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The banner, shown courtesy of the Schwind Collection to Pēteris Cedrinš, is the personal banner of prince Avalov, commander of the West Volunteer Army (Западная добровольческая армия), a White Russian anti-Bolshevik and pro-German force created by Germany Gen. von der Goltz in August 1919 merging the rest of German Freikorps in the Baltic States and some Russian POWs with the Special Russian Corps raised in November 1918 by Gen. Graf Fëdor Arturovič Keller and by Cossack Gen. Pavel Bermond, later Prince Avalov, both Knights of the Russian Branch of the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem (SOSJJ). The Corps lent allegiance to Kolchak's white government and later to a Latvian puppet government supported by Berlin, and fought against both the Bolshevik and the Latvian democratic government supported by the Entente, being disbanded in December 1919. The Banner front shows the imperial coat of arms. On the reverse, the Black Maltese Cross with Crown of Thorns memorializes General Graf Keller, murdered by the Bolsheviks

<http://www.theknightsofsaintjohn.com/History-After-Malta.htm>;

<http://www.vexilloграфия.ru/russia/beloe.htm>;

<http://lettonica.blogspot.com/2007/11/bear-slayers-day.html> (Pēteris Cedrinš, *Bear Slayer's Day*, 11 November 2007). Cedrinš posted the image of the Flag's recto on wikipedia commons.

The Mountains as a Friend and a Foe: The Indian Army in Kargil War

by DIPTANGSHU DUTTA GUPTA¹

“The talent of a General has most room to display itself in a closely intersected, undulating country. In mountains he has too little command over the separate parts, and the direction of all is beyond his powers; in open plains it is simple and does not exceed those powers”

Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*²

ABSTRACT. At the turn of the 21st Century, the world witnessed a major battle in the Greater Himalayas. In the summer of 1999, India and Pakistan fought the Kargil War. Kashmir Valley was always a contested region between the two states since 1947 and both states have been involved in conventional wars until 1971. India was neither new to mountain warfare nor was also not an expert, given its bitter experience with China in 1962. This paper will try to identify the high-altitude war tactics of the Indian army against the Pakistani Northern Light Infantry (NLI). Although India has published several accounts of its key operations in Kargil, yet most of those remain classified. Therefore utilizing existing sources like the diaries of personal experience of army men, declassified government reports and media reports are the only sources I have majorly relied on. Special focus is given how the Indian army adapted itself to high-altitude warfare for the first time as they were training and fighting simultaneously with persistence and determination to gradually make the mountainous terrains their ally against the Pakistani forces, who had already captured crucial points beyond the Line of Control (LoC) posing a direct threat to mainland Indian Kashmir. In the end, the Indian and Pakistani perspectives of the Kargil War shows how the memory and experience of Kargil War has prepared India to face asymmetrical conflicts in the near future when conventional Pakistani offensive has failed against it. India's (asymmetrical) ex-

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2 See chapter 4 on ‘The Chief Moral Powers’ of Book 3 ‘Of Strategy in General’. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Anatol Rapoport (Ed.), London, Penguin Classics, 1982, pp. 253 – 254.

perience at the mountains brought serious policy changes in military, domestic and foreign spheres, where special focus has been given at the end. Asymmetrical conflicts were no longer restricted to the Kashmir Valley after 1999 as radical jihadist groups further spread their terrorist activities in India (like the 2000 Red Fort, 2001 Indian Parliament, 2008 Mumbai Attacks, and so on) causing India to combat terrorism inside out.

KEYWORDS: KARGIL, INDIA, PAKISTAN, KASHMIR, MOUNTAIN, ASYMMETRICAL.

Introduction

Mountains stand as a symbol of solidarity, isolation as well as defence. Various rebel groups and militias worldwide have used rugged terrain to resist central governing authorities. Throughout the world, generally speaking, asymmetrical conflicts centre around strategic natural locations either deep forests or rugged mountainous terrain. The Russians have had a long experience of mountain combat since the days of the Soviet-Afghan War and are still fighting against the Chechnya rebels in the Caucasus Mountains. The Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas of Mexico is based in the Sierra Madre de Chiapas mountain range. In The Philippines, the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group is based in the mountainous jungles of Mindanao Island. The Colombian government is fighting off the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in the Andes range. The Himalayan Ranges, which houses nine out of ten highest peaks in the world has been a contested zone among states like India, Pakistan, China and Tibet.

The Himalayas as the highest battle theatre in the world have tested humanity's adaptation and combating skills simultaneously, be it Alexander III's expeditions in the 4th Century BCE or the 1999 Kargil Conflict between India and Pakistan. Until the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution in 2019, Kargil used to fall under the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, after which it now forms one of the two districts of the Union Territory of Ladakh, the other one being Leh. Kashmir was already a contested zone since 1947 between India and Pakistan (soon after their independence). Jammu and Kashmir was formerly a princely state under Maharaja Hari Singh and had a total area of 2,22,236 sq. km as per the Kargil Review Committee (KRC) Report. Of this, 78,114 sq. km. is under the illegal occupation of Pakistan, of which again 5180 sq. km. (the



Fig. 1. Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. (Source: Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, public domain, wikimedia commons)

Sagsham Valley) was ceded to China in 1963 as part of a boundary settlement. Approximately 37, 555 sq. km. in Ladakh is under illegal Chinese occupation.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir which acceded to India on 26 October 1947 has five main regions – Kashmir, Jammu, Ladakh, the so-called “Azad Kashmir”

and the Northern Areas (Fig. 1).³ India faced battles in the Himalayas with Pakistan and China earlier in the 1960s, but those were mostly conventional wars. The Kargil War was different from those previous wars fought by India. Even by the late 1990s, India had developed a considerable military strength, but it lacked mountain warfare training despite the fact it amassed enough military resources. Moreover, there was a lack of synergy between chief departments of the Indian Defence Ministry, but a closer comparison with its Pakistani counterparts reveals serious fallacies in case of the latter, something which I have reflected upon in the end. Perhaps, that is why, taking into consideration India's intelligence failure, during the initial developments in the Kargil sector with the NLI (Northern Light Infantry) infiltrations, India believed that it was just another conventional war that needed to be dealt with full strength and force. Only from the month of June onwards, did India realise that this conflict could be stopped unless it 'conventionalises' the unconventional tactics,⁴ required in an asymmetric war fought in the high altitude of the uneven terrain and cold deserts of the Greater Himalayas.

This paper will analyse those tactics that India developed and applied amidst the course of the war as a part of the military's learning and unlearning process to engage in an asymmetric high-altitude conflict. Equal importance will be given to the aftermath of the war, which was crucial to India's revelation to overhaul its national security – whose outcome is the Group of Minister's Report (henceforth, *GoM Report*) in 2001. With that, we see changes in India's Defence and Foreign policies from onwards 21st century.

Kargil Conflict – A Continuation of Siachen Dispute of 1984?

Peter Lavoy writes "the Kargil operation was another in a series of failed attempts to resolve Indo-Pakistani disputes through force or diplomacy". Before the Siachen dispute in 1984, none of the countries emphasised establishing a standing military in high-altitude areas along northern portions of the Line of

3 *From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report (KRC Report)*, New Delhi, SAGE Publications Pvt. Limited, 2000, pp. 34 – 52.

4 The consistent Indian operations and its will and capacity to conventionalise unconventional war tactics was something that came as a surprise to Pakistan. Peter R. LAVOY, Ed., *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict*, New York, Cambridge U. P., 2009, p. 9.

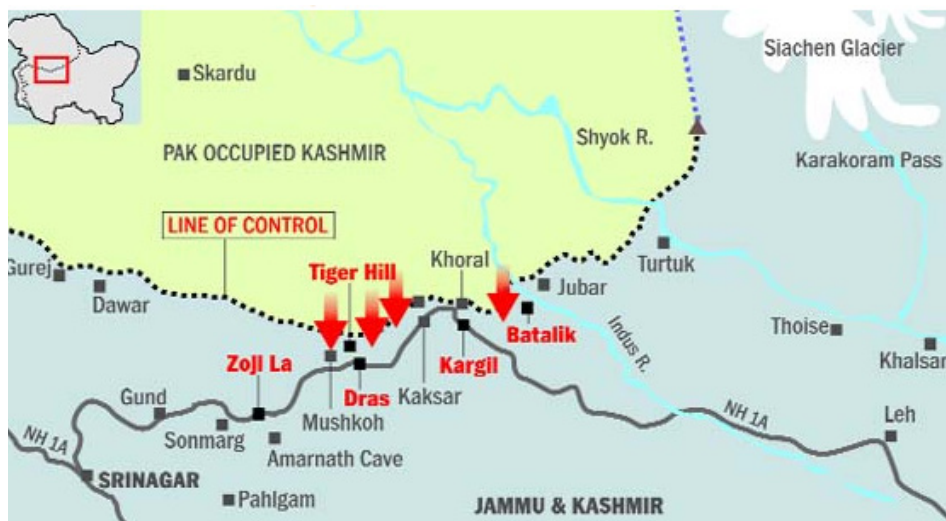


Fig. 2. The arrows depict the areas where intrusions happened across a 160-km stretch in the Kargil Sector along the Line of Control (LOC). (Source: The Tribune, online, <https://www.tribuneindia.com/2014/20140720/pers.htm>)

Control of Kashmir.⁵ Historically, Kargil was a frontier and not a border, which means that it was not a region politically delimited by boundaries between states. The word Kargil is said to be derived from *khar* (fort) and *rkil* (centre). It meant the place between many forts since it stands at the crossroads coming from Srinagar, Leh and Skardu (Baltistan).⁶

William Moorcroft was the first European to cross the Himalayas in 1819 where he described the geography of the region as “of extreme sterility and barrenness” that generates commerce “of no great value or interest” and is situated between gigantic mountains as “ordinary towering to a height which surpasses that of the pinnacles of the Alps”.⁷ This situation hasn’t changed as such. The region of Ladakh is home to India’s only cold desert.

The Kargil Sector (Fig. 2) extends over a frontage of 168 km from Khaobal Gali to Chorbat La. The average height of this range is 5000m and is covered in

5 LAVOY, *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia*, cit., p. 15.

6 Radhika GUPTA, «Allegiance and Alienation: Border Dynamics in Kargil», in David N. GELLNER (Ed.), *Borderland Lives in Northern South Asia*, Durham and London, Duke U.P., 2013, p. 49.

7 LAVOY, *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia*, cit., p. 15.

thick snow from November to May. Two identifiable roads can be approached from the Pakistani side to this sector – along the Indus and Skardu river valleys. This area is marked by mountain peaks ranging from 17,000 – 19,000 ft. above sea level.⁸ The Indian Army while patrolling the LOC (Line of Control) usually took the river valleys and avoided the high peaks. As per reports received by the Director General of the India Meteorological Department, Assistant Chief of Air Staff in Air Headquarters, Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE), and the DRDO, all indicate that snow came late in the winter of 1998 – 99 and the total snowfall was comparatively less than that of its previous years. Although snowfall in the winter of 1998 was less, by March 1999 that snowfall had accumulated enough than the previous years in the valleys that made the area avalanche prone.⁹ Probably for these reasons Pakistan never attacked as per conventional methods. Pakistan's ground study and training of the Northern Light Infantry (NLI) to make this local paramilitary force fully acclimatized to this area was remarkable. The NLI perhaps, were conducting training in the Northern Areas for a long time before they infiltrated areas crossing the LOC in the winter months. One of the hypothetical reasons that I believe behind the Kargil conflict was the perpetuation of the Siachen Conflict of 1984. There might have been a desperation on the Pakistani side to get the region of the Siachen completely under their control to get over their loss of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1971.

Air Commodore Jasjit Singh has termed the Siachen Conflict as 'Pakistan's Fourth War'.¹⁰ In Balti language, the word *Sia* means rose and *Chin* refers to place. Siachen therefore refers to the 'place of roses'.¹¹ Since Siachen was not demarcated as per the Simla Agreement of 1972, the Pakistanis feel India has violated the treaty. In the fifth and sixth round of Indo-Pak Defence Secretary Level talks in 1989 and 1992 respectively, the *KRC Report Point 3.21* on Siachen states –

“both countries came close to an agreement on a package of measures on Siachen entailing ceasefire, establishment of a de-militarised zone and withdrawal of forces”. Further progress could not be made as Pakistan was unwilling to agree to authenticate the ground positions held by the two

8 *KRC Report*, cit., p. 83.

9 *KRC Report*, cit., p. 84.

10 Jasjit SINGH, «Pakistan's Fourth War», *Strategic Analysis* XXIII, 5 (1999).

11 Tariq RAHMAN, *Pakistan's Wars: An Alternative History*, London and New York, Routledge, 2022, p. 175.



Fig. 3. The Indian Army at Siachen Glacier (Source: The Statesman, online)

sides. During November 1998 talks, however, India insisted that before any package could be discussed, the ceasefire must be stabilised.”¹²

[*Omissis*]¹³

Two versions of the Indo-Pak Siachen contestation show the desperation of the two states to establish their flags as earliest as possible to overcome the threat they posed to each other.¹⁴ India’s desperation for Siachen stems from the fact, that Siachen is strategically important for India as that region is surrounded by areas occupied by both Pakistan and China. But both China and Pakistan avoid Siachen to threaten India owing to its inhospitable climate. Shireen Mazari however shows that the useless battle on the highest battlefield begins with Indian

12 *KRC Report*, cit., p. 64.

13 *KRC Report*, (Omitted for Government Security).

14 Pakistani version state that it was Pakistan to issue orders to foreign mountaineers till 1984 when India woke up to this issue and moved troops to occupy the glacier. The Indian version state that Pakistan sent patrols to this area in August 1983 and followed this with soldiers to occupy the passes in Saltoro Range (17,000 to 21,000 feet) first and, in response, India also sent its troops to thwart this move out of defensive actions. See RAHMAN, *Pakistan’s Wars*, cit., pp. 175 – 176.

occupation which was taken seriously only after Pakistan ‘sent India a signal that it could ingress across the LOC under the Simla agreement’.¹⁵ Tariq Rahman, in his recent interview with Pakistani Colonel Azam Jaffar on 19 April 2019, what he documented in *Pakistan’s Wars*, shows that an independent intrusion in the Indian territory was planned under ‘Chilling Operation’ that was planned earlier on 30/31 July 1992 by Major General Z. I. Abbasi (1943–2009) without the permission of the Pakistani Chief of Army Staff (COAS). The objective was to send a helicopter with 6 – 8 soldiers for surveillance who were dropped near the Commando Ridge. Eventually that helicopter flew near to an Indian post on Brigadier Anwari’s orders not expecting that it will become a target of a heat-seeking (Indian) missile that would result in them falling on one of Pakistan’s artillery posts.¹⁶ The future Kargil plan was also a similar secret plan to this one, and instances like these show how Pakistan was institutionally divided. According to Brian Cloughley, in the 1990s India spent \$ 100 million a year while Pakistan spent \$10 million on Siachen.¹⁷

During the Kargil War, the Pakistani penetration was deeper in Batalik and eastern sectors of Kargil like Chorbat La and Turtok which were nearer to the Siachen zone. The disruption caused by the infiltrators to the NH 1A (Srinagar-Leh Highway) was one of their tactics to cut off communication lines between Siachen and Dras as they had taken over advantageous positions like Tololing and Tiger Hill which directly observed the highway. Perhaps in this way, they wanted to shift their actual focus to Siachen while keeping the Indian operations mostly engaged in the Western and Central areas like Mushkoh and Dras. But Pakistan lagged only one thing – continuous logistics and reinforcements, which will result in them facing a massive Indian offensive, something which I have discussed later.

India itself faced intelligence problems that also affected initial defence operations in the frontier zones. As per the KRC Report, Point 4.3 which deals with *Intelligence Acquisition* states that India is primarily dependent on civilian intel-

15 Shireen M. MAZARI, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction*, Islamabad, Ferozsons, 2003, p. 14.

16 Pakistani Major Khalid Sultan was flying a helicopter with Major Babar Ramzan as co-pilot and Brigadier Anwari on board on 1 August 1992. See the detailed interview in RAHMAN, *Pakistan’s Wars*, cit., pp. 177 – 178.

17 Brian CLOUGHLEY, *A History of the Pakistan Army: Wars and Insurrections*, Karachi, Oxford U. P., 1999, p. 291.

ligence like R&AW (Research and Analysis Wing), Divisional Intelligence Units (DIU) and Intelligence and Field Security Units (IFSU). Unlike other states, India doesn't have the provision where armed forces are supported by integrated defence intelligence agencies with adequate resources to carry out a significant portion of this task during peacetime.¹⁸ Moreover, the Indian Intelligence faced challenges over language problems as most of the NLI men speak Balti and other languages having similarities with Kashmiri and Punjabi. The addition of Pash-tu-speaking Frontier Corps troops supported the initial impression among Indian Intelligence agencies that the intruders were militants rather than regulars or NLI.¹⁹ Indian Intelligence was also naïve to detect developments that would bring forth a future asymmetric conflict. James J. Wirtz and Surinder Rana state that Indian Army Intelligence was attuned to the prospect of a large-scale conventional operation in the Kargil region of the LOC.²⁰ To detect a conventional offensive, army intelligence should be on alert as seen from various warning signs like mobilisation of infantry and artillery units, construction of roads, tunnels and bridges, helipads and airstrips, etc. This is quite relevant to India-China border disputes as both countries have been keen to develop their military and infrastructure along the LAC (Line of Actual Control).

Indian Intelligence lacked reports because of the desertion of some inhospitable check posts along the LOC during the months of winter when infiltrators made their way into India. Yet the *KRC Report* in *Point 8.9* stated that in from of the best available intelligence reports of that time, one unidentified battalion was at Gultari. The report on the same point also stated since there was no confirmation on this report, they couldn't conclude whether this was an additional battalion in the FCNA region or not.²¹ Moreover, one lakh of ammunition and 500 snow boots were found in that area. Fragmented reports didn't give the Indian army the confidence it needed to respond as they were hoping for a 'conventional

18 *KRC Report*, cit., p. 82.

19 Srinjoy CHOWDHURY, *Despatches from Kargil*, New Delhi, Penguin, 2000, p. 49.

20 James J. WIRTZ and Surinder RANA, «Surprise at the Top of the World: India's Systemic and Intelligence Failure», in Peter R. LAVOY (Ed.), *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict*, New Delhi, Penguin, 2009, p. 225.

21 "The report also failed to found indicators like improved communication and logistics, essential for an infusion in strength." Improved communication and logistics, to me, mostly refers to conventional communication and logistics that generally happens in a full fledged war scenario. See *KRC Report*, cit., p. 153.

offensive' from Pakistan. Kargil has always been a quiet front and the Indian army perhaps thought, a 'conventional offensive strike' from Pakistan's side was unlikely to happen during the winter snowy months, but these fragmented evidences were enough to show that something was brewing up in Kargil. From the Pakistani viewpoint stated in the recently declassified report of the NSCS (National Security Council Secretariat of the Government of India), which deals with the discussions between the KRC (Kargil Review Committee) had with the Editor-in-Chief of the Indian Express, Shekhar Gupta, (henceforth, Secret NSCS Report), Pakistan believed what it did in Kargil was equivalent to what India did in Siachen.²²

Recently in July 2024, according to Lt Gen K.H. Singh who commanded 27 Rajput Battalion, there was a huge information gap at the end of 1998. He recounted in a meeting that even before May 1999, he along with Maj Gen V.S. Budhwar while on a helicopter spotted footprints on snow indicating the presence of intruders in Mushkoh sector! These uncanny activities continued for a period of four to five months directly indicating a consistent intrusion taking place during the winter months. This shows the *fait accompli* of the Indian intelligence and the lack of prompt decisions before the war. Singh led his battalion to capture Point 5770 from the Pakistanis in broad daylight in northern Khardung La, where much focus wasn't given to intrusions as was in Dras.²³

From a Secret Plan to a Surprise Attack

Even though the Kargil War was a limited war and didn't escalate into a full-scale conventional war, Pakistani commentators like Shaukat Qadir²⁴ state the Kargil plan may have been drafted as early as 1987 or just prior to 1998 for a

22 Kargil Review Committee, National Security Council Secretariat, Government of India, «SECRET: Record of Discussions the Kargil Review Committee Had with Shri Shekhar Gupta, Editor-In-Chief, Indian Express, New Delhi on 24th November 1999 at 11:30A.M. In the NSCS Conference Room», New Delhi, 1999, point 8. (SECRET NSCS Report)

23 Man Aman Singh CHHINA, «Military Digest: By March 1999 There Were Reasonable Inputs on Intrusion in Kargil, Says Retired Lieutenant General», *The Indian Express*, 2024.

24 Shaukat Qadir is a retired soldier and brigadier from the Pakistan army, the founder and Vice President of the Islamabad Policy Research Institute, and now works as an independent analyst.

larger operation.²⁵ Hassan Abbas state that the plan was briefed twice before to General Zia-ul-Haq who rejected it fearing a full-scale war with India.²⁶ Although the third operational plan was the dream of Lieutenant General Mohammad Aziz Khan, chief of the general staff (CGS), Shaukat Qadir mentions that later somewhere around mid-November 1998, Lt Gen Mahmud, then commanding 10 Corps, sought an appointment with the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Gen Pervez Musharraf, through the Chief of General Staff (CGS), Lt. Gen Aziz.²⁷ When he went to see him, he was accompanied by the General Officer Commanding (GOC), Frontier Constabulary of the Northern Areas (FCNA), and Major General (later Lt Gen) Javed Hassan. Hassan was the one to carry out the operations stretched from Siachen Glacier to Minimarg under Brigades 323, 62, and 80.²⁸ They sought permission to execute a plan, which wasn't yet executed, to occupy areas of the Dras-Kargil sector, vacated by the Indian army every winter.²⁹ This Kargil 'misadventure' plan named 'Operation BADR' had four aims – to alter the line of control east of Zoji La Pass and deny the use of NH1A Highway in this area, to capture Turtok/Turtuk in the southern bank of Shyok River in Ladakh, encourage insurgency in Kashmir and, to internationalise the Kashmir issue.³⁰ This supports the fact their real intention was to get control of the NH 1A, severing Siachen's ties with mainland India.

“Pakistani generals sought permission to execute a plan to occupy terrain in the Dras-Kargil sector, vacated by the Indians every winter. The rationale

25 Shaukat QADIR, «An Analysis of the Kargil Conflict 1999», *The RUSI Journal* (2002), pp. 24-30.

26 Zia was the first army chief invited by the Military Operations (MO) directorate to see a presentation on this operation. His ensuing conversation in Urdu with the director general of military operations (DGMO), shows Zia feared Indian offensive operations that might lead to full scale war if India crosses the LOC to attack Pakistan. See Hassan ABBAS, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army, and America's War on Terror*, London, M.E. Sharpe, 2015, p. 170.

27 QADIR, *An Analysis of the Kargil Conflict 1999*, cit., p.25.

28 This information on the Pakistani order of Battle is taken from the Kargil Review Committee Report of the Government of India. See KRC Report, cit., pp. 96-97; also see John H. GILL, «Military Operations in the Kargil Conflict», in Peter R. LAVOY (Ed.) *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict*, New York, Cambridge U. P., 2009, p. 96.

29 QADIR, *An Analysis of the Kargil Conflict 1999*, cit., pp. 25-26.

30 Scott GATES and Kaushik ROY, *Limited War in South Asia: From Decolonization to Recent Times*, London and New York, Routledge, 2018, p. 123.

was that it would provide a fillip to the Kashmiri freedom movement.”³¹

Although the plan might have been rejected earlier owing to its risk factor, the plan was kept secret among the top elite Pakistani Army circuit of the gang of four,³² and controversial reports say that the plan was briefed to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad on 29 January, 5 February and 12 March of 1999.³³ This can be considered since it was even mentioned in this recently declassified report (i.e., Secret NSCS Report). Shekhar Gupta believes that neither Sharif nor Pakistan Army (since it was a plan among the elite Army circuit) didn't plan how the excursions took place, moreover, the editor-in-chief was a close acquaintance of Sharif when the latter was the Chief Minister of (Pakistani) Punjab.³⁴ Some Pakistani accounts asserted that India was preparing an attack to seize key grounds of the Shingo River to deny Pakistani troops direct observation of the Srinagar-Leh Highway (NH 1A). Hence the Pakistani move across the LOC was justified as a 'preemptive defensive attack' to prevent Indian aggression.³⁵

The KRC report (*Point 4.7*) mentions some posts are evacuated due to health hazards in the winter months and it also categorises two types of check posts.³⁶ The NLI or the Northern Light Infantry, which was formed by the British Indian Army to patrol the Himalayas was reorganised into Karakoram, Northern and

31 QADIR, *An Analysis of the Kargil Conflict 1999*, cit., p. 26.

32 The gang of four included the four parents of the Kargil plan – Lieutenant General Mahmud Ahmed, Pervez Musharraf, FCNA Major General Javed Hassan and Lieutenant General Muhammad Aziz Khan (Chief of the Army General Staff or CGS). The absolute secrecy that was one of the preconditions of the success of the operation, to secure it against any possibility of leaks, also made it proof against any possibility of a second opinion and thus against any collusion with a sense of reality. Corps, commanders and other service chiefs were also excluded from the decision-making process. See ABBAS, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism*, pp. 170–171.

33 Sarfaraz AHMED, Hasan MANSOOR, and Farhan SHARIF, «Nawaz Was Briefed on Kargil and He Was on Board: Musharraf», *Daily Times*, June 13 (2006); Pervez MUSHARRAF, *In the Line of Fire*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 2006, p. 96.

34 *SECRET NSCS Report*, points 2, 8.

35 MAZARI, *The Kargil Conflict 1999*, cit., pp. 29 – 32.

36 The Indian Army maintains two types of posts, firstly were 'Winter Vacated Posts' which could expose troops to the risk of loss of life due to extreme weather conditions and avalanches and are vacated before maintenance of routes becomes dangerous. Secondly, were the 'Winter Cut-Off Posts' which are permanent posts that needs to be operationally kept occupied throughout the year. To support the 'Winter Cut-Off Posts', all these posts are stocked up for 210 days till next supplies are sent. See *KRC Report*, cit., pp. 84 – 85

Gilgit Scouts in 1973 by Pakistan.³⁷ They have specialised in mountain and arctic warfare missions for 3 – 4 months in the elite mountaineering school of Astor in the Northern Areas.³⁸ They were mostly locals of the region especially accustomed to the difficult terrain and high altitude atmosphere. The NLI had already made their way into India crossing the LOC during winter.

India needs to make the Mountains as its 'Shield and Sword'

In an asymmetric war, no war tactics and intelligence reports from communication and logistical developments follow a conventional ubiquitous pattern. Reports generated from intelligence bureaus are scant that might have or have not any relations with each other (something to which Indian Intelligence was confused at first). Moreover as in my observation, in high-altitude warfare, the mountains are the '*Shield and the Sword*', which could be tactfully used for both offence and defence. Pakistani NLI was not only trained and acclimatized well enough to bear the lowest of temperatures, blizzards and snowfall in the winter months in Kashmir, but they have used exactly those routes to camouflage themselves from the Indian eye. The NLI travelled in small parties of 30 men each, taking the ridgelines created by the abandonment of outposts during the winter months.³⁹ The NLI sought to avoid contact with the Indian Army's 121 Brigade of 3 Infantry Division, five battalions, and 15 Corps that patrolled some 90 miles of the LOC in Kargil.⁴⁰

The Mountain Strike Corps (MSCs) (Fig. 4) was and continues to be an important force in the Indian Himalayas. According to Sanjay Badri-Maharaj, the armies of India and Pakistan are almost identical to each other as they are the direct descendants of the British Indian Army. The Battalion is the basic infantry fighting formation both of these armies.⁴¹ Battalions are joined together to form

37 Marcus P. ACOSTA, *High Altitude Warfare: The Kargil Conflict and the Future*, Master of Arts Dissertation in National Security Affairs, 2003, p. 28.

38 These three to four months courses is extremely extensive in nature and produces proficient mountaineers who are assigned to units like the NLI as instructors. See Robert KARNIOL, «Fighting on the Roof of the World», *Jane's Defence Weekly* 30, 22 (1998), pp. 27–31.

39 P. ACOSTA, *High Altitude Warfare*, cit., p. 30.

40 GILL, *Military operations in the Kargil Conflict*, cit., p. 101.

41 The battalion is composed of four rifle companies and headquarters and support companies. Its heaviest weapons are generally mortars and machineguns, though some may also



Fig. 4. India's Mountain Striking Corps in Training Action (Source: India TV)

a brigade. Based on South Asian geography, particularly that of India's, infantry are of two formations – plains and mountains. The Indian MSCs form the pivotal troops along the Himalayan borders.⁴² For both India and Pakistan the Corps is the largest formation of the army. It was introduced by Napoleon Bonaparte in the 19th Century in his Grand Army (*Le Grande Armée*) during the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815), which was a continuation of the French Revolutionary Wars (1792–1802).⁴³ In South Asia, there are two types of corps: 'Holding Corps' for defence and 'Strike Corps' for offence.⁴⁴ The MSCs are not heavily equipped unlike the Holding Corps. This is done to make the MSCs more flexible and swiftly

have anti-tank and surface-to-air missiles. In addition to basic infantry battalions, mechanized, parachute and commando battalions also exist, each created, trained and equipped for a special role.

42 The mountain corps could be also be deployed in the plains if required.

43 Napoleon's I Corps was introduced in 1805 but was disbanded in 1814. It was formed again in April 1815 during his Hundred Days Rule that ended up in the Battle of Waterloo.

44 Sanjay BADRI-MAHARAJ, *Kargil 1999: South Asia's First Post-Nuclear Conflict*, Warwick, Helion & Company Limited, 2020, pp. 8 – 11.

adapt to any formations during war times. Light Artillery becomes the bloodline in mountain warfare and hence the MSCs were equipped with 105mm guns and 120mm mortars. Support elements like transport, anti-tank missile units, and air defences were well equipped to Strike Corps as opposed to Holding Corps.

Mobilisation of the Indian army happened in various aspects after 1999 (as explained later in the section of Indian Policy Changes), but this process was already in action before the 1990s. The creation of the Reorganised Army Plains Infantry Division (RAPID) was a unique and significant development for the Indian infantry on the South Asian battlefield. The introduction of RAPID can be traced back to the organisational changes in the Indian Army soon after the 1962 Sino-India War when efforts started to put stress on high-altitude warfare. It came into formation after 1975 with the reforms post-K.V. Krishna Rao Report, particularly in 1986 following the Indo-Chinese military standoff in the Sumdorong Chu Valley (also see in the section of the Indian Policy Changes) when the then Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), Sundarji raised the Army Aviation Corps and the RAPID together. This was the first instance when India introduced reforms for 'mobile warfare'.⁴⁵ Badri-Maharaj sees the RAPID's ability to be deployed in both offensive and defensive operations.⁴⁶

Retired Indian Army Major General Ashok Kalyan Verma mentions that the 121 brigade's patrol during the 1999 winters created a vacuum of 80km of uncovered gaps when Indian posts were vacated. These gaps varied from 36 km in the Mushkoh Valley to 9 km in Kaksar.⁴⁷ Throughout the winter, Pakistani infiltrators have set up their points from where they will start their operations in May. These operations were carefully planned with the help of logistics like mules, porters and to some extent using light helicopters like the double-engine PUMA and the

45 Vivek CHADHA, «An Assessment of Organisational Change in the Indian Army», *Journal of Defence Studies* 9, 4 (2015), pp. 24 – 30.

46 As of 1999, there were four RAPIDs in the Indian Army, all attached to the Holding Corps in Punjab and Rajasthan. The RAPID provided these essentially defensive formations with an extremely flexible unit that dramatically enhanced their ability to withstand offensive operations by Pakistani armour. Moreover, the RAPID possessed sufficient armoured and mechanised infantry assets to conduct reasonably significant offensive operations. The advent of the RAPID was accompanied by a dramatic upgrade of Indian Army C3I assets and communications. See BADRI-MAHARAJ, *Kargil 1999*, p. 13.

47 Ashok KALYAN VERMA, Major General, Indian Army (Retired), *Kargil: Blood on the Snow*, Delhi, Manohar, 2002, cit., p. 86.

single-engine LAMA, capable of flying at altitudes of 19,680 ft. and 17,715 ft. respectively.⁴⁸ In the North of Sando, the Pakistanis reinforced 30 troops with these helicopters. These were believed to be the Pakistani Special Forces, or the SSG who took over these positions. It was here where the Indian troops suffered considerable losses.⁴⁹

The NLI had taken the routes of higher elevation to cross the LOC as Indian brigades traditionally blocked the key routes like *nullahs* (ravines) keeping the upper elevations unchecked. Indian forces in that sector were therefore slender in winter and the “mindset” was defensive.⁵⁰ What needs to be noted is that Pakistan had proper logistical support to support the initial offensive operations against India, but they didn’t have any backup plan if a full-scale war broke out between the two countries. Pakistan like India by 1999, too underwent tremendous artillery moderation and reorganisation programme. Pakistan made a major organisational innovation by creating the subcontinent’s first artillery division using a core component of two artillery brigades and an air defence unit.⁵¹ The considerable manpower and resources India owned to support a full-scale operational war were clear to Pakistan in 1971 (even the DGMO conversation with Zia also revealed the Pakistani apprehension to be involved in a war with India), yet Pakistan pursuing asymmetrical tactics tried to internationalise the Kashmir issue at the United Nations. Then one might ask, whether Pakistan wanted to grapple Siachen or Kargil? This may be difficult to answer, still to the best of my knowledge, Pakistan may have intended to infiltrate Indian Kashmir to occupy its region piecemeal and an asymmetric conflict could be the plausible solution to this offer. This was done with an artillery introduction of mechanized units like 155mm and 203mm self-propelled guns and large numbers of magazine-fed Chinese Type 56 light machine guns by Pakistan for the first time in South Asia. Despite they were not as capable as India’s BMP-2s, the Pakistanis were equipped with radars, to

48 *KRC Report*, cit., p. 99.

49 See section II, chapter 2 of Lt Gen P.C. KATOCH and Saikat DATTA, *India’s Special Forces: History and Future of Indian Special Forces*, New Delhi, United Service Institution of India, 2013.

50 V. P. MALIK, *Kargil: From Surprise to Victory*, New Delhi, HarperCollins, 2006, p. 143; Saikat DATTA, «War against Error», *Outlook*, 2005.

51 Major S. BHADURI, «Weapons Overview: The Artillery Division», *Indian Defence Review*, 1992.

which the Indian soldiers stood no chance. Hence debacle followed the Indian soldiers everytime when they made their advance in broad daylight.⁵²

Indian Intelligence received its first report of major intrusion on 3 May 1999 when local shepherds informed 3 Punjab of 121 Brigade that they had spotted suspicious interlopers southwest of Jubar in the Batalik sector. After eleven days, the 121 and 102 Brigades and patrols of the 3 Infantry Division of the Indian Army gathered information on activities reported near Turtok on 6 May, Dras on 12 May and Mushkoh and Kaksar on 14 May. The bulk of fighting was carried out by the Srinagar based Corps under the aegis of the Northern Army Command, while the Indian Army Headquarters in New Delhi also played a major role.⁵³

What is interesting after this surprise attack is how the Indian Army reacted in a conventional retaliation only to suffer heavy losses in a high-altitude combat. This was the beginning of India's learning and unlearning process to train, acclimatize and simultaneously fight battles to end this limited war. It must be remembered that both India and Pakistan were already in the process of mobilisation of their respective armies. The Kargil war can be considered as a test to understand whose mobilisation was efficient and successful. India had 3 advantages to get hold of the initial developments as a first aid situation. Firstly, before trained armies were sent, the Ladakh Scouts⁵⁴ provided support in Batalik while the 11 Gorkha Rifles were summoned immediately from Siachen to take control of the situation.⁵⁵ All of them were experienced mountaineers. Secondly, the Zoji La Pass was declared open on 22 April, facilitating the supply of troops and munitions. Thirdly, the brigade headquarters at Dras was assigned to the headquarters of the 70 Brigade under Brigadier Devinder Singh.⁵⁶

52 Pakistan also made use of heavy machineguns for use in the surface role. These were a combination of .5"cal/12.7mm Browning M2HB machineguns and Chinese made copies of the 12.7mm DShK design of Soviet origin. See BADRI-MAHARAJ, *Kargil 1999*, cit., pp. 17 – 18.

53 See KATOCH and DATTA, *India's Special Forces*, section II, chapter 2.

54 The Ladakh Scouts were accepted as a regiment in the Indian Army after the Kargil Conflict. See Gurmeet KANWAL, Colonel, Indian Army, *Heroes of Kargil*, Delhi, Army Headquarters, 2002, p. 55.

55 P. ACOSTA, *High Altitude Warfare*, cit., p. 45.

56 *KRC Report*, cit., pp. 85 – 86; Amarinder SINGH, *A Ridge Too Far: War in the Kargil Heights*, Delhi, Tulika, 2001, p. 30, 54.

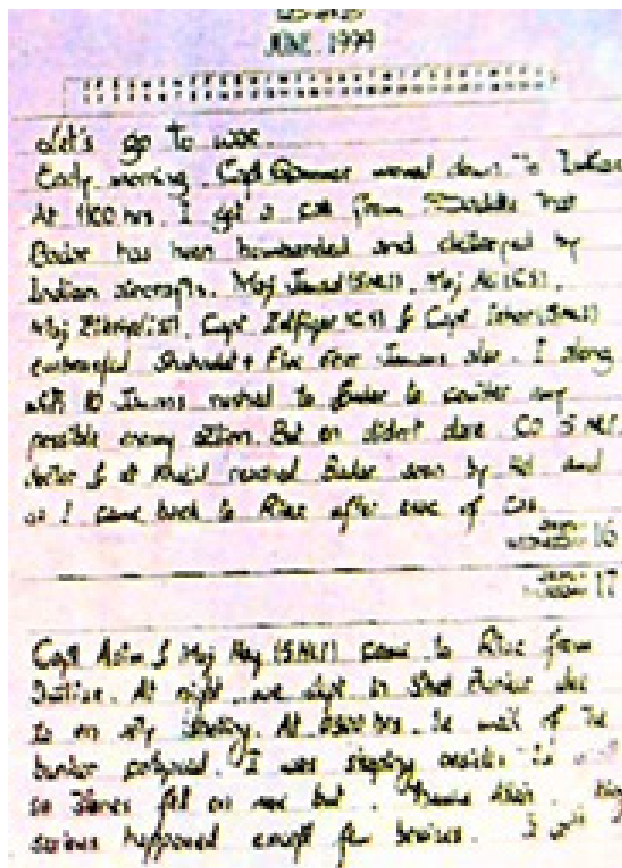


Fig. 5. A page from the diary of the 5 NLI Pakistani officer recovered from a captured post
 (Source: The Tribune, online)

The 2 Rajputana (RAJ) Rifles would give the first major victory with the capture of Tololing. Until then India with its 56 Mountain Brigade was in the process of capturing Tololing where the deepest infiltration happened in Dras, directly threatening the NH 1A. Indian operations were done in a set-piece manner setting off small teams or ‘companies’ who will simultaneously conduct offensive and defensive operations. A.N. Aul, commander of 56 Mountain Brigade, sent 2 Rajputana to carry out further assaults to capture the Tololing ridge. The attack commenced on 12 June. ‘C’ Company led by

Major Vivek Gupta and ‘D’ Company under Major Mohit Saxena set out for the assault. ‘A’ and ‘B’ Companies were established as fire bases as reserves for the attack. ‘D’ Company went in first along the southwestern approach towards its objective, Point 4590.⁵⁷ C and D Companies will engage in a direct attack on the enemy while A and B Companies will provide protection. The NLI soldiers on Tiger Hill managed to hold Indian forces at bay for nearly a month despite their small numbers and tactical mistakes.⁵⁸ Thanks to the high mountains which they

57 MALIK, *Kargil: From Surprise to Victory*, cit., see chapter 8.

58 P. ACOSTA, *High Altitude Warfare*, cit., p. 40.

skilfully used to camouflage their positions. However, the failure of a proper supply of reinforcements and the inhospitable conditions at higher altitudes made their resilience weaker to Indian operations. A diary of a captured 5 NLI officer (Fig. 5) describes his company as containing seventy-one men when it crossed the LOC. He evacuated twenty-five of them before Indian operations began but didn't receive replacements.⁵⁹

Ideally soldiers in outposts rotate to lower altitudes every ten to fourteen days to minimize exposure. Prolonged exposure can produce both physiological and psychological effects at altitudes above 8000 ft. Fatal illnesses like HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Ederma) and HACE (High Altitude Cerebral Ederma) develop, both of which are difficult to detect. Rapid weight loss is even common to trained elite mountaineers if they stay at such high altitudes for a long time, hence rotation is required.⁶⁰ Evacuation to below at least 3000ft is the first requirement for saving a soldier's life.⁶¹ The US soldiers conducting mountain warfare training at Abbotabad in Pakistan at 4000ft. lost approximately 25 pounds in a three-week training period.⁶² Acclimatization is not possible beyond 18000ft. About 60% of the Indian Army stationed at Siachen usually develops 'Siachen Syndrome', which is a combination of AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness) and psychological fatigue.⁶³

The 56 Brigade commanded two infantry battalions – 18 Grenadiers under Col. Kushal Thakur and 1 Naga under Col. D.A. Patil. The Naga Regiment was formed in 1970 from the Indian state of Nagaland and its adjoining states. They were important for their participation in the capture of Tololing, Black Tooth, Pimple Complex. The 2 Naga battalion of the Naga Regiment was inducted on 27 June 1999 for their operation in the capture of Twin Bump. Their fierce dedica-

59 Ravi RIKHYE, 'Bharat Rakshak', in *Bharat Rakshak Monitor*, 3 (2001), www.bharat-rakshak.com/MONITOR/ISSUE3-6/rikhye.html.

60 Muhammad Asim MALIK, Pakistan Army, «Mountain Warfare: The Need for Specialized Training», in L.W. GRAU and C.K. BARTLES (Eds.) *Mountain Warfare and Other Lofty Problems: Foreign Perspectives on High-Altitude Combat*, Solihull, Helion & Company, 2016, p. 32.

61 Craig M. BANULL, «High Altitude Medicine: Case Report», *Navy Medicine*, 2000.

62 C.J. CLEARWATER, «Above and Beyond», <www.pakistan.com/army/institute/highalti.html> [online accessed 28 April 2024].

63 Raspal S. KHOSA, «The Siachen Glacier Dispute: Imbroglion on the Roof of the World», *Contemporary South Asia* 8, 2 (1999), p. 197.

tion and service in COIN (Counter-Insurgency) operations earned them the titles of ‘Battle Honour – Mashkoh’ and ‘Theatre Honour – Kargil’. Sepoy Asuli Mao and Subedar Heni Mao were conferred the Vir Chakra and Sena Medal Gallantry Awards respectively.⁶⁴

The Tololing Ridge starts with Point 4590 and ends with Point 5140. Both the battalions operated in a manner which over time became more defensive and less offensive as no other battalions were present alongside them to provide cover. The Pakistani position was far more superior owing to their height, and they were equipped with heavy guns, mortars and automatic grenade launchers all of which were assembled in parts when they reached the top with the help of mules. Mules are indispensable animals in high-altitude logistics. They were a part of the US Army in Second World War in Burma and Italy and were also used as Mujahideen supply effort in the Soviet-Afghan War.⁶⁵ As part of the learning and application process, the Indian Army also later used mules in the war. This was notable when Lt. Col. M.B. Ravindranath established ammunition and water supply points on each axis when he received orders to seize Tololing. Mules carried battalion’s machine guns, mortars and ammunition up only a third of the route. Porters had to take over at that point, making a treacherous seven-hour uphill climb. The locals of Ladakh were very supportive of the Indian Army. In the Batalik-Yaldor-Chorbat La sector, the young Ladakhi boys easily carried as much as 30 kg whereas normal porters carried 10-kg load. Even farmers gave up their farming spaces for tents and camps to be erected in Biama.⁶⁶

The altitude and terrain restricted porters to making only one trip per day and forced Ravindranath to use as many as sixty porters continually on each axis. The task of transporting water alone required twenty men daily, since natural fresh

64 Lt Col Amit SHUKLA, «Unsung Heroes of Kargil: Role of the Naga Regiment», *Nagaland Tribune*, 2024.

65 Like humans, mules also need to acclimatize to high altitude. Mules and Muleteers require a month’s training to get them 3000ft and above. They also need to be trained in a way to maintain in their march despite the noises from firearms and explosives. See L.W. GRAU & C.K. BARTLES (eds.) *Mountain Warfare and Other Lofty Problems: Foreign Perspectives on High-Altitude Combat*, Solihull, Helion & Company, 2016, pp. 25 – 27.

66 The Indian Government appealed for local volunteers to help the Indian Army in Ladakh through its All India Radio (AIR) in Leh. See Rachna Bisht RAWAT, *Kargil: Untold Stories from the War*, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 2019.

water had frozen up that time.⁶⁷ There are certain tactics that the Indian Army applied that changed the course of war with their victory at Tololing. Ravindranath identified that there are two ways of approaching Pakistani positions, over which he could launch multi-directional attacks and achieve surprise victory.⁶⁸ Here as to my observation, the techniques of enfilade and defilade were applied in a high-altitude zone, generally which are conducted on the plains. Although direct straight line of fire is generally not expected in mountain warfare as everything depends on artillery, the defilade technique becomes very important in this case, where mountains are used as natural obstacles to shield and conceal from enemy eyes. This is what happened at Tololing. Another factor that owed India's success was preparations by night and launching of a surprise attack at the first hour of dawn when the silhouettes of enemy bases/shelters and mortars became visible at the top of the peaks to Indian eyes who were at lower levels.⁶⁹ Earlier Indian operations happened in broad daylight making their manoeuvre difficult as they were vulnerable to enemy observation. The enemy moreover also used direct firing weapons like heavy machineguns (HMGs), MMGs and air defence (AD) guns. Stinger missile shot down a Mi-17 armed helicopter, which crashed into the Tololing *nullah* (Tololing ravine) at 11:30 AM IST (Indian Standard Time) on 28 May, making the IAF's MiG-21 and Mi-17 attack helicopter's operations difficult. As a result, all companies were pinned down in the open. General V.P. Malik notes in the early operations at Tololing under Operation Vijay –

“The situation was dismal. Enemy fire was accurate and sustained. Only night brought some relief, but this was the time to launch one more assault. At this stage, only five batteries were available for the complete Dras sector, which was not enough to cause major destruction. All available approaches to Tololing Top and Point 4590 had been explored.”⁷⁰

67 Natural water sources disappeared quickly in mid-June when the snow melted. The inability to transport sufficient quantities of water into the area forced many Indian units to restrict consumption to one litre per day, and many soldiers ate ice to quench their thirst. 3 and 8 Division raised porter companies from the local populace, and many citizens donated their mules and donkeys, which were heartier and more sure-footed in the mountains than the army's service mules. P. ACOSTA, «*High Altitude Warfare*», cit., pp. 46 – 47, 51; KANWAL, *Heroes of Kargil*, cit., pp. 149 – 150.

68 Harinder BAWEJA, *A Soldier's Diary: Kargil, the inside Story*, Delhi, Books Today, 2000, p. 76.

69 P. ACOSTA, *High Altitude Warfare*, cit., p. 54.

70 MALIK, *Kargil: From Surprise to Victory*, cit., see chapter 8.

Company 'D' at Point 4590 faced firings at a close range, yet the company succeeded in establishing a foothold. At this stage, the 'C' Company launched an assault where the men had an intense hand-to-hand fight at Tololing Top. Vivek Gupta led the reserve platoon to Tololing Top to evict the enemy from there. During this critical moment, Captain Mridul Kumar Singh, a young artillery forward observation officer (FOO) led the company, rallied the men, and deployed them on the objective to ward off the inevitable counterattacks (of the Pakistanis). The Pakistanis reacted to this with vengeance. The loss of Tololing Top was a major setback for them. The counterattacks launched by them were beaten back by 'C' Company. The commanding officer of 2 Rajputana Rifles, Lieutenant Colonel M.B. Ravindranath, then launched 'A' Company, which was an artillery fire reserve under Major P. Acharya to capture the rest of Point 4590. Despite the proximity to Indian troops at Tololing Top, effective artillery fire was brought down on this objective. Simultaneously, 'B' Company another artillery fire reserve was given the order to clear the northern slopes of Tololing. Ravindranath, therefore, used Companies A, B, C, and D in his multi-directional attack strategy, and in my view, it can be considered that A and B were used for defilade while C and D were used for enfilade (since they directly confronted the enemy) in a reverse slope defence technique. C and D were artillery reserves for mortars. On 13 June, 2 RAJ Rifles was finally able to recapture the Tololing pass. The Indian Army by this time and from this time onwards has mastered the skill of manoeuvring mountain warfare. Not only did they apply multi-directional attacks in an enfilade-defilade combination using the mountains as their Shield and Sword, but also their night preparations gave them the perfect moment to strike at the dawn's first light at the enemy bases. Enemy bases were indeed fragile in nature because they were made of portable materials like fiberglass huts and snow tents. Recently Lt Col Ravindranath's own experience at the battlefield has been posthumously published as a book named '*Kargil War: The Turning Point*'.⁷¹

Well-coordinated logistical support determined the Indian operational axis that nothing is fast in a high-altitude theatre. At high altitudes, the first enemy is the environment, and second is the human foe.⁷² Light infantry and artillery are

71 Col M.B. RAVINDRANATH, *Kargil War: The Turning Point*, Chennai, Notion Press, 2024.

72 L.W. GRAU & C.K. BARTLES (eds.) *Mountain Warfare and Other Lofty Problems*, cit., pp. 21 – 22.



Fig. 6. 155mm Bofors Fälthaubits (Swedish for ‘Field Howitzer’) FH77/B02. After the weapons contract scandal, the original plan for acquisition of more than 1,000 examples was scrapped, instead, the Indian Army acquired only 410. In service with about 20 artillery regiments by 1999, it proved highly successful during the Kargil War partly because of its range of 38 kilometres (when using base bleed-rounds generally).

(Source: WeaponSystems.net)

the bloodline of mountain warfare. Indian Military Leadership skills and qualities were also noticeable in the Kargil War. Each mission was conducted into teams divided into small units/teams. It was easy for each leader to manoeuvre his team dedicated to a specific task while collaborating with other teams (with their respective leaders) in a given mission. Mountainous and high-altitude environments extremely demands a high level of leadership at the small level units as well as at higher levels. It is up to the leader to understand the constraints placed on their soldier’s performance considering the weather and terrain to avoid miscalculations in a given timeframe, logistic requirements and force capability. The victory at Tololing is an exemplar of this. The Russians observed in the Afghanistan War how a small unit boldly manoeuvring could change the fate of the battle.⁷³

The Indian Army by late 1980s, updated its infantry and armour for conducting operations in case of a conflict with Pakistan. This involved armour equipped

⁷³ MALIK, *Mountain Warfare*, cit., pp. 33 – 34.

with infrared mechanisms to move and fire enemy targets at night. This upgraded armour system, which is an integration of firepower, mobility and communication through radio networks was executed with speedy decisions that enabled the Indian Army to achieve a ‘psychological shock effect’ on the enemy. The Germans called it *Auftragstaktik*, or mission oriented command system.⁷⁴ I consider the multi-directional strategy which was executed at a decentralised level with an integrated upgraded armour and infantry systems to get into, what Gates and Roy⁷⁵ terms, enemy’s Boyd’s Loop or OODA (Observe-Orient-Decide-Act Loop) (Fig. 7).

Apart from the aforementioned tactics mastered by the Indian Army in June during the course of war, it was evident that the course of battle would now go in favour of India. Not only did India conventionalise the unconventional war tactics, but Musharraf’s pride in mobilising the entire Indian defence with a handful number of Pakistani troops turned into a myth. Peter Lavoy has shown in his study of using asymmetrical tactics by a weaker state to win a prolonged (asymmetrical) war over a strong state, is only a temporary myth, for strong states like India possess both manpower and resources, something which I have already stated earlier in my study. India’s controversial Bofors FH-77B (155mm Field Howitzer) (Fig. 6) was the most sought-after lethal weapon in this war. Its long-range, heavy-caliber shell readily destroyed poorly constructed fighting positions.⁷⁶ Indian batteries reported that the 24 km maximum range at sea level

74 The upgradation of this armour system happens with the issue of an ‘Armour Memorandum’ in 1987 (that replaced its 1982 version) in the Faculty of Studies at the College of Combat Mhow (also, the Mhow Army War College) in Madhya Pradesh, India. While the ‘Infantry Memorandum’ issued in 1988 from Mhow, replaced its 1986 version, was based on the analysis of ground combat in Kohima (in Nagaland, India), Vietnam and from the British Military Theorist Captain Basil Liddell-Hart. See GATES and ROY, *Limited War in South Asia*, cit., pp. 121 – 122; Armour, College of Combat Mhow (Faculty of Studies), 1987, Restricted; Infantry, College of Combat Mhow (Faculty of Studies), 1987, Restricted.

75 GATES and ROY, *Limited War in South Asia*, cit., p. 121.

76 The tube could be elevated to angles over 70 degrees, making it capable of shooting over the high mountain crests of Kargil, capable to execute high-angle fire. The Indian government purchased over four hundred of the Swedish-made Bofors FH-77B artillery pieces in 1988 and originally planned to build the guns under license; allegations that Bofors had bribed Indian politicians with over \$50 million led to a ban on Bofors weapons, which was not lifted until the weapons displayed their effectiveness at Kargil. See Mohammed AHMEDULLAH, «India’s Kashmir Offensive May Accelerate Army Modernisation Plans», *Military Technology* 23, 7 (1999), p. 38.

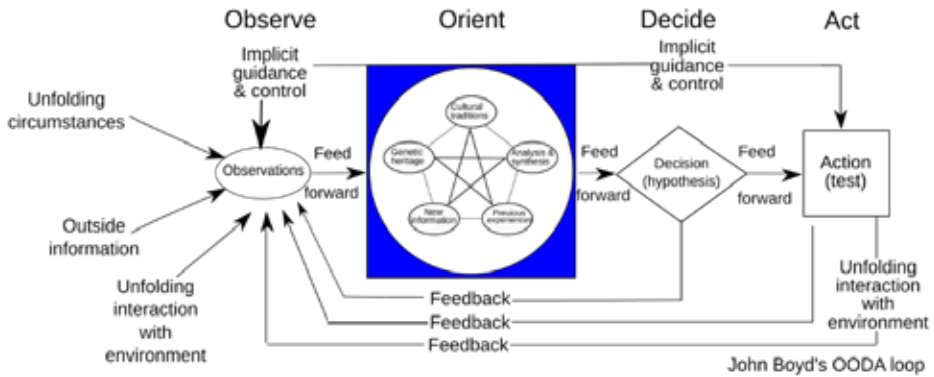


Fig. 7. The OODA Loop (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

extended beyond 40 km in the thin air of Kargil (due to low air pressure at a high altitude).⁷⁷ Moreover, Pakistan's institutional fallacies combined with India's willpower and quick ability to train in asymmetric warfare finally caused India to win the war.

The conquest of Tololing and the simultaneous capture of Point 5203 in the Batalik sector, made things easier for India to carry out rest of the operations. The conquest of Tiger Hill (Fig. 8) was broadcast live on television (hence the Kargil War came to be known as the Television War) and showed the resilience, bravery and confidence of the Indian Army. But likewise, it also made it risky for the army, as the points from where they were operating were shown live posing a direct threat to them from the enemy.⁷⁸ Shekhar Gupta too admitted it was a colossal part of the media and the Kargil war was India's first and last TV war.⁷⁹ Unlike the Indian people who were informed about the events of the battle, the Pakistani people were kept uninformed of a real war going on with India, they were only informed of a Mujahideen invasion⁸⁰. This media pressure was not there in the

77 Prasun K. SENGUPTA, «Mountain Warfare: The Kargil Experience», *Asian Defence Journal*, 10 (1999), p. 46.

78 S. SHINDE, «When "Journalist" Barkha Dutt ended up helping Pakistan in the Kargil War», in *www.news Bharati.com*, 2022, www.news Bharati.com/Encyc/2022/7/26/When-Journalist-Barkha-Dutt-ended-up-helping-Pakistan-in-the-Kargil-War.html.

79 *SECRET NSCS Report*, cit., points 18 and 19.

80 Shekhar Gupta notes this when he visits Pakistan in the post-Kargil war period. Nawaz Sharif also raised then nuclear issue the only time in his interview with Gupta. *SECRET NSCS Report*, cit., points 24 – 26.



Fig. 8. The victorious Indian Army Jawans or soldiers of 18 Grenadiers with the Indian Tiraṅgā (Tricolour) Flag after recapturing Tiger Hill (Source: Indian Express Archive, <https://indianexpress.com/photos/india-news/kargil-vijay-diwis-2020-photos-that-show-how-india-won-the-battle-6523712/7/>)

eastern frontier of war in the remote Batalik, where Brigadier Devinder Singh leading 70 Brigade seized Point 5203 on the Khalubar Ridge. Here, Singh faced challenges like a lack of resources and the broken nature of the landscape. Given his limited resources, he created “assailable flanks” to steadily pick the enemy

defence and conduct a concerted eviction operation.⁸¹

This was almost similar to Ravindenath's multi-directional strategy. By 9 July, Batalik sector was fully retrieved by the army. Combination of massive artillery firepower with infantry assaults was only possible in river valleys but in extremely steep positions, using infantry and light artillery was the only way to conduct operations. But in any case, manoeuvre skills between artillery, infantry, logistics and communication are the key to success. Indian Military's confidence and morale got a major boost when the Indian Air Force (IAF) Mirage 2000Hs struck at Muntho Dalo and is said that the air strike has resulted in 300 enemy casualties. This was the Operation Safed Sagar of the IAF.⁸² It was for the first time in the history of Indian Defence where Flight Lieutenant Gunjan Saxena (now retd) served as the first female Indian Air Force (IAF) officer in a war zone. She was assigned to a Cheetah/Chetak (Alouette III) unit in Udhampur, whose primary task was forward air control, which was to fly in the thick of combat during the erstwhile close air support/battlefield air strike (BAS) missions and visually guiding fighter aircraft to their targets. Her service in the war led her to earn the title of 'The Kargil Girl'.⁸³

Back to the Tables of Diplomacy

This again brings us to the political scenario after the end of the war. The war comes to an end on 26 July 1999 with the success of Operation Vijay after a fight of 2 months, 3 weeks and 2 days. India officially celebrates this day as 'Kargil Vijay Diwas'. In 2024, India celebrated 25 years or Silver Jubilee of Kargil Vijay Diwas. The Parliament and the Cabinet of the Government of India fully supported the decisions of the Indian Military. General V.P. Malik attests to the fact how Jaswant Singh, the then Indian Foreign Minister of the Vajpayee-led government made it amply clear to Sartaj Aziz, the Pakistani Foreign Minister that under no circumstances would India negotiate until and unless the Pakistani intrusion was completely vacated. He affirmed that "*the aggression has to be undone, militarily*

81 KANWAL, *Heroes of Kargil*, cit., p. 62.

82 Benjamin S. LAMBETH, *Airpower at 18,000'*, Massachusetts, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012, pp. 19 – 22.

83 Gunjan SAXENA and Kiran NIRVAN, *The Kargil Girl: An Autobiography*, New Delhi, Ebury Press and Penguin Books, 2020.

or diplomatically, whichever is done first”.⁸⁴ The Kargil War was fought against the backdrop of two newly nuclear-armed states. In my view, the Kargil Conflict from Pakistani side was more like an experiment which started as a military adventure but ended up in disaster and international humiliation.

Pakistan made errors on three levels during the Kargil operation. First, it made errors in perception by miscalculating the strategic significance of this limited operation. Second, it was not prepared for a strategic standoff with India as Pakistan is itself divided internally, isolated diplomatically, and weak economically. Finally, Pakistan’s operational and tactical mistakes contributed to Pakistan’s failure of the Kargil campaign.⁸⁵ Some political figures reasoned that Pakistan’s inability to shape international opinion proactively was due to the deep secrecy with which Kargil was conducted (since it was an elite army plan), and concluded that Pakistan could not conduct operations like Kargil without a broad-based consensus across the various governmental and military institutions.⁸⁶

Pakistan could have cast the Kargil operation as an extension of Siachen, which may have garnered more support internationally. However, there remains the question, with which I have started my paper whether Pakistan actually wanted to occupy Siachen. For India, the Kargil War was the starting chapter of India’s asymmetrical conflicts in future. Pakistan’s defeat at Kargil would only whet its appetite for further attempts at coercion, and if success did not accrue to traditional means of attack, non-traditional stratagems were to be expected. One such

84 Initially, the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif suggested that air strikes (within India) be stopped as a ‘precondition’ for talks. When this suggestion was rejected outright by India, he offered to send Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz to New Delhi. The Government of India accepted this offer. What greatly worried the Indian military was that any political negotiations or attempts to seek a diplomatic solution at this point of time would result in a militarily disadvantageous solution; that could even lead to humiliation, as had happened in 1962 (when China invaded India). Because when Aziz arrived at New Delhi for his diplomatic visit, the Indian military had not captured any significant area in Kargil. Sartaj Aziz arrived in New Delhi via China on 12 June. He projected a three-point formula: (a) a ceasefire; (b) a joint working group to review the LoC and its demarcation on the ground; and (c) a reciprocal visit by the Indian foreign minister the following week. All these were rejected by India. See MALIK, *Kargil: From Surprise to Victory*, cit., see chapter 7.

85 Hasan Askari RIZVI, «The Lessons of Kargil as Learned by Pakistan», in Peter R. LAVOY (Ed.), *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict*, New York, Cambridge U. P., 2009, p. 349.

86 Ashley J. TELLIS, C. Christine FAIR, and Jamison JO MEDBY, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, California, Rand Corporation, 2001, p. 43.



Fig. 9. Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee shaking hands with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif after his famous Delhi-Lahore Bus Journey termed ‘Sada-e-Sarhad’ (Voice of the Borders) to attend the Indo-Pak Summit for the Lahore Declaration in February 1999. This bus journey continued even after the Kargil War but was stopped after abrogation of Article 370 (which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir) in 2019. (Source: Deccan Chronicle, online, <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/170818/atal-behari-vajpayee-is-the-visionary-who-saw-tomorrow.html>)

stratagem, which was of great concern to policymakers, was the spread of terrorism throughout India.⁸⁷ Hence we see terrorist attacks in 2001 Red Fort, 2002 Indian Parliament and 2008 Mumbai Attacks, with that we see Pakistan’s ISI involvement of funding insurgent activities in Northeast India. Securing intrusions along the LOC was another lesson India learnt in the aftermath of the war.

Indo-Pak peace talks can never be successful where the Pakistani Home Secretary is an army general and not a civil servant like in India. No matter how hard the Pakistani civil government tries to mend relations with India, the ‘Indian bogey’ which is always kept alive by the military in the Pakistani populace, prevents Indo-Pak relations from forming good relations.⁸⁸ Pakistani military adventurism

87 TELLIS, FAIR, and JO MEDBY, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, cit., p. 50.

88 Pakistani military saw the rapprochement between PM Vajpayee and PM Sharif as a direct threat to the military’s relevance in Pakistani society. At a time when the entire world felt confident on Vajpayee and Sharif, whose efforts towards positive relations would have

still now costs Pakistani economy and foreign relations, whose burden always falls on its civil government.

Surinder Singh recently stated that Pakistan's strategy was to create gaps in Kargil. They did this by keeping the Kargil sector quiet for years while inducting terrorists (and trained NLI soldiers) in large numbers. When India reacted to it through its Kargil Brigade, it created large gaps.⁸⁹ Pakistan repeated its tools of war – Deception and Subterfuge both of which are fundamental to the Pakistani army. Deception is practised through surprise attacks and subterfuge, is pursued when Pakistan conceals its soldiers as mujahideens. Pakistan made surprise attacks in 1947-8 and 1965, and even in 1999 repeated it, making Pakistan the strategic winner of the Kargil War. India therefore needs to be vigilant of this Pakistani surprise. To overcome this 'surprise', India through its National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) tried to fill this lacuna.⁹⁰

The role of Indian media during the war was important, at least in producing a counter-narrative (of the war) to Pakistan, to formulate a pro-India international opinion rather than being fed what was provided by Pakistan to its own citizens. The role of media in the war enabled to create a memory of the war which turned into a public history of the war. What immediately followed in the last days of the war was US intervention to persuade Pakistan to withdraw its troops and start of immediate peace talks with India. Pakistan may have won strategically but lost to India's diplomacy.

The "lesson" of Kargil – that force projection would work better than diplomacy – was a case of "incorrect learning" which is not at all feasible in an asymmetrical war. In practice, the whole argument for limited war came to naught in 2002. Military thinking has remained unchanged. General Malik continues to hold that "limited war was, and still is, a strategic possibility so long as the proxy war continues on the subcontinent".⁹¹ But then, this represents a military professional's thinking, and does not reflect the perspective of political decision-mak-

started a fresh chapter on Indo-Pak relations, the Pak military with their Kargil project fully sabotaged such motives. See Raghu RAMAN, «Why Is India Still Ignoring Lessons Learnt From the Kargil War?», *The Wire*, 2017.

89 Surinder SINGH, «The Truth about the Kargil War Is Bitter but It Must Be Told», *The Wire*, 2022.

90 RAMAN, *Why Is India Still Ignoring Lessons Learnt From the Kargil War*, cit.

91 MALIK, *Kargil: From Surprise to Victory*, cit., p. 366.

ers, who have been reluctant to return to the limited-war logic that preceded the 2001–2002 crisis. The politicians, from India's military experience at Kargil perhaps learned that limited war is not a viable option in a nuclear context. This explains the Indian leadership's persistence with efforts to put together a structure of confidence-building on nuclear and non-nuclear issues with Pakistan despite its dissatisfying relationship. What needs to be noted from a military and political context is that India's crisis at the mountains has shaped its future external and internal policies. This is what the paper aims to identify in the following section—how India's crisis management at the mountains led to a change of its military, domestic and foreign policies, particularly towards Pakistan and India's security beyond the Himalayas.

Kargil War – A Revelation for New Indian Policy Formulation?

A) Change in *Bhārat's Gṛha Mantrālaya Nīti* or Domestic Ministry Policies:

Given the available reports and documents, what needs to be seen is how the Kargil War was itself a revelation to India to revamp its Foreign, Domestic and Defence Policies all of which contribute to India's National Security. The Kargil Review Committee (KRC) Report itself was an initiative that the Indian Defence Ministry had rigorously undertaken to revamp its defence sector from fundamental changes to the introduction of new major posts. Some of its policies are also detailed in the Group of Ministers (GOM) Report⁹² which was an outcome of a total of 27 meetings (GOM Report 1.15), which mostly deals with domestic and national security.

The then Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had set up the Group of Ministers with the Cabinet Secretariat to review the national security system in its entirety and in particular, to consider the recommendations of the KRC Report and formulate specific proposals for implementation. Point 1.1 of the GOM Report mentions that the GOM Report on National Security was formed to replace the existing draft on India's National Security which was formulated by Lord Ismay and Lord Mountbatten during India's independence that 'had been accepted

92 Government of India, *Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security: Recommendations of the Group of Ministers*, 2001. (henceforth, *GOM Report*)

by a national leadership (i.e., Jawaharlal Nehru and his cabinet), which was not fully conversant with the complexities of national security management'.⁹³

The COSC (Chief of Staff Committee) was the creation of Ismay himself at a time when British India was partitioned into India and Pakistan.⁹⁴ For the first time in Indian history, only after the Kargil War, the Government of India directed the NSAB (National Security Advisory Board) to do a comprehensive 'Strategic Defence Review'.⁹⁵ A significant change in national security was the creation of a National Security Council (NSC) under the prime minister, the establishment of a National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) of non-governmental experts to advise the NSC, and the reformation of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) as the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) to provide inputs for the NSC.

The GOM Report accepts the fact that nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in 1998 altered India's security environment.⁹⁶ The Kargil War taught India two important things – firstly, to expand new notions of National Security as the world stepped into the new age and secondly, the Kashmir issue needs to be dealt differently. Because Kashmir is intrinsically linked with India's domestic administration using military force to prevent terrorism as well as administration via foreign policy towards neighbouring Pakistan. The war demonstrated to India that its Kashmir policy is costly and Pakistan's LIC (Low Intensity Conflict) strategy is inexpensive.⁹⁷ India was slowly becoming vigilant of the Jihadi and Taliban elements that Pakistan endorses to threaten India,⁹⁸ and the report advises the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to play a more proactive role vis-à-vis the state (or provincial) governments. The MHA also later modernised and upgraded

93 *GOM Report* 1.1.

94 He created the COSC as an office to be 'supported by a series of other committees to address details of coordination between the Services, and between the Services and the Ministry of Defence (MOD)'. The COSC will later evolve and change as per the needs of the young Indian nation. See Admiral Arun PRAKASH, «National Security Reforms: Ten Years after the Kargil Committee Report», *Journal of the United Service Institution of India* CXLI, 590 (2012), online www.usiofindia.org/publication-journal/national-security-reforms-ten-years-after-the-kargil-committee-report.html.

95 *GOM Report*, cit., Point 1.7

96 *GOM Report*, cit., Points 2.6 – 2.7.

97 TELLIS, FAIR, and JO MEDBY, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, cit., p. 35.

98 *GOM Report*, cit., Point 2.20.

the CPMF (Central Para-Military Force).⁹⁹

The Minister of Home Affairs L.K. Advani and Home Secretary N.N. Vohra (also chairperson of the Task Force on Internal Security) were given the duty to make the Home Affairs Task Force work. It will be in the domestic sector that major changes will be introduced by the MHA in central intelligence agencies like the IB (Investigation Bureau) whose wrong assessments caused the war in the first phase.¹⁰⁰ The Police System was strengthened and modernised.¹⁰¹ The CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) will later function as a ‘striking reserve’ to assist the states or provinces upon the MHA’s terms and conditions.¹⁰² One major change brought about by the GOM Report is the principle of “*One Border, One Force*” and its subsequent adoption.¹⁰³ Since India is a vast country with a large stretch of international border, this policy of integrating forces under the MHA with the troops under Defence Ministry was crucial to ensure security along the country’s borders as well as within the country. The Border Security Force (BSF) with its growing strength, was divided into East and West wings for better administration.¹⁰⁴

The Government of India called for an increase in the local composition of border forces, the expansion and strengthening of Village Volunteer Forces (VVF), and the enhancement of the Border Area Development Programme.¹⁰⁵ In May 2001, control of the ITBP (Indo-Tibetan Border Police) was shifted from the Ministry of Home Affairs to the Ministry of Defence, and the Assam Rifles regiment was shifted to the Home Affairs (GOM Report 5.85). The Bureau of Immigration was moved from the IB to the direct control of the Ministry of Home Affairs.¹⁰⁶ Point 5.7 of the GOM Report is crucial as it says that the KRC Report only talks in-depth management of land borders, but the GOM with its multidis-

99 *GOM Report*, cit., Point 4.10.

100 Detailed in chapter 3 *GOM Report* but omitted due to Government Security Reasons. Also see *GOM Report*, cit., Point 4.26.

101 *GOM Report*, cit., Points 4.33 – 55.

102 *GOM Report*, cit., Point 4.66.

103 *GOM Report*, cit., Point 5.12.

104 *GOM Report*, cit., Point 5.79.

105 *GOM Report*, cit., Points 5.132 – 139.

106 Rajesh M. BASRUR, «The Lessons of Kargil as Learned by India», in Peter R. LAVOY (Ed.), *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict*, New York, Cambridge U. P., 2009, pp. 315–318.



Fig. 10. PM Vajpayee with Defence Minister George Fernandes, Army Chief Gen. V.P. Malik, then J&K governor G.C. Saxena, Farooq Abdullah and soldiers at an Indian army position in Kargil. (Source: India Today <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/20180903-the-iron-fist-1321138-2018-08-25>)

ciplinary task forces also gave importance to the security of coastal areas and airspace, especially after the arms drop over Purulia district in the state of West Bengal, in Eastern India in 1995 (Point 5.8k).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ On 23 February 1995, villagers in West Bengal's Purulia district were woken up around midnight by the noise of an Antonov An-26 Latvian aircraft. This aircraft dropped a large consignment of arms including several hundred AK-47 rifles pistols, grenades rocket launchers, and more than 16,000 rounds of ammunition over a large area in Jhalda, Khatanga, Belamu, and Maramu villages in West Bengal's Purulia District. Kim Davy was the main accused behind this case. He accused the UPA-led central government in Delhi to plan this conspiracy to overthrow the CPIM led left government in the province/state of West Bengal. See Gloria METHRI, «What Is Purulia Arms Drop Case? Why Is Kim Davy's Extradition Paramount to India?», *Republic World*, 2022, online, <https://www.republicworld.com/india/what-is-purulia-arms-drop-case-why-is-kim-davys-extradition-paramount-to-india-articleshow>

B). Change in *Bhārat's Rakṣā Mantralāya Nīti* or Defence Policies:

Regarding changes in India's Defence Policies, the KRC Report provides a list of recommendations to the GOM Report. The Task Force on Management of Defence, headed by Arun Singh, critically examined the existing structures for a better management of defence. After the Kargil War, we see fundamental and institutional changes in the Defence Ministry. On 25 January 2000, Defence Minister George Fernandes and Army Chief V.P. Malik each announced a '*Limited-War Doctrine*' which paved for India to devise new military responses to future crises in Kashmir. Indian officials spoke more about dealing with punitive actions in the form of preemptive strikes against alleged Pakistani training camps in Kashmir. The Indian Army added a new element called 'Cold Start' to its limited-war doctrine during India's military mobilisation in 2001-2002.¹⁰⁸

With the mobilisation of the Indian Army and its subsequent reforms, the Cold Start aimed to conduct shallow offensive operations using smaller and independent groups against Pakistan along a broad front, rather than the two-pronged deep penetration of the Strike Corps earlier. These modest tactics allowed India to target enemy lines of communication and their support infrastructure as a punitive strike or in "hot pursuit" following a terrorist attack.¹⁰⁹ Cold Start was more effective in dealing with asymmetric conflicts as opposed to conventional mass mobilisation of the Armed Forces as happened in 2001-2002 Operation Parakram.

India's security in the Himalayas heavily depends on its Mountain Strike Corps (MSC). The need to raise MSCs becomes the most sought-after defence force to tackle Pakistani and Chinese infiltrations in the Indian Himalayas. As stated earlier the need to raise new MSCs came after the Indian Army's 'Operation Falcon' in 1986-87 to counter infiltrating Chinese PLA Forces which resulted from a military standoff between two states in the Sumdorong Chu Valley bordering the Tawang district, Arunachal Pradesh in India and Cona County, Tibet.¹¹⁰ This

108 LAVOY, *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia*, cit., p. 14.

109 FOCUS, «Cold Start: The Theory Does Not Match the Capability», *Force* 2, 4 (2004), pp. 32-35; Arzan TARAPORE, «Holocaust or Hollow Victory: Limited War in Nuclear South Asia», *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2005, pp. 16-17.

110 In June 1986, during an annual patrol along the Sumdorong Chu River in India's Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district, Indian troops were shocked to discover Chinese structures, including a helipad, in Indian territory. Army chief General Krishnaswamy Sundarji then launched Operation Falcon, airlifting an infantry brigade (nearly 5,000 men) to Zemithang

was near to the site when first clashes broke out in 1962, resulting in 1962 Sino-India War. The MSC was cleared by then UPA-led Indian Government only to recall it again in 2013 when another military standoff took place in Depsang Valley, in Eastern Ladakh Sector. In 2014, Major General Raymond Joseph Noronha hoisted the flag of the newly-sanctioned XVII Corps in Ranchi. The XVII Corps, also known as Brahmastra Corps, has only one infantry division with 16,000 men in Panagarh, West Bengal. The XVII Corps is the only such force that focuses on China.¹¹¹

The Allahabad-based 4 Division and the Bareilly-headquartered 6 Mountain Division forms the core of I Corps. In case of aggression, the Hisar-based 33 Armoured Division could also be moved to Ladakh. The Palampur-based 39 Division is a reserve force and the Dehradun-based 14 Division is deployed along the Chinese border in Uttarakhand. The XVII Corps, which was earlier mandated to cover India's entire northern border, later was restricted to the states/provinces of Sikkim and the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya. For the eastern sector, the Eastern Command in Kolkata (in West Bengal) has three corps—IV, III and XXXIII— which are based in Tezpur (in Assam) and Dimapur (in Nagaland) and Siliguri (in West Bengal), respectively. Yet the division which was said to be established in Pathankot was shelved despite the 73 day standoff at Doklam in 2017 (at the India-Bhutan-China trijunction) between Indian and Chinese Forces because the 2019 India General Elections were advancing. Like the former UPA-led Indian Government under Dr. Manmohan Singh, who had to agree to the Army's MSC Rationale back in the 2013 Depsang standoff, the NDA-led government under Narendra Modi chose not to challenge the rationale because it believed that standing up to China would work to its political advantage.¹¹²

(the site where the 1962 war broke out), close to Sumdorong Chu. This was the same year when Arunachal Pradesh was granted statehood by New Delhi, separating it from Assam. Amidst Operation Falcon, the 'Operation Chequerboard' was issued from the Indian Army's Eastern Command, whose headquarters are in the Fort William in the city of Kolkata (Calcutta), West Bengal, India. Fearing a serious conflict, China started negotiations with India, resulting PM Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in 1988.

111 Pradip R. SAGAR, «India Needs a Dedicated Mountain Strike Corps to Tackle China», *The Week*, 2021.

112 Ali AHMED, «Decoding the Logic behind the Shelving of India's Mountain Strike Corps», *The Wire*, 2018.

The Kargil war revealed serious weaknesses in the functioning of the COSC (Chief of Staff Committee) that were rectified accordingly. Hence, the COSC was supplemented with the addition of two new posts – the CDS (Chief of Defence Staff) and the VCDS (Vice Chief of Defence Staff).¹¹³ The former presided as the Chairman of the COSC and the latter, as the Member Secretary. Among the key functions listed for the CDS, one was to provide a ‘Single-Point Military Advice to the Government’ while another one was to administer nuclear forces and ensure ‘jointness’ or proper coordination between the Army, Navy and Air forces. Integration of defence services with civilian structure was partially achieved in 2002 by the reorganisation of the Ministry of Defence (MOD), which was renamed the Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence.¹¹⁴

A ‘National Security Doctrine’ and commitment of funds beyond the financial year were addressed in the report.¹¹⁵ Target was to produce the most effective force posture based on a carefully worked out long-term plan, in the most cost-effective manner.¹¹⁶ I mentioned earlier that the armour and infantry systems followed in the Kargil War replaced their former memorandums issued in the Mhow College. After the war, the Government of India took steps to the proper functioning of technological planning and development in the interface between R&D (Research and Development), production agencies and users, particularly in the critical linkages between Services Perspective Plans and the Defence R&D Budget. Ensuring synergy between academic research and government requirements for better government policies was another important step.¹¹⁷ For the first time in India, after 1999, the government urgently considered setting up a “*Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) for co-ordinating the functioning of different Service intelligence directorates in Service Headquarters*”.¹¹⁸ The report also considered the establishment of a National Defence University. Since provinces/states in Kashmir Valley and India’s Northeast are of extreme strategic importance as these regions border countries like Pakistan and China in the Northwest and Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and China in the Northeast of the Indian Sub-

113 *GOM Report*, cit., Point 6.18.

114 Rajesh M. BASRUR, *The Lessons of Kargil as Learned by India*, cit., p. 319.

115 *GOM Report*, cit., Points 6.4–6.5.

116 *GOM Report*, cit., Point 6.8.

117 *GOM Report*, cit., Points 6.9 – 11.

118 *GOM Report*, cit., Point 6.28.

continent, the report also emphasized the establishment of a civil-military liaison effectively to deal ground level operations in these two regions.¹¹⁹

In 2012, Admiral Arun Prakash in an article pointed out some serious flaws which the Indian Government made during defence reforms after 1999, later affecting the national security. Among them, was the paucity of time a new chairman has to acquaint with the COSC. Since the tenure of service for a chairman of the COSC, i.e., the CDS is 2 years and he is generally selected just before his retirement, no CDS gets to complete a full term of 2 years. The CDS is selected from a four-star officer from one of the three Services (Army, Navy, Air Force) in rotation. Prakash considers the tenure of two years and the rotation of the officers from the three services insufficient to familiarise them with the gravity and magnitude of his responsibilities who happens to be a key functionary in the nuclear command chain (like the nuclear-powered submarine INS Arihant and the Agni-V ICBM). On the one hand, the CDS has to ensure ‘jointness’ among the armed forces while on the other he has to be devoted to his Service from where he belongs like the Army, Navy or Air Force. It creates burdens and fallacies for the Service Chiefs to serve as CDS.¹²⁰

Jayant Prasad, a former Director General of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) in New Delhi, while reviewing India’s Security Environment in 2019, suggests that to prevent adversarial forces and powers in the form of cross-border terrorism, India needs to prepare “*her military for full-spectrum warfare including hybrid and high technology*” to counter Pakistan and China. India also needs to secure the external environment in her immediate neighbourhood.¹²¹

This is like practising Preclusive Security or Forward Defence which was the strategic norm in the Roman Empire during its Principate Era (30 BC-AD 284). Ferrill sees this as the Grand Strategy of the Roman Defence. This strategy aims to neutralise enemy threats in war theatres far away from border zones. The Imperial Roman Army dealt with barbarian incursions in this method in small teams and units in fortified strongholds who waited for mobile forces (*comitatenses*) to

119 *GOM Report*, cit., Point 6.82.

120 PRAKASH, *National Security Reforms*, cit., online.

121 Jayant PRASAD, «The Kargil War and India’s Security Environment», *Journal of Defence Studies* 13, 3 (2019), pp. 12 – 14.

arrive and intercept the invaders. Preclusive Security or Forward Defence was a fort-oriented strategy which prevented infiltrations before it breached borders. The strategy was such because the concentration of forces was diluted away from the borders.¹²²

India, similarly following this strategy conducted surgical strikes on 29 September 2016 against alleged Pakistani state-sponsored (Jaish-e-Mohammad) terrorists in Pakistani-occupied Kashmir (POK) crossing the LOC as a retaliation for the terrorist attack at the Indian Army camp in Uri on 18 September 2016. Similarly again, India's Balakot airstrikes on 29 February 2019 by sending twelve Mirage 2000 IAF Jets to bomb Jaish-e-Mohammed training camps was a retaliation to terrorist attacks in Pulwama on 14 February 2019. Here offensive air operations are a low-intensity option for India. Air campaigns are much more flexible in conduct and targets can be easily shot with precision allowing them to engage with hostile parties effectively.¹²³ These latest surgical strikes happened during the NDA-run government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is now the incumbent Prime Minister of India in his third term.

Raghu Raman believes when infiltrators cross borders and enter mainland territories, 'Defence-in-Depth' needs to be practised. The Romans started practising 'Defence-in-Depth' after the Roman Empire by the 3rd Century CE engaged in large-scale warfare with the rising Sassanian Empire of Persia. The Eastern Roman Empire (later Byzantine Empire)¹²⁴ was more 'cavalrised' than the Western Empire, as the Sassanians mainly fought on cavalry, cataphracts and horse archers¹²⁵, while the Romans still relied on infantry to carry out large-scale wars against Persia and large armies were thus required in the east. In my observation,

122 Roman legions were stationed in the great fortresses around these frontiers like Hadrian's Wall and Antonine Wall. See Arther FERRILL, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: The Military Explanation*, New York, Thames and Hudson, 2001, pp. 25 – 45.

123 These targets not only include terrorist training camps, but strategic locations like bridges and ridges, and airfields associated nuclear arsenal. Air operations' real utility lies in applying graduated pressure as part of a low-intensity campaign. See TARAPORE, *Holocaust or Hollow Victory*, cit., p. 16.

124 The Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire came into existence when Constantine I ascended the throne at Byzantium, which he renamed as Constantinople. The Roman Empire with its massive territory was divided into two halves in 395 CE by Emperor Theodosius the Great. The eastern empire survived till 1453, even after the western empire declined in 476 CE, until it fell to the Ottomans.

125 Adrian GOLDSWORTHY, *Roman Warfare*, 1st edn, London, Cassell, 2000, p. 186.

this might have created shorter supplies of army to resist the ongoing barbarian invasions in the west and Defence-in-Depth was adopted. Raman sees the local population of Kashmir valley as an asset to India who historically has always sided as nationalism prevailed over religious and regional affiliations. They aided the army while spotting and identifying infiltrators and handing over them to the Indian Army. A sense of alienation meted out to the local population can cause damage to India's strategic asset.¹²⁶

Under the present government, India has placed emphasis on building its domestic defence industry under the Government of India's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-Dependent India) initiative. The government has also pushed the defence industry to focus on exports, which, according to one count, have grown by over 700% from 2016 to 2020.¹²⁷ In the financial year 2023 to 2024, India's defence exports touched a record of INR 21,083 crore (approx. US\$ 2.63 Billion), surpassing the last financial year with a growth of 32.5% when the figure was INR Rs. 15,920 crore. The recent figures indicate that the defence exports have grown by 31 times in the last 10 years as compared to financial year 2013-14.¹²⁸ India's new policy of producing arms in the state and exporting those to other countries rather than importing from outside is another major change in the defence sector. A major development happened in 2024 when India exported its BrahMos Missile, a joint venture of India and Russia, to the Philippines to counter Chinese expansionism in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian regions. In January 2022, India and the Philippines signed a \$375 million deal as part of defence collaborations.¹²⁹

126 RAMAN, *Why Is India Still Ignoring Lessons Learnt From the Kargil War?*, cit., online.

127 Rasal SINGH, «23 Years after Kargil War, India's Defence Reforms See an Upsurge under PM Modi», *News18*, 2022, www.news18.com/news/opinion/23-years-after-kargil-war-in-dias-defence-reforms-see-an-upsurge-under-pm-modi-5585401.html.

128 A comparative data of two decades *i.e.* the period from 2004-05 to 2013-14 and 2014-15 to 2023-24 reveals that there has been a growth of 21 times in the defence exports. Total defence exports during 2004-05 to 2013-14 were Rs. 4,312 crore, which has gone up to Rs 88,319 crore in the period from 2014-15 to 2023-24. See Government of India Press Information Bureau (PIB), «Defence Exports Touch Record Rs. 21,083 Crore in FY 2023-24, an Increase of 32.5% over Last Fiscal; Private Sector Contributes 60%, DPSUs - 40%», PIB Delhi, Ministry of Defence, 2024, online, pib.gov.in/Press-Release-Iframe-Page.aspx?PRID=2016818.

129 «India Delivers First Batch of BrahMos Missile System to Philippines», *The Times of India*, April 19, 2024, online.



Fig. 11. US President Clinton and Indian PM Vajpayee shake hands after signing a vision statement at Hyderabad House, New Delhi on 21 March 2000 (Source: Photo by David Scull, The White House)

C). Change in *Bhārat's Videsā Mantralāya Nīti* or Foreign Policies:

Lastly, the Kargil War opened a great deal of opportunities for the Indian Foreign Ministry to shape new policies for the future. This conflict allowed New Delhi to portray Pakistan, internationally, as a state that sponsors and supports terrorism.¹³⁰ Shireen Mazari points out the institutional fallacies in the Pakistani state where the civil government and the military have no proper correspondence in state administration. Pakistan's military conduct was flawless but it succumbed to India's politico-diplomatic victory.¹³¹ India didn't want to escalate the Kargil conflict as it was not in a position to widen the war. One academic analyst argued that India marketed its weaknesses as restraint as it was unable to take back the peaks.¹³² To my understanding, India by July was already acquainted with mountain warfare and the capture of Tololing came as a surprise to the enemy.

¹³⁰ TELLIS, FAIR, and JO MEDBY, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, cit., p. 41.

¹³¹ Shireen M. MAZARI, «Re-Examining Kargil», *Defence Journal*, 2000.

¹³² TELLIS, FAIR, and JO MEDBY, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, cit., p. 36.

This shock to the enemy enabled the Indian army to swiftly retake the peaks as the war progressed in India's favour. Yet, at some point, India maintained its restraint to project internationally, that it was a brutal victim of Pakistani terrorism, thus framing pro-India international opinion. The liberalisation of the Indian economy since 1991 caused India to become a part of global market system at a time during the Soviet collapse. Then after the war, came India's military reforms. Automatically, it was expected that changes in India's foreign policies would give the final shape to India's National Security in the context of 21st Century International Relations.

The US support for India came as a new change in India's foreign policy as India in the early years of the 21st Century started forming closer ties with the US. US President Bill Clinton persuaded Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to withdraw the troops reminding that both India and Pakistan are on the verge of a nuclear war. Bruce Riedel, a director on the Bill Clinton administration's National Security Council, believes this diplomatic move of the US later caused Sharif's overthrow in October 1999 by Musharraf's military coup.¹³³ The GOM Report also addressed the growth of the US Hegemony in a Unipolar World after the Soviet Collapse in the early days of the 21st Century, and any form of India's "*adversarial relationship with that State can have significant negative repercussions across the same broad range of issues and concerns*".¹³⁴

Clinton made efforts the start of immediate peace talks as a mediator between India and Pakistan, fearing the onset of a nuclear war. India had already described the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as 'nuclear apartheid' refusing to sign it. Sumit Ganguly argues that the 'nuclearization of South Asia' caused the chances of full-scale war to be limited by limited wars since May 1998.¹³⁵ Therefore, Clinton in his state visit to India (Fig. 11), hoped that India and Pakistan would sign the Nuclear Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and said in his Presidential Speech to the Joint Session of the Indian Parliament in New Delhi in March 2000:

"I believe both nations should join the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban

133 Bruce RIEDEL, «American Diplomacy and the 1999 Kargil Summit at Blair House», in Peter R. LAVOY (Ed.), *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict*, Cambridge U. P., 2009, pp. 130–43.

134 GOM Report, cit., Point 2.5.

135 Sumit GANGULY, «Nuclear Stability in South Asia», *International Security* 33, 2 (2008), p. 46.

Treaty (CTBT); work to launch negotiations on a treaty to end the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons; strengthen export controls.”¹³⁶

America’s mediation came as a fear when developments in South Asia were perceived to take the form of a nuclear war, where nukes developed by states lacked delivery vehicles, doctrines and command structures to wage a nuclear war.¹³⁷ Ashley J. Tellis terms the Kargil War a ‘Catalytic War’ since this war compelled third parties to be involved to force a resolution of an ongoing crisis.¹³⁸ One of the major outcomes of the Kargil War was that India’s pre-eminence and cooperation in South Asia as a regional hegemon further increased. With the formation of a new world order since the late 20th Century, Washington and New Delhi exchanged talks where US delegates asserted India’s inability or unwillingness to define and communicate what its preeminence means in practical terms to its neighbours, since that constantly results into a continuing source of tension in South Asia. New Delhi is therefore obliged to initiate such cooperative ventures since India is a dominant regional power, otherwise her neighbours will view its regional aspirations with suspicion and apprehension.¹³⁹ As of early 1990s, at least before the Kargil War, security collaborations between New Delhi and Washington developed from a post-Nehruvian view of India. Washington was quite sceptical of its close relations with India, where the Soviet Union played a major role. Yet, India’s growing military strength and its position as a regional hegemon in South Asia were the factors for such US initiatives towards India.¹⁴⁰

India’s Kashmir policy regarding its foreign relations with Pakistan is indeed

136 U.S. Department of State, «President Clinton’s Address to India’s Parliament», The White House, Washington D.C., United States International Information Programs, 2000.

137 GATES and ROY, *Limited War in South Asia*, cit., p. 129.

138 Ashley J. TELLIS, *India’s Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent and Ready Arsenal*, New Delhi, Oxford U.P., 2001, p. 131.

139 It was also pointed out that India cannot and should not unilaterally attempt to solve its neighbours’ internal political and ethnic problems. There is tremendous potential for India to elicit its neighbours’ support to tackle the environmental, energy, and water problems that confront the region as a whole like in Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka. See Peter R. LAVOY, «Introduction», in Leo E. ROSE and Eric GONSALVES (Ed.), *Toward a New World Order: Adjusting India-U.S. Relations*, Berkeley, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1992, pp. 7–8.

140 Stephen Philip COHEN, «Trends in U.S.-Indian Relations: The Security Dimension», in Leo E. ROSE and Eric GONSALVES (Ed.), *Toward a New World Order: Adjusting India-U.S. Relations*, Berkeley, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1992, pp. 105–114.

costly as Pakistan believes in “bleeding” India through its Kashmir issue as revenge for Pakistan’s loss of Bangladesh in 1971.¹⁴¹ Prime Minister Vajpayee’s address at the Red Fort on India’s Independence Day confirmed India’s strong position on Kashmir –

“Pakistan would be committing a terrible folly if it thinks that it can secure anything through the undeclared war that it has been waging against India. Kashmir has been an unbreakable part of India, and it will remain so.....On the one hand, Pakistan says it is willing to participate in talks. On the other hand, it continues to be deeply involved in violence, killings, and cross-border terrorism. Activities of the terrorists and proposals for peace talks cannot go together.”¹⁴²

Pakistan’s Kargil war for India not only failed miserably to India’s politico-diplomatic and military strength but also brought a change in the West’s perception towards Pakistan. The United State’s concern over Pakistani state-funded *jihadi* terrorism and militant activities in Kashmir was reported in many US and UK based newspapers. The war also resulted in tarnishing of Nawaz Sharif’s international character.¹⁴³ Whatever governments came and went in India, it must be remembered that every government policy towards Pakistan and China was more or less the same – the methodological and ideological approach might have been different but the vision remains the same. India has now found alternatives to counter Pakistani fundamentalism. This happened with India’s growing strategic alliances with the countries of the Middle East since 2005 with the adoption of India’s ‘Look West Policy’ during Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh’s tenure. India knows that Pakistan is the epicentre of terrorism, and expecting normal relations from Pakistan is nowhere in India’s hindsight. Hence, India developed inroads via strategic alliances in the Middle East, especially with the countries of the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) for defence, economic, political, trade and investment cooperation.¹⁴⁴

141 TELLIS, FAIR, and JO MEDBY, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, cit., p. 34; *GOM Report*, cit., Point 2.22.

142 Shri Atal Bihari VAJPAYEE, «Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s Independence Day Address», Prime Minister Office (PMO) Archives, Prime Minister Speech on India’s Independence Day Celebrations at Red Fort, August 15, 2000, online. <https://archive.pmo.nic.in/abv/speech-details.php?nodeid=9113>.

143 India Focus: Strategic Analysis and Focus, «India after Kargil: Diplomacy & Politics», *India Focus* 4, 3 (1999).

144 GCC or Gulf Cooperation Council includes the following countries – Bahrain, Kuwait,

India's strategic deep ties with Saudi Arabia-Israel-Palestine, where these three states are at odds with each other has indeed proven the success of Indian Diplomacy while securing its national interests.¹⁴⁵ India's growing cooperation with the Middle East and its growing closer ties have indeed snubbed Pakistan's religious placard against India. Moreover, India has found alternative trade routes to the Middle East and Russia bypassing an economically debt-ridden Pakistan. Therefore we can phase out India's strategic alliances in different periods. Firstly, India's relations with Russia have deep-rooted historical ties since 1971. Secondly, India's relations with the US developed momentum after the Kargil War.

Lastly, India broadened its foreign ties with countries of the West, Europe, the Middle East and countries of the Global South from 2005 to 2014 onwards. All these endeavours championed India to hail herself as (in Sanskrit) *Viśvabandhu* or 'Friend of the World'. Ironically, America's position as a mediator during the Kargil War has now been taken up by India, but even more efficiently in the current ongoing Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine conflicts. India has always prioritised its 'Neighbourhood First Policy' while ensuring its national interests and at the same time, promoting development and greater cooperation among the states of South Asia. Pakistan's repeated ignorance of Indian initiatives to restore normal relations has resulted in Pakistan not just being globally isolated but even isolated within regional South Asia. External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar recently in his book on '*Why Bharat Matters*' has focused on how notions of national security have now expanded in this age of globalisation. The thought of security necessarily restricts us to counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism and border defences. In a pluralistic and diverse polity like India, law and order issues and even internal security are more complex as Indian society is seized with conventional and non-conventional threats of a broad range.¹⁴⁶

India's landmark success in global politics and diplomacy was witnessed with the passing of the Delhi Declaration in September 2023 at the G-20 Leaders Summit at New Delhi, during India's presidency of the G-20 Nations (Fig. 12). Pakistan wasn't invited to that summit, which is a result of when Pakistan always

Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

145 Laraib FARHAT, «India's Inroads into the Middle East: Implications for Pakistan», *Focus*, 2021, pp. 1-20.

146 Dr. S. JAISHANKAR, *Why Bharat Matters*, New Delhi, Rupa Publications, 2024, pp. 158-177.



Fig. 12. The 18th Heads of State and Government Summit of the Group of 20 (G20) at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi from 9 – 10 September 2023 under the Indian Presidency of the G-20. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seen at the centre. (Source: The Wire)

took India's initiatives for granted. The Kargil War happened immediately after the Indo-Pak Summit at Lahore in February 1999 (Fig. 9), and so did the Terror Attacks on Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001 after the Indo-Pak Agra Summit in July 2001.

Conclusion

The Kargil War was not just a lesson for India and Pakistan but to the world as well. The war most importantly, was a lesson to teach India the tactics of mountain warfare and reform its National Security which had become outdated since 1947. For Pakistan, it was a lesson not to act out of haste and desperation without considering the views of its own citizens. For the world, it was a lesson of what can happen when states of the Global South develop nukes, especially threatening the very global power structure with first-world nations at the apex. The Kargil War was inevitable. But the advantage of this inevitability lies in the fact that India could project its restraint, diplomacy and strength skilfully. The war also revealed the institutional fallacies in Pakistan. It was a quasi-conventional war fought by India and Pakistan as the fourth and last war.¹⁴⁷ The presence of nukes allowed the nuclearization of South Asia, yet no nuclear war happened out of deterrence. Sumit Ganguly sees the war, projecting Pakistan's behaviour as an example of a stability-instability paradox.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ GATES and ROY, *Limited War in South Asia*, cit., p. 115.

¹⁴⁸ Sumit GANGULY, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions since 1947*, New Delhi, Oxford U.P., 2002.

The war tested the Indian Army's strength, willpower and determination to fight a war even after serious underestimation of the enemy party in the beginning. It also tested the success of Indian Diplomacy amidst ongoing crises. India's defence command structure didn't change until 1999-2000 Reforms, the war again proved that despite such instances, Pakistan's military operations are much weaker as the state has a poor history of military operations. The war was a prelude to the series of upcoming conflicts India would need to face with the beginning of the 21st Century. These conflicts, necessarily doesn't mean, have to be dealt militarily, but also with swift diplomatic and intelligence moves. Limited war is the only form of conflict that can exist in regions where parties follow the logic of deterrence. But the outcome of such wars is much more peripheral and minimal – because such wars cost innocent army and civilian lives and drives out the energy of an entire nation to ensure stability of a region like Kashmir, which not just holds strategic importance to India but historically, has been an integral part of India.

The 2000 Red Fort Attacks in Delhi would be the starting point of a series of Pakistani state-sponsored terrorist attacks in India. The 2001 Indian Parliament Attacks in Delhi, India's Political Capital, resulted in a military standoff between India and Pakistan across the border. About 8,00,000 Indian soldiers were dispatched across the border under 'Operation Parakram'. Could this have resulted in a Fifth India-Pakistan War? The following year, i.e. in 2002, the city of Kolkata was targeted. Kolkata (formerly, Calcutta) is the Cultural Capital of India and formerly, the capital of British India until 1911. Islamic militants attacked the American Consulate in Kolkata resulting in the death of policemen and guards and injuring 21 people at the Consulate.¹⁴⁹ The 2008 Mumbai Terror Attacks shook the entire nation when state-sponsored terrorism went beyond international borders targeting civilians directly. Mumbai (formerly, Bombay) is India's Financial Capital. Bruce Riedel writes that after the 9/11 terror attacks, the Mumbai attacks were the deadliest. He sees the attacks immediately happened after Barack Obama's election as the US President causing his first challenge to be met soon after his election. The LeT (Lashkar-e-Tayyiba) terrorists who attacked Mumbai, were supported by Pakistani intelligence and the Al-Qaeda. Riedel further writes that

149 «India Links Kolkata Attack to Sept. 11», *CNN*, 2002, online edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/asiapcf/south/01/22/india.attack/index.html top of page

another attack was planned when India hosted the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi in 2010 but it was thwarted with the help of British Intelligence Services.¹⁵⁰

The early years of the 21st Century witnessed terrorist attacks in Indian metropolises like Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai. This series of asymmetrical conflicts whether in the form of terrorist attacks or insurgencies has tested India's crisis management ability with an integrated coordination of military, intelligence and diplomacy. India, being the largest democracy in the world has been both resilient from the threats it faced and consistent in its growth to be a future superpower in a multipolar world. The Kargil War was therefore a revelation of a new India, which is well adaptive to the changing trends of times. The formulation of a new doctrine on national security doesn't allow complete security for a vast and diverse state like India, for that has to be applied and rectified from time to time depending on the situation. India's consistent focus on her growth has caused her to become more powerful than it was during independence. India's success in Democracy lies where India values public opinion and takes into consideration its sensitive issues, unlike neighbouring Pakistan. India's military is as diverse as Indian society. The multi-ethnic regiment system in the Indian Army is a legacy of the British Indian Army.

The very existence of a multi-ethnic regiment system ensures balance in military population preventing the hegemony of one regiment over the other. This is not the case in Pakistan, where its military always chose to stay far away from the civilian government. The hegemony of the Urdu speaking West Pakistanis in army and bureaucracy in East Pakistan was one of the major factors causing a Bengali-dominated East Pakistan's liberation as Bangladesh in 1971. South Asian states still have to bear the brunt of colonialism in the form of border disputes. British frontiers in South Asia became borders after their departure and with decolonisation of South Asia, i.e., after the 1947 Partition, whose horrors are still felt even today in contemporary South Asian society, border disputes and wars were an accretion to Post-Partition problems. These frontiers were drawn by colonial states, not regarding the complexities of the local regions but to suit colonial interests. India's territorial disputes with China after China's Tibet annexation is just a common example to this and the Kashmir issue with Pakistan

¹⁵⁰ Bruce RIEDEL, «Mumbai Attacks: Four Years Later», *Brookings*, 2012, online www.brookings.edu/articles/mumbai-attacks-four-years-later.



Fig. 13. Kargil War Memorial (Wikimedia Commons)

is not an exception here. India or *Bhārat*, despite such multifaceted challenges, continues to learn from history and everyday experiences, toward a path of a strong and secure nation.

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