

KARGIL WAR

July 9, 2019

Manifest pedagogy

This year marks 20 years of Kargil conflict. Kargil conflict lead to a diplomatic reorientation in Indian foreign policy, this reorientation lead to warming up of relations between India and USA. This conflict also lead to a major reshuffle in Indian Security establishment and also its border management protocols. This conflict has linkages to Indian diplomacy and Indian Security these dimensions can be explored by UPSC

In news

- 2019 commemorates the 20th year of Kargil war

Placing it in syllabus

Paper1

- Modern Indian history – significant events,
- Post-independence Consolidation Reorganization

Paper 3

- Security challenges and their management in border areas
- Various security forces and agencies and their mandate.

Static dimensions

- Background to war and course of conflict
- International pressure on Pakistan
- Reasons why Kargil being a limited conflict
- Indian diplomacy at Kargil war

Current dimensions

- Kargil review committee report



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Content

The Kargil war was one of the fiercest conflicts between India and Pakistan. This year India will be celebrating 20 years of the Kargil War on July 26. It is observed in the remembrance of recapturing the towering hills in **Kargil district in Ladakh division** after the occupancy of Pakistani troops. The Indian Army named the mission '**Operation Vijay**' while the Air Force called it '**Operation Safed Sagar**'

The 20th anniversary of "Operation Vijay" will be celebrated this year with the **theme 'Remember, Rejoice and Renew'** and troops from three battalions will undertake expeditions to the peaks where their units had fought under impossible conditions to drive out the intruders



Background to the war and course of conflict

The war took place between May and July of 1999 in Jammu and Kashmir's Kargil district which was the part of Baltistan district of Ladakh before the partition of India 1947 and was separated by the LOC after the first Kashmir War (1947-1948). The conflict began in the winter of early 1999, when Pakistan Army along with the Mujahideen reoccupied the forward positions and strategic peaks of Kargil, Drass and Batalik. "**Operation Al-Badar**" was the name given to Pakistan's infiltration

Based on information from local shepherds, the Indian Army was able to ascertain the points of incursion and deployed four divisions to take back the strategic peaks for securing its

main supply line in Kashmir. India's operation to recapture their territory was named "**Operation Vijay**". The Pakistani soldiers had positioned themselves at higher altitudes which gave them an advantage in combat, as they could fire down at advancing Indian troops. Pakistan shot down two Indian fighter jets while another fighter jet crashed during the operation

It was fought for around 40- 60 days under minus 10-degree temperature. Until July 4, 1999, the Indian Army had captured strategic peaks like Tiger Hill and Tololing. The war saw the use of Bofors FH- 77B artillery guns. Although it is said that the USA refused GPS help, Israel helped India with ordnance and armaments and provided UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or drones)

The Indian Air Force also used MiG-27 and MiG-29 against Pakistani troops and the bomb was also dropped wherever Pakistani soldiers occupied the area. With the help of MiG-29, several targets of Pakistan were attacked with R-77 missiles. IAF's MiG-21s and Mirage 2000 were extensively used in the Operation Safed Sagar during this war

International pressure on Pakistan

Pakistan was criticised by the International community for allowing its paramilitary forces and insurgents to cross the Line of Control (LoC). Pakistan also attempted to internationalise the Kashmir issue, by linking the crisis in Kargil to the larger Kashmir conflict but, such a diplomatic stance found few backers on the world stage. The US and the West including the G8 nations identified Pakistan as the aggressor and condemned it

The other G8 nations, too, supported India and condemned the Pakistani violation of the LoC. The European Union was also opposed to the violation of the LoC. China, a long-time ally of Pakistan, did not intervene in Pakistan's favour, insisting on a pullout of forces to the LoC and settling border issues

peacefully. ASEAN Regional Forum too supported India's stand on the inviolability of the LOC

Pakistan asked the US to intervene, but then-President Bill Clinton declined to do so until Pakistani troops were withdrawn from the Line of Control. Faced with growing international pressure, PM Nawaz Sharif managed to pull back the remaining soldiers from Indian territory. As Pakistani troops withdrew, the Indian armed forces attacked the rest of the outposts, managing to get back the last of them by July 26

Reasons why Kargil war was a limited conflict

Post war, Clinton in his autobiography stated that "Sharif's moves were perplexing" since the Indian prime minister had travelled to Lahore to promote bilateral talks aimed at resolving the Kashmir problem and "by crossing the Line of Control, Pakistan had wrecked the bilateral talks." He applauded **Indian restraint for not crossing the LoC and escalating the conflict into an all-out war.**

One of the main concerns in the international community during the Kargil crisis was that both neighbours had access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and if the war intensified, it could have led to nuclear war. Both countries had tested their nuclear capability in 1998. India conducted its first test in 1974 while 1998's test was Pakistan's first-ever nuclear test. Pakistani foreign secretary had made a statement warning that an escalation of the limited conflict could lead Pakistan to use "any weapon" in its arsenal. Many such ambiguous statements from officials of both countries were viewed as an impending nuclear crisis.

The nature of the India-Pakistan conflict took a more sinister proportion when the U.S. received intelligence that Pakistani nuclear warheads were being moved towards the border. Bill Clinton tried to dissuade Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from nuclear brinkmanship, even threatening Pakistan of dire

consequences. Sensing a deteriorating military scenario, diplomatic isolation, and the risks of a larger conventional and nuclear war, Sharif ordered the Pakistani army to vacate the Kargil heights

Additionally, the threat of Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) included a suspected use of chemical and even biological weapons. Pakistan accused India of using chemical weapons and incendiary weapons such as napalm against the Kashmiri fighters. India, on the other hand, showcased a cache of gas masks, among other firearms, as proof that Pakistan may have been prepared to use non-conventional weapons. However no nuclear arsenal or WMDs were used, thus making the war a limited conflict

Indian diplomacy at Kargil war

India's success in the Kargil war was a result of its successful combination of diplomacy and the use of force. In the aftermath of the 1998 nuclear tests India was under sanctions—the UN Security Council resolution 1172 had condemned its actions, and multilateral and bilateral sanctions had India on the back foot when 1999 came around. It was in this context that India decided to not cross the Line of Control (LoC). It needed international opinion to be in its favour—much like the support of the domestic audience, the support of the international community was seen to be a potential “major force multiplier.”

Kargil was India's first television war. This rallied public opinion in favour of Indian action. Blood donations to the Indian Red Cross Society in New Delhi increased during the war. Additionally, donations to soldiers' welfare funds increased exponentially. Images of wounded soldiers, coffins, and bereaved families created awareness and solidarity. Furthermore, the use of the media was seen as a booster for the Indian armed forces.

By the end of June, the U.S. government, the European Union and the G-8 all threatened sanctions on Pakistan if it did not withdraw to its side of the LoC. International pressure was building up. Even Pakistan's traditional allies in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) chose to water down its resolutions against India.

The Kargil war marked the first instance in the history of South Asian conflicts that the United States strongly supported India. It laid the foundation of the current United States-India that eventually culminated in the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal almost a decade later. Furthermore, in subsequent conflicts too, India was able to bear international pressure down on Pakistan—particularly in the aftermath of the 2001 Parliament attacks and the 2008 Mumbai attacks

Kargil Review Committee report

To review the events leading up to the Pakistani aggression in the Kargil District of Ladakh in Jammu & Kashmir and to recommend measures considered necessary to safeguard national security against such armed intrusions, a committee under K. Subrahmanyam was set up.

Recommendations

- The Committee recommended that there must be a **full time National Security Adviser**. Members of the National Security Council, the senior bureaucracy need to be continually sensitised to assessed intelligence pertaining to national, regional and international issues.
- Kargil highlighted the gross inadequacies in the **nation's surveillance capability**, particularly through satellite imagery. It highlighted the fragmented nature of communication capabilities in India and its inadequacy in funding.
- The role and the **tasks of the para-military forces have**

to be restructured particularly with reference to command, control and leadership functions. They need to be trained to much higher standards of performance and better equipped to deal with terrorist threats.

- It recommended a detailed study in order to evolve force structures and procedures that ensure **improved border management** and a reduction, if not the elimination, in the inflow of narcotics, illegal migrants, terrorists and arms.
- It suggested the need to **enhance India's Defence outlays** as budgetary constraints have affected the process of modernisation and created certain operational voids. Priority should be given for equipping infantrymen with superior light weight weapons, equipment and clothing suited to the threats they are required to face in alpine conditions.
- It recommended that the entire gamut of **national security management and apex decision-making and the structure** and interface between the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces Headquarters be comprehensively studied and reorganised.
- It recommended the publication of a **White Paper on the Indian nuclear weapons programme.**
- It recommended that the Government must **review its information policy** and develop structures and processes to keep the public informed on vital national issues by publishing authentic accounts of the 1965 and 1971 wars as well as Kargil war.
- **Facilitating defence exports, the better utilisation of highly sophisticated industrial capacity** and related manpower.
- The establishment of a **civil-military liaison mechanism at various levels**, from the ranking Command headquarters to the operational formations on the ground is most necessary to smoothen relationships during times of emergency and stress, like war and proxy war.

Given the low ebb in the relations between India and Pakistan at the moment—coupled with greater Indian willingness to use force—it is important for the Indian government to learn from Kargil, and lay out specific political goals and use diplomatic means to attain them. This needs to be in the form of an institutionalised agenda to put diplomacy first and the ad hoc show of strength second