

Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia

*The Causes and Consequences of the Kargil
Conflict*

Edited by
Peter R. Lavoy



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1. Pakistanis became mesmerized by the Indian setback to India, so much so that they turned their success into a local battlefield. They used heights, and using their position, they had ideas about how success in a tactical and political gains were achieved in wishful thinking.

2. *It accompli* at Kargil also offers a different perspective on Indian officials' behavior during the conflict. Assured by the defensive dominance relationship, they instead of a much stronger opponent. They use their dialectic as a way to obtain success. It would suggest, Kargil convinced them to surprise, and this was the specter of nuclear war.

9 Militants in the Kargil conflict: myths, realities, and impacts

C. Christine Fair

Background: origins of the myth

In the spring of 1999, Pakistan executed a broad incursion across the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir using 3–4,000 men equipped primarily with small arms from the then-paramilitary organization the Northern Light Infantry (NLI).¹ Ostensibly, the Pakistani forces sought to make small territorial gains at tactically significant locations near the Indian town of Kargil. Initially, Indian reports characterized these intruders as *mujahideen*, or *ghusbhaitiyan*.² Indian authorities later believed that a composite force of militants and Pakistani regulars executed the incursion. After the fighting intensified, however, Indian officials learned that this infiltrating force was comprised not of civilian militants, but rather nearly entirely of NLI troops supported by civilian porters, or *razakars*.³

¹ The research for this chapter draws from several research trips to Pakistan and India between 2000 and 2006, some of which were conducted explicitly for this research. Initial fieldwork in Pakistan was undertaken during the winter of 2000, during which the author interviewed serving and retired army officers, academic and think-tank analysts, journalists, political leaders, and non-state actors. See Ashley J. Tellis, C. Christine Fair, and Jamison Jo Medby, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella: Indian and Pakistani Lessons from the Kargil Crisis* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2001). During a second CCC research trip to Pakistan in January of 2003, the CCC team, including this author, met with a number of retired and serving army officers, intelligence officials, civil servants, journalists, and analysts. I also conducted extensive interviews with serving and retired army officers, intelligence officials, journalists, and analysts in India and Pakistan in the winter of 2000, the fall of 2002, the summers of 2003 and 2004, and the falls of 2005 and 2006. This chapter was written in 2003 and updated in 2007 to reflect changed events and the feedback from external reviews. The opinions expressed here are solely attributable to the author.

² This is the plural of *ghusbhaitiya*, which is the Hindi neologism for "intruder."

³ Civilian *razakars* (volunteers) were used mainly as porters. They may have carried light arms. See Shaukat Qadir, "An Analysis of Kargil," *RUSI Journal* 147, no. 2 (April 2002), 26. See also Ashok Krishna, "The Kargil War," in *Kargil: The Tables Turned*, ed. Ashok Krishna and P. R. Chari (New Delhi: Manohar, 2001), 102; V. P. Malik, *Kargil: From Surprise to Victory* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2006), 42–46, 82–83, 92–97, 110, 116, 344; Y. M. Bammi, *Kargil 1999: The Impregnable Conquered* (Noida, India: Gorkha Publishers, 2002), 180–183; Tellis, Fair, and Medby, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, 20.

Curiously, many popular accounts of Kargil still sustain the myth that the operation was executed by *mujahideen* either operating alone or in tandem with Pakistani troops.⁴ This misperception about the intruding force has persisted for a number of reasons. First, the initial reporting of the incursion characterized these forces as *mujahideen* or *jehadi* militants and those accounts formed the basis of most subsequent analyses of the conflict. Second, and related to the first, Pakistan did not deny for many years after the crisis the Indian reports that these intruders were irregular fighters. Third, the international community did not publicly discount these claims even when the NLI's involvement was discerned. Finally, prior to January 2003, Pakistan did not issue a publicly available, authoritative, and credible account of the operation, its planning and objectives, as well as a thorough and detailed account of the force employed.⁵

There is some dispute over whether Pakistan intended to use the *mujahideen* cover story from the conception of the operation or whether the Pakistan army simply found it expedient to permit the Indian mischaracterization to persist. Major General Nadeem Ahmed, Commander, Force Command Northern Areas (FCNA), during a January 2003 briefing to the Center for Contemporary Conflict (CCC) Kargil team, indicated that the Indians made this claim and that Pakistan found it beneficial to continue letting the Indians believe this was the case rather than disclosing that the land grab was executed by the NLI.⁶ CCC research shows this to be a correct statement. After the initial Indian contacts with the intruding forces occurred in early May, Indian authorities assessed that the intruders were *mujahideen*. The Pakistan army had anticipated that the true identity of the intruders would be discovered sometime during the spring, but because the Indians believed the deception, the Pakistani military leadership decided to continue with it as long as possible. Lt. Gen. (retd.) Chaudhry Iftikhar Ali Khan, the former Chief of General Staff of the army and Defence Secretary to Nawaz Sharif, related

⁴ P. R. Chari, "Some Preliminary Observations," in Krishna and Chari, eds., *Kargil: The Tables Turned*, 13; and Shireen M. Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* (Islamabad: Ferozsons, 2003), 33–34.

⁵ The use of NLI rather than civilian militants was conceded during a briefing by Maj. Gen. Nadeem Ahmed, Commander, FCNA, on 12 January 2003. Also see Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999*, 46. The Indian government previously released evidence of the involvement of the NLI in Kargil: identity cards and paybooks of captured NLI sepoys. See V. P. Malik, "Terrorism and Limited War with Kargil Backdrop" (presentation to the Near East South Asia Center, National Defense University), personal communication. In addition, there is substantial inferential evidence attesting to the direct involvement of the Pakistani regular army in the planning, execution, logistical support, and artillery coverage for the operation, as these functions could not be adequately supplied by the NLI.

⁶ This point is reiterated in Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999*, 46.

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Kargil still sustain the myth that it was either operating alone or in collusion with the Indian army. First, the initial reporting of the presence of *mujahideen* or *jehadi* militants in the region. Most subsequent analyses of the conflict have shown that Pakistan did not deny for many years that these intruders were irregular fighters. The Indian government did not publicly discount the possibility of their presence. Finally, the Indian government's planning and objectives, and the size of the force employed.⁵

Pakistan intended to use the success of the operation or whether it was sufficient to permit the Indian misperception. Nadeem Ahmed, Commander, 1st Division, during a January 2003 briefing (CCC) Kargil team, indicated that Pakistan found it beneficial that this was the case rather than the other way round. CCC research has shown that the initial Indian contacts with the intruders, Indian authorities assessed that the Pakistan army had anticipated the deception, the intruders believed the deception, the intruders continued with it as long as possible. Ali Khan, the former Chief of Staff, related to Nawaz Sharif, related

to a CCC team member that during a 17 May 1999 briefing, Pakistan army officials explained: "To the outside world, the information given will be that *mujahideen* are operating, not the Pakistan army."⁷

CCC interviews with another senior retired army officer offer the most lucid account of how the *jehadi* story enjoyed such staying power within and outside of Pakistan. He explained that the Pakistan army planned to use the locally based NLI as a fundamental element of its initial denial and deception strategy. He, and others interviewed over the course of this research, averred that these troops were sent across the LoC without their uniforms with the explicit intention of concealing their NLI affiliation. This contributed to the perception that the intruders were Kashmiri militants, or *mujahideen*.

The NLI troops transmitted military communications in Pashtu, Balti, Shina, and other local dialects. Some of these transmissions were "intercepted" by Indian intelligence networks, giving further credence to the Indian hypothesis that the intruders were civilian militants, not Pakistani soldiers. This aspect of the Pakistani deception plan probably was fortuitous, because even though Pakistani military officers generally use Punjabi or Urdu for communications, the enlisted NLI soldiers under their command speak to one another in their native dialects, including Pashtu, Balti, and Shina, and generally have poor command of Urdu or Punjabi. It is possible that Pakistan's deception plan included the element of local-dialect communications, but it is more likely that the planners of the Kargil operation assumed that if Indian intelligence picked up any military communications, all that they would hear would be the local dialects, which are routinely used by both the NLI troops and the civilian militants that operate along the LoC.

The Pakistan army hoped that the *mujahideen* façade would last long enough to obtain some territorial gains even if eventually the truth would be discerned. However, the Pakistan army was surprised by the subterfuge's success, due in good measure to India's inability to properly identify the intruders.⁸ Once Indian sources reported that there were *mujahideen* ensconced in the Kargil-Dras sector, according to one officer interviewed by the CCC team, the Pakistan army developed the *mujahideen* story more thoroughly. By the time that the international community ascertained that the intruders were NLI soldiers, the Foreign Office, specifically the Foreign Secretary, argued against conceding the involvement of the NLI and the Pakistan army in the operation. He insisted, "We must stick to this story." In his view, admission would have been

5 Krishna and Chari, eds., *Kargil: The Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction*.

6 Conceded during a briefing by Maj. Gen. Ali Khan, 19 January 2003. Also see Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict*, released evidence of the involvement of "captured NLI sepoys." See V. P. Malik, "The Kargil Conflict" (presentation to the Near East South Asia Council). In addition, there is evidence of involvement of the Pakistani regular army and artillery coverage for the operation, as well as by the NLI.

⁷ Lt. Gen. (retd.) Chaudhry Iftekhar Ali Khan interview, 19 January 2003.

⁸ See discussion in Malik, *Kargil: From Surprise to Victory*, 42-46, 82-83, 92-97, 110.

tantamount to confessing that Pakistan deliberately committed an act of war. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif agreed with the Foreign Office's advice and persisted with the *mujahideen* fabrication. The Pakistan army, for the first time, admitted the exclusive use of NLI soldiers (perhaps with logistical support from *razakars*) during the January 2003 CCC meeting, convened at the FCNA Headquarters. Former President Pervez Musharraf later admitted use of the NLI in his autobiography in 2006.⁹

India too faced several incentives to sustain the *mujahideen* story, despite its embarrassment at the lack of veracity of initial reports. First, political strategists in New Delhi found it expedient to allow the myth to persist as it provided the Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) some degree of political cover for engaging Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in the Lahore process of late 1998 and early 1999. If *mujahideen* were responsible, Nawaz Sharif arguably could have engaged Vajpayee in good faith, potentially mitigating Vajpayee's personal loss of political capital. The *mujahideen* infiltration likely generated a more tempered public outcry in India. Had the public become immediately aware of the Pakistan army's deliberate seizure of Indian-administered territory, popular demands to punish Pakistan might have been even more forceful than it was. Given the Government of India's need to temper escalation, this could have been politically destabilizing for the weakened BJP-led government. Indian intelligence officials also had a bureaucratic incentive to cling to their initial assessments that the entirety, or at least the majority, of the intruders were civilian militants, not Pakistani army soldiers.

When the international community finally intervened to restore the status quo and to compel Pakistan to restore the sanctity of the LoC, the United States and others also were content to permit Nawaz Sharif to sustain the fiction of a *mujahideen*-led initiative. This provided Pakistan with an honorable exit if Nawaz Sharif compelled the intruders to return to Pakistan's side of the LoC. In short, none of the key actors – India, Pakistan, or the United States – had much incentive to decisively put to rest the farcical claim that civilian militants executed the Kargil intrusion.

Pakistan's ploy to make India and the rest of the world believe that the intruders were *mujahideen* struggling to liberate Kashmir from Indian control worked brilliantly at the outset of the crisis. However, Pakistan clung to this canard well after the direct involvement of Pakistani troops

⁹ Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 87–98. Musharraf denies that the Pakistan army engaged in an offensive seizure of ground, contending Pakistan's actions were defensive in nature in anticipation of Indian offense. See the Introduction to this volume for more on this Pakistani allegation.

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from the NLI became apparent. The question naturally arises as to why Pakistan continued to insist that the operation was completely civilian in nature. A number of explanations can be posited for Islamabad's persistence.

India's response initially was hampered as the Indian army organized its operations to counter militants, extending the period over which Pakistan enjoyed significant plausible deniability. Consequently, during much of the conflict and afterwards, India and the international community understood the operation to be an extension of Islamabad's proxy war in Indian-held Kashmir rather than what it really was: an interstate conflict with limited territorial aims. Further, had Pakistan admitted that it was an NLI-executed ingress, Islamabad no doubt would have had to explain why it chose to violate its various agreements with India (notably Karachi and Simla) and launched what the world understood to be an unprovoked act of military aggression.¹⁰ Pakistan sought to hide behind the ruse of the *mujahideen* at least in part because Islamabad recognized that the comity of nations would not tolerate any redrawing of maps by force – particularly in the context of the recent nuclearization of South Asia. Finally, the longer Pakistan maintained this cover story, the more difficult it became to devise a credible strategy with which to extricate itself from its own web of deception.

Ultimately, this deceit seriously damaged Pakistan's relations with India and the United States and degraded the international credibility Pakistan had gained after India initiated nuclear weapons tests in May 1998. This strategy of deception also had several adverse domestic consequences for the Shia residents of Pakistan's Northern Areas, public trust in the government, and upon the relationship between the army, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISID), and Pakistan-based militant organizations. Islamabad's management of the Kargil crisis also affected Kashmiri civilians as well as the various militants operating in the Kashmir Valley. Kashmiris reinterpreted their expectations of the Pakistani state and what it was capable of delivering to them. This chapter explores these consequences of Pakistan's reliance on an implausible cover story. However, as important as these domestic impacts were in the months after Kargil, they were largely overtaken by the events of 11 September 2001.

k: Free Press, 2006), 87–98. offensive seizure of ground, nticipation of Indian offense. ni allegation.

¹⁰ The 1949 Karachi Agreement between India and Pakistan delineated the Cease-Fire Line (CFL). In the 1972 Simla Agreement both sides recognized the LoC, geographically very similar to the CFL, and agreed not to alter it unilaterally.

Preview of the argument

This chapter has three sections. The first examines the impact of Pakistan's deception strategy on its internal social and political dynamics. How were relations among militant groups, Islamist political parties, ISID, and the Pakistan army affected by the latter's handling of the Kargil operation? The army's denial and deception strategy adversely influenced the morale of the NLI troops and the populace from which they are recruited. Because the NLI comes entirely from Pakistan's heavily Shia Northern Areas, discontent emerged when the Shia "boys" of the NLI underwent great sacrifice to support an untenable mission while the accolades of valor went to Sunni "*mujahideen*" groups. Given the history of Sunni-Shia tensions in that region, this was more than many families were willing to tolerate.

The second section assesses the impact of this strategy on the militants and populations in Indian-held Kashmir. Because ISID was excluded from operational planning, there was little or no coordination with militants operating in the vale of Kashmir. Although one of the motivations for the operation was to show the militants that Pakistani soldiers were willing to sacrifice for the Kashmir cause, the way the withdrawal occurred demoralized the militants, as it demonstrated that Pakistan once again ignored them in planning and executing an operation.

The third section examines the deception strategy's impact on Pakistan's foreign relations. Pakistan's persistent attempts to cast the operation as a *mujahideen* effort seriously damaged its international credibility, from which it has yet to fully recover. Pakistan's apparent on-again, off-again commitment to the war on terrorism has not ameliorated US and Indian concerns. Its attempts at perception management ultimately could not shelter Pakistan indefinitely from the consequences of relying upon an implausible lie. The downturn in Indo-Pakistani relations was another casualty of the Kargil misadventure and it laid the ground for a major US policy shift toward India. Whereas Indo-US relations are likely to further improve, US-Pakistan relations seem held hostage to Islamabad's decisions to support proxy warfare in Afghanistan and Kashmir, its dedication to rounding up and detaining al Qaeda and Taliban suspects, and continued revelations of its nuclear technology assistance to Iran, Libya, and North Korea.

Pakistan's internal dynamics

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the Pakistan army affected two important relationships. First, the operation created serious resentment and unrest in Pakistan's Northern Areas, the mountainous territory from which the NLI is heavily recruited. Second, even though militant outfits (*tanzeems*) were not used in Kargil, the army's withdrawal may have caused discord between the government and these non-state actors, including their allied Islamist political parties. However, the rancor that manifested between the Pakistan army and the *tanzeems* as a result of Kargil paled in comparison to the divisions that developed between the army-led government and the *tanzeems* in the years following Musharraf's September 2001 "decision" to participate in the US-led global war on terrorism.

Following Musharraf's decision to align with the United States in its war on terrorism, opposition to the Musharraf government arose within several Deobandi militant groups (e.g., Jaish-e-Mohammed, Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan, and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi), which formed breakaway groups beyond ISID control and which began targeting President Musharraf and other individuals and institutions within his government. (In contrast, the Ahl-e-Hadith group, Lashkar-e-Taiba, has never targeted the state.) While Musharraf did not shut down the militant production infrastructure in Pakistan, his efforts to calibrate the jihad in Kashmir and elsewhere provoked the ire of these Deobandi groups, as did his decision to ally himself closely with the United States. Oddly, while some of these groups have turned their guns on the state, little has been done to decisively shut them down.¹¹

Impact on the population of the Northern Areas

Until 1999, the NLI was a paramilitary organization recruited mainly from the Shia population of Pakistan's Northern Areas, notably in the towns of Gilgit and Skardu.¹² Unfortunately, reliable estimates of the size of the Shia population in the Northern Areas specifically and Pakistan generally is not available, as published Pakistani census statistics do not include the residents of the Northern Areas.¹³ The NLI was raised in this

¹¹ See C. Christine Fair and Peter Chalk, *Fortifying Pakistan: The Role of US Civilian Security Assistance* (Washington, DC: USIP, 2006), 9-28; Zahid Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 67-75, 119-140.

¹² See Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999*, 44; and "Pakistan's Northern Light Infantry," in Krishna and Chari, eds., *Kargil: The Tables Turned*, 296-299.

¹³ Even though Pakistan is 97% Muslim, there is considerable sectarian diversity. It is estimated that 77% of the population is Sunni and 20% is Shia. (The estimates of the Shia population vary, ranging from 15 to 25%). CIA, "Pakistan," in *The World Factbook*, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pk.html.

area primarily for border defense and was formed by amalgamating the Northern Scouts, Karakoram Scouts, and Gilgit Scouts of the Frontier Corps. Northern Areas populations know the local terrain and are acclimatized to operating at high altitude, making them well suited for NLI service. The Ministry of Interior and the Pakistan army jointly operated the NLI. While it was a paramilitary force during the Kargil conflict, subsequently it was inducted into the regular Pakistan army as the 6 Infantry Regiment on 8 September 1999.¹⁴ Musharraf explains in his autobiography, *In the Line of Fire*, that he converted the NLI into a regular infantry formation within the Pakistan army to acknowledge the NLI's "achievements, professionalism, and bravery" at Kargil.¹⁵

By claiming that *mujahideen*, who are almost invariably Sunni, conducted the operation, the Pakistan government and army ignored the efforts and sacrifices of the Shia NLI troops. Pakistani journalist M. Ilyas Khan observed that, as early as February 1999, residents from the districts of Ghizer, Hunza, and Baltistan had come to suspect Pakistan's involvement in the intrusion. Khan quotes a relative of an NLI soldier: "Most of our relatives and friends are in the NLI and, when they came home on leave, they told us what was happening ... They were excited that they had advanced deep inside enemy territory without firing a shot, and would talk about it all the time."¹⁶

Panic reportedly set in in the area by early June when dead bodies began arriving. The residents told Khan that the bodies were delivered at night. According to a local Pakistan Peoples Party leader and a former member of the Northern Alliance Council, Dr. Parveen Ashraf, "All of the martyrs had beards, and they were mostly buried in the same civilian clothes in which they had left for the front line. They were not given any military protocol at the time of the funeral."¹⁷

The locals were particularly outraged as stories began to filter back to the Northern Areas about the ammunition shortage and starvation suffered by the NLI troops at the front line. This occurred despite specific promises from the NLI high command to establish and sustain effective supply lines. Nor did the NLI high command establish second-line forces, according to a veteran of the Kargil conflict.¹⁸ The NLI paid a high cost. By mid-June 1999, both the 6 NLI on the Kargil front and the 12 NLI had taken massive casualties. Feelings of betrayal among Northern Areas

¹⁴ See Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999*, 156; and "Pakistan's Northern Light Infantry," in Krishna and Chari, eds., *Kargil: The Tables Turned*, 296–299.

¹⁵ Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire*, 95.

¹⁶ M. Ilyas Khan, "Life After Kargil," *The Herald* (Karachi), July 2000, 24–30.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 27. ¹⁸ *Ibid.*

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residents took on a very different color when the Pakistan government began asserting that the conflict was a militant operation. One resident told Khan, "When I first heard in the Pakistani media that the Kargil was being fought by the *mujahideen*, I was shocked ... My children were being killed, but the laurels went to Qazi Hussain Ahmed [The Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami]."¹⁹

Most of the residents of the Northern Areas are not Sunni Muslims, the sect represented by most of the militant organizations taking credit for the incursion. This caused considerable outrage because the loss of life was born disproportionately by Shia and Ismaili fighters while the Sunni groups took credit for the territorial gains.²⁰ Social unrest was further exacerbated because many of the Sunni militant groups support a militantly anti-Shia ideology and advocate violence against them.

The sectarian concern in the Northern Areas is important because the Shia there and elsewhere have been the victims of sanguinary communal violence for decades. Zia ul-Haq's government was accused of complicity in a three-day rampage against Shia in Gilgit (a town in the Northern Areas), perpetrated by Sunni militants in May 1988. In that anti-Shia violent episode, official estimates claim that 150 Shia were killed although unofficial estimates put the figure much higher. In addition, numerous villages were razed, herds slaughtered, and millions of rupees of property damaged.²¹ The military also relies upon anti-Shia militias such as Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan in areas like Kurram Agency, where Shia are concentrated. Presumably, this is done to thwart or offset Iranian influence in those areas.²² Thus it is important to understand that while Shia, Ismaili, and Sunni fighters wage Pakistan's external war with India in unison within Pakistan's armed forces, domestically the Shia and other minorities have been and continue to be victimized and targeted by Sunni militant groups. In some cases, this anti-Shia violence has taken place with significant degrees of state complicity. While Zia's patronage of these groups is most notorious, other Pakistani military and civilian governments have courted and even formed alliances with these Sunni sectarian organizations.²³

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 28.

²⁰ The Ismailis are the second largest Shia community. Ismailis dispute the proper succession from the sixth to seventh Imam, and supported the eldest son of the sixth Imam, Ismail. A majority of Shia accepted the younger son, Musa al-Kasim. That line of succession would be broken with the disappearance of the Twelfth Imam.

²¹ International Crisis Group, *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan: Crisis Group Asia Report* no. 95 (Brussels and Islamabad: International Crisis Group, 2005), 12, 19-20. Also see A. H. Sorbo, "Paradise Lost," *The Herald*, June 1988, 31.

²² Personal communication with Husain Haqqani, March 2007.

²³ Vali R. Nasr, "International Politics, Domestic Imperatives, and Identity Mobilization: Sectarianism in Pakistan, 1979-1998," *Comparative Politics* 32, no. 2 (January 2000), 175-179, 183-187.

Residents of Skardu also told Khan that militants associated with violence in India's Kashmir Valley began establishing a presence in Skardu by late May to give credence to Pakistan's assertion that Kargil was a militant operation. Citing the account of a senior police official in Gilgit, Khan reports that these militants forcefully took over a house for use as their office. An exchange of fire ensued between local residents and the militants. In a further bizarre twist of events, a captain of ISID threatened the Superintendent of Police for favoring the Skardu residents.²⁴ To quell the groundswell of unrest, top state officials began touring the Northern Areas and provided the families of martyrs with "extravagant awards" in an effort to buy out their discontent.²⁵

Impact on domestic militant and Islamist groups

The Pakistani press and the Pakistani populace remained unaware of the nature of the infiltration, the use of the NLI, and the orchestration of the operation by army leaders. As discussed in detail by Saeed Shafqat in chapter 11 of this book, the domestic press coverage of Kargil persisted in its depiction of the invading forces as the work of a few hundred *mujahideen*. Several militant groups were – and are at present – based in and around Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistan-held Kashmir. One June 1999 report in *The Herald* writes with some suspicion that "if the statements from the political camps of the various militant groups in Muzaffarabad are to be believed, members of at least four such organizations are involved in Kargil. Initially, it was Tehrik-e-Jihad which openly claimed that their men had taken control of large parts of Kargil. Later, three more groups, Al-Badr, Harkatul Mujahideen, and Lashkar-e-Taiba came out with similar statements."²⁶ The militant organizational leadership claimed to be operating collectively in the Kargil effort.²⁷

Such pronouncements and public posturing by militant groups are consistent with interview data obtained from Lt. Gen. (ret.) Chaudhry Iftikhar Ali Khan, who suggested that at a later stage limited *mujahideen* were incorporated. (Iftikhar was the Defence Secretary to Prime Minister Sharif during the Kargil crisis.) Likely, these *mujahideen* statements were encouraged to lend credibility to Pakistan's assertion that this was a

²⁴ Ilyas Khan, "Life After Kargil," 27–28.

²⁵ For more information about these visits, see *ibid.* 29.

²⁶ Zaffar Abbas, "Back from the Brink," *The Herald* (Karachi), June 1999, 46–48.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 48.

completely militant-orchestrated because ISID was excluded from coordination with militant groups. Indian-held Kashmir was likely a factor. Director Ziauddin became an interview material, it appears he did not go out of his way to

Pakistani press coverage from a sense of outrage over the would the Indians need to be dragged *mujahideen*?²⁹ B evinced because a few *mujahideen* required such a large mobilization. the Pakistani populace remain that the *tanzeems* executed to generally were held in high Department of State data, c 1999, relative to January and

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²⁸ Another complicating factor was Director General of ISID Ziauddin. more information about this re Hassan Kahn, Peter R. Lavoy, at this volume.

²⁹ Between 1 June and 1 August 1999, Indians responsible for escalation. *Nuclear Umbrella*, 14, fn. 19.

³⁰ The percentage of individuals with confidence in Pakistan's religious leadership fell from 48% in February 1999, to 48% in July, Pakistan, Musharraf Has Broad (17 May 2002). Provided by per

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completely militant-orchestrated and executed operation. However, because ISID was excluded from the initial planning of the operation, coordination with militant elements either within Pakistan or within Indian-held Kashmir was limited initially. It is not clear when ISID director Ziauddin became aware of the Kargil operation, but based on interview material, it appears that while he did not oppose the operation, he did not go out of his way to support it either.²⁸

Pakistani press coverage from May to October 1999 reflected a consistent sense of outrage over the way in which the Indians responded. Why would the Indians *need* to introduce air power to confront some bedraggled *mujahideen*?²⁹ But simultaneously, a sense of pride was evinced because a few *mujahideen* posed such a threat to India that it required such a large mobilization of forces. During the entire time that the Pakistani populace remained in the dark and under the mistaken belief that the *tanzeems* executed the operation, Islamists and militant groups generally were held in high esteem. For example, according to US Department of State data, confidence in religious leaders spiked in July 1999, relative to January and November 1999.³⁰

Throughout most of the conflict, the Pakistani press was fairly consistent in its depiction of the Kargil intrusion as the effort of freedom fighters. The lag-time required to produce critical accounts of the government's version of events is odd given that presumably some of the well-connected intelligentsia were aware that the *mujahideen* story was false. Nonetheless, it was not until the end of July and the beginning of August that the domestic audience began to question Islamabad's version of events. For example, in late July, M. P. Bhandara wrote, “We are told incessantly that the Kargil freedom fighters are genuine Kashmiri freedom fighters. However, is it reasonable to believe that freedom fighters can fight at 15,000 feet above sea level without Pakistani rations, clothing, logistics, ammunition and intelligence support? Again, who are we fooling? It is

²⁸ Another complicating factor was the tense relationship between CoAS Musharraf and Director General of ISID Ziauddin, both of whom were appointed on the same day. For more information about this relationship and its significance, see chapter 3 by Feroz Hassan Kahn, Peter R. Lavoy, and Christopher Clary, and chapter 11 by Saeed Shafqat in this volume.

²⁹ Between 1 June and 1 August 1999, there were twenty-three articles in *Dawn* that held the Indians responsible for escalation. Tellis, Fair, and Medby, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, 14, fn. 19.

³⁰ The percentage of individuals replying that they had a great deal or “a fair amount” of confidence in Pakistan's religious leaders went from 40% in a survey taken in January and February 1999, to 48% in July, down to 36% in November. Department of State, “In Pakistan, Musharraf Has Broad Public Support; Most Back His Anti-Extremist Reforms” (17 May 2002). Provided by personal communication.

possible for PTV to beguile its captive audience at home but the world does not consists [sic] of retards."³¹

Moreover, as the United States, the G-8, the United Nations, Russia, and even China joined India's call for Pakistan's withdrawal, Nawaz Sharif claimed that he had no control over these independent forces.³² Such news coverage also attributed to the operations of Pakistan's *tanzeems* a degree of independence that they did not deserve. The truth is quite different: the *tanzeems* have been, currently are, and are likely to remain under the influence and direction of ISID.³³ Despite Musharraf's rhetoric, analysts widely believe that Musharraf had little or no intention to eliminate these *tanzeems* altogether. Rather, he sought to restrain their violence as India and Pakistan engaged diplomatically, while maintaining a core capability that could be ramped up as needed. From 2003, Musharraf, as the anti-status quo actor, was more creative in proposing innovative options to resolve the Kashmir dispute. However, India did not reciprocate and, as the status quo power, had little incentive to move substantially from its current position. (Musharraf gave up Pakistan's long-held demand for a plebiscite and stated that Pakistan would accept any solution acceptable to Kashmiris.) Given presumed – and demonstrated – Indian recalcitrance on the disposition of Kashmir, Musharraf had few options but to retain the *tanzeems* as one of his few coercive options.³⁴ That said, Pakistani authorities contend that a resolution of the Kashmir dispute will make the *jehadi tanzeems* irrelevant, thus enabling the Pakistan government to marginalize them once and for all. Alternatively, the use of state force against them could produce a domestic backlash that could produce uncontrolled internal violence.

On 4 July 1999 Nawaz Sharif went to the United States seeking a dignified exit strategy from then-President Bill Clinton. While Clinton had no delusions that Kargil was planned and executed by entrepreneurial *mujahideen*, the agreement penned with Nawaz Sharif did not require any

³¹ M. P. Bhandara, "On the Edge of the Precipice," *Dawn*, 21 July 1999 cited in Tellis, Fair, and Medby, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, 44–45.

³² See Tellis, Fair, and Medby, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, 22–23; "Pakistan's Sharif Meets with Military over Kashmir," 9 July 1999, www.cnn.com/WORLD/asiapcf/9907/09/india.pakistan.01/; and Sridhar Krishnaswami, "Firm American Demand," *Frontline*, 17 July 1999, www.frontlineonnet.com/fl1615/16150160.htm.

³³ This assessment is based on the author's fieldwork in July and August of 2003, focusing on militant recruitment techniques in Pakistan and the connections between militant groups, the army, and ISID.

³⁴ See "The Year of Kashmir," *HIMAL South Asian*, February 2007, www.himalmag.com/2007/february/commentary2.htm.

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admission of Pakistan army complicity. Rather, the prime minister only pledged to bring the intruders back to Pakistan's side of the LoC. As this withdrawal was executed in July, public sentiment turned against the government for selling out the brave *mujahideen*. The pusillanimity of the Sharif government imposed a defeat on the *mujahideen* that they did not deserve and gave India a victory that it did not earn. Public anger was even more apparent as the so-called *mujahideen* casualties mounted after the withdrawal agreement.

So in many ways, Kargil was a major boon for the reputation of the various Islamist and militant groups. In truth, Pakistan's deception strategy gave the militants a tactical victory they did not earn. During the so-called withdrawal phase, when the *jehadi tanzeems* were at the height of their popularity and the government at the receiving end of the criticism, not a single militant group revealed the mendacity that Kargil was a *mujahideen* affair.

Impact on the militants

Determining the extent to which the Pakistan government's handling of Kargil affected the militant groups is difficult because there is generally considerable opacity surrounding the relationships among the militants and their handlers in the Pakistan army and ISID. Data gathered through field interviews by this author suggest that such impacts were rather indirect.³⁵ Despite the positive press and numerous accolades for the *jehadi tanzeems*, is it reasonable to suggest that the execution of Kargil without the actual use of militants had an untoward impact on relations between these groups and their handlers in the army and ISID? Presumably, these militants could have reasoned that had Pakistan been serious about affecting the balance of power in the valley, ISID would have coordinated militant activities there as a force multiplier. However, as noted above, Lt. Gen. (retd.) Iftikhar provides the most credible information on this issue: He claimed that there was no formal coordination of, or plan to include, civilian militants initially because ISID was

³⁵ Another interesting element of the army's motive in pursuing Kargil is the personality and vested interest of Lt. Gen. Muhammad Aziz Khan. Prior to assuming his position as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Aziz was responsible for handling the Kashmir policy within ISID. Aziz is himself a Kashmiri and is passionately devoted to the case, based on the author's interaction with Aziz and based on the views espoused by retired senior Pakistani army officers of his acquaintance. One informant (a retired Lt. Gen. from the Pakistan army) suggested that Aziz may have argued the case that the Kargil operation could provide a fillip to the enervated insurgent movement in Kashmir. Militants could be motivated to resume the fight with renewed vigor if they observed Pakistani troops forfeiting their own lives to make inroads into Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir.

completely excluded from the planning and execution of the Kargil intrusion.³⁶

The policy decisions made by President Musharraf subsequent to 11 September 2001 further strained the army's relations with militants and their allied political parties. After Pakistan's decision to participate in the global war on terrorism and the militant attack on the Indian parliament on 13 December 2001, Musharraf was under intense – if episodic – pressure to rein in Pakistan-based militants operating in Indian-held Kashmir and within India. To the extent that Pakistan has been consistent in its application of restrictions upon *jehadi tanzeems*, these policies were effective. For example, it has been more difficult for groups to openly raise funds and recruit and train new cadres. However, this appears to be at best a tactical decision on Islamabad's part. Pakistan likely has made no strategic decision to move away from the reliance upon militants in the pursuit of its policy of proxy war in Indian-held Kashmir. Militants and the regime appear to have struck a sort of bargain whereby they agree to keep operations at a minimum and maintain a low profile in exchange for which they will be allowed to continue to recruit and train new cadres and raise funds.

There is little doubt that the relationship has suffered since 11 September 2001 when Pakistan withdrew its support for the Taliban and al Qaeda. Moreover, the militants were dealt a significant setback when they lost vast training infrastructure in Afghanistan, and a number of large camps were closed in Pakistan.³⁷ Initially, some groups may have speculated that Pakistan's overnight willingness to abandon its decades-old policy in Afghanistan may have implied a willingness to abandon its Kashmir policy – with the right combination of sticks and carrots from the international community. However, the *jehadi tanzeems* remain operational despite various bans and limitations placed on them.³⁸

Impact in the Valley of Kashmir

Because ISID has responsibility for coordinating militant operations in Indian-held Kashmir and because ISID was left out of the planning and

³⁶ Peter Lavoy's interview in January 2003 with Lt. Gen. Chaudhry Iftikhar Ali Khan.

³⁷ See C. Christine Fair, "Islam and Politics in Pakistan," in *The Muslim World After 9/11*, Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Benard, Peter Chalk et al. (Santa Monica Calif.: RAND, 2004), 247–295; Amir Mohammad Rana, "Jehad Inc – Back In Business," *Friday Times* (Pakistan), 16 January 2003; Amir Mohammad Rana, *Jihad-e-Kashmir Aur Afghanistan* [The Jihad in Kashmir and Afghanistan] (Lahore: Mashaal Books, 2002).

³⁸ Ilyas Khan, "The Waiting Game," *The Herald* (Karachi), July 2003, 36–41; and Ilyas Khan, "Business as Usual," *The Herald* (Karachi), July 2003, 38–39.

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Musharraf subsequent to 11 September 2001 relations with militants and his decision to participate in the operation on the Indian parliament building under intense – if episodic – pressure. Its operating in Indian-held Kashmir. Pakistan has been consistent in its *tanzeems*, these policies were cultivated for groups to openly raise funds. However, this appears to be at best a facade. Pakistan likely has made no reliance upon militants in the Indian-held Kashmir. Militants and the government whereby they agree to maintain a low profile in exchange for recruitment and train new cadres and

ship has suffered since 11 September 2001 its support for the Taliban. It has dealt a significant setback in Afghanistan, and a number of groups, especially, some groups may have been forced to abandon its decades-long willingness to abandon its use of sticks and carrots from the *hadi tanzeems* remain operational on them.³⁸

inating militant operations in the valley left out of the planning and

n. Chaudhry Iftikhar Ali Khan. "The Muslim World After 9/11," in *The Muslim World After 9/11*, ed. Monica Calif. (RAND, 2004), 10. "Back In Business," *Friday Times* (Islamabad), 7 June 2002. *Jihad-e-Kashmir Aur Afghanistan* (Ishaal Books, 2002). (Lahore), July 2003, 36–41; and Ilyas Ali, July 2003, 38–39.

execution of the Kargil intrusion, there was no coordinated effort to mobilize militants on either side of the LoC before or during the Kargil operation. Senior Pakistani military officers indicated in interviews that there likely were civilian militants operating on the Indian side of the LoC, but without any formal coordination with the Pakistan army or the FCNA. This assertion is confirmed by data obtained from the Indian army's 15 Corps Headquarters based in Srinagar, which indicates that the Jammu and Kashmir Valley did not experience any significant increase in militant activities at the time of the Kargil conflict.³⁹ This is one of the stranger elements of the execution of the operation since one of the often-posed purposes for the operation was to give a fillip to the lagging insurgency within the valley. It is not obvious how this operation would energize the insurgency if they were abandoned in the planning and execution phases. Presumably, Pakistani planners reasoned that if soldiers were willing to die for the Kashmiri cause, militant morale might be boosted. However, given that Pakistan did not concede NLI presence in Kargil, the efficacy of this tactic may have been limited.

Prima facie, it would not be unreasonable for militant groups operating in the valley to be surprised that they were excluded from such a significant operation. They may have even drawn their own conspiratorial conclusions as to why Pakistan launched the operation without the use of these civilian combatants at least as a force multiplier. Indeed, had these militants been used in a concerted fashion with the NLI, Pakistan's cover story might have been more credible and durable, and this might have put much more pressure on the Indian counterinsurgency grid in the valley and elsewhere.

During interviews with Kashmiri groups (in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and in Islamabad) in December 2000, individuals communicated with this author a sense that Pakistan repeatedly had demonstrated that it was not a reliable partner. For example, during a meeting with several constituents of the Kashmir Action Committee, one interlocutor expressed concern that Pakistanis and other non-Kashmiris should be fighting in Kashmir.⁴⁰ It was this person's view that these guest militants would de-legitimize the Kashmir struggle. The Kargil operation certainly denuded the conflict of any patina of legitimate freedom struggle. This

³⁹ The author met extensively with 15 Corps Headquarters in September 2002. Additional data were also supplied in interviews with other Indian military officers.

⁴⁰ Kashmir Action Committee Pakistan "is a voluntary non-governmental organization of Kashmiris living in Pakistan and their supporters and sympathizers whose objective is to help Kashmiris get their right of self-determination." See <http://kacp-pk.com/home.htm>.

also was the view espoused by a representative of the All Parties Hurriyat Committee in Pakistan interviewed about Kargil during December 2000.

Interviews conducted in Srinagar in September 2002 and in August 2006 found considerable antipathy with both the Government of Pakistan and the militant groups supported by Pakistan operating in the valley. How much of this is attributable to Kargil *per se* is unclear. Much of this vexation stems from the ongoing violence imposed upon Kashmiris from the militants and Indian security forces as well from the kind of Islam generally pursued by the militants (such as Jaish-e-Mohammed), which is rooted to the Deobandi and Wahhabi strands of thought. Lashkar-e-Taiba, unlike most of the militant groups, espouses the more stringent Ahl-e-Hadith interpretative tradition.⁴¹ On the main, these militant groups embrace forms of Islam that are hostile to the traditional Sufi practices of the residents of the Kashmir Valley. Incidents such as electoral violence (for example, killing poll workers, candidates, and voters) as well as attacks on women who do not observe *purdah* have generated anger and resentment toward these groups in the valley.⁴²

The antipathy that has developed among residents of the valley toward Pakistan and its proxies essentially arose from the ways in which Pakistan and its allied *tanzeems* have appropriated and fundamentally transformed

⁴¹ The Deobandi, Wahhabi, and Ahl-e-Hadith comprise important Sunni traditions. The Deobandi school of Islamic interpretation originated in the nineteenth century in the Indian town of Deoband. Originally, this school of thought argued for the purification of Islam and called for Muslims to abandon nonorthodox local customs that may have been accretions from Hinduism or which may have been Sufi practices. Deobandis in Pakistan were a small minority until the early 1970s. The ascendancy of General Zia ul-Haq brought political patronage to the Deobandis which precipitated rapid Deobandi growth. They have come to operate the largest share of religious schools (*madaris*) in Pakistan. Deobandi organizations were one of the most important bastions of support for the Taliban, many of whose leaders studied in Deobandi *madaris*. Ahl-e-Hadith is a very conservative Muslim reform movement that also originated in the nineteenth century. It was heavily influenced by the Wahhabi movement, centered in Saudi Arabia. Ahl-e-Hadith rejects the Hanafi interpretive tradition. Ahl-e-Hadith is regarded as one of the most stringent Muslim groups in Pakistan and takes guidance from the ulema in Saudi Arabia. It is hostile to Sufi practices, which prevail in large swathes of Kashmir. Wahhabi refers to the eighteenth-century reform movement founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and which originated in Saudi Arabia. This reform movement, sharing much in common with the Deobandis of India, argued against accretions to Islam and maintained that they should be expunged. All three of these traditions in Pakistan have become highly associated (with varying degrees of legitimacy) as stringent and all have developed political organizations and militant outfits. For additional information, see Guilian Denoux, "The Forgotten Swamp: Navigating Political Islam," *Middle East Policy* 9, no. 2 (June 2002), 56–81; and Mandavi Mehta and Teresita C. Schaffer, "Islam in Pakistan: Unity and Contradictions" (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 7 October 2002), <http://csis.org/saprog/021007schaffer.pdf>.

⁴² Based on conversations with students, political figures, and newspaper editors in Srinagar in September 2003.

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what was initially an indigenous Kashmir-based struggle for self-determination. Throughout the 1990s, the conflict in the valley increasingly involved Pakistan-backed "guest militants," who come from Arab states, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere and who trained in camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Concomitant with the changed composition of the fighters, the nature and objective of the conflict in Kashmir changed. These largely non-Kashmiri fighters were less interested in securing Kashmiri sovereignty and more interested in establishing a Sunni-based Islamic regime first in Kashmir and subsequently throughout South Asia.⁴³

One of the consequences of this changing nature of the violence and its perpetrators in the valley is that by the late 1990s, the authenticity of the "Kashmir struggle" largely has been rejected. Instead, the conflict in the valley has been characterized as devoid of Kashmiri support and representation and a cynical consequence of Pakistan's execution of proxy war to coerce India to the negotiating table. The conflict in Kashmir was further cast within the broader contours of the much-reviled Islamist violence, which only intensified in the wake of the second Intifada against Israeli occupation of Palestine and in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001. Consequently, Kashmiris in the valley are very interested in regaining the credibility of their grievances against the Indian state within international fora. This likely requires that Pakistan cease supporting Pakistan-based militants operating in Kashmir and cease interfering in the affairs of Kashmiris in the valley.

The deep-seated antagonism toward Pakistan and India among the various areas of Kashmir was evident in a late 2002 survey conducted by A. C. Nielson. Nielson surveyed 574 people between 12 and 16 September in the urban areas of Srinagar and Anantang, in the Muslim-dominated district of Kashmir, and in the cities of Jammu and Udhampur, in the Hindu-dominant district of Jammu. When asked about their preferred political future, not a single respondent in Srinagar, Anantnag, or Udhampur was in favor of the valley joining Pakistan, and only 1% in Jammu wanted to; whereas 48% in Srinagar and 59% in Anantang said independence was the only solution to the Kashmir problem. While 26% in Srinagar and 27% in Anantang said Kashmir should stay with India, they also indicated that the state should be granted greater autonomy. In

⁴³ For more information about this transformation, see Alexander Evans, "The Kashmir Insurgency: As Bad as it Gets," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 69–81; and Sumantra Bose, *The Challenge in Kashmir: Democracy, Self-Determination and a Just Peace* (New Delhi: Sage, 1997).

Srinagar (the heart of the valley and with a dominant Muslim majority), 21% wanted the valley to stay with India, and in Anantnag (also heavily Muslim) only 5% wanted this.⁴⁴

Returning to the narrow question of Kargil's effects on internal dynamics in the valley, a number of those interviewed in Pakistan believed that while the Kargil operation was mainly a failure, it also was a victory of sorts. Some interlocutors said that because of Kargil and its deep significance within India, New Delhi initiated the ceasefire during Ramadan of 2000 that endured until the spring of 2001. Pakistani interlocutors interviewed by the author in December 2000 explained that Kargil demonstrated to India that a military solution would not prevail and that India could not simply act with disregard to Pakistani and Kashmiri equities. Thus, these individuals believed that Kargil inclined India to pursue nonmilitary solutions such as the Ramadan ceasefire.⁴⁵ Whether or not residents of the valley espoused this view is unclear.

It is unclear if the Kargil conflict had specific and isolable impacts upon groups and populations in the valley. However, over time, the valley's residents have come to espouse little or no support for Pakistan and its proxies. Their support for India, while more than that for Pakistan, is still low. Over time, the residents of the valley have expressed a preference for independence from both. Residents also have expressed vexation and exasperation with Pakistan's continued support of non-Kashmiri fighters in the region and the notions of Islam that they seek to exert upon the varied people of Kashmir.

Impact on Pakistan's foreign relations

While the consequences of the Kargil conflict on Pakistan's domestic politics and the valley have perhaps been overshadowed by the events subsequent to 9/11, Kargil had an enormous impact on Pakistani foreign relations for the first several years following the conflict. First, Pakistan was completely isolated because it pursued the destabilizing intrusion and because it persisted in clinging to a falsehood that no one found credible. The United States, the G-8, and even China took positions that were concordant with India's preferred position: that

⁴⁴ Praveen Swami, "The Game of Numbers," *Frontline*, 14 October 2000, www.flonnet.com/fl1721/17210360.htm; see also "Kashmiris Don't Want to Join Pak: Survey," *Times of India*, 27 September 2002, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/articleshow?artid=23409600&sType>.

⁴⁵ See Tellis, Fair, and Medby, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, 35.

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Frontline, 14 October 2000, www.flonnet.com.
is Don't Want to Join Pak: Survey," *Times*
india.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/articleshow?

under the Nuclear Umbrella, 35.

Pakistan was the aggressor and that Islamabad needed to act to restore
the LoC.⁴⁶

Kargil left Pakistan internationally isolated, widely perceived as a rogue
state, veering dangerously toward becoming a bastion of radicalized
Islamists increasingly similar to its neighbor under the Taliban. Whereas
in 1998, India emerged as the regional pariah responsible for nuclearizing
the subcontinent, Pakistan squandered on the heights near Kargil what-
ever goodwill it had accumulated in the wake of the nuclear tests. At one
point, the US State Department even suggested that sanctions could be
imposed upon Pakistan if it persisted with its posture of intransigence.⁴⁷
The absurdity of Pakistan's cover story and Islamabad's tenacity in main-
taining it further diminished Pakistan's credibility.

This credibility deficit continues to complicate Pakistan's external relations.
When Pakistan-based and Pakistan-backed militants attacked the Indian
parliament in December 2001, few believed that Islamabad was innocent of
the incident. That event precipitated a near-war condition that involved the
largest mobilization of troops since the 1971 Bangladesh war. The diversion of
Pakistani troops from the western border to the eastern border also compli-
cated US military operations in Afghanistan, which were predicated upon
Pakistani fortifications to prevent al Qaeda and Taliban fugitives' escape into
Pakistani territory. Pakistan's contention that the parliament attack was "stage
managed" by India to diminish Islamabad's renewed international standing
was immediately dismissed. Similarly, Pakistan's claim to have no involve-
ment in the Afghanistan insurgency has been met with dubiety given that it is
well known that Taliban and al Qaeda operatives enjoy sanctuary in key tribal
agencies and Baluchistan. The historical reliance upon deception and deni-
ability has cast a long shadow on Pakistan's credibility with the international
community generally and key partners, like the United States, in particular.

Indo-Pakistani relations

Kargil was an important turning point in Indo-Pakistani relations. First, it
confirmed India's belief that Pakistan was "a reckless, adventuristic, and

⁴⁶ For transcripts of the various statements, see "Texts of the G-8 Statement on the Kargil Crisis" and "Text of the Clinton-Sharif Statement, 5 July 1999," in Krishna and Chari, eds., *Kargil: The Tables Turned*, 313, 314. The G-8 is an informal organization comprised of eight countries: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

⁴⁷ Sridhar Krishnaswami, "Zinni Mission to Pak, Very Productive," *The Hindu*, 29 June 1999. See also C. Raja Mohan, "Will US Match Words with Deeds?" *The Hindu*, 26 June 1999; Amit Baruah, "US Asks Pak to Pull Out Intruders," *The Hindu*, 25 June 1999.

risk-acceptant state, capable of behaving strategically and irrationally."⁴⁸ Second, because Kargil was planned and prosecuted at the same time as the Lahore process, India concluded that it simply could not do business with Pakistan, which was a duplicitous and inherently untrustworthy partner. Third, India assessed that Pakistan's ongoing civil-military rivalry would make normalizations with that state exceedingly difficult. This conclusion stems at least in part from the regrettable tendency within India to view the Kargil operation as the design of the army imposed upon an unwitting civilian leadership under Nawaz Sharif. This was an important division of onus because it allowed India's political leadership to justify squandering political capital on the Lahore process because it held that Nawaz Sharif was duped as well.

These conclusions influenced how India tended to deal with Pakistan in the few years following Kargil. First, despairing of reaching any viable agreement with Pakistan, India preferred to avoid substantive engagement with Pakistan. Distinguishing between "substantive" and "procedural" engagement, India preferred to engage Pakistan procedurally, not substantively.⁴⁹ The Agra Summit exemplified such procedural engagement.⁵⁰

The Kargil conflict raised questions about the basis for substantive engagement with Islamabad. Even if India did manage to reach an agreement with Islamabad, India has little guarantee that such an accord could endure. Rather, any such agreement would be hostage to the vicissitudes of Pakistan's ever-changing internal dynamics. For several years following Kargil, India believed that it could only deal with Pakistan by not dealing with it – particularly on the issue of Kashmir. India found that its best strategy was to continue to marginalize Pakistan on this issue while mobilizing the specter of Islamist terrorism emerging from this state. During and after Kargil, the Indian press made explicit references to al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden and the various deep connections with Pakistan in an effort to cast Pakistan as an ignominious, unstable, non-secular, and increasingly Islamist neighbor.⁵¹ In contrast, Indian media managers early on sought to drape about India an aura of responsibility and trust by exercising restraint against crossing the LoC – and by

⁴⁸ Tellis, Fair, and Medby, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, 16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 62.

⁵⁰ One could certainly argue that there was little hope for any productive outcome at Agra because neither side was anywhere near convergence. In some ways, Agra could be seen as a tool to distract the international community from the serious development in Indo-Pakistani relations: the termination of the 2000 Ramadan ceasefire.

⁵¹ See "Delhi Plans Publicity Blitz to Expose Direct Role of Pakistan," *Hindustan Times*, 30 May 1999; "Kargil Infiltrators Are Fundamentalists: Russia," *Hindustan Times*, 29 May 1999; and B. Raman, "Is Osama bin Laden in Kargil?" *Indian Express*, 26 May 1999.

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ended to deal with Pakistan in a manner of reaching any viable substantive engagement. Substantive and “procedural” are procedurally, not substantively, procedural engagement.⁵⁰ But the basis for substantive would manage to reach an agreement that such an accord could be hostage to the vicissitudes of time. For several years following the conflict with Pakistan by not dealing with it. India found that its best strategy was to deal with Pakistan on this issue while it was emerging from this state. India made explicit references to all the deep connections with Pakistan, ignominious, unstable, non-⁵¹ In contrast, Indian media portrayed India an aura of responsibility for crossing the LoC – and by

publicizing its efforts to do so.⁵² India emerged from Kargil as a front-line state against Islamist terror, a mantle that it has further claimed in the aftermath of the 11 September terrorist attacks. Thus, India has tried to resolve Kashmir without any recognition of Pakistan’s putative equities in the dispute. This would entail cutting a deal with the Kashmiris and presenting to Islamabad a *fait accompli*, forcing Pakistan to either abide by or rubbish its often-stated commitment to honor the wishes of the Kashmiris.

Following 11 September 2001 and the formal end of the 2001–2002 military crisis in October 2002, India and Pakistan embarked upon a “peace process” of sorts. This round began in early January 2004, when then-Prime Minister Vajpayee and then-President Musharraf met on the sidelines of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) meeting in Islamabad. This process has endured despite shocks such as the 2006 terrorist attacks on the Mumbai transit system.

In varying degrees, the conclusions that Indian authorities drew from the Kargil conflict continue to hold. The current Indo-Pakistan detente has yet to yield substantial progress on the core issue of Kashmir’s political and territorial disposition. While many Indians may believe Musharraf was the only available leader to push through some deal on Kashmir, there was little reason to believe that future leaders would not renege. This conclusion was strengthened by Musharraf’s ever-eroding domestic and international standing. Indeed India’s behavior suggests that it prefers to maintain the status quo of reduced violence while it finds an internal solution to present to Islamabad as a *fait accompli*. India has good reason to believe that its position on Kashmir will strengthen over time as a key ally of the United States while Pakistan’s will weaken for myriad reasons related to terrorism, democracy, and nuclear proliferation. This confidence diminishes any incentive to accommodate Pakistani equities provided that the violence in Kashmir and elsewhere in India remains at a tolerably low level. Pakistan’s ability to expand the violence may be limited by the international community’s waning tolerance for violence as a means to achieve political means.

The Kargil conflict also prompted massive changes within India’s defense and intelligence infrastructures, which are transforming India as an adversary of Pakistan. Because of Kargil, India undertook a sweeping review of its entire defense infrastructure in an effort to explain how such an intrusion could have happened without detection and how “future Kargils” might be avoided. The Kargil Review Committee and the

Nuclear Umbrella, 16.

for any productive outcome at Agra. In some ways, Agra could be seen as the serious development in Indo-Pakistani ceasefire.

le of Pakistan,” *Hindustan Times*, 30 May 1999. Russia,” *Hindustan Times*, 29 May 1999. “India Express, 26 May 1999.

⁵² Arpit Rajain, “India’s Political and Diplomatic Response to the Kargil Crisis,” in Krishna and Chari, eds., *Kargil: The Tables Turned*, 181–203.

subsequent Ministerial report on the matter proposed many wide-ranging reforms. As this topic is covered elsewhere in this volume, the discussion here focuses specifically on those concerns relating to the problems of infiltration, the desire to monitor activities along the LoC, and the development of improved methods of countering Pakistani disinformation.

Pakistan's deception campaign and use of intruders in mufti clearly led to an Indian intelligence failure. The Kargil Review Committee report argued for a reorganization of all of its communication and electronic intelligence efforts under one organization, similar to the US National Security Agency. It also suggested establishing an integrated defense intelligence agency to ensure a coherent system of intelligence collection, collation, and assessment.⁵³ Kargil also made painfully obvious that India needed new intelligence hierarchies to ensure "the flow of intelligence from tactical elements to strategic agencies, the analysis of the many pieces of information coming in from different sectors, the communication among the various agencies, and the necessary technology upgrades for early warning surveillance equipment."⁵⁴ In addition, India realized the imperatives of an effective strategic warning system: broad investment in better technology, a commitment to better intelligence assessment, and dissemination procedures at the highest diplomatic and political levels.⁵⁵

To counter the ongoing problem of infiltration, India is making and will continue to make a number of investments to fortify its forward defenses to mitigate the possibility of future Kargil-like adventures. Kargil made painfully obvious to Indian defense managers the degree of vulnerability that exists along the porous and rugged mountain terrain of the LoC. To mitigate these vulnerabilities, India is hungrily acquiring a range of technologies that will augment India's thermal, infrared, acoustic imaging as well as image-intensification capabilities. This includes the acquisition of high-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles and pace-based systems, along with their concomitant ground-based command and control and image-processing facilities.⁵⁶ The army also needs long-range artillery for

⁵³ *Ibid.* ⁵⁴ Tellis, Fair, and Medby, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, 71.

⁵⁵ Kargil Review Committee, *From Surprise to Reckoning*, 253–256; for a general discussion of this, see also Ashley J. Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent and Ready Arsenal* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2001), 623–625, 660–662.

⁵⁶ Tellis, Fair, and Medby, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*, 70–71. See also Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture*, 623–625, 660–662; "Israeli UAVs: Forces of the Future," *Vayu Aerospace Review* 4 (2000), 50–52; "Imaging Capability," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 22 November 1999, 17; "'Spy Satellite' Launch by Year-End," *The Hindu*, 2 July 2000.

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deployment along the LoC to effectively target militant formations across the LoC. It also wants to acquire ground sensors.⁵⁷

In addition to these hardware and weapons systems acquisitions, India is also actively seeking military training to better confront the challenges it faces in Jammu and Kashmir. This has been made apparent in the emphasis that India has paid to Special Operations within the Indo-US army-to-army training exercises. Some Indians even have suggested that future restructuring of the Indian army could include the creation of a Special Operations Command similar to that of the United States. The Indian army also has been active in obtaining Special Forces-specific equipment such as night-vision goggles, special rifles, assault vehicles, kayaks, masks, and protective gear for operating in nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) warfare environments. It also seeks enhanced and more secure communications (such as secure hand-held communications) as well as an increased ability to intercept militant communications. Night-vision equipment is a priority because it would allow the army to insert teams under the cover of night.⁵⁸

As is apparent from the above discussion, the Kargil conflict has motivated India to rethink its entire strategy for dealing with Pakistan. It has altered the Indo-Pakistani bilateral relationship as well as how Indian officials portray Pakistan in multilateral fora. Kargil also ushered in a wide-ranging and thorough review of India's entire defense and intelligence infrastructures. Much of India's current defense-reform initiatives stem from Kargil. Finally, India's ambitious pursuit of more robust forward offensive capabilities has motivated India's defense acquisitions as well as defined the type of combat training that it hopes to gain in its bilateral army exercises with other nations. In short, because of Kargil and its sequelae, the kind of adversary that Pakistan will face in future conflicts has evolved in manifold dimensions.

Pakistan-US relations

Pakistan was generally cast as the transgressor by various international commentators of the conflict and, as noted above, its reliance upon the *mujahideen* cover story did little to advance a sympathetic interpretation of Pakistan's actions in multilateral fora. To a great extent, the damage to Pakistan's credibility has been irreversible despite President Musharraf's

under the Nuclear Umbrella, 71. , 253-256; for a general discussion *in Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent* 11), 623-625, 660-662.

Nuclear Umbrella, 70-71. See also -662; "Israeli UAVs: Forces of the naging Capability," *Aviation Week* atellite' Launch by Year-End," *The*

⁵⁷ The paramilitary forces have been using the Israeli sensor (Elop-manufactured LORROS) on a test basis with unsatisfactory results. See R. K. Jasbir Singh, ed., *Indian Defence Yearbook 2003* (Dehra Dun: Natraj Publishers, 2003), 196, 206.

⁵⁸ C. Christine Fair, "Indian Army-to-Army Relations: Prospects for Future Coalition Operations," *Asian Security*, 1, no. 2 (April 2005), 157-173.

heroic decision to join the war on terrorism, in part, because he had little choice in the matter – as Musharraf himself acknowledges.⁵⁹

Moreover, after 2005, considerable doubt arose over Musharraf's commitment to aid the United States in the war on terrorism, particularly with respect to the insurgency in Afghanistan. Pakistan also has made numerous commitments to completely cease cross-LoC infiltration under pressure from the United States and others. Indian officials grant that while infiltration is reduced compared to pre-2001 levels, it is widely accepted that Pakistan has not abandoned the use of proxies altogether for reasons discussed above.⁶⁰ The availability of militant training facilities in Pakistan continues to imperil Pakistan's foreign relations, as evidenced in the aftermath of the July 2005 London terror attacks. Several bombers made several trips to Pakistan and are believed to have met with Deobandi militant groups. One of the suicide bombers, Mohammad Sidique Khan, forged connections with al Qaeda in Pakistan and filmed his suicide video in Pakistan.⁶¹ As long as Pakistan retains camps, the potential for such crises will persist.

While the Kargil conflict had a wide-ranging ensemble of corrosive impacts upon Pakistan's foreign relations, its untoward significance was particularly notable in its relations with the United States. Kargil opened the door for the expansion in Indo-US relations that began in 2000 with President Clinton's March 2000 summit visit to India.⁶² With the presidency of George Bush, the pace in bilateral engagement surpassed the expectations of even the most optimistic observers of the Indo-US relationship. Kargil was catalytic in these regards for two reasons.

First, the stance that the United States adopted during the Kargil crisis toward Pakistan was very much appreciated in New Delhi. India had

⁵⁹ President Bush reportedly told Musharraf after 11 September that he could either be an ally in the war against terrorism or a target. C. Christine Fair, *The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with Pakistan and India* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2004). Musharraf agrees he had little or no choice. Musharraf writes in his autobiography that US Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, explained "in what was the most undiplomatic statement ever made" that should Pakistan demur, it "should be prepared to be bombed back to the Stone Age." Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire*, 201.

⁶⁰ See Ilyas Khan, "The Waiting Game," 36–41 and Ilyas Khan, "Business as Usual," 38–39. Author interviews with the Indian Home Ministry in September 2006 and interviews with police officials in Srinagar in September 2006.

⁶¹ See "7 July Bombing: The Bombers," BBC News online, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/london_blasts/investigation/html/bombers.stm; "Bomb Trail Goes Cold on Pakistani Ties," BBC News online, 11 May 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4761659.stm.

⁶² He was the first president to visit India since President Carter did so in 1978. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee made a reciprocal visit in September of that year. This was the second occasion in the two states' history when reciprocal state visits were made within the same year.

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previously assumed that if the United States intervened in a bilateral dispute between India and Pakistan that it would take Pakistan's side. In light of the prolonged estrangement between the United States and India and the intense pressure that the United States applied to New Delhi regarding its nuclear weapons and missile programs, India was both surprised and delighted that the US position posited Pakistan as the aggressor and insisted upon its withdrawal. Kargil demonstrated to New Delhi the potentially positive regional role of the United States.

Second, the Kargil crisis gave the United States a window of opportunity to strategically realign its priorities in South Asia both by providing a convenient "excuse" to distance itself from Islamabad and by demonstrating to India that the two democracies had several shared strategic interests. Pakistan made this movement toward an "India first" policy even easier with the October 1999 military coup, which invoked Section 508 sanctions.⁶³ Both India and the United States emerged from Kargil with a clear sense that they both shared a growing convergence of strategic interests, including containing the global threat of terrorism, and stabilizing and rehabilitating Afghanistan, as well as mutual interest in Pakistan's stability. One of the key dimensions of this new US relationship with India was the resumption in and expansion of military-to-military relations that began in the spring of 2000 under the Bush administration's new approach to South Asia popularly known as "de-hyphenation."⁶⁴

Since the events of 11 September 2001 and commencement of military action in Afghanistan, the Indo-US relationship has continued to strengthen and has taken on hitherto unimaginable dimensions inclusive of a US-Indian civilian nuclear agreement and a commitment to help India become a global power among other initiatives.⁶⁵ The fate of

⁶³ The term "India first" derives from Stephen Cohen, "Moving Forward in South Asia," Brookings Institute Policy Brief no. 81 (May 2001), www.brookingsinstitution.org/comm/policybriefs/pb081/pb81.htm. Under Section 508 of the 1999 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, no US assistance may be given to any country "whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree." However, after 11 September, Congress gave waiver authority to the president until the end of the fiscal year 2005. See Dianne E. Rennack, "India and Pakistan: Current US Economic Sanctions," *CRS Report*, no. RS20995 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, updated 12 October 2001) and K. Alan Kronstadt, "Pakistan-US Relations," *CRS Issue Brief* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, updated 2 December 2003).

⁶⁴ This policy shift calls for a decoupling of US relations with India and Pakistan ensuring that bilateral relations with both states is not held hostage by their security competition. Fair, *The Counterterror Coalitions*.

⁶⁵ See Ashley J. Tellis, *India as a New Global Power: An Action Agenda for the United States* (Washington, DC: CEIP, July 2006) and Faaiza Rashid and George Perkovich, "A Survey of the Progress in US-India Relations," in Tellis, *India as a New Global Power*, available at www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=17079&prog=zgp&proj=zsa.

US-Pakistan relations remains very much indeterminate and will likely depend upon future decisions that Pakistan takes with respect to supporting proxy warfare in Kashmir and Afghanistan in an effort to project its equities in these two regions. Notably, Pakistan's cooperation in the global war on terrorism concentrated the attention of the newly elected, Democrat-led Congress. Both the Senate and the House explored ways of exacting greater accountability from Pakistan, moves which the Bush administration opposed.⁶⁶ Further, A. Q. Khan's network's nuclear assistance to Iran, Libya, and North Korea continues to create policy dilemmas as concerns persist over the responsibility of Pakistan as a reliable and responsible custodian of nuclear weapons.⁶⁷

Conclusion

This chapter takes as its starting point that civilian combatants were not used in the execution of Kargil. Pakistan's use of the deception strategy has had a number of consequences for Pakistan's domestic internal dynamics, the various groups operating in the valley as well as large swathes of the civilians there, and upon its foreign relations – particularly with the United States and India. Initially, the Pakistan public took great pride in believing that a handful of ragtag *mujahideen* could have effectively tied up the Indian army and inflicted such heavy casualties. This occasioned a brief, but important improved opinion of the religious leadership of Pakistan among the Pakistani polity. While the deception may have provided a boost to the insurgency in Indian-held Kashmir as well as to the popular perception of religious leadership and militant groups in Pakistan, the deception campaign appears to have had very negative consequences in Pakistan's Northern Areas. Unfortunately, research cannot shed much light on the ways that Kargil may or may not have influenced the relationships and the interoperability of the militant organizations and their Pakistani handlers in the army and ISID. It seems likely

⁶⁶ The US House of Representatives introduced H.R. 1, which seeks greater accountability from Pakistan. See "H.R. 1: Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007 (Referred to Senate Committee after being Received from House)," available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c110:3:/temp/~c110t9AF0T>. For an official statement from the White House opposing the measure, see Office of the President, Statement of Administration Policy: H.R. 1 – Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007, January 9, 2007, available at www.whitehouse.gov/omb/legislative/sap/110-1/hr1sap-h.pdf.

⁶⁷ See William J. Broad, David E. Sanger, and Raymond Bonner, "A Tale of Nuclear Proliferation: How Pakistani Built His Network," *New York Times*, 12 February 2004, A1; and David E. Sanger, "Threats and Responses: Alliances; in North Korea and Pakistan, Deep Roots of Nuclear Barter," *New York Times*, 24 November 2002, A1.

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that decisions relating to the global war on terrorism undertaken by the Pakistan government may have posed more far-reaching challenges to these relationships. What has become apparent is that these *jehadi* groups are still very much in operation and still largely under the scrutiny and perhaps even control of the Pakistan army and ISID.

Turning to the consequences that the Kargil conflict may have had upon actors in the Kashmir Valley, with the passage of time it is difficult to isolate trends that are directly attributable to Kargil. Rather, over time, Kashmiris in the valley appear to have grown dissatisfied with Pakistan and its militant proxies. For sure, they also appear exhausted with New Delhi and many in the valley seem to prefer an option of independence.

The impact of Kargil on Pakistan's foreign relations has been most apparent. Because of Kargil, Pakistan will face a completely transformed foe in future conflicts with India. Kargil was a clarion call to New Delhi's security managers and has prompted India to make broad investments to fortify its forward offensive capabilities, to seek enhanced technology and combat training to contend with the insurgency in the valley, and to launch a major defense and intelligence restructuring. Second, because of Kargil, India and the United States found an opportunity for rapprochement. This process began anew in 2000 and has continued to develop momentum and gravity since then. Whereas India is the new US strategic partner, the future of US-Pakistan relations remains very much in question. Concerns over democracy, support of militancy in Kashmir and in Afghanistan, as well as missile and nuclear proliferation continue to pose policy challenges to Washington. Prospects for Islamabad to assuage Washington's concerns on these fronts appear ever dim.