

Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: Crises of 1999, 2002, and Beyond

Conference Report

New Delhi, India, September 26-27, 2002

The Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Contemporary Conflict (CCC) and the United Service Institution of India (USI) sponsored a conference on "Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: Crises of 1999, 2002, and Beyond" in New Delhi on 26-27 September 2002. This conference was the second in the series of conferences in support of the [CCC Kargil Project](#). The [first conference](#) of the series was held at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, May 29-June 1, 2002.

Project Objectives

The first day of the conference, as part of the ongoing CCC Kargil Project, was devoted entirely to understanding the causes and consequences of the 1999 Kargil Conflict. In this conference report, the details of discussion on 26 September are not attributed to particular speakers. The second day was devoted to an assessment of the contemporary security situation South Asia. The Kargil Project aims to develop new insights into the causes, conduct and consequences of the 1999 India-Pakistan war in central Kashmir and to draw from these insights a better understanding of India-Pakistan military rivalry, asymmetric conflict, and the role of nuclear weapons in crisis dynamics. As the venue of the session suggests, the conference aimed to obtain inputs from a cross-section of Indian participants on the research prepared by the Kargil Project authors. The discussions on the second day aimed at analyzing and debating the strategy of deterrence, the dimensions and dynamics of limited war, perspectives on South Asian security and the prospects and challenges for U. S. engagement in South Asia.

Conference Participants

Conference Co-Chairs: [Dr. Peter Lavoy](#), Director CCC, and Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Mathew Thomas, Member USI.

CCC Kargil Project Team: Dr. Peter Lavoy, Colonel Jack Gill, U.S. National Defense University, [Lt. Col. \(Ret.\) Surinder Rana](#), CCC Research Fellow, Member USI, Ms. Chris Fair, RAND Organization, Praveen Swami, Frontline Magazine, India, Mr. Joseph McMillan, National Defense University (NDU), Washington, D.C., Mr. Rodney Jones, President, Policy Architects International, Virginia, MAJ Steve Smith, NPS, CPT Marcus Acosta, NPS, and [Ms. Iliana Bravo](#), NPS.

Panel Chairs and Discussants: Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Mathew Thomas, Member USI, Col. S.C. Tyagi, Member USI, Mr. A.K. Verma, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India, Shri B. Raman, Director, Institute of Topical Studies, Chennai, Member USI, Air Cmdr. (Ret.) Jasjit Singh, Center for Strategic & International Studies, Maj. Gen. A.K. Verma (Ret.), Member USI, Shri K. Subrahmanyam, Columnist Times of India & Member USI, Dr. Ashley Tellis, Senior Advisor to the U. S. Ambassador in India, Shri Chinmaya R. Gharekhan, IFS (Ret.), Member USI Council, Dr. Paul S. Kapur, Claremont McKenna College, California, Dr. Kanti Bajpai, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, Lt. Gen. V. R. Raghavan (Ret.), Delhi Policy Group, Member USI, Mr. Anand Elchuri, Monterey Institute of International Studies, California, Shri C. Raja Mohan, Strategic Affairs Correspondent, The Hindu, New Delhi, Shri Bharat Karnad, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, Member USI, Brig. V.K Nair, (Ret.), Member USI, Gen. V.P. Malik, (Ret.), former COAS, India, Member USI, Brig. Devinder Singh, IDSA, Member USI, Mr. Larry Robinson, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi.

Attendees: Dr. Varun Sahni, JNU, Dr. M. Zuberi, JNU, Dr. Navnita Behera Chaddha, JNU, Air Chief Marshall (Ret.) K. Mehra, Member USI, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Y. K. Gera, Deputy Director USI, Air Vice-Mshl. (Ret.) Kapil Kak, Member USI, Maj.-Gen. (Ret.) Ashok Krishna, Member USI, Lt. Gen.(Ret.) B.S. Malik, Member USI, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) V.K. Nayar, Member USI, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) P.K. Pahwa, Member USI, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Y.M. Bammi, Member USI, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) R.C. Chopra, Member USI, Brig. (Ret.) K.N. Singh, Member USI, Vice Adm. (Ret.) Inderjit Bedi, Member USI, Vice Adm. (Ret.) M.K. Roy, Member USI, Vice Adm. (Ret.) P.S. Das, Member USI, Vice Adm. (Ret.) P.J. Jacob, Member USI, Vice Adm. (Ret.) I.J.S. Khurana, Member USI, Rear Adm. (Ret.) K. Raja Menon, Member USI, Air Mshl. (Ret.)

Vinod Patney, Member USI, Air Mshl. (Ret.) Bharat Kumar, Member USI, Air Vice Mshl. (Ret.) N.L. Gupta, Member USI, Brig. R. Chowdhury, Member USI, Col. Mohinder Singh, Member USI, Col. K. Rawal, Member USI, Prof. Satish Kumar, Member USI, Mr. Suba Chandra, IPCS, Col. (Ret.) V.K. Gautam, Member USI, Brig. R.P.S. Malhan, Army Headquarters (AHQ), Col. S. Madhok, AHQ, Maj. Gen. Devraj Singh, Integrated Defense Staff (IDS), Lt. Cdr. A Bharadwaj, IDS, Capt. U.K. Vohra, IDS, Col. A. Ahuja, AHQ, Col. A.K. Bhalla, AHQ, Brig. Arun Saigal, IDS, Shri Rajesh Rajagopalan, IDSA, Dr. P.R. Chari, Institute of Peace Studies, Mr P.M. Chingappa, IDSA, Shri E.N. Ram Mohan, USI, Shri S.K. Dutta, USI, Shri S.K. Bhutani, USI, Mr. Wajahat Habibullah, Director, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mr. Sundeep Nayak, Deputy Director and Faculty, LBSNAA, Mr Bhuwan Malhotra, Ministry of Defence (MoD), Dr. Sudha Raman, USI, Mr. Geoff Pyatt, Political Counselor, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, LTC B S Tollie, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, Ms. Kimverly Kinney, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, Mr. Thomas Rafaul, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, Ms. Virginia Foran, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, Mr. Robert James, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, Mr. R. Williams, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, Mr. Ajay Shukla, Defense Correspondent, NDTV, Shri Inder Malhotra, India Express. Mr. R. Prasannan, Associate Editor, The Week, Ms. Sonia Trikha, Indian Express.

Conference Support: Ms. Niharika Hora, Ms. Ruchika, Ms. Simran K Sanghera, Ms. Yash Pal Bist

September 26, 2002

Introduction and Orientation

Dr. Peter Lavoy provided an overview of the conference objectives, CCC activities, and the Kargil project. Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Mathew Thomas welcomed all participants, and talked about CCC-USI cooperation. Col. S.C. Tyagi gave a brief presentation on the terrain and topography of Kargil and Kashmir more generally.

Kargil Conflict: Motivations and Surprise

Chris Fair presented Dr. Zafar Iqbal Cheema's paper "Pakistan's Motivations and Calculations for the Kargil Conflict". The author (Cheema) said in his paper that the Pakistan government's silence on the Kargil conflict had forced him to rely mostly on secondary sources. He argued that Kargil was the continuation of the five-decade old India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir. According to Cheema, a small number of senior officials in the Pakistan army planned the Kargil operation as a reaction to the Indian army's forward military policy, which culminated in occupation of the Siachin Glacier in 1984. He contended that Pakistan's military planners worked on the premise that occupation of un-held areas in Kargil would enable them to choke Indian defenses in Leh and Siachin. Hence it was the Siachin dispute that eventually spilled over into a new territorial dimension in 1999—the Pakistan's army's intended control over the Kargil heights.

Surinder Rana presented the paper "Kargil Conflict: A Systemic and an Intelligence Failure," which he jointly wrote with Dr. James Wirtz. Rana and Wirtz argued in their paper that there is a sharp military asymmetry between India and Pakistan. Pakistan, which is the weaker power in this equation, naturally finds surprise an attractive option. But because achieving surprise is a risky proposition and because it allows the weaker party to consider initiatives and outcomes that otherwise are beyond its capabilities, the victim of surprise (in this case India) often dismisses potential surprise scenarios as improbable.

Wirtz and Rana argued that the Indian army was indeed surprised, but under certain circumstances every organization is susceptible to surprise. At the heart of the problem are the limits to human cognition that constrain an organization's ability to anticipate unexpected and novel development, especially if the future fails to match existing analytical concepts, beliefs and assumptions. Idiosyncratic factors, the "ultra-syndrome," the "cry-wolf syndrome," denial and deception, or unavoidable signal-to-noise ratio, complicated Indian institutional efforts to perform intelligence analysis and produce finished estimates regarding the Kargil intrusion. These authors argued that the Indian intelligence apparatus suffered from glaring problems prior to Kargil, such as lack of coordination, lack of coherence, lack of accountability, and poor transparency. The Indian government and armed forces have lived with these systemic weaknesses over the years; however in the changed regional security situation—especially with the introduction of nuclear weapons—such anomalies, if not overcome, could lead to catastrophic results.

The discussant, a senior retired Indian intelligence official, contended that Kargil is not clearly a result of intelligence failure. The basic argument is flawed as the responses of the Prime Minister of India and the Defence authorities were negative in this respect. If the government had internally agreed on such an intelligence gap then corrective measures

should have been put into place in the post-Kargil Review Committee Report, but no such actions were taken.

The discussant brought forth the absence of clarity with regard to Pakistan's perspective—the questionable release of General Musharraf's telephonic conversation, Nawaz Sharif's sudden flight to Washington, the rumors of Nawaz Sharif's ignorance on the subject, Al Qaeda's involvement, the refusal of the court to allow Nawaz Sharif to testify about Kargil, the murder of his lawyer, and other political angles which have not yet been analyzed in greater detail. Only a complete study of these factors will allow us to see the bigger picture and understand the conflict in totality. An American participant, however, contested Al Qaeda's involvement in the Kargil conflict.

In the open discussion the participants gave varying opinions about intelligence failure. A retired Indian general contended that there had been no intelligence failure. He did not however, provide any supporting argument for his contention. A senior bureaucrat, who is also a Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) cadre IAS officer, supported the argument of an intelligence failure and asked if sufficient measures have been recently taken in order to cover existing loopholes in the security apparatus in J&K.

Military Operations and the Role of Insurgents

Ms. Chris Fair's paper, "Employment of Civilian Militants in the Kargil Crisis," focuses on the various militant organizations and their putative role in Kargil. She emphasized that the commonly employed terminology for Pakistani intruders was flawed, as there is a clear distinction between the Pakistani regular/irregular forces and the civilian militants or insurgents. She touched upon the history of the insurgency in Kashmir and mentioned that the three main groups involved during the Kargil conflict were Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Harkat-ul-Ansar. She provided statistics based upon intelligence reports about the composition of Pakistani forces that were involved during Kargil. She pointed out that the ratio of regular/irregular forces to civilian forces was 60:40 according to both R&AW (Research and Analysis Wing) and BSF (Border Security Force), though IB (Intelligence Bureau) held the ratio to be 70:30. She said that Pakistan's official version of Kargil maintained that it was an entirely civilian militant affair, though there are alternative narratives found in other Pakistani sources such as those of Shaukat Qadir and M. Ilyas Khan, which contradicted Pakistani government's official version.

She concluded her presentation by saying that the role of civilian insurgents was not extensive and most likely it did not involve prominent militant organizations. There is no evidence suggesting extensive involvement of Pakistan regular forces; rather irregular NLI (Northern Light Infantry) troops appear to have been the workhorses of this operation. It was a tactical operation not intended to have strategic dimensions.

There was strong objection by one senior retired Indian military officer to the NLI being put into the same category as irregular forces. He added that the NLI could rather be equated to 'Ladakh Scouts' in the Indian Army. In fact, they are better equipped than regular infantry in such a mountainous terrain as it is their home ground. Pakistan used them in the entire northern Kashmir areas. Artillery guns from the Pakistan Army supported the operations and the NLI was officered and integrated with regular army brigades.

A senior retired military officer pointed out that 'civilian militants' is only a semantic term and reiterated that the NLI was totally integrated in each brigade employed in that area. All regular officers in the NLI are as well equipped as any other infantry battalion having better fighting capabilities. Referring to the ratio figures of 70:30 as Ms. Fair had stated, he said that during the conduct of operations in Kargil, the Indian army found no evidence of militants having participated in Kargil, implying that it was a 100 percent Pakistan army operation.

In her response to the comments, Ms. Fair said that she was not suggesting the NLI to be inferior structurally—she meant only to outline its different role.

One active duty Indian Army officer argued that the Indian Army had gathered irrefutable proof of the Pakistani Army's participation in the Kargil Conflict. This proof was available in an Indian booklet titled Pakistan Army's Misadventure in Kargil, which gave a sordid account of a Pakistani Army caught in a cobweb of lies.

Another Indian strategist suggested that Pakistan hardly ever owned up to their responsibility in all of the wars it has fought for Kashmir since 1947. In fact, it appears as if denial is part of their strategy. The Kashmir situation in 1947 was attributed to irregular forces, and it was only years later that the man who planned it all admitted responsibility. From an analytical point of view, regular and irregular forces are constantly interchanging in Pakistan. About the ratio, he said that 100

percent were Pakistan army and the evidence of this was provided by the Kargil Review Committee Report (KRCR). He stated that in the list of people decorated with medals, there is no mention of any 'Mujahideen' having attained martyrdom. Those who achieved 'Shaheedi' are not mentioned either. In September 1999, the NLI was formally merged into the Pakistani army.

Colonel Jack Gill presented his paper "An Analysis of Military Operations during the Kargil Conflict." In his paper, Gill stated that the unit and sub-unit level operational techniques including mountaineering skills used by infantry units was laudable as it was not a normal infantry operation. He suggested that Kargil was a special episode in this 55 year-old India-Pakistan conflict and cannot be studied in its entirety unless one goes back to study the mindset of the Indians and Pakistanis involved in it, i.e. back to the military under the Raj—the Partition and the reactions thereafter. He made following observations in his paper:

- The conflict reaffirmed the verities of combat in Kashmir.
- Kargil was not routine artillery exchange but much more. It went well beyond the norm of fighting in Kashmir as suggested by length, intensity, level of forces involved, intentions of combatants and its inherent ramifications.
- Nawaz Sharif acknowledged his fear that fighting across the Line of Control (LoC) would not die down by autumn as India would not give up. Nawaz Sharif and Clinton held talks with the goal of restoring the LoC to its pre-Kargil status.
- Restraint by both sides was a key to keeping the conflict contained.
- An understanding of the Kargil conflict helps to explain subsequent politico-military developments in both countries.

An Indian Army officer who participated in the Kargil conflict suggested that the operations in Turtok, as well as their implications, need to be studied in greater detail.

The discussant observed that Ladakh was not affected by the insurgency. Pakistan selected this isolated area to introduce the insurgency into the region. The motive behind the infiltration was that Pakistan has never really accepted the LoC, which per the Simla Agreement was to be the de facto border. Pakistan always wanted to change the alignment of the LoC even at minor levels; in the case of Kargil, it was done at a larger level.

A senior retired Indian Army officer commented that the Pakistan government had not even taken the Pakistani Navy, Air Force, and other important people into confidence. Referring to Turtok, he mentioned that Pakistan had captured peaks on the Indian side of the LoC with an apparent aim of interdicting Indian forces in Siachin. But the Indian army was able to block and later evict the intruders. On the issue of the artillery exchanges in Kargil in 1998, he stated that it was possibly a Pakistani response to the Indian army's interference in the Neelam Valley area.

Conflict Management and Nuclear Dimension of Kargil

Dr. Peter Lavoy in his paper "Conflict Management Strategies of India, Pakistan and the United States," observed that according to Western scholars, the introduction of nuclear weapons into a region of conflict is supposed to create a logic of military escalation avoidance and thus produce such caution among decision makers that the opposing sides in a crisis will curtail their coercive behavior well short of war. He argued that Pakistan's defiance of this logic led to the Kargil conflict. In fact, the calculations of Pakistani military planners seemed to follow the logic of the "stability-instability paradox," according to which the side that is willing to run greater risks is able to use military force to obtain territorial or political gains, thereby placing the pressure on the other side to escalate to the nuclear, or near-nuclear, level—which, the logic goes, it will refrain from doing.

However, full-scale India-Pakistan war was prevented in 1999 through a combination of factors such as India's eventual battlefield successes, Pakistan's decision not to support its fighters (or perhaps they were not in a position to provide this support), official and back channel diplomacy, and international mediation through the aegis of the United States.

Lavoy further argued that Pakistan's decision makers apparently perceived Kargil as mainly a tactical military operation, which was launched by a small group of Pakistani army leaders under the guise of ongoing militancy in Kashmir. Pakistan's strategy was based on the premise that due to the new nuclear factor, international pressure would force the cessation of hostilities, leaving Pakistan in an advantageous position on the ground. Based on this premise, the Pakistan government approached China and then the U.S. for support after the fighting started. China adopted a neutral posture, whereas the U.S. government gave a conditional commitment for mediation after Pakistan withdrew to its side of the Line of Control (LoC). In the end, however, Pakistan's military behavior and its diplomatic efforts were sometimes contradictory and inconsistent, and, in the end, ineffective. India, on the other hand, managed to combine

effective military measures involving all three armed services, with consistent and coherent diplomacy.

The discussant, a senior diplomat, commented on the 'rules' articulated by Dr. Lavoy and called them a good reflection of the actual crisis situation. According to him, even though the United States and the Soviet Union never came to blows during the Cold War, the U.S. forces remained in a constant state of preparedness in case its interests were threatened. He referred to rule two (i.e. do not escalate a crisis with a nuclear adversary), as a rule of thumb from a policy perspective. He said that deterrence was a goal in the Cold War era and it is still an instrument of policy. He questioned the possibility of conducting a revisionist political policy in the nuclear age. Rule four (i.e. the importance of outside intervention for crisis management), he feels, may be misused as a tool of exploitation by outside powers. He noted that Pakistan was engaged in risk-taking even before it went nuclear. Hence the question arises, "What are Pakistan's political objectives in South Asia?" What is the extent of Pakistan's structural dissatisfaction with the status quo?

Mr. Rodney Jones presented Dr. Timothy Hoyt's paper on "Kargil: The Nuclear Dimension." Hoyt argued in his paper that India and Pakistan each view their nuclear capabilities as largely political, rather than military tools. Decision makers in both states have made assumptions about the impact that the nuclear demonstrations of May 1998 would have on regional security, but these assumptions were mutually contradictory: on the one hand, Indian and Pakistani leaders have affirmed their pursuit of "minimum deterrence" postures, but on the other hand, they have spoken of and actually undertaken preparations for nuclear use under a wide range of circumstances. Hoyt said that India's continuing development of military doctrine, including the post-Kargil "limited war doctrine," and Pakistan's efforts to re-define nuclear "red lines" during the Kargil war and even thereafter, suggest that the subcontinent may be moving toward a low-level arms race.

Referring to Dr. Hoyt's paper, the discussant questioned as to how outside countries could distinguish between enhancing military preparedness and preparations for war. The discussant classified these preparations as stabilizing and destabilizing, respectively. Given Pakistan's fear of India's conventional superiority, and India's political goals during a conflict, prudence and rationality demand certain minimal preparedness before the onset of crisis.

Socio-Political Impact of Kargil

Praveen Swami said in his presentation that Kargil was the first major armed conflict in the sub-continent that was fought in the full glare of domestic and international media. Certain regions of India, such as the South and Northeast states, which hitherto had remained immune to previous India-Pakistan conflicts, were also affected because of the government's policy of sending the dead for last rights in their native places. Swami argued that although Kargil became an issue in the national elections that followed the conflict, no particular political party actually benefited from this issue. Public sensitivities on a national issue such as Kargil are evident from the record 5,000 million rupees contributed by the public toward the war effort and toward the rehabilitation of those harmed by the conflict.

Dr. Paul Kapur presented Dr. Saeed Shafqat's paper on "The Impact of Kargil on Pakistan's Domestic Politics and Security." Dr. Saeed wrote in his paper that the Kargil conflict—and subsequent Indo-Pakistani crises—exposed the scope and scale of the Pakistan state's involvement with militant religious groups. The conflict also brought to the surface the dissention among the highest echelons of Pakistan's political and strategic decision-makers. According to Saeed, the Kargil conflict affected Pakistan's politics and society in many ways: first, it deepened the already brewing distrust between the military and the political establishment; second, it produced tensions between the military and religious groups; third, it raised questions about the responsibility and reliability of the Pakistani state among the community of nations; fourth, it damaged the professional reputation of the Pakistani army, allowed the international media to portray it as a rogue organization; and fifth, by deliberately keeping the public in the dark about the government's involvement in the Kargil conflict, the Pakistan government's political strategy had an adverse societal impact. This problem was exacerbated by the government disowning the remains of dead NLI soldiers, which caused resentment among families of those who were killed or wounded in combat.

A senior Indian academic commented that the Kargil conflict contributed to the rise of right-wing politics that has intensified in both the countries. Extreme right-wing forces are particularly involved with non-parliamentary parties that are gaining ground and criticize the established governing parties (i.e. the VHP in India and the 'Jamait's' in Pakistan). The right-wing forces also have a large mobilizing capacity. The rise of right-wing parties suggests an increasing embattlement of the regular parties but also of the liberals in all segments of Pakistani society. The Kargil war prefaced a rise in communal and sectarian violence and attacks on minorities in both countries. Also, a change in the attitude of both societies towards the United States took place in the wake of the conflict. In Pakistan there was growing anti-U.S. sentiment, whereas in India, an ambivalent attitude gave way to a more positive one.

The Indian academic further noted that neither government got much credit for their handling of war. The BJP in India reaped no particular dividends; while in Pakistan Nawaz Sharif went and Musharraf gained power. He also brought out how Praveen's paper failed to show the impact of media on domestic politics in India. Ironically, pressure was built up on the government through the media to be transparent about Indian military policies and the war.

The discussant pointed out that the Kargil conflict led to a shake-up in the Indian intelligence apparatus. In India this shake-up resulted in the formation of new institutions such as Chief of Defense Staff (CDS), but the Pakistani military apparatus more or less remained the same. In India there was consensus among the political elite on various **defense** refurbishment issues, but not so in Pakistan. He concluded by noting that both speakers agreed Kargil hasn't done much good to domestic politics in Pakistan or India..

In the open discussion, a senior retired Indian diplomat asked whether the rise of the right -wing could correctly be attributed to Kargil?

Another participant pointed out that India has been engaged previously in wars with Pakistan and Kargil was no different. Thus, the socio-political implications were not too different from those resulting during previous Indo-Pak conflicts. It has affected Pakistan more than India. He brought out that in the Pakistani press (Friday Times) there was an unprecedented feeling that three wars have already been fought with no benefits. Therefore, should a fourth be forced upon Pakistani people? There was a perceptible change and a general feeling of "enough is enough." Articles blaming the army for taking the administration in hand and misleading the government on Kargil appeared in the press. But the Pakistan government refuted this last observation. He further said that there is more than one press in Pakistan and there is a difference of opinion in the English and the regional press. Hence, nothing could be generalized.

A senior diplomat commented that although neither of the two governments may have received credit for the war translating into big electoral victories, Vajpayee has nonetheless gained popularity as a wartime leader.

Another participant commented that it was a rather disturbing aspect that Pakistani society evaded reality by considering Kargil a victory even when it was clearly a defeat. The 1965 war was a draw, though the Pakistanis like to call it a victory. Even the 1971 war was termed a conspiracy by Bhutto. The Kargil result was attributed to the pressure Pakistan received from the United States to withdraw. Pakistan's governing establishment has always shielded their public from the reality that their nation has been defeated by a superior military power.

A senior academic said Kargil caused a major political change in Pakistan, which is that Musharraf became the unopposed arbiter of administrative reforms as well as national security. He is said to be a follower of former Turkish leader Kemal Ataturk. However, unlike Turkey, political competitors in Pakistan are not allowed free expression, and at the same time there are not many political leaders in Pakistan who will even dare to stand up to Musharraf. Pakistani society has changed in the sense that it has come to accept the institutionalization of military rule.

A senior retired Indian Army General pointed out that absolute military victories in today's short and limited wars might not be feasible. Therefore, our major concern should be whether the political aim is achieved or not.

A senior retired Indian diplomat responded by observing that war aims are different from everyday political aims in that they are not definitive or publicly announced. Also, they change depending on how the war advances. The General replied that an important consequence of the Kargil conflict was that the LoC has acquired sanctity. There is a greater realization that eventually the LoC may be the only resolution to the Kashmir conflict. Internationally, the Indian government has gained higher ground by practicing restraint across the border.

A young military officer said that Kargil was part of an ongoing proxy war, which means there was no political aim other than eviction of intruders in occupied territory. The challenge was big so the efforts in turn were massive. The question therefore arises as to whether there is a game plan for how this proxy war is to be fought? If so, there must be a political aim for the same. From the forgoing discussion one could conclude that political aims are restricted by what is accepted internationally.

Lessons Learned from Kargil Conflict

Mr. Anand Elchuri presented Dr. Rajesh Basrur's paper on "The Lessons of the Kargil Conflict as Learned by

India ." According to Basrur, the lessons learned by India can be inferred from the organizational and policy changes in the Indian security and political system that followed Kargil. Indians perceived Kargil, which was planned even as the Lahore peace process was underway, as a betrayal by Pakistan; and ever since then they have hardened their posture over dialogue with Pakistan. Even the failure of Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf to reach some agreement at Agra is attributable to this hardened posture.

In the wake of Kargil, India has instituted various changes in its higher defense management, operational deployments in Kashmir, and nuclear command and control structure. The concept of limited war has now become a buzzword of Indian strategic thinking. Basrur argued that Indian sincerity in the peaceful resolution of Kashmir with Pakistan is evident from its cease-fire offer to militants, and also its initiation of dialogue with the Musharraf regime at Agra.

Colonel Jack Gill presented Dr. Hasan Askari Rizvi's paper on "The Lessons of the Kargil Conflict as Learned by Pakistan." Rizvi pointed out in his paper that there is a sharp divergence of viewpoints on the Kargil conflict within Pakistan's official and non-official circles. Officials still view Kargil as a diplomatic success for Pakistan, which according to them resulted in the internationalization of Kashmir. Rizvi argued that a major lesson of the Kargil conflict is that no military expedition could be a success if it is undertaken without accounting for the totality of the environment, which includes domestic, political, and economic contexts as well as international opinions and sensitivities.

Mr. Joseph McMillan gave a presentation on the chapter he will co-author with Mr. Rodney Jones on "The Lessons of Kargil as Learned by the United States." In his presentation, Mr. McMillan stated that although U.S. policy on South Asia was previously centered on non-proliferation concerns, its focus in the wake of the Kargil conflict has shifted to the strategic stability of the region.

Historically, the United States had been inclined towards Pakistan. However, since the United States identified Pakistan as the initiator of the Kargil crisis, its view of both Pakistan and India has changed.

The United States also came to believe that it could play a central role in mediating Indian-Pakistani conflict, as observed during Kargil (e.g., the Clinton-Sharif meeting in Washington). In this vein, the United States now leans towards the LoC as a potential long-term resolution.

A senior Indian journalist made observations on the questions of understanding the significance of nuclear weapons, conventional and sub-conventional conflicts, and the internationalization of Kargil. He said that Kargil crisis forced India, Pakistan, and the United States to come to grips with the reality posed by nuclear weapons in South Asia. India changed its stance from rejecting the importance of nuclear weapons to accepting it. The Indian government has learned that acquisition of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan has changed the military equation in South Asia. Whether India gained or not by going overtly nuclear is a moot question. Nuclearization has made Pakistan bolder, which is a reason for concern for India. Kargil forced the United States to come to terms with the complexity of a nuclearized South Asia. According to a RAND report, Pakistan refused to see that India and Pakistan would not have an absolutely free hand in the situation and so U.S. activities became intense after mid-June 1999. The results were completely contradictive to previous notions. Pakistan was pressuring the United States to favour them, but the Pakistan government faced a contrary reaction from the United States, which instead leaned toward India. It was then that India realized that internationalizing the crisis might not be a bad thing. Pakistan can take credit for internationalizing the Kashmir issue through its actions in Kargil; but actually this internationalizing effort benefitted India, because the United States accepted the sanctity of the LoC in Kashmir.

Mr. McMillan concluded his presentation by saying that Kargil is a definite marker of triangular handling of nuclear or territorial issues. During the Kargil conflict the United States acknowledged the sanctity of LoC. More recently, post-11 September and 13 December, the United States has had to address the core issues impacting stability in nuclearized South Asia. In doing so, one U.S. action has been to pressure Pakistan to end the cross-border movement of terrorists.

September 27, 2002

Opening Remarks

On the second day of conference the discussions were made open to the Indian and international media. Since during this session a different set of participants attended the conference, Dr. Peter Lavoy, and Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Mathew Thomas started the day's proceedings with opening remarks.

Strategy of Deterrence and its Relevance to South Asia

Dr. Peter Lavoy presented Dr. Robert Jervis' paper on "Deterrence - A South Asian Perspective." In his paper, Dr. Jervis argues that Pakistan followed a bad course (surreptitious intrusion) because no good course was available. He says that Pakistan's strategic situation was weak. It had ambitious objectives but few resources. Pakistan sought to change the status quo, which is difficult even under propitious circumstances. In the India-Pakistan situation as elsewhere, the party trying to maintain the status quo has an easier task than the party trying to change it. Relatedly, Jervis notes that deterrence is generally easier than compellence. Dr. Jervis asks how the theory of deterrence worked in the Kargil scenario of 1999. He attempts to answer this question by saying that for Pakistan, the status quo in Siachen was unacceptable and that it recognized its weaker military and diplomatic capabilities vis-a-vis India. In addition, Dr. Jervis believes that the planners of Kargil clearly expected to succeed despite the odds. Pakistan believed it could achieve victory through the element of surprise alone.

According to Dr. Jervis, Pakistan engaged in an asymmetric conflict against India in Kargil. This is a strategy that cannot be maintained for too long due to its natural tendency to lead the warring parties into a war of attrition. He further comments that Pakistani planners may have taken a too shortsighted view of how the conflict would develop. However, Pakistan views its nuclear weapons as a "hope for forever avoiding a war of attrition with India."

Mr. Bharat Karnad then gave a presentation on the "Nuclear Strategy of India." He stated that asymmetric warfare is characterized by an imbalance of military power where the weaker side is trying to fight the military strength and effectiveness of the stronger side.

He further stated that groups and movements that have no territorial base may indulge in asymmetric warfare. Focusing on South Asia, he added that amongst the two nuclear states, the stronger state can be exploited by the weaker state through the "stability-instability paradox", whereby the weaker state counts on the stronger's unwillingness to bring its full might to bear in the conflict, for fear of nuclear escalation.

Brigadier (Ret.) V.K. Nair gave a presentation on, "Nuclear Command and Control." In his presentation, Brigadier Nair stated his belief that India lacks a fully operational nuclear command and control system (CCS). He listed major components of a national nuclear command structure as: a comprehensive communication network; a research and development complex; and an integrated intelligence organization. He highlighted that nuclear strategy in South Asia is not related only to India and Pakistan, but rather that China must also be considered since India has to balance the ripple effects of its actions with regards to China-Pakistan relations. He called the Kargil war a "limited escapade", initiated by Pakistan within the larger Indian security matrix, which must be observed by the national CCS. Brigadier Nair mentioned restraint to be an excellent means of keeping a bad situation at a manageable level. He concluded by asserting that the fact of nuclear deterrence is indisputable, and that the main issue is how to make deterrence most effective for South Asia. An adequately designed CCS must be created to meet the challenges of future conflicts like that of Kargil.

Mr. K. Subrahmanyam commented that in 1987 and 1990, Pakistan exercised deterrence with India by threatening a nuclear strike if India attacked. In 1999 it attempted to exercise compellence with India. He stated that Pakistan needs to avoid a war of attrition with India under the umbrella of nuclear deterrence. Also, in considering ever actually using nuclear weapons, Pakistan would need to take into account the possible reactions of the five other nuclear powers, in addition to those of India. Mr. Subrahmanyam went on to discuss some rules to abide by in order to prevent a nuclear misadventure by Pakistan and India. They included the following:

- (1) Nuclear brinkmanship has cost both for India and Pakistan, and hence it should be avoided.
- (2) The international community should not keep silent in times of crises.

He said that the weaker side could use nuclear weapons pre-emptively without considering the consequences. But this is not applicable to Pakistan since it could be disarmed by other nuclear powers through non-nuclear means in such a situation.

Air Commodore (Ret.) Jasjit Singh pointed out that the norms set forth in the Geneva Conventions (1925) worked well until they were violated by Iraq in 1988. He felt that it is desirable to develop stronger international norms against threats to use nuclear weapons. He observed that Pakistan has issued nuclear threats against India in 1987, 1990, 1999, 2001, and 2002.

General (Ret.) Malik noted that deterrence is a rational theory. It works in the context of nuclear and conventional threats amongst nation-states, but not in the case of terrorism. Deterrence is a Cold War concept that cannot be applied to the irrational minds of terrorists. Counter-terrorism has been integrated into military operations only after 11 September 2001.

Dr. Lavoy agreed that deterrence is ineffective in dealing with terrorism. On India's China-based apprehensions, Dr. Lavoy said that in his readings of India's strategic thought expressed in documents like the annual reports put out by the Indian Ministry of Defence (MoD), China does not figure as a major threat.

Limited War and its Escalatory Dimensions

Brigadier Devinder Singh presented his brief on, "The Concept of Limited War and its Applicability in the India-Pakistan Context." He introduced the concept of limited war, as well as its ramifications and its various characteristics. The dynamics of a limited war as defined by Brigadier Singh include: limited aims, limited degree of violence employed, restrained weapon usage, etc. With the help of a graphic illustration he explained the strategic space existing between proxy war and an all out conventional war. According to Brigadier Singh, this strategic space could be filled by a limited war.

Major Steve Smith presented his brief on, "Assessing the Risk of Inadvertent Nuclear War Between India and Pakistan." The main theme of his talk was centered on whether India and Pakistan can fight a conventional war and avoid the use of nuclear weapons altogether. He also dealt with the issue of survivability: how would strategic forces survive in event of a conventional war? In addition, Major Smith talked about the weaknesses of command and control structure in both countries.

According to Major Smith, the main difference in the strategies of the two countries is that India's strategy is based on deterring nuclear attack, whereas Pakistan's strategy is to deter an all-out conventional attack by India in response to its proxy war in Kashmir. India, he believes, is continuously improving its conventional capabilities at a rate that Pakistan cannot match. Steve concluded his presentation by stating that conventional war between India and Pakistan carries a high risk of escalating to nuclear war. Future wars should either be avoided or steps taken to keep them limited so as to preclude inadvertent escalation

Mr. Rodney Jones questioned the life span of asymmetric warfare. According to him, this form of warfare cannot be carried on endlessly. Thus, a conventional response from the Indians is obvious. If the United States feels that nuclear war may become inevitable, it has to take some steps to de-escalate the conflict and prevent the use of nuclear weapons by either party. He stated that the only time Pakistan would attack India is when it feels that its command and control apparatus is threatened. He raised questions regarding other instances in which Pakistan would and/or could be the first to attack.

General (Ret.) Malik quoted John Garret by stating that, "Limited war is a political game, the aim of which is not winning but rather not to lose to the enemy, to settle for a compromise". General Malik further said that clear defeats and victories are not possible in today's wars.

Lt. Gen. (Ret.) B.S. Malik said that the Siachin case was and still is one of a limited war. According to him there should be no problems in accepting the concept of limited war. There is always the possibility of it escalating when the number of people involved becomes large. He said that there was no fear of India employing nuclear weapons in a war. The fear comes from Pakistan engaging in an unconventional war that might escalate, leading to the use of nuclear weapons.

He questioned the steps taken by the United States in such an event. He also questioned why an official statement regarding the non-use of nuclear weapons was not issued by the United States at the time of Kargil? How will the safety of American forces deployed in the region be ensured in case of an all out war between India and Pakistan, with the possibility of a nuclear exchange? If the United States was taking the whole issue seriously, why, he asked, was there an absence of any dialogue in the U.S. media and in U.S. think tanks regarding the same?

Air Cmdr. (Ret.) Jasjit Singh questioned the ambiguity in defining top and bottom limits of escalation and the possibility of a conventional war. He also pointed out that mobilization could be a tool, which could be used to send a clear signal of escalation.

A journalist in the audience questioned the idea of limited space, and why the objective had no effect on the same. The objective in Jammu and Kashmir is counter-terrorism. The United States has the intelligence but is doing nothing to check Pakistani misadventure in Kashmir. What, he asked, are we actually achieving through a limited war on

counter-terrorism?

Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Bammi commented that limited war is a reality within a limited space, but the questions which then arise are: Who decides what the space is for India, and are we sure Pakistan feels the same?

New Perspectives On South Asia Security

The chair, Surinder Rana, introduced the panel to the audience and said that Kargil was a watershed event from a South Asian security perspective. The Kargil conflict is a subject of study for various organizations like the U.S. Army, and the U.S.- based non-proliferation community. The two papers in this panel were a manifestation of increasing interest shown by the outside world in the Kargil conflict.

Captain Marcus Acosta gave a presentation on, "A U.S. Army Perspective on High Altitude Warfare—Kargil: A Case Study." His presentation focused on the U.S. Army's perspective of the tactical lessons learned from Kargil. He said that the U.S. Army has very different perspectives on high altitude warfare, which are in large measure theoretical. His research covered the following: training, essential soldiering skills, logistics, offensive skills, junior leadership, artillery, and logistics in high altitude. In his presentation, Captain Acosta said that there were a number of lessons learned from the Kargil episode, which the U.S. Army could use in their ongoing war in Afghanistan. He highlighted the impact of combat fatigue on troops while fighting in high altitude, the limitations of supporting arms, and the complexity of logistics. According to Captain Acosta, one glaring weakness of Pakistan's Northern Light Infantry was a lack of adequate logistical support, which ultimately led to their defeat.

A retired Indian Army officer pointed that the Indian Army routinely vacated high altitude posts in the Kargil region due to the extreme climatic conditions during the winter months. The Pakistani army risked their troops in manning those peaks. They made a grave miscalculation by not building an adequate logistical back up. If it were so easy to come and occupy those posts and remain there during the winter months, the Indian army wouldn't have risked vacating them in the first place. Hence, the Kargil conflict brings out an important lesson, which is that a tactical misadventure in high altitude is a costly proposition both from an offensive and defensive perspective.

General Bammi said that the factors responsible for the failure of Pakistan's NLI were a lack of aggressive patrolling, unsatisfactory conduct of defensive battle (no reinforcements and counter attacks), lack of air support, and poor leadership (no senior leaders came forward to lead their troops).

Dr. Paul Kapur presented a paper on, "Impact of Non-Proliferation on Conventional Stability—Lessons from the Kargil Case." Dr. Kapur argued that the Kargil case suggested that nuclear proliferation is likely to encourage conventional aggression by states that are: conventionally weak relative to their enemies, and revisionist regarding key territorial disputes. Dr. Kapur said that proliferation encourages aggression by such states for reasons such as:

- (1) Nuclear weapons deter all-out enemy retaliation. They can also embolden a weak, revisionist state to alter the status quo through conventional military action that previously would have been too risky.
- (2) The acquisition of nuclear weapons can help a weak, revisionist state use conventional aggression to alter the status quo through third party diplomacy. When such a state launches a conventional attack against a nuclear-armed enemy, the threat of escalation draws international attention, potentially enabling the weak state to secure third-party mediation of the dispute, and thereby to achieve a more favorable territorial settlement than it could have gotten on its own.

Journalist B.M. Chengappa argued that acquisition of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan was not a critical factor in accounting for Pakistan's 1999 aggression in Kargil. He pointed out that in 1965 and 1971, neither India nor Pakistan had nuclear weapons.

Mr. K. Subrahmanyam observed that existing nuclear powers sometime disregard international non-proliferation norms in favor of supporting allies. He said that in 1977 India had actually shelved their nuclear program, but it was later revived when the Indian government learned that Pakistan continued to develop their nuclear weapons capabilities with China's help. The United States also ignored the development of Pakistan's nuclear program during the time of its proxy war in Afghanistan against the Soviets.

Prospects and Challenges for U.S. engagement in South Asia

In his opening remarks, Mr. Robinson stated that the United States had over-reacted to the current India-Pakistan crisis. The U.S. government did not expect the Indo-Pak situation to escalate. But the outcome of war was a risk that seemed ever present. He also agreed that the travel advisory has done damage to the Indian economy, more than it did to the Pakistan economy because the restriction in the latter case was already present. He said that despite the travel advisory, the business community and some tourists continued to visit India. He emphasized that the U.S. government can only advise its citizens and the business community, but does not control their actions.

He posed a list of questions to the floor. He asked how U.S.-India interactions have brought about a change in their respective attitudes, habits, etc. How has this change impacted the recent crises (both in December 2001 and May-June 2002)? Is the Indian government ready to resolve these issues with the aid of U.S. government? How close can the U.S.-Indian relationship become, and how long will this process take? How far are external factors playing a role in this relationship, and what steps should be taken by both sides to further bolster this relationship?

Mr. C. Raja Mohan gave a presentation on, "The U.S. India Strategic Relationship." He stated that he is an optimistic realist. In his opinion, U.S.-India relations in the last four years have exceeded all expectations and have arrived at a new threshold. He maintained that there are lessons to be learned from Kargil for India, Pakistan and the United States. He further stated that these lessons should help all the parties in their efforts to resolve India-Pakistan issues. In addition, the United States and India have discovered that they can be partners on issues other than just those relating to matters of security.

He further added that there is need to look beyond Kargil. The U.S. national strategy pertaining to terrorism has been successful in overthrowing the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The values shared by the United States and India are mostly on similar lines. Globalization is creating a single market forcing India to open up to the integrated economies of the world markets. With the direction of America's capital support towards this region, Raja believes South Asia can be converted into a dynamic market.

Joseph McMillan disagreed on the prospect of a popularly elected government being a solution to resolve the Indo-Pak crisis. He stated that the decision to Islamicize Pakistan started with Benazir Bhutto, who was democratically elected.

Larry Robinson clarified that the rules of future arms sales to Pakistan include weapons having prior approval and/or the purpose to fight terrorism.

In response to a question, Mr. Robinson stated that the United States is not seeking any bases in South or Central Asia. However, it recognizes the importance of staying in Afghanistan until all Taliban operations are terminated. According to him, a significant outcome of Kargil has been a heightened importance of Kashmir on the international agenda, although the conflict may not be resolved in the manner Pakistan intended.

Lieutenant General (Ret.) Mathew Thomas said the issue of terrorism is important and that cooperating nations must responsive to each other's sensitivities on the issue. While post-Kargil U.S.-India relations have been amiable, some Indians have felt that the United States has not exercised enough pressure to dissuade Pakistan from supporting terrorism in the name of the Kashmiri freedom movement.

Mr. Joseph McMillan gave a presentation on, "U.S. Imperatives and Options for Continued Engagement in South Asia." He said that there are many dimension to U.S. national security strategy , several of which directly or indirectly bear on U. S. relations with India:

(1) The United States has always campaigned for human dignity and this is also at the core of what India aspires to. The strongest relationships exist between countries that share common values and similar objectives.

(2) The United States endeavors to strengthen alliances against the menace of 'global terrorism,' including preventing attacks against the countries of Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan.

(3) The United States endeavors to work with others to diffuse regional conflicts. He stated that there is a need for India and Pakistan to resolve their disputes, and that the United States could play an influential and constructive role in this exercise. India is moving towards becoming a strong power in the twenty-first century with similar values and interests as the United States. Mr. McMillan stated that the United States is looking to maintain a stronger partnership with India.

(4) The United States seeks to ensure that its enemies are not in a position to threaten it or its allies. Trying to prevent additional countries from acquiring nuclear weapons, especially countries with terrorist linkages, is part of this effort. Efforts also need to be made to prevent existing nuclear weapons states from becoming rogue states.

(5) The United States seeks to encourage the development of vibrant democracies and open marketplaces.

Concluding Remarks

Dr. Peter Lavoy stated that the two days of discussion had been very useful and that the CCC team was able to meet their objectives for the conference. As pointed out during the opening session, the goal of the conference was to develop a structure for continued U.S.-India dialogue on issues of mutual interest. Dr. Lavoy hoped that with the process started by this conference, further dialogue would continue. He thanked the CCC and USI staff, which was actively involved in the organization of the conference. In his concluding remarks, General Mathew expressed his satisfaction and happiness for the successful conclusion of the conference.

