombshell toppling George Fernandes in its wake. The Defence Ministry was handed over to Jaswant Singh and this brought him even closer to Arun Singh. Finally we have the decisions of the Group of Ministers on the path breaking recommendations of the four Task Forces which IDC now analyses. The effects of 'Tehelka' have also been summarized, as we have had a lot of queries on the subject after the opening up of the Defence sector to private and foreign enterprises.

Effects of Tehelka

IDC feel that 'Tehelka' was the best thing that could have happened to this country after Kargil. As we have often cried out even as a lonely voice, defence agents must be legally permitted now that 26% FDI is also being allowed, otherwise touts and middlemen will make hay. Just recently Roland Dumas ex Foreign Minister of France and his mistress (some similiarity) have been fined and sentenced for making money from ELF the oil giant. What many may miss is that ELF was the conduit for money

laundering in the sale of French frigates to Taiwan and its head has been prosecuted.

Admiral Mansurul Haq former CNS of Pakistan had recently been extradited from Austin, Texas (USA) to answer the charges of making money in the \$ 750 million 4 Agosta 2B submarine deal from DCN of France.

It means in Defence, kickbacks are a fact of life even in France, but India has a crazy 'no agents' policy that makes all defence deals enigmatic and shrouded in mystery. India is negotiating with the same firm DCN for the Scorpene Type 75 submarines to be built at Mazagon Docks. DCN have no legal agents or representatives in India but may soon depend upon THALES — formerly Thomson CSF, which has a big office in India and employs senior ex-Service officers. The whole situation is farcical. IDC has also learned that retired Maj Gen Murgai of Tehelka fame, has admitted using his professional knowledge and contacts to offer consultancy, without transgressing the Official Secrets Act in any way and firmly believes he did no wrong. Half of India's bureaucrats and some brilliant technocrats like Dr Arunachalam former head of DRDO now in Carneige Melon University do or did just the same — consultancy and many even hold diplomatic passports after retirement. It is ridiculous but as they say India is the best country in the world for under the table work. Rules are made to be broken or bypassed under the dictum 'show me the face and I will show you the rule'.

Defence procurement in India has now come under scrutiny by the retired Supreme Court Justice Venkataswami who is inquiring into the corruption scandal exposed by Tehelka. Two journalists of **tehelka.com** posing as Agents of a non existent British thermal imaging firm Westend, tried to hawk their fictitious product and successfully bribed senior Army officers, bureaucrats and politicians to the tune of \$28,000. They ingeniously posed as 'middlemen', because Defence Agents have been legally banned since 1986 and videotaped the entire operation stealthily. On 13 March the internet firm aired the sordid 'expose' on prime time TV and Indians saw it all in the comfort of their drawing rooms. BJP Party President Shri Bangaru Laxman, was caught on camera accepting \$2200. Defence Minister George Fernandes had to resign as his close associate and Samta Party President Mrs Jaya Jaitly received \$4400 at his official residence, ostensibly for the party fund. Maj Gen P S K Chaudhry, ADG Weapons and Equipment responsible for Army's procurement took \$2200 and some other bureaucrats, Brigadiers and Colonels accepted lesser sums to assist in the selection process. A lot of muck was raked up. The five Army officers are awaiting disciplinary action, which could include Court Martial. IDC hope not as a Court Martial will rake up further muck.

Changes in Higher Defence Set-Up

The major far-reaching recommendations of the Group of Ministers (GoM) put out in a 117 page report, omitting the Intelligence aspects, which are proposed to be implemented are tabled below with our analysis and we would welcome viewers response:

- **A Defence Procurement Board under a Secretary is to be instituted and more financial powers would be delegated to the Service HQs, which will be integrated with the Ministry of Defence in a matter of 90 days as per the RM in a press conference.**

This is good news and we see a Special Secretary with experience in procurement in London and earlier in MOD, Shri Ajay Vikram Singh has already been appointed. The IAS are already off the mark and a Vice Chief status vacancy has been made on the civil side while the Armed Forces are still to see any action.

The step will be fruitful only if the three Service Chiefs sit down and demand more powers for the Services HQ and explain to the GOI that Agents should be legalized for the sake of transparency and professionalism. Otherwise the MOD with a Special Secretary in charge will continue to perpetuate the existing system with greater

impunity. At present the Service HQ go to the MOD for procurement files to be cleared, literally with begging bowls in their hands.

- **A Tri-Services Command would be set up in the Andaman Islands replacing the Fortress Commander (FORTAN), who is presently a naval Vice Admiral.**

VAdm O P Bansal who has an Army Brigade under him and conducts amphibious operations regularly is the FORTAN. The Air Force as it is wont to do, operates there separately.

This step is a beginning in the right direction, for other Tri-Service Commands to be set up. There needs to be cooperation from all the three Services to make it work. The IAF will not be too happy but then it is the writing on the wall, that with technological advances in the weapon systems and communications, the concept of C³ (command, control and communications) viz 'Jointness' in any operational command is inescapable. The earlier we adopt it the better. This may pave the way for more tri-service operational commands and the Command of them should be rotated or follow the principle of preponderance. That should not be difficult to work out.

- **A Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) is to be formed with national Intelligence system also duly reorganized. There will be Intelligence and Technology Coordination Groups to bring about systemic co-ordination at all levels which are presently lacking.**

However, whom the DIA will report to is a moot question at the moment. Logically it is the CDS who should control it. However, the decision to appoint a CDS has been held back. Till then tasking it and checking its funds as also its cloak and dagger doings, may immediately be done by a bureaucrat and get frozen as such — which is exactly what should not happen. Once we know who writes the Annual Confidential Report (ACR) of the DIA Chief, we will be able to predict the success factor and how the co-ordination will flow because the status of RAW and IB Chiefs has not been clarified.

Many may not remember, but years ago Jaswant Singh was told to head a committee on reorganization of Intelligence. Nothing came of it. Intelligence is vital and India has inputs but lacks a proper processing and analysis system with due accountability. This needs tremendous skills and dedication. An IPS cadre based set up, with vested interests for promotions will not give the desired results. In the Northeast and Kashmir the two hot spots, IDC had earlier commented that intelligence officers go on brief postings, retain houses in Delhi where they spend more than due time, without getting the feel of the place or the pulse of the local organization, so vital in intelligence work.

- **The policy of 'One Border One Force', will be implemented and the Home Ministry will get greater control of para military forces (PMF) like the Assam Rifles.**

Thus the Coast Guard could become independent of the Navy with direct reporting to the Defence Secretary. At present the Department of Revenue funds the Coast Guard, which practice may change. The first non-naval officer, Rameshwar Singh has been appointed Director General Coast Guard and is due to retire late this year. Earlier serving naval Vice Admirals headed this organization.

There has been an internecine battle on the issue of top command and control of para military forces. The majority of them are border forces assisting the Army. IDC had earlier pointed out India's defence budget nears 3% of GDP if expenses on PMF are added. This dichotomy makes the unified command concept difficult to implement in the North East and Kashmir.

- **It is proposed to set up an integrated Air Command for low-level radars and aerial surveillance.**

The IAF has been worried about its secretly held responsibility to deliver the nuclear

punch and possession and control of 'space', a new medium for warfare. This should be well left to it. The low level surveillance system should be integrated with the national ATC set up and IDC hopes IAF can maturely take charge of the coordination and control and infuse latest technology into the traffic in Indian skies. The western world has excellent coordination as technology in this sector has advanced and it is cheap, but this proposal needs to be kept out of a turf war between various Air Control Agencies.

- **A National Identity Card scheme is to be implemented and the Citizenship Act amended to deter illegal migrants.**

This is common sense and long overdue. It is estimated India has 40 million immigrants from Bangla Desh alone. In fact, Election Commissioner MS Gill when he was Agriculture Secretary had stated that India's green revolution had been possible with the cheap labour from Bangla Desh and in Delhi most of the cheaper domestic workers in *jhuggi jhopris* are ex Bangla Desh. It is a pity that a few years ago, crores of rupees were spent on making voter ID cards, but local ID cards at least in border areas have not been brought into force as yet.

The task is mammoth. IDC attended a seminar at IIC, on the Bangla Desh border clashes, which hosted speakers of eminence including ex BSF Chief Prakash Singh, ex RAW and later Governor of Nagaland Srivastava, who we believe is knowledgeable and is married to a Naga. All spoke from the heart and admitted lapses on demarcating the enclaves and the remaining border. Other grey issues of smuggling between India and Bangla Desh and the Chakmas were discussed but ex Foreign Secretary K Raghunath who is due to go as our Ambassador to Russia, defended the Government well. He said only 6.5 km of border remained to be demarcated hence some credit should go to the MEA. A BSF officer got up and said, "Let me tell you honestly, development work in the entire NE area has been neglected so the main vocation in the area is smuggling and illegal migration. The boats in riverine areas are not marked so when BSF catches illegal immigrants the Sarpanch identifies them as he wishes. The border is porous ". IDC admits the task is difficult but ID cards are a step in the right direction.

- **The Cabinet had approved the appointment of a four star CDS to oversee nuclear/strategic forces and provide single point advice to the Government.**

But the move has been deferred thanks to the internecine turf battles over the duties and responsibilities of this post. CNS and Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee Admiral Sushil Kumar who was tipped for the post withdrew his name, adding to the Government's dilemma. IDC feel the key to this post lies with the Chiefs of the three Services and not the politicians. Dissension among them will only confer advantage to the bureaucrats. It is well known that most countries have a CDS over the other Chiefs, but India wants to try it otherwise. Italy tried it and IDC believes that we Indians are a little like Italians — but it did not work. In fact things got worse and some years ago Italy decided to have a CDS over the other Chiefs with accountability and responsibility. It is working.

MOD Annual Report

Finally, the Annual Report of the Defence Ministry including some of the aspects discussed above has been released. There is nothing revolutionary except reiteration that China has ICBMs and nuclear missile capability to target Indian cities and it is helping Pakistan. India will evolve its nuclear command and control for its deterrence. A repeat of last year except that for the first time India's security concerns have been taken beyond its physical borders, namely Persian Gulf in the West and The Malacca Strait in the East, giving a major maritime dimension to our official thinking. Wait for our full analysis on this document.

Kargil

Quantifying Failure and Success

Maj Gen Afsir Karim, AVSM (Retd) AVSM

One year has passed since the Kargil war, but Kargil continues to attract media and public attention because Pakistan's military threat in J&K still looms large. In the Kargil sector the Pakistan Army, according to some reports, has yet not fully withdrawn from our side of the Line of Control. Pakistani troops have maintained a highly threatening posture all along the LoC in the post-Kargil period.

Failure to anticipate and detect extensive Pakistani intrusion in the Kargil sector has generally been attributed to intelligence failure by government sources. However, a clear picture of the enemy's intentions or his planned chain of events can seldom emerge from intelligence reports alone. If the military mind is diverted from the possibility of a war because of certain internal conditions and presumptions, every reported move of the enemy is considered alarmist or exaggerated.

Information available in a no-war no-peace situation prevailing in J&K has generally been connected with small-scale intrusions, infiltration and belligerent acts across the Line of Control. In such circumstances, bits of information received from intelligence sources which hinted at concentration of forces opposite Kargil sector or pointed to unusual activity across the LoC in Shyok valley were taken with a pinch of salt in military circles. It seems some reports were considered unduly alarmist and viewed with disdain. Complacency, presumption of one's superior military knowledge, and pet theories of senior military commanders proved dangerous in such circumstances. The Kargil operation which was forced on the Indian Army holds many lessons for the country and the army.

The reports on the Kargil operations by the media/government agencies can be generally divided into three categories:

- First, those who go all the way to hide or gloss over the most glaring failures at various echelons of political and military leadership. These generally blame the system and intelligence agencies.
- The second category, which assigns the entire blame on the government of the day, highlights the failures of the government and ignores positive factors which resulted in the eviction of the Pakistani intruders.
- The third category is of reports by the media and non-governmental agencies. These are based on the aspects which were witnessed by the journalists who went all the way to the Kargil sector. Some of these reports describe the operations in fair detail. Many highlight

the failure of the higher command before and during the operations. Patriotic fervour colours many of these reports and reduces their value.

It seemed from various official briefings, statements and handouts that the Government of India and the army brass were ready to take credit for the achievements, but wanted to underplay their responsibility for failure to anticipate and detect the massive Pakistani intrusion. It is necessary to examine both the failures and the achievements to arrive at realistic conclusions.

An attempt has been made here to quantify the failures and successes in the Kargil war and the overall operating factors which presented the performance of the government, the military commanders, intelligence agencies, etc., in a certain light. The methodology used here is to assign the degree of responsibility for the failure phase and the success phase based on the existing system of command and control and the accountability expected at each level.

NEGATIVE FACTORS NOTICED

- Arrogance of certain commanders who assumed that the enemy could act only in a particular manner as perceived by them. This could be one of the causes of the failure to anticipate events or to detect the extent of intrusion in the Kargil sector.
- Indolence at various levels of command, which limited the capability to think and act even when facts were glaring and irrefutable. This was yet another factor which possibly led to the failures.
- Lack of concern for the loss of life and limb of men and junior commanders to cover up one's lapses is a sure sign of command failure.

In the initial phase of the Kargil war of 1999, most of these factors were discernible at various levels of civil and military commands.

The operations in Kargil have been divided into distinct phases for purposes of quantification as follows :

The Failure Phase. This includes lack of anticipation of enemy intentions and capability; inability to read tell-tale signs of the impending Pak offensive; failure to detect the extent of enemy intrusion; attempts to hide the actual ground position at the early stage of this phase and hasty attempts to send troops to tackle the enemy intrusion without proper evaluation of the nature and extent of intrusion. To make matters worse, this was done to save face regardless of the danger it posed to the troops and junior leaders.

The Second or Success Phase. This was the counter-action and offensive by our troops to evict the Pakistan Army from our side of the LoC. This phase includes: diplomatic and political action by the government to gain international support; limiting of military action to the area of conflict; initiative and determination at various levels of military/civil echelons to push the enemy back regardless of various strategic handicaps; outstanding performance of troops and commanders in some very difficult situations; and rapid build-up of artillery and logistic support requirements for the offensive.

Evaluation has been based on the established norms of responsibility and accountability in our system. The degree of moral, indirect and direct responsibility and accountability have been assessed accordingly.

Table 1 : FAILURE PHASE

FACTORS

(a) Lack of anticipation and capability to evaluate developments (b) Inability to maintain vigilance and read tell-tale signs (c) Failure to detect the presence of Pakistani forces on the own side of the LoC and the extent of intrusion (d) Inappropriate late action on the ground/attempts to cover up.

	Out of 25 minus points for each factor				
Organisation/office	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	Total minus points
PMO	20	5	10	0	-45
Army HQ/MOD	23	10	15	20	-68
Intelligence agencies	20	20	15	5	-60
Command HQ	20	20	20	20	-80
Corps HQ	22	23	22	24	-91
Division HQ	20	24	23	24	-91
Kargil brigade	15	25	25	20	-85
Unified Command	25	20	10	-	-55

Table 2.1 : SUCCESS PHASE

FACTORS

(a) Diplomatic and political action to evict Pak troops (b) Role in planning and counter-offensive (c) Ground action (d) Consolidation/determination on the ground.

	Out of 25 minus points for each factor				
Organisation/office	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	Total Plus points
PMO	23	11	10	12	+56
Army HQ/MOD	20	12	20	10	+62
Intelligence agencies	15	5	5	10	+35

HQ Northern Command Udhampur	10	5	10	8	+33
HQ 15 Corps at Srinagar	5	10	15	5	+35
HQ 3 Division at Leh	-	5	5	3	+13
8 Division in Kargil sector	-	10	45	12	+67
121 Brigade (Kargil)	-	-	5	10	+15
Unified Command at Srinagar	10	20	-	-	+30

Table 2.2 : MEDIA PROJECTED IMAGE

FACTORS

Media Image (b) Propaganda (c) Political patronage (d) Protection

Organisation/office	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	Total Plus points
PMO	23	23	23	23	+92
Army HQ/MOD	20	20	20	20	+80
Intelligence agencies	5	5	5	5	+20
Command HQ	10	5	5	5	+25
15 Corps	5	15	10	15	+45
3 Division	-2	2	5	10	+15
Kargil brigade	-5	-5	-	-	-10
Unified Command	2	2	20	10	+34

Table 2.3 : OVERALL IMAGES WHICH EMERGE

Organisation/office	100 minus	100 plus	Actual	Projected	Final
PMO	45	56	11	92	+103
Army HQ/MOD	68	62	-6	80	+74
Intelligence agencies	60	35	-25	20	-5
Command HQ	80	33	-47	25	-22

Corps HQ	91	35	-56	45	+11
3 Division	91	13	-78	15	-63
8 Division	-	67	67	40	+107
Kargil brigade	85	15	-70	-10	-80
Unified Command	55	30	-25	40	+15

The above assessment may seem notional to some. However, it has been done after a detailed and comparative study of media reports, books on the Kargil war, official statements and personal conversations with journalists, defence experts, defence services officers and well - informed laymen.

INDIA DEFENCE CONSULTANTS

WHAT'S HOT? — ANALYSIS OF RECENT HAPPENINGS

KARGIL REMEMBERED — A TRIBUTE TO THE INDIAN SOLDIER

An IDC Analysis

New Delhi, 29 July 2003

The Government in its wisdom once again decided not to celebrate 29th July this year, which was the anniversary of the fantastic Kargil war in 1999. 527 brave souls gave up their lives and 1700 were injured recapturing the commanding heights which Pakistan had tried to take by force. The assault on Tololing, the early Batalik battles the fire fights in Mushkoh valley and the tribulations in Turtuk, that reached our drawing rooms live now seem consigned to history.

'Operation Vijay' — one of the most heroic physical battles fought under great odds and lack of technical hardware — like weapon locating radar which have just arrived, night vision devices which Tehelkha made known and bullet proof vests over which there was a scandal — was hailed all over the world for the sheer courage of the indomitable Indian soldier.

With the Defence Minister preoccupied and the BJP Government in the throes of pre-election dramas, Parliament boycotts and political *Baithaks*, the MOD did not find it fit to commemorate the heroes and Government stated that they did not wish to annoy Pakistan. Deputy Defence Minister Chaman Lal Gupta said one Vijay Divas was enough and so it will be. Besides the soldiers that died, Rs 1,984 crore were spent as per the government release.

It is a pathetic country that does not remember its heroes. We should have, beginning with 6th May when Lt. Saurav Kalia a young officer barely six months out of the Academy, leading a six member patrol, was declared missing. There is impotence in the Armed Forces when they fail to tell the Government that morale depends on glorifying heroes. Regiments must honour their heroes in public and the Government must encourage this. In the West, Governments spend millions to remember their war victors and make much of them at the anniversaries. They even fly out veterans as the costs are minimal but advantages are many.

Last year the Commander Pacific had released a report from United States explaining the weaknesses of the Indian Army and another forthright report, was commissioned by the Pentagon and prepared by young and attractive Julie McDonald of Boston Consulting. This very revealing booklet is doing the rounds.

Instead of looking at it seriously it is being cursed with words that she had no business to go around asking frank questions. The four GOI reports have told the nation in no uncertain terms that the 15 days from 6th May to 21st May 1999 when incursions were noticed were days when the politico military decision-making machinery of the country was found to be wanting. A CDS had been recommended and in hindsight it was only when Gen. V. P Malik Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee returned from Poland on 21st May, having earlier left on 10th May 1999, that some action took place.

Operation "Safed Sagar" was launched by the Indian Air Force to push the intruders back and assist the Army to restore India's Line of Control. Now that four years have passed and many including those abroad have analysed India's security situation, it is clear that India's top leadership has still a lot of work to do. Pakistan's Musharraf would have had the upper hand and would have had ownership of some of the heights they actually held in 1965, but for providential timing.

Air Chief Marshal P.C Lal in his book "My Years with the IAF" summarized the 1971 war and had this to say about Kargil "In the Kargil sector, there was some very tough fighting. The vital road link between Srinagar and Leh lies through this region. As related earlier, certain Pakistani posts such as Point 13620, Black Rock and a few others had changed hands twice during 1965. In December 1971, the Indian Army accomplished this difficult task a third time. Under the leadership of Brig. M.L. Whig and Lt. Col R. B. Gurung, the troops secured Point 13620 on the north bank of the Shingo river, a tributary of the Indus, attacking from the rear, cutting off their supply line and their source of water. Our ancient Vampires from Srinagar operated in close support, especially on 8 and 9 December. In this region, on either bank of the Shingo river, on the Brachil Pass, on the Bielargo Ridge, Wali, Hathi Matha and several other well-fortified posts were attacked and the well-entrenched enemy was cleared bunker by bunker."

Ten days ago Lt Gen S K Sinha while releasing a book on Gurkha actions in the region also recounted how Point 13620 had changed hands and was back with India, and admitted he contributed to the Saichen dispute. He was Secretary LOC committee and left the border at NJ 9842, not foreseeing that the future may see action in the glaciers.

It is sad to recollect that on May 5th the then DGMO Lt. Gen. N. C. Vij (now Army Chief) visited Kargil and Batalik unaware of the intruders.

Brig. Surender Singh was the 121 Bde Commander reporting to Maj. Gen. V. S. Budhwar, GOC 3 Infantry Division reporting to Lt. Gen. Krishan Pal, GOC 15 Corps at Srinagar. On May 13th 1999 Defence Minister George Fernandes visited Kargil and while he claims that he was told the situation would be sorted out in 48 hours, the Army however stated they had said they would know the situation only after 48 hours.

On May 21st a Canberra was shot at losing one engine and Squadron Leader A Perumal courageously brought the plane back to Srinagar. At this time Lt. Gen H.M Khanna the Army commander was on leave in Pune, ostensibly being briefed by his predecessor Lt. Gen. S. Padmanabhan. In New Delhi the Chiefs of Staff Committee with Admiral Sushil Kumar in the chair standing in for Malik, ACM A.Y. Tipnis and Lt. Gen. Chandra Shekar VCOAS kept meeting but none could ring the bells of the Ministry of Defence, that the matter was serious.

As the nation celebrates economic gains four years later, committee after committee has sat to make the National Security Council functional, bring the impotent CDS system into play, NSAB meetings continue ad nauseam, there is a lethargy, which has seeped into the Armed forces which no one is reporting. Nobody listens.

The national petrol pump scams made servicemen suffer, personal agendas of Hindutva and vote banks have become more important than the morale of the armed forces of this nation. The soldier is taken for granted and the fact that Kargil Day passed without memory except for two talk shows on TV, is a sad commentary on our brethren in uniform. This is a Kargil day thought for all of us to ponder.

2002 - Kashmir Crisis

The current deployment, which includes troops in the states of Rajasthan, Punjab and Gujarat, is the largest since the 1971 conflict between the two rivals. By early January 2002 India had reportedly mobilised over 500,000 troops and its three armored divisions along the 3,000 km frontier with Pakistan. India also placed its navy and air force on "high alert" and deployed its nuclear-capable missiles. Pakistan reacted in kind, concentrating forces along the line of control that divides Kashmir.

According to some reports, by late May 2002 as many as 700,000 Indian Army and paramilitary forces have deployed along the Indo-Pakistani border and the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan has reportedly deployed as many as 300,000 troops, and perhaps as much as three-fourths of the army [which would be nearly 400,000 troops], at or near the Indian border. Both Pakistan and India have placed their forces in the disputed border area on alert. India's paramilitary contingent comprises several hundred of thousand combat-ready troops, a major portion of whom were already deployed on the Line of Control.

India has made a troop pull-back conditional on Islamabad halting the flow of militants into Kashmir, but this may not be evident until the summer when the snows melt and infiltration normally starts.

When India did not act by the end of June, when the monsoons began, military action became more complicated through the summer. India's primary security objective is to curtail the cross-border intervention by Pakistan and Kashmiri militants. India's expected option, to avoid a wider war, consisted of limited strikes against militant camps in Kashmir. The four major militant centers which have been identified in PoK are in Zaffarwal, Samani, Kotli and Kahuta areas and are within two kilometres of the LoC. The center in Zaffarwal is run by the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) ultras and the Samani center is manned by Mujahideens of almost all outfits. The Kotli center is operated by the Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami (HUJI), and the Kahuta centre jointly by the Lashkar and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) militants.

India would probably prefer opening a limited front along the LoC, rather than a wider war. Even in event of a larger war on the international boundary, India would probably seek to break through Pakistan's defenses along the LoC to capture some additional territory in Kashmir. Although India could also seek to punish Pakistan, and holding Pakistani territory would probably not be the aim of India's offensive military operations.

Combatants

- [India](#)
- [Pakistan](#)

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In the event of war, India's Air Force was postured to initially conduct air strikes at 50 to 75 militant bases and a few other targets in Kashmir. Targets could also include a bridge across the Karakoram highway connecting China to the region, and at least three others linking Pakistani Kashmir to the rest of the country. The destruction of these bridges would prevent China from replenishing Pakistan, and would also cut off supply routes from Pakistan to front-line units.

India could also send troops across the high mountain passes in helicopters, though this would risk casualties as the helicopters crossed Pakistani air defenses.

India's broad strategy of air strikes could induce Pakistan into extending the conflict by opening a wider front along the International Border. Pakistan indicated that even if India's actions were limited to air strikes in Kashmir border, Pakistan might not restrict actions to this sector. The possibility that Pakistan might open other fronts in Punjab or Rajasthan essentially meant that Pakistan was ready for a full-scale conventional war.

India's army lacks the logistics infrastructure to support a massive and sustained ground movement to take and hold all of Kashmir. Although India has a numerical superiority on almost all fronts, some of their military equipment is not in servicable condition. Despite having a numerical disadvantage, Pakistan has a qualitative edge in many equipment holdings, notably tanks and anti-tank missiles.

India's Air Force would face serious challenges from Pakistan. Many of India's combat aircraft are poorly maintained, and trained pilots are in short supply. Pakistan's air force is widely regarded as being better trained and equipped.

The Indian Navy had a wide range of Indian navy fleet in the region, including frigates and destroyers. India reportedly deployed seven Kilo Class submarines in an offshore picket-line formation in the Arabian Sea.

Chronology

For India, the 13 December 2001 attack on Parliament by the suicide squad of Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed was the last straw in a series of attacks over the previous two years. The attack, which according to Home Minister L.K. Advani was aimed at wiping out the Indian political leadership, was a declaration of war against this country.

The troops deployments were massive, extending from Gujarat to Kashmir. The Indian Army received reinforcements from central and northern India to counter the Pakistani build-up which had not ebbed since their winter exercise codenamed Operation Khabardar. It commenced in October 2001, with troops from the strike corps, Mangla-based 1 corps, Karachi-based 5 corps and Bahawalpur-based 31 corps, an armoured brigade and infantry divisions, in the sensitive Jhelum-Chenab and Chenab-Ravi corridors close to the LoC.

There were reports of massive Indian troop movements along the border in the Sindh-Rajasthan sector, as well as in the Chenab-Ravi corridor and along the Line of Control which divides Indian and Pakistani-ruled Kashmir. On 27 December 2001, Indian Defence Minister George

Fernandes called the border situation "grave", and said that the Indian forces deployment on the forward areas would be completed within two to three days. By 01 January 2002 the Indian Defence Ministry denied on Tuesday allegations by Pakistan that it was continuing its military buildup along their tense borders, saying that "the mobilisation is more or less complete."

India recalled its envoy to Pakistan for the first time in 30 years. India had previously withdrawn its ambassador prior to conflict breaking out in the 1965 war over Kashmir and the 1971 war over independence for Bangladesh (previously East Pakistan). India also ended bus and train service between the two nations, as part of the strategy to increase pressure against Pakistan.

Pakistan moved 7 to 9 divisions of its army towards the Indian border. With the Pakistani Army having to cover shorter distances from its cantonments to its borders, it has the advantage of mobilising much faster than India. On 25 December 2001 Pakistan's Army canceled all leaves for its troops and told them to report for duty immediately. India was moving troops by the trainload from south and central India to the northwestern border with Pakistan. The buildup was not just in Kashmir, but also along the International Bborder [IB] dividing the Indian states of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Punjab from the Pakistani provinces of Punjab and Sind.

In 2000 Pakistan had unilaterally withdrawn its troops from the Line of Control under a "maximum restraint" policy that sought to normalize relations with India. Up to 20,000 Pakistani troops, who should have withdrawn from the area following winter exercises, remained stationed near the line. Two corps of the Pakistani army were supposed withdraw from near the International Borders in Rajasthan and Punjab and the Line of Control following exercises, but they had not done so.

Pakistan pushed its own troops forward, and moved the 10, 11 and 12 Corps from their Afghan frontier locations near Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Quetta to its eastern frontier. By early January 2002 the build-up of Pakistani forces near border areas raised concerns among Indian analysts. Pakistan had stationed 150,000 troops in the Jammu-Punch belt - from Chicken Neck on the International Border [IB] to Rajauri on the Line of Control [LOC]. The Indian army is regarded as being weak in the Chicken Neck and Pallanwala sectors. This suggested that, if war broke out, Pakistan's major thrust would be from Jammu. Pakistan's 1 Corps, in Khariyan-Mangla, Gujranwala's 30 Corps and Rawalpindi's 10 Corps had also prepared to move at short notice. The troop build-up was taken as an indication that, if there were an outbreak of hostilities, Pakistan would attack and capture the Akhnoor-Pallanwala sector. In 1965, Pakistan had captured Chhamb. In 1971 Pakistan had made advances in Jayorian, but retreated after a counter-attack by Indian forces. The Pakistani build-up along Jammu indicated that Pakistan might seek to capture Akhnoor-Pallanwalla and Jayorian, cutting off the Rajauri-Punch Highway. The 10-km stretch of the Srinagar-Kargil Highway, which is within range of Pakistani artillery, has been shelled continuously. The recent build-up may indicate that Pakistan was also considering moves against the Jammu-Punch Highway.

As part of New Delhi's efforts to maintain pressure on Islamabad, on 11 January 2002 Army Chief Gen. S. Padmanabhan warned in a rare press conference that Pakistan would be severely punished if it launch ed a nuclear attack on India. "Let me assure you of one thing as surely as I'm alive. Should a nuclear weapon be used against India, Indian forces, our assets at sea,

economic, human or other targets, the perpetrators of that outrage shall be punished so severely that their continuation thereafter in any form or fray will be doubtful," the general said.

In mid-January 2002 Pakistani police arrested over 200 militants, bringing the total number of detentions to over 1,100. This was part of the crackdown against five groups banned by President Pervez Musharraf. Two of the banned groups -- the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad -- are among the most hardline Islamic militant groups fighting against Indian rule in Kashmir.

On 30 January 2002 Pakistan's Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar termed the deployment of about half a million Indian troops along the border with Pakistan as "coercive and intimidating". Sattar said de-escalation was possible through dialogue as was done in 1987.

By early April 2002 it had become apparent that India's troop deployment along the Indo-Pakistan border would be prolonged until at least the autumn of 2002. The Indian Government had considered pulling back elements of some of its strike corps from the border by May end or early June, given an anticipation that by that time, trends in cross-border infiltration would become clear.

On 26 April 2002, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf accused India of "offensive deployment" of troops, and ruled out the possibility of unilateral withdrawal of troops from Indo-Pak border.

The tension between the two countries heightened after militant attack on an army family accommodation camp in Kalu Chak [Kaluchak] on 14 May 2002. Three militants arrived by bus, and after opening fire on the bus passengers, they entered the lightly-guarded camp. The militants turned their guns on the family quarters of soldiers. The terrorists systematically fired at the families of Army personnel. Eight women and 11 children died of gunshot wounds. Most of the 25 injured persons were women and children. The gunmen were killed in an intense battle with soldiers that followed. The attack was the worst in Kashmir in the previous eight months.

On 19 May 2002 the Indian Army centralized command of the paramilitary forces, including the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). These paramilitary forces, especially the BSF, are deployed along the International Border (IB), including parts of the Jammu sector, close to the Chenab river. The Army and not the paramilitary forces, in most cases, face Pakistani forces along the Line of Control (LOC) which stretches along most of the rest of Jammu and Kashmir.

On 19 May 2002 the Coast Guard was placed under the operational control of the Indian Navy. In consequence of rising tensions between India and Pakistan, Indian merchant ships were placed "on alert" and directed to file daily location reports as well as to file voyage plans with the Mumbai based Maritime Administration for passing to the Navy. By taking command of the Coast Guard, the Navy sought to safeguard the coastal areas that straddle high value industrial complexes along the west coast.

On 21 May 2002 India redeployed troops from Gujarat state, the site of prolonged sectarian violence, to the India-Pakistan border, where the two nations traded artillery fire for a fifth consecutive day.

On 22 May 2002 the Indian Prime Minister said that India needed to be ready for sacrifices, but this will be a fight to victory. He said that the time for a "decisive fight" had come.

By 26 May India had detached additional naval warships from its eastern fleet home base in Vishakapatnam, into the Arabian Sea closer to Pakistan. Among the warships of India's Western Fleet which deployed in the Arabian Sea was the aircraft carrier "INS Viraat" with Sea Harrier jets. The Indian Navy moved five front-line warships of the Eastern Naval Command to join the Western Naval Fleet. The warships moved to the western coast include a "Kashin" class missile destroyer, a Leander class multi-purpose frigate and three missile corvettes. The Indian objective was to have total control of the sea and deny movement to Pakistani ships and submarines.

As of late May 2002 it appeared that eight out of nine strike divisions of the Indian Army had moved to "jumping off points" near the border. The 21st Strike Force (mainly comprised the 33rd Armored Division) had advanced towards Akhnur in the Jammu region, assuming a forward command post. This strike force was supplemented by two more mechanized infantry brigades and self-propelled artillery units from Meerut and Mathra. The three Corps in Kashmir were augmented with additional armoured and infantry brigades to enable the Indian troops in the region to move forward from a defensive posture to major offensive. These forces include 16th Corps at Nagrauta, Jammu, 15th Corps at Badami Bagh, Srinagar and 14th Corps at Nimmud, Leh.

In response to India deployment, Pakistan, in addition to engaging nine divisions in a holding formation, moved an attack-force of armored and motorized infantry divisions into combat readiness positions. The two infantry divisions based in Baluchistan and the NWFP North-West Frontier Province also moved towards the eastern borders. Pakistan reinforced the Uri Sector by deploying two brigades of 10-Corps (Rawalpindi). Four brigades of the 31-Corps (Bahawalpur) moved into forward positions along the Bahawalpur-Fort Abbas stretch in Punjab and Rajasthan sectors. An independent Armoured Brigade moved forward to support the local infantry in the Old Beas Area. Further south, five brigades of 5-Corps (Karachi) moved up to the border stretch south of Fort Abbas to Gadra Road and Darwaza and in the border region adjacent to Jaisalmer, Bikaner and Barnar forward areas. Pakistan's formations include North and South Army Reserves, including 1-Corps (Mangla) with significant armored element.

On 05 June 2002 the United States and Britain upgraded official warnings to their citizens in India and Pakistan, telling people to leave now. The raising of the status of travel alerts came after Pakistan rejected an offer from India for joint border patrols in the disputed territory of Kashmir. The US State Department issued new advice to the 60,000 Americans in India and several thousand in Pakistan, saying: "Tensions have risen to serious levels and the risk of intensified military hostilities between India and Pakistan cannot be ruled out." The updated travel warning said it "strongly urges that American citizens in India depart the country". Previous advice to Americans merely "urged" them to leave.

By 05 June 2002, despite the stand-off between India and Pakistan at Almaty and Defence Minister George Fernandes' assertion of non-withdrawal of forces from borders, there were indications that India may start the process of de-escalation at the international border any day

after June 15 in the wake of “positive signals” from Pakistan. The de-escalation may begin from Kutch, Rajasthan and Punjab but army deployment would continue along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir.

Islamabad was believed to have taken steps to close down some militant training camps in Kashmir. Intercepts by Indian intelligence agencies reportedly indicated that Pakistan instructed its Tenth Corps to stop infiltration across the LoC.

On June 26, 2002, the US State Department noted that the very high level of tension between India and Pakistan that had existed at the end of May and the beginning of June had subsided somewhat. This condition followed intense diplomatic activity and important steps taken by both India and Pakistan to reduce tension. Nonetheless, military mobilization by the two countries remained in place along the Line of Control and the international boundary with the risk of renewed high levels of tension impossible to rule out.

The six-month standoff between India and Pakistan, which brought the two nuclear neighbours to the brink of war, had eased. But the return of peace was months away, pending Pakistan's putting an end to sponsoring cross-border terrorism, and the October polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

As of late August 2002 Indian officials insisted that infiltration by Pakistani-backed militants had declined but not ended. India will not engage in a dialogue with Pakistan over the future of Kashmir until cross-border terrorism stops.

Tensions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir continue to oscillate. As of May 2003 both governments expressed willingness to talk, and both re-established formal diplomatic relations. No time-line for the talks was established, the conciliatory moves from both countries was due to pressure from the international community. Specifically, pressure exerted by the US, Britain, and Russia.

PAKISTAN'S LESSONS FROM ITS KARGIL WAR (1999): *An Analysis*

by Dr. Subhash Kapila

Introductory Background:

The Kargil War (1999) against India was a military misadventure of the Pakistan Army master-minded and executed by Pakistan Army's Chief of Staff, General Pervez Musharraf and now the self-anointed President of Pakistan.

The Pakistan Army under General Musharraf, despite some initial gains, ultimately suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Indian Army. With the possibility of India escalating the war from a "limited war" in Kargil and extending it to Pakistan proper, General Musharraf seemingly goaded the hapless Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to rush to Washington and enlist United States aid to pressurize India for a three-day ceasefire to enable Pakistani troops to withdraw to their side of the LOC.

The Pakistani Army under General Musharraf had kept the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in the dark about the Kargil military misadventure. Later, the Pakistan Army and General Musharraf, after the Kargil defeat, kept secret this fact from the Pakistani nation. To deflect domestic and international attention from his own personal culpability in this misadventure, General Musharraf, unscrupulous as his wont, blamed PM Nawaz Sharif for Pakistan's military humiliation and used this as a pretext for launching his military coup against a democratically elected Government. Incidentally PM Nawaz Sharif was elected by an overwhelming majority and that too on an election plank of peace with India.

Its only five years later after the Kargil war that analyses have now started appearing analyzing this war from the Pakistani perspective and drawing lessons from it. One such work that is now available on the Kargil War is by Shireen Mazari a Pakistani strategic analyst, with hawkish anti-Indian stances. Shireen Mazari's research stands published by the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, Pakistan.

The aim of this paper is to dwell on the "Lessons Learnt From Kargil" as brought out by Shireen Mazari in her publication and give a deductive analysis on each of her major points as a commentary. Her conclusions are quoted verbatim in bold print and this author's commentary follows each excerpt quoted.

It is also the aim of this paper to draw some brief lessons for the United States and India, as emanating after this authors analysis.

"Lessons learnt From Kargil" as Projected by Pakistani Strategist Shireen Mazari:

The short preamble to this portion of the publication praises the Pakistan Army showing "tactical ingenuity and boldness in its execution" and the very next sentences then adds: " However what the whole event revealed were critical shortcomings in the decision-making process". The observations then follow and to begin with:

Confusion and Dysfunction in Decision Making:

"And as the operation incrementally moved up on the escalation ladder, Pakistan's decision-making system betrayed signs of confusion and dysfunction. In fact, the short-coming of Pakistan's national security decision-making were revealed by the Kargil Conflict were not episodic but systemic."

Commentary: It needs to be remembered that "confusion and dysfunction" in Pakistan's higher elections during the Kargil War occurred due to the following factors:

- Kargil War was master-minded and launched by General Musharraf on his own personal decision and initiative, without taking PM Nawaz Sharif into confidence or bringing him into the picture at the outset.
- Confusion and dysfunction occurred due to this "dis-connect" between the Pakistani Army Chief and his political master i.e. the Prime Minister.
- General Musharraf and the Pakistani military hierarchy were in a "state of denial" till such time India's military superiorities started coming into play.
- The growing Indian and international media over-publicisation of the Kargil War added to Pakistan Army's perplexities as by now plausible deniability exists stood sealed.
- Pakistan's national security decision making is centered on the Pakistan Army Chief and its collegium of Generals. This phenomenon, despite an NSC in existence will continue.

Lack of Strategic Policy Coordination Between the Military and Political Leadership:

Shireen Mazari observes:

"To begin with the lack of strategic policy coordination between the military and political leadership was so apparent that no serious attempt was made to cover it up. The political leadership did not make any serious efforts to think-through the unfolding military situation on a strategic plan, and until late in the day June 3, 1999 this leadership did not feel the need and made no attempt to try and discuss the issue in the federal cabinet. Hence the utter confusion and lack of coordination once the diplomatic and political stakes rose".

Commentary:

- This is a motivated observation by Shireen Mazari aimed as a posterior protection measure for the Pakistan Army and General Musharraf. How could Pakistan's political leadership exert when the entire operation was kept away from the political domain by General Musharraf. As would be recalled from Bruce Reidel's records of the Clinton-Nawaz Sharif meeting of July 4, 1999 the Pakistani Prime Minister appeared to be terrorized by the prospects of General Musharraf's coup and had come prepared with his family not to go back to Pakistan.

- Shireen Mazari's very choice of sequence of words "lack of strategic policy coordination between the military and political leadership" betrays who was calling the shots in Pakistan, namely General Musharraf and the Pakistan Army. So therefore, the blame falls squarely on their shoulders."

Lack of Strong Civilian Institutions/Bureaucracies:

Shireen mazari states"

"To put it simply, Pakistan utterly lacks strong civilian institutions/bureaucracies, inclusive of any national security apparatus, that can integrate various inputs at the upper echelons of the government and then render appropriate advice to the Chief Executive of the country, or set out policy options for him."

Commentary:

- This malaise will continue in Pakistan till such time the Pakistani masses mobilize themselves politically and force the Pakistan Army back to the barracks.
- The Pakistan Army voluntarily would not permit emergence of viable strong civilian institutions.

Pakistan Military Cannot Fully Fill Civilian-Decision Making Gaps:

The following observation is a telling comment on the Pakistan military:

"Apparently, the conflict, at its various stages was broadly discussed verbally, in official circles, and some quick conclusions drawn. These were then disseminated through ad-hoc chains of communication between various organs. The negative manner in which competing bureaucracies, including military, absorbed and disseminated or refused to disseminate information further aggravated the issue at the national level. To give political context to military decisions, there have to be strong civilian institutions in defence policy making,----- . Military institutions and organizations, no matter how efficient cannot fully fill these civilian decision-making gaps and inputs in an adequate fashion. This is exactly what happed during the Kargil conflict also."

Comments:

- This is the most valuable lesson brought out as it puts in proper perspective, all that is wrong with the Pakistani nation state.
- The Pakistan Army has consistently subverted the Pakistani nation state to firm its grip and control on Pakistan's politics.
- The Pakistan Army and its Generals are not competent to act rationally and give mature strategic directions to the nation state of Pakistan. The Kargil War defeat and the previous defeats of the Pakistan Army in earlier wars with India are eloquent testimony to this fact.

- Even under civilian regimes, foreign and defence policies are dictated by Pakistan Army. Notably, even under civilian regimes the control of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is in the hands of the Pakistan Army.
- The world and particularly the United States needs to take a significant note of this aspect in relation to Pakistan's nuclear weapons. Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is not under civilian political control but in the hands of military adventurist rulers like General Musharraf.

Absence of Written Records of Security-Related Issues:

It has been brought out, that:

“ A lack of serious thinking and critical assessment of the evolving situation during the conflict is borne out by the near total absence of written records at all levels of government. This aspect, perhaps, reflects a much deeper erosion of professionalism within the government that needs to be reformed. Prior to 1971, official records of defence and security-related meetings, show detailed minutes of government proceedings.”

Commentary:

- The absence of written records on security related issues reflects two serious infirmities of the Pakistan state machinery.
- First, that all records, that may have been maintained within the Pakistan Army itself were either not made accessible to Shireen Mazari, or worse, fearing exposure of the sordid details of General Musharraf's misadventure, they stand destroyed, on the orders of General Musharraf who still continues in power.
- Second, with a virtually continuous military rule in Pakistan post-1971, the Army has made sure that the civilian political executive has no access to the discussions of the Pakistan Army Corps Commanders Conference where all foreign policy, defence and nuclear weapons issues are discussed.
- In such an environment where military decisions are verbally taken and no records of security issues maintained it is self evident that no accountability exists on critical issues of state policy like foreign affairs and defence. Pakistan's credibility therefore in international affairs is pitifully low.

Pakistan Army's Bungled Military Planning in Kargil and Under-estimating Indian Army's Response:

The Pakistan Army and General Musharraf in particular stand significantly indicted by the following observations:

“ For the Pakistani military it was essential to evaluate the various anticipated Indian politico-military responses-including the raising of the military ante and worse case

scenarios. The military, in planning a division-sized defensive engagement, failed to foresee how the demands of military operational strategy would cross with the exigencies of grand strategy and international diplomacy. It also did not anticipate the degree to which the enemy would vertically escalate the military situation. A major failing of Kargil was to under-estimate the Indian response militarily. Therefore it is vital that the planning and operational conduct of this conflict (Kargil) is allowed to be critically discussed in military training institutions at all levels."

Commentary:

- Pakistani Army's military planning failures need to be solely shouldered by General Musharraf. He was the mastermind as Pakistan's Army Chief in terms of planning and conduct of the Kargil mis-adventure. He is therefore responsible for Pakistan's defeat in the Kargil War as accountability is vertical.
- General Musharraf, used as he is to military swagger, severely underestimated the Indian military response. It is the same trait that is in play today in the on-going peace dialogue with India.
- General Musharraf seems to have been misled into militarily challenging India, fortified by the newly acquired nuclear weapons arsenal of Pakistan Army in 1998.
- Regrettably any such future miscalculation by General Musharraf on the use of nuclear weapons could surely lead to the extinction of the Pakistani State.
- The Pakistan Army has always shied away from discussions of its military reverses against India. It would therefore be unimaginable that General Musharraf would allow his military fiasco to be discussed in Pakistan Army training establishments.

Pakistan Army's Military Confusion and Disconnect with the Political Government:

It is stated that:

"By the end of May 1999, there was a total disconnect between the political government and the strategic planners, as a result of which no offensive formations were moved to the front which sent a clear signal to the Indians that Pakistan was in no mood to fight a war. Once ambivalence and confusion were not maintained at the military level by Pakistan for the enemy, India gained an assured level of focus."

Commentary:

- The culprit for the "disconnect" stated above was essentially General Musharraf.

- If no offensive formations were moved by the Pakistan Army, than the responsibility once again lies with General Musharraf.
- This may yet be another reflection of General Musharraf's personal trait of resorting to brinkmanship, but shying away from hard choices when actually facing the brink..
- It reflects poorly on General Musharraf's qualities as a military leader and his professionally poor appreciation of the enemies capabilities ie. India.

Pakistan Lost the Information War:

Shiren Mazari states:

“ The information war was lost from the start because of the decision not to inform the public at home and an equally half-hearted approach regarding what to give out to the international community. There is no clear cut evidence to pinpoint who actually made the decision not to inform the domestic polity, but clearly the lack of coordination at the highest level of decision making was the major factor.”

Commentary:

- It is surprising for an astute strategic analyst like Shireen Mazari to state that no clear cut evidence exists as to who decided not to inform the Pakistani public about the Kargil misadventure.
- Obviously, it was General Musharraf and the Pakistan Army which all along had kept PM Nawaz Sharif out of the decision- making loop of the Kargil War and the Pakistani defeat.
- This phenomena of the Pak Army and its Generals has been noticeable in all the conflicts with India. The Pakistani masses are never taken into the picture by the Pakistan Army, which calls all the shots in Pakistan and in the process fudges its military reverses against India.
- Why go further, published reports in Pakistan indicate that even the Pakistan Air Force Chief and Pakistan Navy Chief were not taken into picture on Kargil by General Musharraf till a late stage in the conflict.

Wrong Military Lesson Drawn By Shireen Mazari in Terms of Indian Responses

As if to soften the indictment blows on the Pakistan Army in terms of her preceding comments, Shireen Mazari in the concluding para comes to this final conclusion:

“ However, one positive lesson from Kargil was that Pakistan could sustain limited military encounter in conventional terms in the face of India raising the conventional ante, and still prevent India from opening an all-out war front along the international border.”

Commentary

- This is a singularly erroneous misconception in terms of a conclusion.
- It was the military restraint imposed by India's political leadership on the Indian Army not to cross the LOC which permitted the Pakistan Army to sustain its military misadventure in Kargil. The outcome would have been otherwise had the Indian Army not been politically restrained.
- It would also be erroneous for Pakistan to believe that India would not cross the international border in future. India did it in 1965 when its military resources were limited. With increased military might, India may not be all that restrained in the future notwithstanding Pakistan's nuclear weapons.
- Whether in conventional war or into nuclear escalation by Pakistan in the future, Pakistan's capacity to withstand both conventional and nuclear attrition is limited and therefore Pakistan's Generals need to exercise abundant caution before stepping on India's toes.

United States Needs to Re-evaluate its Strategic Ally in South Asia

The major lessons/deductions arising from an analysis of Shireen Mazari's publication are that:

- Pakistan is a highly militarised and militant state under the iron grip of the Pakistan Army.
- The Pakistan Army is not inclined to let go its vice-like grip on Pakistan's foreign policy and politics.
- Pakistan Army would not permit the emergence of strong civilian bureaucratic institutions.
- Pakistan Army is a reckless body led by military adventurists generals like General Musharraf.

If these be the hallmarks of the Pakistani nation-state run by military dictatorships, the United States needs to decide whether:

- Can United States national security interests be served by Pakistan under a military dictatorship devoid of civilian political support from the Pakistani public and its polity?
- Can United States feel safe with nuclear weapons being under the control of an irresponsible and strategically blind Pakistan Army?
- Can the United States afford a nuclear conflict in South Asia initiated by a Pakistan Army Chief under whose sole control exists the Pakistan nuclear arsenal. United States needs to remember that India has declared a "No First Use" nuclear policy whereas Pakistan has not done likewise.

United States seems to be unwisely forgetting that the bigger danger is not of Pakistan's nuclear weapons falling in the hands of Islamic Jihadis, but that Pakistan Army itself handing over

nuclear weapons to Islamic Jihadis for proxy war against the hated enemy of Islam, that is the United States.

United States must recognise that if ever a nuclear conflict takes place in South Asia it would be directly of Pakistan's making and indirectly that of the United States.

Lessons for India

India needs to take sharp notice of the following factors and devise appropriate responses:

- The Pakistan Army is a military adventurist Army and has the propensity to repeatedly initiate new conflicts with India notwithstanding any episodic peace rhetoric.
- In this it is buoyed by United States permissiveness of Pakistan Army's military control over Pakistan, denial of democracy and emergence of strong civil institutions.
- India should not mistake the 'peace with India' yearnings of the Pakistan masses as the aspiration of Pakistan's Generals, including General Musharraf .
- Pakistan Army under military pressure could initiate a nuclear exchange with India. India needs to be politically and militarily prepared for swift appropriate responses.
- India militarily and in terms of civil defence measures should prepare itself for an irresponsibly initiated nuclear conflict launched by Pakistan.
- No amount of US guarantees or interceding on General Musharraf's behalf be considered or accepted by India.

Concluding Observations:

With the benefit of hindsight, Shireen Mazari at many places elsewhere in her published work, tries to cover up the Pakistan Army and General Musharraf. Some of those observations need quoting and these are:

- **“In fact the international attention focused on the Kargil conflict took Pakistan by surprise especially since Pakistan saw it as yet another tactical operational exchange similar to others along the LOC, but which incrementally escalated as a result of India raising the military, political and diplomatic ante.”**
- **“another damaging result of Kargil has been the use of the Pakistan military as a scapegoat not only by the Indian and American analysts but also by elements within Pakistan's political elite and civil society. There is an increasing attempt to undermine the institution of the military and place it at odds with civil society”**

Many questions get raised and many factors come to the fore from these assertions and these are:

- If Kargil was not planned as a deliberate well planned military operation by General Musharaaf, then what was the necessity of keeping the Kargil developments a secret from the Pakistani public. Tactical operational exchanges along the LOC are regularly reported in the Pakistani media, than why not the Kargil Conflict developments.
- President Clinton and his Administration would have not come out so heavily on Pakistan and General Musharraf , had the Kargil misadventure been just “ another tactical operational exchange similar to others along the LOC.” Obviously the United States also held evidence of Pakistan’s more wider and strategic grandiose designs in the illusionary mind of the military adventurist Pakistan Army Chief, General Musharraf.
- Unlike the present President Bush and his Administration, President Clinton had not much respect for General Musharraf and his credibility, it seems.

Concluding finally, one could offer Pakistan and Shireen Mazari, the following advice which could be added to her “Lessons Learnt From Kargil”:

- In any future military misadventure by Pakistan’s head-strong Generals, India may go in for a military sledge-hammer rather than an “incremental escalation” in response to what Pakistan would like to call “as another tactical operational exchange along the LOC”.
- The Pakistan Army was not made a scapegoat in the Kargil War. It was the Pakistan Army and General Musharraf who made PM Nawaz Sharif as the scapegoat as a cover-up for their military follies. It was General Musharraf who kept the Pakistan nation, his Prime Minister and the other Chiefs in the dark about Kargil.

The Pakistan Army is a state within a state and a law unto itself. It is high time that Pakistanis, especially strategic analysts like Shireen Mazari joined hands with other Pakistani intellectuals to politically mobilize the Pakistani masses to rein in the Pakistani Army. The Pakistan Army was responsible for disintegration of Pakistan in 1971 (civil war leading to creation of Bangladesh) and it may now be leading towards another disintegration of Pakistan in Balochistan and Balwaristan.

KARGIL REVIEW COMMITTEE: A COMMENTARY

D RAMANA

The Kargil Review Committee (KRC) was constituted by the Government of India to review the events leading to the Pakistani aggression in Kargil sector of Jammu and Kashmir in May 1998 [1]. A further brief was to recommend necessary measures to safeguard national security against such armed intrusions. The KRC panel had wide ranging access to data and personnel in performing its charter. It accomplished its task by interviewing slew of former and serving officials. The voluminous report and its annexes constituted 15 volumes.

The KRC report is remarkable in India for being an inquiry commission that analyzed causes of the events rather than fixing blame for them. In addition, it is a mini strategic review, which flowed from its second charter. It is detailed, and addresses many popular myths propagated at the time of the crises. It has commented on a wide range of matters, from inadequacy of intelligence to lacuna in the national security apparatus. Thus, it is a far-reaching report that deserves to be read and understood. Its findings are especially important in light of the nuclearization of the sub-continent, as early detection has to be part of the minimum deterrent posture. It also represents a first for India as it has been published and commented on by various experts. The present article is based entirely on the on-line version [1]. The full text might have more details which may add to the picture.

The main section is divided into findings and a recommendation section. Previously the Bharat Rakshak Monitor gave a preliminary account of the factors for surprise at Kargil [2] and these are updated.

Developments leading to the Pakistani aggression at Kargil

The KRC found that the entire aggression was a complete and total surprise to the Indian government. This is its primary conclusion and all others stem from it. What was expected was an infiltration by armed irregulars but not an intrusion and occupation of territory by Pakistani troops. Numerous former Indian Army officers were unanimous that such an operation was unsustainable. Coupled with the Indian Army's domination in previous instances and the hostile terrain a mindset was created that this scenario was unlikely. Expecting the enemy to do what you would do is known as "mirroring" and leads to surprise.

The report concluded that Pakistan has repeatedly miscalculated the Indian response to its aggression. The KRC does not examine why Pakistan prone to making such erroneous conclusions and whether there is any India based characteristics involved. It is possible that the lack of a coherent policy by previous Indian governments contributed to the Pakistani judgment of a feeble response.

The report examines the role of deterrence in the calculus of aggression and concludes that Pakistan is convinced that its various nuclear threats have deterred India from reacting to its covert war. However, essential players have noted that the Indian Armed Forces were overextended in the last decade and hence could not be brought to bear on aggressive Pakistani overtures. This indicates that the lack of resolve and overextended resources are more likely to have deterred India rather than nuclear threats from Pakistan.

The report also examines whether Nawaz Sharif was in the loop in planning the Kargil aggression and concludes that the balance of probability suggests that he was in the loop. This conclusion has grave portends for prospects of peace in the sub-continent. It is this perfidious behavior of the Pakistani elite that has to be guarded against, and explains the reluctance of India to resume dialog with the military regime in Pakistan until terrorist support is halted. On a positive note, this exonerates the Pakistani Army from rogue behavior. The report states that Lahore process did not lead to a lowering of the guard in the Indian government despite the euphoria in some segments of the political spectrum. This is an important conclusion and demolishes the charges of the Opposition during the crises.

The report reconstructed the modus operandi of the Pakistani aggression and concluded that it was based on creeping intrusion. Early parties entered Indian Territory in late January and early February 1999. These were followed by reinforcements in late April. They used cover and deception to avoid detection by WASO patrols from air. In addition, due to risks from terrain and climate, the Indian forces did not take aggressive ground patrols. From a study of the intruder deployments, the committee concluded that the plan was to occupy Indian Territory and provide a fait accompli to India as it would suffer large casualties in recovering the territory and lose time. In the meantime, the goal was to arrange an international cease-fire leaving them in occupation of Indian Territory.

A minor point is to be noted here. The report identifies the shepherds who reported the intrusion as being in the pay of the Brigade Intelligence Team (BIT). The committee should have excised this, as there is no need to confirm information that could lead to harm to such informants. Similar comments can be made of the wealth of data provided as illustrations to show lack of proper assessments. These revelations can be faulted for revealing the systematic collection capabilities of the Indian agencies and need not have been published.

The force deployments of the Fifteen Corps commander succeeded in localizing the conflict. Action was taken before a complete analysis of the magnitude of the intrusion could be obtained. The speed of reaction was critical to localizing the conflict. The report also studied the rate of casualties to determine if there were avoidable casualties and determined that this was not so. It also examined the state of equipment of the soldiers and pointed out the deficiencies. Once the decision to use the Air Force was taken, the armed forces moved to proactive positions to deter any escalation by Pakistan. In conclusion, the report characterizes this as 'not a minor skirmish but a short sharp war'. This is important as Indian leaders were calling it a limited war, or even "war-like," at the time of the conflict.

Intelligence

In this section, the report gathers its findings of lapses in the Intelligence field that led to the surprise. As noted elsewhere [2], the methodology of Uri Bar and Zachary Sheaffer is more useful than that adopted in this report. The power of the Bar-Sheaffer method is such that it gives an X-ray picture of what went wrong as opposed to the snapshot provided in the KRC report. A list of tables is added which summarizes the report findings in the Bar-Sheaffer methodology [4].

The report identifies the roles and missions of the two principal intelligence agencies of the Indian government – the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB). It also clarifies the limited role of the Director General of Military Intelligence (DGMI). Although RAW was tasked with collecting military intelligence, the facility in Kargil sector,

though under the Srinagar command, was reporting to Leh. The Kargil facility, at the time, was operating under other priorities. This illustrates the need to appropriately allocate and task resources. The Leh office based its priorities on threat perception, which was that no intrusion could be sustained in Kargil. It therefore concentrated its resources on more immediate threats. The report does not identify this, but press reports suggest it was concentrated on Tibet. It would be interesting to see if there were indicators in that area, which distracted it from picking up signals from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK).

The IB picked up signals of activity, in the FCNA region of POK. However, it did not forward them to the proper agencies that it knew could provide follow-up. This is an obvious instance politicking and bureaucratic power struggles. The report documents other instances of systematic failure and lack of inter-agency coordination.

It also reports that there were many indicators but few of actionable quality, with the nebulous and noisy signals. It is possible that the increase of noise indicated a masking of signals. Another point noted was the failure to communicate the intensity of counter-action by the Indian Army led RAW to make incorrect assessments as to the nature of the activity going on across the Line of Control (LoC). Surprisingly, battle damage reports in the forward areas was not intimated to RAW. These illustrate a lack coordination and interaction. The problem could be due to over-emphasis on the "need to know" principle, which denies a second look at the data.

The report highlights the deficiencies in the Order of Battle (ORBAT), which did not include two battalions. Here the report blames RAW for the lack of information of their presence and forward deployment as likely indicators of potential intrusion. However, this begs the question as to the responsibilities of the local area commanders. They should have been alert as to the threat coming from the existing thirteen battalions. This raises the question of whether there is a need to see the complete picture before deciding if the data is interesting or not. The local commanders should have sent patrols and asked for more air surveillance near the LoC to confirm the pattern of deployment of the thirteen battalions.

The report goes on to identify the shortcomings of the Indian system of intelligence gathering. The lack of inter-agency coordination, the single source of threat assessment and collection and lack of war game scenarios including civilian participation are all identified. All these lead to overload and missed assessments. It does not identify what prevents the constitution of a secondary review of the primary data from RAW by the receivers. All these point to hierarchical nature of the organizations involved. The more top heavy they are the more they are prone to failure.

The report also highlights the political factors affecting the process- lacks of importance of and need for assessed intelligence at all levels. Shortcomings in the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) are reported. Here the factors are primarily bureaucratic shortcomings. The head of RAW doubling as JIC chairman for over eighteen months is not optimal. The responsibility is definitely political, as timely appointments of vacancies, is a political function. The report does not highlight if the agency as a whole was preoccupied after Chagai tests.

A point to consider is the lack of assessments based on a totality of inputs. The constant factor of one agency not knowing the data unearthed by another agency is interesting. Smith [3] examines the difficulties in preparing national estimates even when the best resources were available during the early years of the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The need to have inter-agency review of the estimates before they are presented to

the political authorities for action is also detailed. This demonstrates the difficulty of the task ahead. It is not that other nations did not face surprises. It is important to examine how they learned from them and recovered. Pearl Harbor, Yom Kippur, and the collapse of Baring Bank are all surprises. Nearer home the 1962 NEFA debacle, the indefinite extension of NPT, the firing of Ghauri missile are all surprises. In India, none of these events led to a systematic examination of the factors leading to the surprise. The KRC report is a pioneering effort, authorized by the government in order to get to the root of the matter.

Wilensky [5] examines intelligence organizations and concludes that the intelligence failures are built into complex organizations. On one hand, easily accomplished re-structuring, might end up being just tinkering with the organization and will not eliminate the ills. On the other hand, sources of distortion will persist in some measure due to the nature of the organization. Proper mastery of the task requires specialization leading to compartmentalization; the need to control and motivate individuals requires hierarchy leading to blocking communications; coordination demands centralization leading to top heavy overloaded systems; and exigencies of decision demand direct answers, if not short term estimates leading to diversion of resources. In fact failures are natural for an organization based on its state of development and are often not in its control. All this places importance on the leadership, which has to educate itself of the organizational pitfalls and be aware of them while formulating policy.

The Nuclear factor

This finding is the most important contribution to the nuclear issue in India in recent times. While examining the reasons for Pakistan choosing intrusion as a way to change the LoC, the KRC panel examined the history of the nuclear question in South Asia. In doing so, it lays to rest many popular myths. The KRC report is an important contribution to the history of Indian nuclear development, and with the recent efforts from Perkovich [6] and Chengappa [7], one may form a more complete picture of the Nuclear Option in Asia.

Pakistan embarked on its quest for nuclear weapons under President Bhutto in January 1972 after the defeat in the Bangladesh war. The main driver was deterrence of India's conventional superiority. Thus, it predates the Indian nuclear test of 1974. In addition, since its main aim is to deter India's conventional weaponry, Pakistani denuclearization is not predicated on Indian denuclearization. This is a very important finding and has bearing on the whole gamut of relations between India and Pakistan.

Pakistan had been assessed to have the capability by 1981-82 and this prompted Mrs. Gandhi to authorize a test 1983, which were called off due to external pressure. This explains the reports of test preparations in the early eighties. The report details the Chinese proliferation to Pakistan from the early eighties. It is surprising that India waited until the May '98 tests to publicly take China to task. China has been behaving in an inimical manner since the early eighties.

Pakistan had conveyed a nuclear threat on three different instances in a short period of three years - 1987 to 1990. Two of them were in one year - January and August 1990. The US imposed sanctions on Pakistan under the Pressler amendment soon after these threats.

The report details the continuity in the Indian program under the Prime Ministers from Mrs. Gandhi to Mr. Vajpayee. This aspect is important as the tests in May 1998 were misconstrued as an act of aberration by the BJP government. However, while successive Prime Ministers implemented the program, they kept it under wraps. On the other hand,

Pakistani leadership was very vocal about their possession. The panel here does not take into account the various ambiguous statements made by Indian leadership – "befitting response" etc. The picture is rather incomplete on this account.

The Pakistani leadership is deduced as having concluded that they were able to deter India with their nuclear threats and were emboldened to pursue proxy war through encouragement of terrorists and eventual intrusion. However, Indian officials told the committee that due to various reasons the Indian conventional superiority was unusable. This shows a serious disconnect and lack of understanding of the reality of Pakistan's nuclearization. Had resources been available, the possibility of hot pursuit operations escalating is a definite possibility. It is here that the excessive secrecy could have led to major problems. As the report states the circle of knowledge of Indian capabilities and threat perception was very small and excluded essential functionaries responsible for execution of state policy.

Successive Indian Chiefs of army expressed unhappiness about being kept out of the loop. However, the Pokhran test range is under Army control. The shafts were dug and maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers. Hence, it is unclear why the Military should express ignorance about Indian plans and prospects. Moreover, Chengappa indicates that Gen. Sundarji was taken to see the storage areas at BARC in the mid-eighties [7]. It can be concluded that there was a strict "need to know" policy in place about the nuclear issue in India. This secrecy managed to preserve the reality of the option from those whose business it is to know. However, it is for the public to decide whether the nation had paid an excessive price by way of being the victim of proxy war brought upon by an unfriendly neighbor.

In retrospect, secrecy was acceptable; however, the inability to unambiguously convey the threat of assured retaliation has been a major handicap. This is definitely a leadership issue. The panel alludes to this while outlining the Pakistani strategy to grab Kashmir in bold move when the Indian leadership appeared weak and indecisive.

The report outlines the indirect role of well meaning efforts of the US in emboldening the Pakistani posture and hopes that the Singh-Talbott talks will lead to gradual devaluation of their nuclear card.

In the end the panel points out the fact that if Kargil gamble was planned in 1997, then the tests of May 1998 by India may not be that significant since nuclear deterrence was in place since 1990. In other words, the tests were an affirmation of the facts on the ground since the mid-eighties. As stated before the KRC report on this issue is an important contribution to the history of the Indian nuclear program. However, it still does not clarify who was authorized and what was the process behind the program. The recommendation to publish a white paper on this topic is critical.

Counter Insurgency Operations, Kargil and Integrated Manpower Policy, and the Technological dimensions

These are findings that had bearing on the Kargil crisis and are combined herein for brevity. The report goes into the impact on fighting terrorism and counter-insurgency due to the withdrawal of the regular troops. The reduction in manpower due to this shows the high reliance on Army troops in this role. This demonstrates the claim that the Indian army could not undertake offensive operations due to being over extended in counter insurgency role. The report also details how the paramilitary forces are not up to the task in combating state

sponsored terrorism and need augmenting. The panel recommends a comprehensive strategy involving manpower, technical resources, and political initiatives to combat this menace. Again various schemes to restructure the operations are proposed and should be studied in depth before implementation.

The panel studied the effect of equipment lacunae in the armed forces and their impact on the performance of the troops. They found there was no integrated equipment policy, which hinders combat effectiveness. The panel has special words for the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and its shortcomings in equipment development and time overruns. It makes note of the progress achieved and the constraints it faces but is critical of its shortcomings. Ultimately, the Indian forces had to make do without critical equipment while the adversaries do not. It regrets that many recommendations by previous bodies await implementation.

Was Kargil avoidable?

The panel examines if the situation at Kargil was avoidable. It concludes that had the Indian Army taken up a deployment posture akin to Siachen it could perhaps have been able to prevent this. Such a policy would be expensive in resources - human and material and would further degrade Indian military capability. The panel recommends a declaratory policy of swiftly punishing wanton and violations of the Line of Control. The reviewer believes that a more proactive policy of assessments and monitoring by the relevant bodies could have detected the intrusion and reduced the cost of vacating it. However it would not have deterred the aggressive intent of the neighbor and have to second the panel in its recommendation. The need of the hour is to have in place a deterrent policy and provide it with the means to implement it.

Tables and Charts

1. [Political Factors](#)
2. [Strategic Factors](#)
3. [Psychological Factors](#)
4. [Organizational Factors](#)

Select Bibliography

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8. The reason is due to reluctance to put the facts on the table; the record is what anyone else publishes. For instance the Ref.6 is vocal in saying that scientists drove the decisions to test. This might suit the Indian leadership but the West has a fixation with Stranglovia syndrome – out of control scientists. This detracts from the image of the Indian scientists who worked hard with limited resources to provide the means to deter WMD threats.

9. Siachen: A Viewpoint

10. Brig. (r) S. K. Raychaudhuri VSM

11. The Siachen area is awe inspiring and beautiful.....till the first few steps are taken! The challenges to human endurance that this beautiful and inspiring scenario imposes adequately negate the initial impression caused by its stark beauty.
12. The Siachen Glacier is awesome and it embodies one of the most inhospitable and glaciated environs in the world. The glacier runs down the valley in the Karakoram Range and is 76 kilometers long and varies in width between 2 to 8 kilometers. The mountains alongside the Siachen, range between 15,000 to 25,000 feet. The ridges are sharp, rugged and barren. Local resources are absent. The gradients are steep and precludes cross country movement and the glacier is highly crevassed.
13. Compounding the arduousness are the snow and blizzards. It receives 6 to 7 meters of the annual total of 10 meters of snow in winter alone. Blizzards can reach speeds up to 150 knots (nearly 300 kilometers per hour). The temperature drops routinely to 45 degrees C below zero, and the wind chill factor makes the temperature dip further with increase in wind velocity. The weather is fickle and can change without notice. It does not require imagination to realize the isolation and forbiddances of this place.
14. Such an environment makes conducting a war in this area an expensive proposition. An unending, undeclared war is worse still. Siachen, thus, is mind boggling, not only in since a solution is elusive, but also in financial terms and in human lives.
15. The origin of the Siachen imbroglio can be traced to Karachi Agreement (27 July 1949) consequent to the first war over Kashmir after Partition. The terminology in the delineation beyond NJ 9842 was couched in the vague phrase 'thence moving northwards'. This 'northward moving line' was never physically demarcated or verified on ground. The Pakistani contention that Siachen is a part of Baltistan in the Northern Areas of Pakistan is faulty if viewed in the light of the Karachi Agreement. Every area would then be a part of the Northern Area of Pakistan so to say given this astounding logic. Therefore, the ground reality and the geopolitical situation demanded physical occupation and administrative control which India undertook in 1984. This gave concrete body to the vagueness of the delineation terminology of the Karachi Agreement and its successor Agreement at Suchetgarh (11 December 1972). The question of interpretation and exercising of this prerogative physically and administratively was thus resolved.
16. The question of the line 'thence moving northward' going North West or North East is of pertinence. Currently, the line moves from NJ 9842 through Bilafond, Saltoro Kangri, Sia La, Baltoro. It thus joins at the central segment of the Shaksgam area of Jammu-Kashmir which Pakistan illegally ceded to China.
17. A North Eastern demarcation of the line would join it to the Sino – Indian boundary between the eastern corner of Pakistani-ceded Shaksgam and the western corner of Chinese-occupied Aksai China. This is where the strategic Karakoram Pass is situated (a distance of 91.3 kilometres). The occupation of Siachen effectively separates Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) from Aksai Chin, the part of Kashmir claimed and Occupied by China and hence precludes any outflanking moves to isolate Leh or even Kargil sectors. It also empowers India to keep a check on the Khunjarab Pass; as also is a positive factor to any negotiation with China on the border question.
18. Thus, the view that Siachen is an exercise in futility and too expensive an all encompassing burden is not valid given the geopolitical realities then and even now.
19. There is a view that India could withdraw from the Glacier. Unless there is an international assurance, which in any case, is not the worth in paper it is written on, there is no guarantee that Pakistan would not occupy the Glacier. In such a case advantages that India currently has would be negated. To imagine that holding a few

major passes would suffice would also not be valid since moving troops in a High Altitude Area to an impending threat is laborious, time consuming, physically impossible given human adaptability limits and thus merely theoretical.

20. Pakistan occupies the southern slopes of the Saltoro Watershed, most of which is between 9000 to 10,000 feet at most places, whereas India occupies the northern slopes which are higher and reach 25000 feet. This makes operating in high altitudes compared to Pakistan more complex and difficult.
21. It is in Pakistan's advantage that lower heights given them a positive inherent logistic supply continuum and less dependant on air supply. As Pakistan occupies lower heights there logistic can be land based routes while the same is not the case with India. This also ensures that the cost of operations is much lower for Pakistan, especially in financial terms.
22. Occupation of commanding heights and passes is the crux to the defense of Siachen. Therefore, the flip side of the altitudinal disadvantage is that it provides tactical advantage. Given the altitude and the steep terrain it is immensely difficult to dislodge the defender as Pakistan has learnt at a high cost.
23. Pakistan however occupies certain areas which give them the advantage over the logistic routes.
24. The Base Camp for Indian forces is 12,000 feet above sea level. The altitude of some Indian forward bases on the Saltoro Ridge ranges from Kumar (16,000 feet) and Bila Top (18,600 feet) to Pahalwan (20,000 feet) and Indira Col (22,000 feet). Because of the steep gradient of the Saltoro Range, the area is also prone to avalanches. It is may be pertinent to mention that only 3 per cent of the Indian casualties were caused by hostile firing. The remaining 97 per cent have fallen prey to the altitude, weather, and terrain.
25. The greatest challenge is logistics. The maintenance chain is by fixed wing air drops, helicopters, porters, army mules or small donkeys. This is not only financially costly but also costly in terms of effort. As per an estimate, it costs between Rs 1,00,000 to Rs 1,50,000 per ton depending upon the aircraft/ helicopter employed.
26. The interesting fact is that Kerosene Oil required for heating and drying purpose constitutes about 40% of the tonnage lifted. As Kerosene freezes at -50 C, it is possible to use a pipeline to pump Kerosene. Much that it may astound those who have not operated at such attitudes and adverse weather conditions that Kerosene oil is more welcomed than foodstuff.
27. As is well known, food is not a problem since these altitudes influence an aversion to food. The appetite is reduced. Tinned stuff is most unpalatable and this low intake in food seriously affects the operational efficiency, even though it is not apparent if one goes by the enthusiasm of all ranks in executing their tasks. 6000 calories are essential at these altitudes compared to 3000 to 4000 calories at lower heights.
28. There is a continuous effort to reduce costs. To offset the cost in the supply chain, which is airlifted from Chandigarh or brought from Srinagar since the food habits are different from the locals, the DRDO has done commendable work. They are greening Partapur, the Siachen brigade headquarters at an altitude of around 11,000 feet. A serious attempt is to grow fresh vegetables for troops stationed at an altitude of 12,000 feet and above (up to 20,000 feet) on the glacier and beyond on the Soltoro ridge. A pilot project is already underway to grow cabbage, capsicum, onions, tomatoes, cauliflower and brinjals. It is to their credit that when the temperatures are minus 25 degrees Celsius and snow omnipresent they succeeded in harvesting crop through solar green house cultivation. It is of interest to note that not only they are army specific, they are actively assisting the local populace. However, the sizes of the vegetable are so large that they defy imagination!

29. My unit in Kargil, though not in the glacier, had a full fledged poultry organized in a shed with *bukharis* so that my men had fresh chicken when they so desired.
30. There is a dairy is already functioning in Partapur on an experimental basis and approximately 200 liters of milk are sent up to different posts on the glacier every day.
31. Health remains a problem. Pulmonary edema is a killer. Acclimatization is the only way to ensure unnecessary deaths. At times, owing to operational imperatives, this is forgotten, but then the costs are high.
32. The challenges to human endurance make the conduct of operations as challenge not only in military terms but also in human ingenuity. This is the sole factor that makes Siachen Glacier operations a keynote issue in the art or science of conducting warfare and thereby keeping it at the center of everyone's attention.
33. *The author is a retired Infantry officer of the Indian Army*

The Northern Light Infantry in the Kargil Operations, 1999

Ravi Rikhye

Because of the exceptional harsh winter weather conditions in the North Kashmir region, prior to the Kargil operations Indian piquets were customarily withdrawn with the onset of winter. They returned in the late spring. In 1998 Pakistan infiltrated approximately 1000 troops during the winter and spring of 1998/1999, presenting India with a de facto change in the Line of Control.

India reacted by moving 8 Mountain Division from the Kashmir Valley to Dras, and forced the intruders out after several weeks of heavy fighting in June and July 1999. Approximately six brigades and 30,000 troops were required to complete the job.

The Northern Light Infantry conducted the infiltration and subsequent fighting. Initially four battalions – 3, 4, 5, and 6 NLI – were deployed; later, at least three other battalions – 7, 11, and 12 – were engaged.

Because officers from several other regiments were identified – 24 Sind, 13 Azad Kashmir, 1 and 63 Frontier Force, 60 Baluch – there exists a temptation to assume other battalions were involved. As far as is known, however, these officers probably were on deputation to the NLI. Regular battalions assigned to Force Command Northern Areas, for example, 69 Baluch at Olithingthang, did not enter the fighting. The confirmed exceptions were from the Pakistan Special Services Group, which normally rotates two companies through the Skardu sector. Officers from 1 and 3 Special Services Group were also killed, and the SSG was an essential part of Pakistani plans.

Two Frontier Scouts battalions (wings in Frontier Corps terminology) – 2 Chitral Scouts and a battalion of the Bajaur Scouts – joined the fighting to reinforce NLI battalions.

One reason Pakistan may have been constrained in escalating the fighting once the Indians began pushing the NLI off the mountain posts was that Pakistan could not shift Kashmir-committed battalions to the north in case the fighting escalated, and outside battalions would have required an extensive period of acclimatization. India could shift six brigades without affecting its Kashmir defenses because these troops were on counterinsurgency duty, and sure enough, the rest of 1999 saw an increase in militant activity.

The NLI suffered very heavy casualties in the fighting: the Indian Army buried 244 killed and Pakistan accepted the bodies of five additional killed. The Herald, a Pakistani publication, indicates that more than 500 soldiers were killed and buried in the Northern Areas. It is probable that some additional men were also killed but are buried outside

the Northern Areas. For example, the two Scouts wings belong to the North West Frontier Province, not to the Northern Areas. This adds up to upwards of 750 men killed. It appears that 6 NLI suffered particularly heavy losses.

The impact of such a high casualty rate on the tiny communities of the thinly populated Northern Areas must have been disastrous, and the Herald article indicates this was the case. See www.vijayinkargil.org/herald.htm . The fighting was followed by unrest in the Northern Areas. The Pakistan Government dealt with the unrest by:

- Suppression – the Northern Areas in any case do not have the right to vote even when Pakistan is under democratic rule.
- Cash payments – Payments ranging from Rs 900,000 to Rs 1,200,000 were made to the families of men killed. In the South Asia context, particularly so in the poor and backward Northern Areas, these are enormous sums of money.
- Recognition – the NLI was regularized and over 40 gallantry awards given

The NLI suffered heavier losses than the Indian attackers even though the latter were fighting upmountain because:

- NLI posts were isolated and not cross-supported due to the need to grab the maximum territory. Indian forces were able to concentrate against each in turn and overwhelm them. The analogy with the Sino-India War 1962 is obvious.
- To avoid alerting the Indians, Pakistan did not improve its communications in this remote area. Consequently, it was unable to adequately resupply its posts. In the absence of proper roads, a large number of porters are required, but because the area is so thinly populated, and because Pakistan did not expect India to retaliate, few porters would have been available.
- To avoid escalating the war, Pakistan did not reinforce NLI posts to the extent it could have, either with NLI battalions or regular army battalions.
- Most important, India used firepower to an extent unprecedented in South Asia. In just one operation to seize three posts in the Dras area, for example, Indian guns fired over 4000 rounds. This may be quite routine in western armies, but is an unheard of ammunition expenditure in South Asia. Pakistan artillery, which works to a high standard and was a big reason the Indians did not do better in 1965, could not operate effectively once the NLI was pushed off the high piquets and it lost its forward observers.

The NLI appears to have fought with exceptional bravery, despite lack of support from higher headquarters and grave disquiet among its ranks at Pakistan's actions. For example, the Indian Army website listed above has posted pages from the diary of a company commander of 5 NLI. This company had only 71 men at the start of its operation instead of the 113 authorized, which indicates serious trouble even before the onset of the fighting. Twenty-five men were evacuated due to sickness, and a number of others asked for permission to leave the service. The latter were, of course, not allowed to do so. Though the photographed pages are hard to read, it appears at one stage the company was down to just 37 or 38 men.

Despite these conditions, India took only eight prisoners. One, having run out of ammunition, resorted to throwing rocks at the attackers. Some of the prisoners was severely wounded and were possibly left behind by withdrawing troops. One must, of

course, take into account the possibility that the Indians refused to take prisoners, in part because of the earlier torture, mutilation, and execution of four Indian soldiers. At the same time, one should possibly avoid pinning the blame of the NLI. For one thing, a Pakistan Army officer saved two of the six men who fell into Pakistani hands. For another, that the bodies were returned despite their obvious condition may show that someone in authority wanted to do the decent thing even though the Pakistan Army would be blamed. It is possible that the Pakistan Special Services Group, not the NLI or other elements of the Pakistan Army, were responsible. The SSG routinely executes prisoners after unspeakable treatment. Its battalion in East Pakistan in 1971 was guilty of the most serious war crimes against civilians; another battalion left ample evidence of its handiwork in the hotly disputed Chaamb sector in the western front. Though one should avoid making political comments, one must wonder if the ongoing cooperation between the US military and the SSG is perhaps the wisest course for the United States military when it is trying its best to avoid involvement with foreign forces that might be guilty of war crimes.

The saddest aspect of the Kargil fighting is that the Pakistan Government refused to accept back the bodies of all except 5 killed. One finds incredible and unbelievable that a government can be so devoid of honor as to first tell its soldiers to discard their uniforms, destroy their ID, infiltrate enemy-held terrain, fight without adequate support, refuse to reinforce them, in effect leaving them to be killed, and on top of this, refuse to take the bodies back, all because of a failed fiction that these men were Kashmiri freedom fighters not under its control. This is not the place to get into a political discussion, but the general reader should know there are no Kashmiri freedom fighters in Ladakh and never will be because the Ladakh Muslims are of the "wrong" sect and completely support India.

So not only this fiction not particularly intelligent, by requiring its men to fight out of uniform, the Pakistan Government stripped them of the protections of the Geneva Convention. If India did indeed execute any POWs, it was completely within its lawful right to do so, as it was dealing with an invasion of its territory by armed civilians. The Pakistan Government seems to have forgotten that in South Asia, at least, soldiering is an honorable profession. A government can ask for volunteers who will be expected to fight out of uniform. It cannot require its soldiers to do so. This is an absolute abuse of its soldiers, and what makes it worse is that the Northern Areas have no political voice.

One is horrified to learn of even worse happenings from the Herald story. Bodies of NLI soldiers killed in the fighting were taken back to their villages during the night, usually with just one soldier accompanying the body, and dumped outside their family's house at all hours. Sometimes the soldiers were out of uniform. The bodies were not even washed and properly dressed in uniform. The Herald speaks of two cousins who lay in their coffins dressed in tracksuits. A soldier who served in the same unit as another whose body was returned told the family that at their post only some kilograms of sugar was left by way of food. The dead soldier's father told the Herald that the youngster still had sugar on his mouth. So now one not only have a violation of military honor, one have a complete disregard for religion and human decency.

A last point. If callous civilians had treated the military in this manner, perhaps there could be some excuse. The Kargil intrusion, however, was conceived, planned, and executed in secrecy by the highest echelons of the Pakistan General Staff, including their

divisional commander, the Force Commander Northern Areas. The now-deposed civilian government had little to do with it except to retroactively give its stamp of approval. The guiding spirit behind the operation was the head of the Pakistan Army himself, now the head of the country.

A version of this article was originally published on Ravi's excellent site at Orbat.com.